

Swift's portrayal of different societies invites an exploration of utopian dreams and dystopian realities, highlighting the clash between humanity's pursuit of perfection and its inherent flaws. Through imaginative lands like Lilliput and Houyhnhnms, he encourages reflection on contradictions within governance and social frameworks. The trivial disputes among the Lilliputians serve as an exaggerated mirror of political turmoil, prompting readers to confront absurdities in contemporary political landscapes.

Additionally, allegorical characters such as the Struldbriggs critique humanity's desire for immortality and eternal youth. This narrative illustrates how these aspirations can lead to despair rather than fulfillment, shedding light on society's often unrealistic expectations regarding aging.

Swift also examines moral values and societal norms through Gulliver's encounters, probing concepts of justice, power dynamics, and ethical governance. The contrasting societies he visits, each an exaggerated representation of prevailing ideologies, facilitate critical discussions about governance models that remain pertinent today. Thus, these allegorical elements elevate «Gulliver's Travels» beyond mere entertainment, transforming it into a platform for philosophical discourse on ethics in leadership.

Ultimately, literature's power lies in its ability to reflect human experiences and highlight societal shortcomings through allegory. Swift's use of irony enhances his critiques and engages readers emotionally, allowing for diverse interpretations shaped by individual perspective.

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FORMS AND MEANINGS OF SILENCE IN BECKETT'S PLAYS OF THE 1950s–1960s

*Silence as a particular aesthetic tool characteristic of Samuel Beckett's plays (and the theatre of the absurd in general) has been discussed by scholars and critics since it was first mentioned by M. Esslin in 1961. The paper is focused on a particular aspect of this tool's functioning within the plays: comparing the «language» and context of silence in *Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame* and *Happy Days*, it analyzes common and different features of Beckett's image of silence.*

Key words: S. Beckett; drama; silence; functions; uncertainty, confusion; absurdity.

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ФОРМЫ И ФУНКЦИИ МОЛЧАНИЯ В ПЬЕСАХ С. БЕККЕТА 1950–1960-х годов

Молчание как особый эстетический прием, характерный для пьес Сэмюэля Беккета (и театра абсурда в целом), обсуждается исследователями и критиками с момента его первого

упоминания М. Эсслином в 1961 году. Статья посвящена отдельному аспекту функционирования этого приема в пьесах: сравнение «языка» и контекста молчания в пьесах «В ожидании Годо», «Конец игры» и «Счастливые дни» позволяет выявить общие и отличные черты образа тишины у Беккета.

Ключевые слова: С. Беккет; драма; молчание; функции; неопределенность; абсурдность.

Silence in Beckett's plays is not merely the absence of speech but a powerful tool to express psychological states, existential conditions, and complex interpersonal relationships (see, e.g.: [1, pp. 45–67]; [2, pp. 88–110]; [3, pp. 24–91]). By analyzing the three major plays, I wish to demonstrate how silence is strategically employed to convey meaning beyond verbal communication.

In *Waiting for Godot* silence often emerges between Vladimir and Estragon's dialogues, reflecting uncertainty, confusion, and the absurdity of human existence. The pauses and gaps create a rhythm that mirrors the characters' sense of waiting without purpose, embodying the theme of existential stagnation. These moments of silence also allow the audience to focus on the absurdity of communication, reinforcing Beckett's minimalist approach to language. Beckett employs pauses, ellipses, and unfinished sentences to highlight the breakdown of communication between the characters. The pauses convey existential angst, reflect their inability to connect meaningfully, and mirror the cyclical stagnation of their lives. The audience is plunged into discomfort by these pauses, driven into reflection on the void inherent in human interaction.

At the very beginning of the play, Estragon struggles with his boot without speaking, while Vladimir watches. The scene creates a pause that denotes break of communication, weakness of human 'position' in the world and absurdity of human life in general [4, pp. 9–10]. In Act I, after Vladimir's line «Nothing to be done» [4, p. 7] – a pause follows where both characters silently contemplate the situation. This silence becomes a metaphor for stasis and futility. Pauses between questions about Godot throughout the play hold on ambiguity, pointing at uncertainty about meaning and purpose [1, p. 46].

Endgame employs silence differently. In this play, silence is closely tied to the characters' physical and emotional limitations. The play's confined setting and minimal action magnify the tension between Hamm and Clov. Silence here is laden with hostility, resignation, and the inevitability of death. Pauses between lines function as spaces where unspoken emotions accumulate, revealing power struggles and the characters' mutual dependence despite their animosity. In this context, silence is an instrument of domination and resistance, an unvoiced language of survival.

At the opening scene, Hamm sits silently in the center, blindfolded, while Clov moves about the room without speaking; the repeated stage direction «(Pause.)» emphasizes the feeling of emptiness and expectation [5, p. 1]. Hamm's monologues often break unexpectedly throughout the play, leaving silence that reflects his mental fatigue and the decay of language. Nagg and Nell regularly lapse into long pauses after brief exchanges, and their silence symbolizes emotional distance and resignation [2, p. 145].

In *Happy Days* silence acquires a more ironic, if not satirical, tone. Winnie's incessant monologues are punctuated by moments of stillness that emphasize the absurdity of her optimism in the face of physical entrapment. These moments of silence juxtapose the flow of speech with the immobility of her body, suggesting the inescapable decline towards mortality. The pauses also allow the audience to confront

the contradictions between a language as means of cognition and communication and the stark reality of absurdly limited (as if unreal) human existence.

Thus, before and after pronouncing her famous phrase «Another heavenly day» Winnie pauses, and not only she, but the action in general (the author marks many times: «Pause», «A long pause»), and silence here has a suggestive effect on the audience, as well as stresses both the dramatic tension of the heroine's situation as she is buried up to her waist [6, pp. 8–9], and the sharp contrast between her words and her reality. When Winnie's final song ends, silence follows, and this last scene of the play leaves the audience with thoughts, provoked by the play, in a suspended emotional state. At the same time, long pauses in the Winnie and Willy's 'dialogues' hint at their inner isolation from each other.

Across these three plays, Beckett's usage of silence challenges conventional theatrical dialogue. Rather than serving as a gap to be filled, silence becomes an active presence that shapes meaning, reveals psychological states, and engages the audience in interpreting the unsaid. Beckett's silence embodies both the limitations and the possibilities of human communication, functioning simultaneously as a reflection of existential emptiness and a space for profound meaning. Through silence the author forces the audience to engage actively with the performance and interpret meaning through non-verbal cues.

Beckett's silences operate on multiple levels: as a dramatic technique to control pacing and tension, as a thematic reflection of existential and absurdist philosophy, and as a means of exploring the limits of communication. Ultimately it can be concluded that silence in Beckett's plays is not a void but a meaningful presence that shapes the audience's understanding of the characters and their circumstances.

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THE ECOLOGICAL ETHICAL ADJUDICATION OF THE RED LOCUST IN MO YAN'S «THE HERBIVOROUS FAMILY»

*This paper takes the red locust, the first dream in Mo Yan's *The Herbivorous Family*, as the object of study and analyzes the process of the locust from being endowed with divinity and sacrificed by people to having its mystical veil torn off by brute force, and finally losing its divinity and being completely eradicated. Relying on the ecological metaphor shown by the locusts, the novel reveals the latent urban-rural conflict and human alienation under the rapid expansion of rampant materialism, and the multiple themes and ambiguous meanings derived from them provide a rich source of inspiration for Mo Yan's subsequent creations.*

Keywords: Mo Yan; «The Herbivorous Family»; Ecological ethics; Human alienation.