

An Ontological Approach to Existentialist Theatre and Theatre of the Absurd in the Works of Jean-Paul Sartre and Samuel Beckett

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Abstract : The aim of this study is to analyse the works of playwrights within the framework of existential philosophy. It is to observe the ontological existence in the plays of *No Exit* and *Endgame*. Literary works will be discussed separately in each section of this study. The despair of post-war generation of Europe problematized the 'human condition' in every field of literature which is the very product of social upheaval. With this concern in his mind, Sartre's creative works portrayed man as a lonely being, burdened with terrifying freedom to choose and create his own meaning in an apparently meaningless world. The traces of the existential thought are to be found throughout the history of philosophy and literature. On the other hand, the theatre of the absurd is a form of drama showing the absurdity of the human condition and it is heavily influenced by the existential philosophy. Beckett is the most influential playwright of the theatre of the absurd. The themes and thoughts in his plays share many tenets of the existential philosophy. The existential philosophy posits the meaninglessness of existence and it regards man as being thrown into the universe and into desolate isolation. To overcome loneliness and isolation, the human ego needs recognition from the other people. Sartre calls this need of recognition as the need for 'the Look' (*Le regard*) from the Other. In this paper, existentialist philosophy and existentialist angst will be elaborated and then the works of existentialist theatre and theatre of absurd will be discussed within the framework of existential philosophy.

Keywords : consciousness, existentialism, the notion of the absurd, the other

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