Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Samuel Becket and Harold Pinter wrote their major plays in a period which demanded the writers to rewrite their role in the society. It was the post Second World War period which was marked by political turmoil, scientific breakthroughs and social upheavals. As any other war in the history of the world, Second World War brought about a particular kind of situation which was unable for the people to grasp easily. Memories about a lost homeland was deprived to people as much as the hope of a promised land to come. The invention and the use of atomic bomb was a major scientific breakthrough which made the world aware of the disastrous consequences of science when it gets used for negative purposes. A quote from Absurdism in Post- Modern Art: Examining the Interplay between Waiting for Godot and Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close by Elizabeth L. Bolick will make this idea clear.

The attacks on Hiroshima and Nagazaki in 1945 leveled the cities and caused 80,000 and 70,000 deaths respectively (Timeline). The United States Government knew the war against Japan was already won (It was settled at the Postdam conference on August 3, 1945) three days before the bombing
of Hiroshima (Bird and Sherwin). This was an example of choosing to experiment with new technology even though there would be the moral implication of causing unnecessary human casualties.

(2009: 1)

Another very important factor that lead to the confusion of people in the post War period was the extent of cruelties which human beings inflicted upon their own race under the false pretext of cleaning the earth off Jews through Nazism. The Nazis firmly believed in the idea that the Jews are worse than worms and used psychological brainwashing to make some people believe in the superiority of Aryan race and the inferiority of Jews. Hitler, who conceived this doctrine while adorning the position of a chancellor, became the President of Germany in 1934. This gave him the immense power of a dictator to execute his Aryan Supremacy Theory. What took place after that was the founding of concentration camps in various parts of the country with the sole purpose of erasing people whom the Nazis considered as inferior to them. The most heinous killing strategies were applied in these camps for the systematic erasure of human beings in large numbers. There was a concentration camp at Auschwitz in Poland that shocked the world after the brutalities happened there became known to people after the war. A
quote from *Auschwitz: Nazi Concentration Camp – Research Paper* by Vintage Thompson will clearly state the gravity of the situation.

One thing that Auschwitz was known for was the labour work. A sign hung above the gate at Auschwitz saying “*Arbeit Machet Frei.*” This is translated as “Work will give you freedom”, however, this gave false hope to the workers. Work only lets one escape death for a couple of weeks or months. In reality, death was the only escape to the prisoner’s lives. Workers were subjected to four hour roll calls in any sort of weather, more than once a day, and had full twelve hour workdays. Prisoners had to work through heat, snow, rain, and every other sort of weather.

(2009: 1)

From the above quote, it can be assumed that it was the application of a well formulated theory of human destruction that happened in Auschwitz. The people in the camps were tortured both physically and psychologically. Fascism under Mussolini in Italy, though not with the help of concentration camps, was empowered by the method of killing people who refused to toe his line during this period. Another important matter to take into account is that Second World War changed the way
war was fought. New inventions such as machine guns, tanks, chemical weapons, and grenades were used to kill people, but only created stalemates with millions of troops getting killed in each part with little progress on either side. The culmination of the horrors of the war with the dropping of the atom bomb shattered the ideas of human goodness and morality for good. All these pointed to an absurd world which was hard to explain by the rationality of human mind. It was impossible to find any rational ground to all that happened in war. From this chaos aroused the need to find a philosophical perspective on human beings. There was wide change in all areas of art to find new means to express the problems of war. From the completion of First World War itself, there were changes in the attitudes of artists and writers about the presentation of ideas through their medium. In painting, movements like surrealism, expressionism and Dadaism created a different perspective to look at art. Expressionism distorted images to evoke a radical emotional effect which will give rise to moods and ideas. These kinds of ideas gave rise to more experimentations from the part of the writers and artists after the Second World War. The war intensified the illusion about life in the minds of people. The philosophical idea of Existentialism became relevant in this context.

Existentialism is a major philosophical school which was spread primarily through the ideas of Soren Kierkegaard, Jean Paul Sartre,
Albert Camus and Martin Heidegger. The movement flourished in Europe in the 1940s and 1950s. The nineteenth century philosophers, Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche, are considered as the precursors of this movement. A coterie of writers and artists, who got linked with this philosophical movement, include Dostoevsky, Ibsen and Kafka. From Paris, there were Jean Genet and expatriates like Samuel Beckett. Existentialism posits that it is impossible for human beings to understand themselves through any scientific, psychological or cultural theories. A quote from Existentialism, A Graphic Guide by Richard Apignanesi and Oscar Zarate defines this philosophical idea

‘There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental questions of philosophy.’ So begins Albert Camus’ (1913 -60) in the Myth of Sysyphus (1942). He stiffens the dose by quoting Nietzsche: “a philosopher, to deserve our respect, must preach by example.”

(2013:3)

During the Second World War Period, Albert Camus was a part of underground resistance to Nazism in Paris. The members of the group feared an attack at any time. This made Albert think deeply on the idea of death and suicide. In his opinion, death intensifies the need to think on the
meaning of life. The other philosophers in the group also contributed their own ideas. Victor Frankl, a holocaust survivor, was another leading figure in the philosophy of existentialism. He formulated the theory of ‘Logotherapy’, which aims to repair a person’s sense of meaning. He stated that any attempt to suicide is an act of giving a meaning to life. As death is a certainty and people have no idea when it will happen, the very act of living itself is meaningless. If a person commits suicide, he is stating that his absurd life has meaning. A quote from Existentialism, A graphic Guide by Richard Appignanesi and Oscar Zarate will make this idea clear

Frankl somehow organized a team concerned with the prevention of suicides. Isn’t that amazing? Why deter suicide when death is an everyday act of mass killings. Why attempt to “repair meaning” when meaningless existence is a guaranteed condition. “The contrary to suicide is the man condemned to death,” says Camus, and that is Frankl’s own experience.

(2013:20)

Human beings, according to this group, are more than mere categorisations. As a person is born with innumerable choices, people
may think that he or she can be called a sum total of what he does in his process of growing up. At the same time, it is a fact that the purpose of a man is set by the actions of people before him. But, according to the philosophers of this school, stating a particular moral idea as superior to another is just absurd. It is because right or wrong can only be analysed from a subjective point of view, which differs from person to person. In that case, it is just absurd to claim that a person understood who himself or herself is. In that case, it is absurd to believe that there is any overarching moral order in the world. All of these philosophers firmly believed that existence comes before essence. A quote from Nietzsche’s famous essay *Existentialism is Humanism* will make this idea clear

That means that man first exists, encounters himself and emerges in the world, to be defined afterwards. Thus, there is no human nature, since there is no God to conceive it. It is a man who conceives himself, who propels himself towards existence. Man becomes nothing other than what is actually done, not what he will want to be.

(1945: 1,2)

From the above quote, it can be understood that Sartre was an atheist. There are other philosophers of this school who firmly believed in
god. The idea all the existentialists held dear was of a world which was conceived by the subjective experiences of each man. In the post War period, the destruction which happened in a large scale, made people think of the possibility of any absolute moral order in the world. This made a group of playwrights think about the absurdity of the world they live in. From various critical interpretations of their plays, one thing commonly associated with the existentialist aspect of the plays is the idea of human beings being thrown into a world in which they have to find their own meanings. After the Second World War, the world was in utter chaos to make sense out of. Thus the playwrights of the period were forced to find their own methods through which an order can be found in the disorderly jumble of the world. Theatre of the Absurd was a term collectively applied to a group of playwrights who tried to create meanings from the meaningless jumble of post war life through their own methods. To quote from *A Glossary of Literary Terms* by M.H.Abrams

The term is applied to a number of works in drama and prose fiction which have in common the sense that human condition is essentially absurd, and this condition can be adequately represented only in works of literature that are themselves absurd.

(1999: 1)
The major playwrights under the study, Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter, are included in this group. Other major playwrights of this period include Jean Genet, Edward Albee, Arthur Adamov and Eugene Ionesco. Beckett and Pinter, the two playwrights under the study, gave their own versions of meaninglessness, absurdity and chaos existed in the post Second World War period. The prime purpose of the study is the comparison of the absurd elements in the major plays of these playwrights. Waiting for Godot, Endgame and Happy Days are the major plays of Becket taken for the study. The Dumb Waiter, The Birthday Party and The Caretaker are the major place of Pinter for the study. Beckett started to write plays before Pinter and made the idea of absurd theatre popular.

Beckett’s Waiting for Godot was staged five years after the end of Second World War. His experience as a member of the resistance to Nazism reflected in his opinion on the absurdity of life. Thus the play was considered by the critics as a clear interpretation of the absurdity of life in the post Second World War period. The existential philosophical ideas which gave rise to the deep probes on the meaning of human life, coupled with the vast change in the attitudes of the writers and artists of the period toward a new means to express the chaos left by the war, got reflected in this seminal play of the absurd genre. In the play, Vladimir
and Estragon, two tramps, are waiting for a saviour named Godot to save them from the tiresome waiting to find a meaning to their life. The curtain falls in the final act while the tramps continue to wait. This is a clear elucidation of the idea that there is no possibility for a higher power to tell people who they are. According to Sartre, Human beings create their own identity through subjective experiences. The two tramps have no past to speak of. This creates a specific kind identity crisis in them. The thesis highlights how their existence becomes absurd while comparing the play with the major plays of Pinter. Lucky and Pozzo are other two characters in the play. Through this servant – master pair, Beckett clearly shows the absurdity of domination in a world which is constructed in a subjective way by each person in the wake of a lack of any overarching moral order in the world. *Endgame*, the another Beckett play, is set in a room with no furniture or anything attractive to call it a home. The vegetation of the outside world is withering fast and the world, as presented in the play, is near to extinction. Nagg and Nell, two old couple in the play, are legless and dumped in dust bins. Hamm and Clov, the two other characters, are crippled and in search of a solution for their suffering to end. Thus the critics state that the play presents a world which is moving towards frustration and doom. The post war trauma of people in a world which
offers no solution to the problems is presented through this play. *Happy Days* is the other play under the study in which a woman is shown as sinking into the sand mound. Her husband is reading the newspaper and indifferent to the plight of the woman. This play is a clear presentation of the gradual degradation of the post war society.

Harold Pinter came to write plays much later than Beckett. The three plays selected for the study clearly show the problem faced by the people in the post war period. In *The Dumb Waiter*, two contract killers are waiting for their victim in a basement room. No details about the person are imparted to them. They are not alike in their character. Gus and Ben, the two killers, are of opposite behavior strategies. Ben is very upset about the possible crime committed by the victim to deserve this fate. Gus, on the other hand, only thinks of himself as someone who is hired for the job. In the end, we get to know that Ben is the person to be killed because he is not fit for the job. An overly inquisitive person is not fit for the job of a contract killer. This is a clear indication of what happened in the Second World War. Some soldiers were sacrificed in war for the advantage of some people with position and influence. At the end of the war, intellectuals and writers understood there was nothing heroic about war other than systematic destruction of human beings for the gain of a few people. This makes the idea of war absurd. In the play,
the two contract killers are the toys in the hands of an organisation which carries out the ulterior purpose of human destruction for the sake of power. Pinter has been a close observer of the suppression of individuality for the deep rooting of the power of a view. A quote from *Art, Truth and Politics*, the Nobel Prize speech of Pinter will make this idea clear

Everyone knows what happened in the Soviet Union and throughout Eastern Europe during the post – War period: The systematic brutality, the widespread atrocities, the ruthless suppression of independent thought. All these has been fully documented and verified.

(2005)

*The Birthday Party* has the central character Stanley who lives in a boarding house in constant fear of the outside world. There are no details about his past. Meg and Petey, a couple, are the other characters who live in the house. Stanley’s peaceful life in the house gets upturned by two strangers named Goldberg and Mc Cann who came to take Stanley away from the safe haven of the boarding house. They dominate Stanley in a way that takes even his ability to talk for himself. They celebrate his birthday party without his consent, and in
the end, he becomes unable to speak for himself. The subjugation of a human subject who becomes a threat to the functioning of some organizations can be seen in this play. *The Caretaker* is the next play for the study in which the tensed conversation between Aston, Mick and Davies, the three main characters, clearly show the tensed relationships between people who struggle for a space in a life of confusion and chaos. The situation clearly describes the post war predicament.

The study is a comparison between the major plays of Beckett and Pinter which were selected for the study. As the idea of absurdity is imparted through various chapters, it is very much necessary to give a detailed explanations of the chapters. The first chapter deals with a comparison of the themes of the major plays and the process through which absurd elements are presented in those. Themes are underlined ideas of action. As the function of absurd plays was to present the predicament of people living in an absurd universe, it was not possible for the dramatists to use ordinary methods of playwriting. Themes, in that case, should be analysed in that way. The first theme analysed in the play is waiting. In Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*, this theme is explored in a way which explores the predicament of the human beings who wait for meanings in a pointless and absurd world. The thesis
compares this theme with that of the waiting of the two contract killer characters in Pinter’s *The Dumb Waiter*. The description in the chapter starts with descriptions on the historical backgrounds in which the plays were written. They are mere playthings in the hands of an organization. Nothing can be used against any of the people who entrusted them with the job. With the awkward reverence from the part of Ben towards the authorities which we get to know from the dialogues of him, we can easily say that he shows a kind of fake respect to get the favours from the employers. But no such reverence or consideration is shown by the authorities in this regard. It should be considered as a major trick to dominate. This is an idea that is explored in detail. Vladimir and Estragon, the two tramps, are waiting for a person named Godot in the play *Waiting for Godot* to deliver them from the long agony of waiting for a meaning. Gus and Ben, the two contract killers, are waiting for their victim to arrive in *The Dumb Waiter*. The thesis offers a clear comparison of the situations the characters face while waiting. Godot is only the aim of their waiting in *Waiting for Godot*. There is no surety that Godot will come and there is no possibility for the pair to understand him if he comes. If they understood him, there is no possibility that he would be the solution for their search. This is the absurd situation Vladimir and Estragon are in.
The Birthday Party and The Caretaker, the two plays of Pinter under the study, do not explore the theme of waiting. This is a point stressed in the thesis. The second theme that is explored is domination. In Beckett’s Waiting for Godot, Lucky and Pozzo are slave–master pair. Lucky is treated by Pozzo like a dog in the first act. In the second act, Pozzo is blind and Lucky dumb. This makes Pozzo in a position to seek the help of Lucky whom he considers as inferior. The idea of human absurdity in believing in the act of domination in a world with no surety on their life is stressed at, through this incident. In Endgame, Hamm always try to control Clov. A special sort of control and domination make these characters exist in an absurd way in a world with no overarching moral orders. This idea is stressed at in this thesis.

The comparison between Beckett’s major plays and Pinter’s can never be more striking than in the theme of domination. In The Birthday Party, Stanley is dominated by the two strangers. Goldberg ad McCann, the two strangers from the outside world come to take Stanley away to a mental asylum. In the final act, we can see Stanley as someone who is unable to talk due to excessive acts of domination on his identity. This absurd act of domination in the belief that the value system held dear by the two strangers are superior to the way of thinking of Stanley is a clear connection between the relationship of
Pozzo and Lucky in the first act of *Waiting for Godot*. The *Dumb Waiter* shows two contract killers waiting for the victim to arrive in a basement room. The thesis presents a contrast of their of waiting from that of the waiting in the plays of Pinter.

Alienation is the next theme explored in the chapter. The characters in the major plays of Beckett exist in a world which they cannot make sense out of. The thesis presented how this theme is presented in the three plays of Beckett under the study. A comparison of it to the same theme explored in a different way in the Pinter plays taken for the study is given in detail. The next theme is uncertainty of life. As the characters in the plays exist without a past, uncertainty about the present and future is definitely a very powerful force in their life. This aspect is explored in detail in this thesis. Chaos and confusion are two other themes in the play. As the post war period was fraught with tension on the future course of life the people were to take, the plays under the study reflected this problem. A careful comparative study of these themes is presented in the thesis. Violence is the last theme explored in the chapter. Second World War was a period of violence which was explored in the works of Beckett and Pinter. The plays under the study clearly explore the theme. Violence, as a theme, is presented in detail.
The third chapter is *Absurd Elements in the Characterisation of Harold Pinter and Samuel Beckett*. As the characters in absurd plays are not traditional like to be interpreted easily, it is very hard to find one specific interpretations to the characters. It is, in that context, to interpret them through themes. Waiting is the first theme explored through characters in the chapter. The exploration of the meanings of the waiting of characters in Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* are presented in detail. *Happy Days*, which is play without the theme of waiting, is mentioned as one play with no such theme explored through the characters. How the idea of waiting changes to the characters of Pinter is the next area of stress. The theme of waiting is explored clearly in Pinter’s *The Dumb Waiter*. The two killers in the play wait for their victim in a basement room. Waiting in the play is different from the act of waiting in Beckett’s major plays. The killers are not waiting for a saviour to get them out of the problematic situation. This aspect is presented in detail. Another aspect that is explored through characters is domination. In Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*, Lucky and Pozzo are the characters through which this idea is presented. The act of domination and its futility are very much present in the post War period. Through the characters, Beckett presented this idea. As reality is constructed through subjective interpretations of people, any act of domination is foolish.
This idea is explored in detail. Jean Paul Sartre’s book *Being and Nothingness* adds a different dimension to the idea by stating that there is no single subjective reality. This makes the act of domination more futile. His ideas about the identity states this problem. To quote from the book:

> But the world refers to me the image of this unjustifiability in the form of the synthetic unity of its univocal relations to me. It is absolutely necessary that the world appear to me *in order*. And in this sense, this order is *me*; it is that image of me which we described in the last chapter of Part Two. But it is wholly contingent that it should be *this* order.

(1984:408)

The next play of Beckett in which we can see the domination of characters is *Endgame*. Hamm and Clov are the characters through which domination is presented in this play. In *Happy Days*, the domination is presented in a passive. The woman in the play is dominated by her husband in her position as a person who gradually sinks into the sand mound. She has to depend on her husband for her needs, but he is indifferent to her and considers it as a chance for a domination. This idea is stated in detail. Pinter’s three plays under the study clearly show how the characters are dominated by circumstances and people. This idea is stated in detail.
Alienation is the next theme which elucidates the characters. *Waiting for Godot* has Vladimir, Estragon, Lucky and Pozzo as characters in an alienated universe. In *Endgame*, all the characters are thrown into an alienated universe. How this characters exist in the absurd universe is explored in detail. *Happy Days* has Winnie and Willie, a couple, who are not in a good relationship or not even in talking terms with each other. The woman is sinking into the sand and the man is immersed in newspaper reading. This creates a relationship crisis and alienation in characters. Language does not help this couple either because they are not in a good relationship to talk to each other. This intensifies their alienation.

Pinter plays like *The Dumb Waiter* and *The Birthday Party* consist of characters who use ordinary language to hide their emotions and intentions than reveal it. It is because they are not interested to be in a relationship with each other. Each communication that takes place in the plays show the influence of alienation. *The Caretaker*, another play selected for the study, has three characters fighting to have a space in the room. Their dialogues clearly state that they are not in good relationships and are alienated.

There are mythical interpretations by major critics to the major characters in the plays of Beckett and Pinter. The connection of the
Greek god Zeus to Godot in *Waiting for Godot* is one such. Godot does not arrive on stage at any time in the play, but he pervades every activity of the characters. In that sense, he is an important power who exercises his will on people without taking their emotions into account.

The next chapter is *Dialogues as Tools of Absurdity*. Dialogues are not used in the casual way in absurd plays because the angst of post-War period was unable to be communicated through ordinary everyday language as it is. So it was important to use dialogues in new ways. Repetition is a very powerful aspect of dialogues in the plays. In the plays of both playwrights, repetition works as a tool to present the inner angst springing out from the inability to communicate well. In *Waiting for Godot*, it is the inability to communicate the problems they face while waiting for the person they have no surety of arriving. This makes them talk repeatedly on mundane things and the possibility of the arrival of Godot, the saviour they are waiting for, repeatedly. Time, as a static and flowing factor, is a very important aspect, in the idea of repetition. This is stated in detail.

Non-communication is another significant aspect of dialogues which presents the inability of the characters to communicate well. In
absurd plays, no dialogues can be considered as connected with the passing of messages from one person to another. According to Heidegger’s existential idea, which was an influence on both Beckett and Pinter, ideas are understood by each person according to his subjective points of view. It is also connected with our idea of being in time. A quote from Martin Heidegger’s *Being and Time* will make this idea clear

> All research- and not least that which operates within the range of the central question of being – is an ontical possibility of Dasein. Dasein’s Being finds its meaning in temporality. But temporality is also the conditions which makes historicality possible as a temporal kind of Being which Dasein itself possesses, regardless of whether or how Dasein is an entity ‘in time.’ Historicality, as a determinate character, is prior to what is called “history.”

(1962:41)

Anything uttered can only be understood in a subjective way. In this sense, one significant sentence, as uttered by a speaker, never reaches another one in an effective way. This idea is explored in the dialogues of the major characters of these playwrights.
The influence of time in dialogues is an another important factor. Time is both static and flowing. In that way, presenting it through dialogues, is a vain act. There are dialogues in *Endgame* and *Waiting for Godot* which state this aspect of time. It is stated in the dialogues between characters. In Pinter’s characters, the same idea of time can be experienced in the reclusive life of characters in the boarding house. In *The Dumb Waiter*, time for the victims arrival is not given to Gus and Ben, the two contract killers. This intensifies the tension. *The Caretaker* is totally connected with the time confined to the basement room. Lacan’s The Symbolic Order, The Imaginary Order and The Real Order are reflected in the major plays. This aspect is explored in detail. The lack of clear memories is a problem that affects the character’s in the play. There are no clear cut past to the characters. This creates an inability in the characters to understand the present. The dialogues reflect this problem.

The next chapter is *Theatrical Techniques as Tools of Absurdity*. As absurd plays were unlike traditional plays, a careful analysis of the theatrical techniques will give us a very clear understanding of the functioning of the absurd plays.

Settings are very relevant in the analysis of the plays of Beckett and Pinter. In Beckett’s plays, the characters are inside a room and they have
deeply fear the outside world. In Beckett’s plays, the open spaces clearly present the barren mindset of characters. Dialogues are another area in which techniques are used. Through dialogues, these playwrights try to present the angst of a period which was reeling under pressure to give a vent to their emotional agony from a terrible war, words and sentences used in the traditional plays will not work. Thus we can see the dialogues in their plays as strewn with pauses and silence. The idea of non – communication works better in the case of Beckett and Pinter than the straight act of passing messages from one person to another. The dialogues are attempts to while away the time in Beckett’s plays. In Pinter’s plays, everyday language is deflected by the characters to hide their real ulterior intentions. These ideas are explored in detail.

Characterisation is an another area in which theatrical techniques are used with dexterity by these playwrights. The traditional well rounded characters of casual plays gave way to the characters with no past and definable characters in absurd plays. We cannot clearly define any of the characters in the major plays of Pinter and Beckett because they are so unlike any of the characters we see in ordinary plays. Beckett’s characters are what we should consider as people with no past. Pinter’s character’s are the same.
Theatrical techniques can be experienced in extreme effect in the analysis of the themes of the major plays. Alienation, uncertainty, anxiety and chaos are the main themes through which the technique of presenting the absurd idea is used. The characters of these playwrights are thrown into a universe which they cannot make head or tail out of. What they can do is to construct meanings out of very limited resources in a chaotic world. This creates alienation and uncertainty as wells of anxiety in them. This idea is presented in a very detailed way.

As absurd plays of both these playwrights created a space among the post War writers who tried to give a particular voice to the meaningless of life, the plays are studied as representations of a struggle from the part of a group to make a specific order out of chaos through various unconventional artistic means. Through all the chapters in the thesis, a comprehensive analysis of the methods through which these playwrights put forth their ideas are studied. Both Pinter and Becket outlived the horrors of Second World War and they clearly understood the angst and agony of the life after the war. Another thing that makes both these playwrights somewhat similar in thinking is the situations of character which are not easy to understand and not even possible to ruminate completely with clear and specific logical elucidations. This is just because the characters, without a past,
give a hard time to the viewers to place them anywhere in temporality while trying to think about them. All we can do to connect the characters is to think that they are thrown into an absurd universe with no clues about its functioning. These ideas are clearly stated in all the chapters.

The settings the characters are in are related to their moods. In the plays, the characters are not in a happy mood. It is just because they are not like the ordinary inhabitants of the world who will go to their routine places of work. The characters in the plays are not aware of themselves because they are not aware of themselves as ordinary people do. They are confused about themselves and the outside world. Their future is something unknown to them. This aspect binds the characters of both Beckett and Pinter. This is an idea explored in all the chapters. The characters are not presented in a way in which we can fully decipher their ideas about the world.

Another important factor that binds the characters together is their ability to use language in a way which hides their real intentions. Whenever the characters in the plays utter something, the exact opposite is what they mean. It is a technique that is constantly explored by the playwrights to present their inability to understand themselves. If
a person can’t understand who he is and what he stands for, it is not
difficult to understand that whatever he speaks will be attempts to while
away the time. Thus talking becomes a casual exercise like eating and
drinking. They are compelled to do this as a process of their existence.
Without talking, their already meaningless life will become more
absurd and futile.

Actions are another binding factor that connects the major plays.
Though the characters are thrown to a chaotic universe, it does not deter
them from involving in actions. A lot of activities take place in the play
as a sign of routine existence. The chapters deal with this aspect in
detail. As mere talking will not give a meaning to their pointless
existence, the characters try to do something. All these actions can be
considered as attempts from the part of characters to give meanings to
their already pointless life. According to major existentialist thinkers,
the very act of trying to give a meaning to life is an absurd act.

The understanding of the characters about their life creates a very
important development in the comparison between characters and their
connections with the outside world. Outside world is something that
remains hidden from people of these dramas. Whoever tries to defend
the workings of the world they live in is unknown to them. They are left
with no clues about their own existence in the meaningless universe. Which person is to be trusted is the most pressing problem they all face. So many ways are used by the people to control the minds of other people and power is used at the maximum to apply their strengths in a very bad way.

Both Pinter and Beckett are playwrights who belong to a particular period that needed attention from the major philosophers of the period. If we ever analyse their plays, one thing can be understood quite clearly. They belong to a specific class who expressed the inexpressible angst of a period which was trying to burst but unable to be in such a situation. There were serious contemplations on the futility of suicides. Though many of the characters in Pinter plays are not suicidal, they refuse to live like ordinary mortals. From a deep analysis, it is very clear that they focus too much on their life and trying to give it meaning in the process. It is one of the most foolish acts according to the major philosophers of the period. This idea is presented in great detail. Something we can’t find in the dramas of Beckett is the ability of the characters to ruminate on the power of life. It is not there in any of his plays just because he strictly believes in the meaninglessness of life.
Characters, themes and situations provide a particular kind of ambience to the plays of both the playwrights. Irrespective of the plays they write, there is a connection between the ideas of the world they create and the sensibilities of the world outside. Themes create a particular kind of understanding in the viewers about the problems the characters