

## Humour and Satire in the Plays *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett, *No Exit* by J. P. Sartre and *The Birthday Party* by Harold Pinter

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### ABSTRACT

Authors do not say what they want to say, but hide it behind the lines. They want the readers to find out what they express within the implications. Thanks to this, they use some literary devices on writing their Works in which they imply their messages. Some of the literary devices are images, symbols, metaphors, allusions and etc. These devices help the authors bring a mysterious significance in their Works. Besides these humour and satire are made by means of these literary devices and the authors give or hint their criticisms by means of them. Humour and satire are used within the similar roles of those literary devices as well. Sometimes humour is concealed behind the satire; sometimes satire behind the humour. In some cases humour becomes the aim while satire is means and vice versa. The study is fundamentally based on the question "How do the authors use humour and satire with the help of the literary devices in their Works?" The plays *Endgame* (by Samuel Beckett), *No Exit* (by J. P. Sartre) and *The Birthday Party* (by Harold Pinter) are discussed and examined within the context of humour and satire. The conclusions reached by consistent deductions are emphasized in the study and comments are made. Finally, in this study, it is aimed to open a new door into various seminal questions and discussions about the propability of the novel useages of humour and satire in the literary texts.

### Introduction

To begin with, after World War II Europe has lost its political, ethic, and religious values; this made life nonsense/meaningless, painful and absurd. Due to the rather great disappointing result of the war people had to not only get recover but also work under quite heavy and troublesome conditions so as to support themselves. In fact, the war was not finished but changed. Depression, oppression, alienation, miscommunication and aggression spread among people. Later on the scholars interested in literature got in problematic condition, since they had asserted that literature is inspired from the real life and the real events for years. Even though the works they would write were fictional they imitated the real characters and their memories. If they had written on the community of the postwar they could not have gotten satisfying impression and interest; therefore they decided to use the deeply painful issue in a comic way and found out the type tragic-comedy, which is a sort of genre in which tragic events are demonstrated within a comic style.

In addition, the writers contributed a new genre named 'The Theatre of the Absurd' to the literature. Alfred Jerry is claimed to have been the founder of this genre. In his play *King Ubu* he focuses on the surrealistic movement and with this he has influenced the Modern Drama. The modernist writer Antony Chekhov has helped the Theatre of the Absurd to gain importance and get widespread. It focuses on the world surrounded by loneliness and on a person's behaviors belonging to his/her private life. It does not aim to analyze the social problems and relationships like epic theatre does. In it a person does not have any will to listen to the others and make friends

with them. While talking the characters present fairly different things as if they were in surrealistic communication. Indeed, speaking is not the means of understanding but nonsense talkativeness. In speaking words and meanings are in contradictory, so it does not clarify meaning but conceal.

There are conflicts among the events and topics such as estrangement, loneliness, being misunderstood, identical problems, dilemmas, absurdity, absence of meaning, getting lost, individual conflicts. Reality is tried to be shown with the help of individual interpretations separated from communal relationships. The goal is to extent the social dogmas. In this theatre, there is personal interpretation of reality but going away from it. The background of the characters is not important; writers do this willingly so as to make us realize that those characters represent all of us. Theatre of the absurd has appeared as a negative reaction to habitual values of traditional bourgeois life. It points communal alienation/estrangement as a human condition. It has broken down the logical dialogue of the conventional drama and has created paradoxical one. Its aesthetic approach spreads to clown literature, grotesque, unconscious, black humor, non-verbal drama, surrealist theatre, horror theatre, existential theatre.

Besides, it is a rebellious reaction to death, living in vain, deception, fear and lack of self-confidence. It prompts the audience trying to find out the factual reality to fail in. It holds prism but a mirror to reality. Anti-hero is created in this type of theatre. The main events are not occurring around the main character, it is just the opposite. In fact, in drama hero is the plot-mover he/she directs the occurrences but in the Theatre of the Absurd the anti-hero is directed by the action in the play. The plot is incongruous; however, it does not mean that the play is meaningless. "Actually, incongruities, no matter how absurd, have a meaning and purpose." (Gray, 1963, p. 343). Theatre of the Absurd is pessimist and inactive and due to this its writers are called Nihilist. Furthermore, nihilism and existentialism are the fundamental movements having appeared since then. Nihilism is the act of believing nothingness which means that there is no life after death and everything on the universe is nothing at all. This movement contributes to the ideology existentialism. In existentialism the individuality is more important than community. Individuals are at the centre they direct everything around they decide what to do; they are responsible for their actions; they think no one except themselves can judge them because of their deeds. Actually, this is a little bit related to materialist ideology in which individuals think their ego at first, and then they consider the others. This is the tragic result of World War II, since the powerful countries have brought out the capitalist regime which makes "the rich richer the poor poorer" (Dowd, 2007, p. 25). The countries holding the potency in their hand call this as civilization which is ironically admired by the third world countries although it causes them to suffer.

## Analysis

In three of the plays there are common features related to the theatre of the absurd. The settings are similar or they have similar impacts over the characters. For example, in *Endgame*, *The Birthday Party* and *No Exit* there is a room in which all the actions or inactions occur. The characters are closed in a room and they go on their daily life there, which means the outside is not available or safe for them to go. In *Endgame* throughout the play, Clov says to Hamm that he will go and leave him, but he never goes and leaves. During the play he repeats this several times and he postpones his wish again and again. It shows how weak he is to go. "Weakness" is one of the outstanding themes Beckett uses in his Work. It has some significations about the toughness of the life, in which the people despairingly believe "The end is what never ends." (Graver & Federman, 2005, p. 20) indeed. This paradoxical mood and the difficulties in managing to be existent in the world where there are wars may cause a person to be weak at his/her struggle against the troubles.

In fact, it is better to call it as failing in being persevering enough to strive to stay alive at the time of the war. Beckett uses the theme "weakness" in such an interesting way that he both criticizes the people experiencing the world wars and makes the reader/ audience empathize with them. Since nearly all the people have the possibility of ending up in a chaotic atmosphere like a war causing its victims to lose their zest for life. This loss, indeed, affects them so adversely that they push aside all their goals, hopes and wishes and try just to go on their existence for good or ill. Nearly everything loses its value in the eye of them. Beckett creates such a world in his

play that even “time has no meaning in this world.” (Segal; 2001, p. 448). Hamm, Clov, Nagg and Nell are the ones who have only one sign showing they are alive: that is their breathing. They are not in palpable relation to the outside world and they are like the prisoners who are put in a jail and have no chance to go out. Even though Clov says and repeats he will go, Hamm is sure that he will not, as they are stuck in that house evoking a prison. As Mária Minich Brewer emphasizes “His (Beckett’s) characters invariably inhabit closed, subterranean refuges or else waste land spaces of barely differentiated nothingness.” (1986-7, p. 159). Namely, they cannot leave the place they stay in, since it resembles both everywhere and nowhere at the same time. That means no matter where they are they are still in nowhere and wherever they go they will be in nowhere too. Due to this, they feel themselves as if they are/were in a huge space which has invisible walls preventing them from going out.

Additionally, Hamm’s parents Nell and Nagg are the other characters having no chance to go out but stay in the house. They are crippled and senile. When they talk to each other Hamm’s mother Nell says to Nagg “I am going to leave you?” (I; p. 19) and Nagg replies “Could you give me a scratch before you go? (I; p. 19). Nagg is either very sure about she cannot go and leave him or he is not interested in whether she may leave him or not. He takes her sentence so normally that he does not even pretend not to let her go. In fact, as they are both paralyzed they fairly know that neither of them can go anywhere. Here Beckett not only demonstrates how desperate they are but also he presents the situation in a comic way with Nagg’s response. Normally when a woman tells her husband that she will leave him, he will react quite differently. He might not let her go, get angry and shout at her or be very happy to get rid of her. However, here Nagg reacts so unexpectedly that his reaction makes the reader/audience laugh.

As it is obviously seen from the example that “Beckett’s characters are past emotion.” (Guardamagna & Sebellin, 2008, p. 352). In fact, the emotionlessness is a sign of the characters’ misery. Beckett uses the elements of comedy to emphasize the pathetic situation of the characters in the play. It helps the author be able to both take the reader/audience’s attention successfully and make them see what he wants them to see. On the other hand, the characters’ being deprived of feelingness is one of the important elements of comedy; as Henri Bergson explains;

Here I would point out, as a symptom equally worthy of notice, the ABSENCE OF FEELING which usually accompanies laughter. It seems as though the comic could not produce its disturbing effect unless it fell, so to say, on the surface of a soul that is thoroughly calm and unruffled. Indifference is its natural environment, for laughter has no greater foe than emotion. I do not mean that we could not laugh at a person who inspires us with pity, for instance, or even with affection, but in such a case we must, for the moment, put our affection out of court and impose silence upon our pity. In a society composed of pure intelligences there would probably be no more tears, though perhaps there would still be laughter; whereas highly emotional souls, in tune and unison with life, in whom every event would be sentimentally prolonged and reechoed, would neither know nor understand laughter. (1980, p. 4a-4b).

Beckett portrays his characters as if they were out of emotion innately, and he influences the target audience in a way that they get defamiliarized with the characters and laugh at them. The reader/audience sees the characters like “machines” which helps him/her feel himself/herself fairly superior and stay away from establishing any relationship with them so as to laugh. Bergson expresses it as “the attitudes, gestures and movements of the human body are laughable in exact proportion as that body reminds us of a mere machine.” (1980, p. 11b). Beckett’s characters behave and treat one another in such a senseless mood that they are thought as if they were machines other than human beings. That is the reason why the target audience smiles or laughs at them despite of their physical and psychological disabilities, which indeed normally should sadden the reader/ audience. It is obviously Beckett’s success that he firstly alienates the characters who resemble the wretched people in real life and then puts them in a notably comic situation by means of the elements of comedy.

Furthermore, J.P. Sartre in his play *No Exit* uses comic methods to lay stress on the characters Garcin, Estelle and Inez's troubles throughout the play. The setting is similar to the one in *Endgame*. Three of the characters are put in one of the rooms of a house and they cannot go out as they are locked up. Metaphorically the place is compared to hell. Garcin, and Inez think they are dead and they are punished with hell. Although Estelle thinks they are put together in that place by chance, Inez says

Mere chance? Then it's by chance this room is furnished as we see it. It's an accident that the sofa on the right is a livid green, and that one on the left's wine-red. Mere chance? Well, just try to shift the sofas and you'll see the difference quick enough. And that statue on the mantelpiece, do you think it's there by accident? And what about the heat here? How about that? [A short silence.] I tell you they've thought it all out. Down to the last detail. Nothing was left to chance. This room was all set for us. (I; p. 14).

She expresses the room resembling a hell is prepared for them deliberately. They must have committed sins during their lives and they are put there to pay for their faults. As it is seen there is a disagreement on whether the place they are in is a hell or any other place. The discussion among them obviously presents they are not sure about if they are dead or not as well. Actually, as Walter Leavitt expresses in his article "Sartre's Theatre" that

*No Exit* takes much of its piquancy from the fact that the characters can be either living or dead. The only thing that is important is that these people are in a situation where there are others-Hell means, ultimately, the impossibility of indifference. (Leavitt, 1948, p. 104)

That is to say, people themselves are both the victims and perpetrators of the actions; therefore, they are the ones to be discussed so as to come up with a solution.

Taking Sartre's being existentialist into consideration; it is explicit that he makes fun of the idea of hell not the hell itself. He criticizes the ones believing in the ones committing sins or being wrongdoers' getting sent to the hell. He lays stress on the exclamation there is no other hell than the people themselves. According to him human beings are the torturers of one another. For example, in the play Inez says "I mean that each of us will act as torturer of the two others." (I; p. 17). Besides this, in the *No Exit: A Play in One Act* (by James Morrow) Sartre -one of the characters- expresses "You are my appointed torturer, Hitomaru, and I am Murasame's torturer, and she is your torturer – forever." (I; p. 367). Morrow clearly demonstrates and impresses on what Sartre himself think about hell.

Likewise, Sartre brings life, death and life after death up for discussion with his play. In fact, he prioritizes satire and aims to criticize the political and social matters rather than just get a laugh. As Harry Levin says "When comedy becomes more purposeful than playful, then it is satire." (1987, p. 195). Sartre's play is explicitly more aimful than joking, and so the satiric side of it outweighs. He focuses on people's weaknesses impelling them to make mistakes or fall into sins. In the play the theme "weakness" is used differently from the one in *Endgame*. In Sartre's Work "weakness" stands for "a flaw" which is the major factor prompting the people to take an action though it is forbidden, while the "weakness" in Beckett's play resembles the "inability" causing them to stay in inaction. On the other hand, both writers use the theme in such a humorous way that they not only direct the target audience to think over the problems caused by weakness but also make them laugh/smile to get relieved from the gloomy situations of the characters.

Making the reader/audience get relieved by means of humor is included in the scope of "The Relief Theory: Humor as a Pressure Valve", which is one of the three essential humor theories designated by John Morreall. In his book Morreall classifies humor as "The Superiority Theory: Humor as Anti-social"; "The Incongruity Theory: Humor as Irrational"; "The Relief Theory: Humor as a Pressure Valve". Due to the fact that the humor in the plays

*Endgame*, *The Birthday Party* and *No Exit* is predominantly based on “a perception of something incongruous.” (Morreall, 2009, p. 10), it is quite better and more accurate to say that the humorous theory used in these plays is “The Incongruity Theory: Humor as Irrational” rather than “The Relief Theory: Humor as a Pressure Valve”.

“Incongruity” is one of the fundamental features of the theatre of the absurd, which contains the plays *Endgame*, *The Birthday Party* and *No Exit*. It embodies nearly the whole frame of the theatre of the absurd, in which just a workaday laughter is not aimed but philosophical, sociological and psychological messages are implied. As a matter of fact, the implications in the plays incorporate satiric innuendos. The playwrights satirize the post war society and their inability to struggle against the chaos caused by the war. In fact, with the satire the people experiencing war and their psychological troubles in the post war period are put into question. Since a war is picked by the people who end up in great problematic condition after it ends. They do not have a better life than their life before the war. Throughout the history no community no matter whether they win or lose the war gain a better life. That is to say in three of the plays basically the war and people’s false notion about seeing the war as a solution to their problems are satirized.

In *No Exit*, Garcin, one of the main characters, is a soldier before his death. He is shot by a gun and dies. During his stay in the room, thought as a hell by Garcin and the other characters Estelle and Inez, his being locked in the hell is discussed by them. Normally, he should have been sent to the heaven, as he has been martyred. When they want each other to tell the truth about what they have done in their previous lives and got punished with hell, he confesses that he has not been loyal to his wife who has loved and been faithful to him throughout their marriage. They at first think his infidelity has been the essential reason of his getting punished with hell. However, there is still a problem with this, since he has been killed during the war and has become a martyr, which means he deserves to be in heaven rather than hell. Later on, he tells how he gets killed:

**GARCIN:** They shot me.

**ESTELLE:** I know. Because you refused to fight. Well, why shouldn't you?

**GARCIN:** I-I didn't exactly refuse. [*In a far-away voice*] I must say he talks well, he makes out a good case against me, but he never says what I should have done instead. Should I have gone to the general and said: "General, I decline to fight"? A mug's game; they'd have promptly locked me up. But I wanted to show my colors, my true colors, do you understand? I wasn't going to be silenced. [*To ESTELLE*] So I- I took the train.... They caught me at the frontier. (I; p. 36-7)

In *The Birthday Party* humor is mainly structured on the characters Goldberg and McCann. The setting of the play is a boarding house managed by the couple Petey and Meg. Goldberg and McCann are the guests planning to stay at the house for a few days. Pinter’s characters have very interesting and strange influences over the target audience, since they are seen quite familiar despite the great ambiguity they conceal about their past. As Bernard Dukore defines

The characters behave in a "believable" manner, but they are shrouded in twilight of mystery. We are never precisely sure who they are, why they are there, or what they have come to do. Their motives and backgrounds are vague or unknown. We recognize that there is motivation, but we are unsure what it is. We recognize that there is a background, but that background is clouded. (1962, p. 43-4)

The contradiction between the obscurity and the acquaintance of the characters is the fundamental impact and motivation behind Pinter’s humor indeed. He takes the reader/ audience into such a paradoxical mood that causes him/her to identify the characters with anyone he/she encounters in his/her daily life and laugh at them.

The characters in *The Birthday Party*, Goldberg and McCann in particular, explicitly answer to Dukore’s description. For example; One day they get Stanley, who is the other man having been staying at that house for a

long time, sit on a chair and they begin to cross- question him as if they were police officers and Stanley were a suspect. The questioning scene is definitely a successful example of the theatre of the absurd. The dialogue among Stanley, Goldberg and McCann is fragmented and there is no rational relation between their speeches. As it is known, fragmental dialogue is one of the essential characteristics of the theatre of the absurd. This type of dialogue is used to emphasize the lack of communication among the people that results in unexpected and problematic ends. That is because it causes misunderstanding, which is more or less the most major reason of the conflicts.

Furthermore, In *The Birthday Party* with the help of the miscommunication among Stanley, Goldberg and McCann, it is aimed not only to make the target audience laugh but also take their attention to the points referred by the characters. During the questioning scene Goldberg and McCann distort the dialogue into an absurd way with their irrelevant questions. Although Stanley tries to play with a full deck, they go on to ask interesting and unexpectedly nonsensical questions which stimulates the reader/ audience's laughter. For example;

**GOLDBERG.** Why do you treat that young lady like a leper? She's not the leper, Webber!

**STANLEY.** What the—

**GOLDBERG.** What did you wear last week, Webber? Where do you keep your suits?

**MCCANN.** Why did you leave the organization?

**GOLDBERG.** What would your old mum say, Webber?

**MCCANN.** Why did you betray us?

[...]

**GOLDBERG.** Who does he think he is?

**MCCANN.** Who do you think you are?

**STANLEY.** You're on the wrong horse.

**GOLDBERG.** When did you come to this place?

**STANLEY.** Last year.

**GOLDBERG.** Where did you come from?

**STANLEY.** Somewhere else.

**GOLDBERG.** Why did you come here?

**STANLEY.** My feet hurt!

**GOLDBERG.** Why did you stay?

**STANLEY.** I had a headache!

**GOLDBERG.** Did you take anything for it?

**STANLEY.** Yes.

**GOLDBERG.** What?

**STANLEY.** Fruit salts!

**GOLDBERG.** Enos or Andrews?

**STANLEY.** En— An—

**GOLDBERG.** Did you stir properly? Did they fizz?

**STANLEY.** Now, now, wait, you—

**GOLDBERG.** Did they fizz? Did they fizz or didn't they fizz?

**MCCANN.** He doesn't know!

**GOLDBERG.** You don't know. When did you last have a bath?

**STANLEY.** I have one every—

**GOLDBERG.** Don't lie.

[...]

**GOLDBERG.** What can you see without your glasses?

**STANLEY.** Anything.

**GOLDBERG.** Take off his glasses. (II; p. 47-49)

As it is seen, the cross-questioning scene is full of comic elements which comprise the whole comic side of the play. Goldberg and McCann change their questions without paying attention to whether Stanley replies frankly or not. They try to go on asking him questions quickly according to his answers so as to have him confessed what he has concealed from them. Lisa Trahair describes such kind of comic scene as “the comic emerges from a relationship between reason and unreason.” (2007, p. 15). According to her determination Stanley stands for the reasonable side, whereas McCann and Goldberg unreasonable one. Hence, the target audience puts himself/herself into their position and thinks the characters are inferior to him/her and then interacts with laugh. Simon Critchley explains the reason behind the laugh as “That is, in jokes I laugh at others, find them ridiculous and myself superior.” (2002, p. 96). The determination is valid for the characters in *Endgame* and *No Exit* as well. They behave in such a ludicrous way that inclines them into an inferior situation.

Furthermore, the questioning scene resembles the one seen in the interrogation room at the police station. This resemblance is used in the comic Works fairly commonly. That is to say, comparing a scene in a play to the serious one in a real life creates a comic atmosphere and the reader/ audience laugh at it. Insomuch that, if the characters in the play are such ones that can never be as the people they are compared to, that increases the laughter-inducing side of the scene as it is seen in the one mentioned above. When three of the characters are analyzed it obviously shows that Goldberg and McCann are too unserious to be police officers, while Stanley is too innocent to be a guilty. Therefore, this irrelevant representation affects the target audience so strongly that they react by laughing, since it is quite unexpected for them. As Barry J. Blake says “Most jokes lead the audience in one direction and set up the expectation of a certain outcome, only to introduce the unexpected in the punch-line.” (2007, p. 13). Goldberg and McCann’s inapprehensive questions and Stanley’s feeling himself helpless under these circumstances bring about the unexpectedness. There are similar dialogues in Beckett’s *Endgame* as well.<sup>2</sup> In the play the characters ask interesting and unrelated questions and they answer them in such an absurd way that it prompts the target audience’s reaction of laughter. For example;

**HAMM:** Why don't you kill me?

**CLOV:** I don't know the combination of the cupboard. (*Pause.*)

**HAMM:** Go and get two bicycle-wheels.

**CLOV:** There are no more bicycle-wheels.

**HAMM:** What have you done with your bicycle?

**CLOV:** I never had a bicycle. (I; p. 8)

Hamm is a blind old man who is a wheelchair-bound as well. Clov is his servant who has been taken by him since he was a child. As Clov is as ill as Hamm, he is not happy with staying with his master. On the other hand, he still goes on serving him, even though he complains about being obliged to serve Hamm. That is to say, he is too weak to go out, where there is a twilight world waiting for him. Here in this dialogue Hamm by asking why he doesn't kill him, expresses Clov's being too unhappy to be with him and wonders why he still continues serving him. Clov's answer as “I don't know the combination of the cupboard.” is so strange and unexpected that he throws the reader/ audience a curve and gets a laugh. In addition, it also shows how he is desperate and in need of Hamm's order and guidance. Namely, it is fairly obvious that they both lean on one another. Furthermore, Hamm's going to order something quite irrelevant, takes the dialogue into a situation all over the map.

Hamm's beginning the dialogue with a question which is the most serious moment of the play and continuing with an order that is neither more nor less unserious is a good example of the feature of the theatre of the absurd which is a fragmental dialogue. As it is seen above, the fragmental dialogue is constructed with unrelated

<sup>2</sup> The similarities between H. Pinter and S. Beckett's Works are pointed out as Pinter's getting inspired by Beckett. According to Ruby Cohn ““Like Osborne, Pinter looks back in anger; like Beckett, Pinter looks forward to nothing (not even Godot). Pinter has created his own distinctive and dramatic version of *Man vs. the System*. Situating him between Beckett and the Angries is only a first approximation of his achievement.” (1962, p. 56).

questions and answers. To go on with, this type of dialogue is included in *No Exit* as well. To give an example, at the beginning of the play Garcin talks to the Valet who leads him, Inez and Estelle to the room one by one. Garcin thinks the room he is put in is a hell and he asks some questions about the place:

**GARCIN:** Quite so. [*Both laugh. Abruptly the laugh dies from GARCIN'S face.*] But, I say, where are the instruments of torture?

**VALET:** The what?

**GARCIN:** The racks and red-hot pincers and all the other paraphernalia?

**VALET:** Ah, you must have your little joke, sir!

**GARCIN:** My little joke? Oh, I see. No, I wasn't joking. [*A short silence. He strolls round the room.*] No mirrors, I notice. No windows. Only to be expected. And nothing breakable. [*Bursts out angrily.*] But, damn it all, they might have left me my toothbrush!

[...]

**VALET:** [...] all our guests ask me the same questions. Silly questions, if you'll pardon me saying so. Where's the torture-chamber? That's the first thing they ask, all of them. They don't bother their heads about the bathroom requisites that I can assure you. But after a bit, when they've got their nerve back, they start in about their toothbrushes and what-not. Good heavens, Mr. Garcin, can't you use your brains? What, I ask you, would be the point of brushing your teeth? (I; p. 4)

Garcin's asking about the elements used in the punishment of the infernal people and immediately afterwards continuing with asking the "toothbrush" he is about to use during his stay is a good example for the type of the dialogue pointed out above. With this, Garcin takes the dialogue from the serious point to the unserious one, which is generally used in the theatre of the absurd. That is to say, as it creates unexpectedness, it influences the target audience in a way that they find themselves laughing, while they are thinking on the unsmiling matters being mentioned by Garcin at the time of the communication.

Garcin concedes he has been sent to the hell, but he just wonders the style of his punishment and of course the toothbrush which is very necessary in daily life. However, the life or whatever it might be called, Garcin has in the hell is not like the one he has before death. Therefore, his asking for the toothbrush implies he is not aware of his death or he is not dead and the room is a place quite different from the hell. Notwithstanding, during the play among their dialogues Garcin, Inez and Estelle behave as if they are/were in the hell, which affects the reader/audience to believe they are dead and sent to the hell due to their sins as they tell which mistakes they have made during their lives. Thus, Sartre satirizes the death and the dark side of it in his play. As an existentialist he takes the notions such as the eternity and the indefiniteness into discussion by means of the concepts death and hell.

## Conclusion

Taking everything into account, three of the playwrights focus on the sociological and psychological problems in their plays. They use the elements of humor to lay stress on the problems and make the target audience laugh so as to take their attention into the matters to be discussed. Samuel Beckett and J.P. Sartre use dark humor which aims to make the reader/ audience smile and think deeply the issue emphasized rather than burst into loud laughter, while Harold Pinter uses the humorous methods prompting the target audience to raise a laugh and think over the points expressed later on. Pinter gives priority to the comic side of humor, whereas Beckett and Sartre aim to take what they have in their minds into discussion primarily. Laughter is less important than the problems to be thought long and hard.

On the other hand, the plays *Endgame*, *The Birthday Party* and *No Exit* are fairly successful examples of the

theatre of the absurd. The fragmented dialogue, which is one of the fundamental features of this genre, is used in the plays aforementioned. This sort of communication or miscommunication demonstrates that the people in the post war society have lost their mental health which has caused them not to think and communicate healthily. Particularly in *Endgame* the characters Hamm, Clov, Negg and Nell are the representatives of the people who are psychologically too sick to think and behave healthily besides having physiological disorder. Additionally, the Characters Garcin, Inez and Estelle have psychological troubles although they are not disabled physiologically. Indeed, they are dead and they have no problems with their health anymore, as they do not feel any physical pain. Notwithstanding, they still have mental suffering which prevents them from getting rid of their faults before death and compels them to face their sins. On the other side in Pinter's play the characters Meg, Petey, Stanley, Goldberg and McCann stand for the ones who concentrate on trying to make ends meet, without noodling over what has happened and is happening outside.

To sum up, it is understood from the plays and the analysis of them that people are the ones who make the place so livable that they feel themselves as if they were in heaven; and they can make the place so unlivable that they think as if they were sent to the place due to the sins they had committed. That is to say as Garcin says "Hell is other people!" (I;p 45) rather than the place itself.

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