

## Literary Study in Representation of City Images in Contemporary Theater: A Comparative study of Modern American and Modern European Theater<sup>1)</sup>

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### I.

The images of cities and its representations in literature has been the subject of study through out the history of literature from its conceptual beginnings to today's modern literary history, as we know it. This study will try to develop the problématiques in representation of cities in contemporary theatres with the dialogues in the plays by examining how dialogues have become the very foundation and the means in communication of various images. In short, the bases of this hypothesis infers to the connotative and denotative images implied within the dialogues and in the use of stage directions in the domain of contemporary theatre.

This research is a comparative study on 'imagery' of cities represented in the European Avant-garde and the American expressionistic theatres. The paper will try to define, the characteristics of the differences that can be seen in the two theatres. The research will also develop the point of how the incorporated

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**【Keywords】** Beckett, Ionesco, Miller, O'Neill, décontextualisation, recontextualisation, contextualization, spectator, image, modern, modernization.

1) This Paper has been revised from the one that was presented at the proceedings of the ACLA2001 at University of Colorado at Boulder.

images are related to one another even if they may seem quite apart, taking into consideration the historical development of each society.

Of course, this approach infers that the study will refer to the movement of the images that can be not only noted, but also are inferred to within the plays themselves. By stating images of cities, the study does not limit itself to the 'literal' imagery of cities, suggestive of that which is identifiable by touch or sight, but that, which is metaphorically present through connotations.

## II.

The image of cities in modern theatre is not something that could be easily discerned due to the diverse décors and situations that are used and inferred in the plays. This parting from the traditional perspective that the 'lieu', was the foremost important element in defining where the action was, because it represented/signified the dogma of 'vraisemblance', was a change that should be looked upon as a major factor in the development/evolution of the contemporary theatre. The element of 'vraisemblance' is the key, which denotes the very tradition upon which the traditional theatre was based upon. The changes that one identifies in modern dramas are suggestive of the changes that separate the modern experimental theatres from that of the traditional dramas.

In today's theatres images can be defined as belonging more to the dimension of psychology or imagination than being materialistic, since the images are created by and through the dialogues that the spectators 'hear' and 'see' on the stage. The importance of the dialogues is suggestive of the changes in the perspectives of the authors in their adaptation to the new societal environments and this in turn, is relevant to the movement of modernization. In contemporary drama the traditional dogma of 'vraisemblance' is not absolutely adhered to, and one may state that to a greater extent it is being replaced by the imagination

of the audience.<sup>2)</sup> This change can be summarized by what the spectators of today may or will accept as a form of dramatic art.<sup>3)</sup> In other words the stage is defined by what is accepted and not accepted by the spectators of today, it also signifies the changes in the expectations of the spectator/audience in what they would like to see on stage, <sup>4)</sup> which is quite different from what traditional theatres had been portraying.

The audiences of contemporary theatres are much less demanding on the subject of 'vraisemblance' in relation to the social context or in a larger context the surrounding reality. The theatre has become a venue where all settings/décors are accepted, in short the theatre has developed into a venue where everything is possible in the application of imageries of cities, and in other words today's theatre is a mélange of different images from traditional to experimental. It is not only limited to just the traditional norms but all that are relevant to the representation are considered making all representation acceptable. In short, the dialogues have become one of the major tools of stage communication through which the authors try to relate the décor to the public.<sup>5)</sup>

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2) "Assister à un spectacle n'est pas une occupation passive : c'est un acte qui implique un engagement. Le jeu qui se joue sur la scène est votre jeu, auquel vous devez participer, et qui ne peut se jouer sans vous."

Touchard, Pierre-Aimé, *L'Amateur de théâtre*, p.236.

3) "Qu'un auteur ait quelque chose à dire, et qu'il le dise sincèrement ne suffit pas à justifier la naissance d'une œuvre dramatique : ce qui la justifie, c'est que le public ait quelque chose à entendre."

Touchard, Pierre-Aimé, *L'Amateur de théâtre*, p. 233.

4) "Audiences also affect the theatre through their expectations and motives for attending. Some members of the audience come to the theatre wanting only to be entertained, to be diverted from personal cares the problems of the world. ... Other members of the audience may prefer productions that challenge accepted values, raise provocative issues, advocate action about political or social issues, or use innovative theatrical means."

Brockett Oscar G., & Ball Robert J., *The Essential Theatre*, p. 9.

5) "Le théâtre qui n'est dans rien mais se sert de tous les langages: gestes, sons, paroles, feu,

The dialogues therefore should be viewed not only for the traditional role that it played as a communicative medium for the development of themes, but also should be viewed as elements that denote that which are significant and symbolic.

### III.

The representations of city image between the avant-garde theatres of Europe (Samuel Beckett; Eugene Ionesco etc.) and the American traditional theatres (Eugene O'Neill; Tennessee Williams etc.) show a stark contrast when compared. Even though they derive their imagery from the same source 'the dialogues', the imageries that the dramatists incorporated into their plays shows two completely different approaches relative to the societies.<sup>6)</sup>

The major difference between the two theatres allows an insight as to what the authors tried to portray in their plays and as to the reasons of why. The European avant-garde tried to provoke a revolutionary change in the aesthetics of theatre itself.<sup>7)</sup> The avant-garde in accommodating these perspectives of the

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cris, se retrouve exactement au point où l'esprit a besoin d'un langage pour produire ses manifestations."

Artaud Antonin, *Le théâtre et son double*, p.18.

- 6) "L'œuvre littéraire nouvelle est reçue et jugée non seulement par contraste avec un arrière-plan d'autres formes artistiques, mais aussi par rapport à l'arrière-plan de l'expérience de la vie quotidienne. La composante éthique de sa fonction sociale doit être elle aussi appréhendée par l'esthétique de la réception en termes de question et de réponse, de problème et de solution, tels qu'ils se présentent dans le contexte historique, en fonction de l'horizon où s'inscrit son action."

Jauss, H. R., *Pour une esthétique de la réception*, p.76.

- 7) "The modern drama, in short, rides in on the second wave of Romanticism – not the cheerful optimism of Rousseau, with his emphasis on institutional reform, but rather the dark fury of Nietzsche, with his radical demands for a total transformation of man's spiritual life. And Nietzsche remains the most seminal philosophical influence on the

dominant philosophies that were rampantly gaining stature in the society, tended to represent the cities in a destitute fashion.<sup>8)</sup> For example addressing the consequences of nuclear war, which represented the total destruction of the society and its traditional humane values the avant-garde dramatists tended to denote the modern man as ‘lost/forsaken’ in a world where there are no subsequent meaning or hope for the future.<sup>9)</sup> This type of representation stems from the historical events that have plagued the European societies, which are the World Wars II, & I in which the very definition of human life and values that defined the very nature of the western society were put to question.<sup>10)</sup>

It is an imagery of cities/societies based on ‘non-communication’ (*En Attendant Godot, La Leçon, Les Chaises, La Dernière Bande, Oh Les beaux Jours, Fin de partie* etc.), where everything is suggestive of symbolic and furthermore represent the finality of the society or of man. This imaginative representation is played out in the minds of the spectators, through the images suggested through the ‘contextualisation’<sup>11)</sup> of the dialogues. The plays

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theatre of revolt, the intellect against which almost every modern dramatist must measure his own.”

Brustein Robert, *The Theatre of Revolt*, p.8.

8) *Fin de Partie, Les Chaises, La Leçon* etc.

9) “In the theatre of revolt, the note of banishment is repeatedly struck, and the modern drama aches with nostalgia, loneliness, and regret.”

Brustein Robert, *The Theatre of Revolt*, p.11.

10) 10 “Les années de guerre et d’occupation ont contribué à orienter les esprits des écrivains, en France et dans presque toute l’Europe, vers un examen sérieux du rôle de l’homme, non seulement en tant qu’animal social, mais en tant qu’habitant d’un univers dont la signification et les structures s’effondraient.”

Pronko, L.C., *Théâtre d’avant-grade*, p. 31.

11) « Décontextualisation » ←-----→ « Contextualisation »  
 (œuvre ; auteur) (compréhension ; jugement)



« Recontextualisation »  
 (fonction d’interprétation ; lecteur/spectateur)

themselves can be summarized to a certain degree as an explication of the representations of the world viewed by the characters that survives in a world deprived of hope and future. Like the character ‘Clov’ in *Fin de Partie* or the destitute setting of *En Attendant Godot* where we find the 20<sup>th</sup> century vagabonds ‘Estragon and Vladimir’ waiting for a reply or an answer from a symbolic Godot character who will never arrive.<sup>12)</sup>

The portrayal of the cities in the American drama relied on the same psychological experiment as that of the avant-garde. To this effect, the images of city do not correlate to a direct image of the city itself, but is transposed through the psychological relationship which relates the city image with the character who symbolizes the city and its characteristics. For example, the character ‘Willy’ in *The Death of a Salesman* by Miller or ‘Hickey’ in *The Iceman cometh* by O’Neill gives the audience an insight as to the image of a city where everything is suggestive of wealth, social statue in short the economic

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“Quand nous voyons l’œuvre représentée ou en état d’écriture pour la première fois, nous pouvons dire que nous sommes en face d’une image décontextualisée. En utilisant la connaissance déjà acquise et des symboles du monde réel (actuel), le lecteur/spectateur interprète cette image en recourant à la recontextualisation, et finalement arrive à donner une contextualisation à l’image en question. Notamment en utilisant les symboles ou en attribuant aux signifiants les signifiés que ce lecteur/spectateur connaît, ou fabrique, par rapport au monde réel. On peut donc récapituler le schéma de contextualisation de l’œuvre comme suit : « l’œuvre (état de décontextualisation) ⇒ fonction d’interprétation ; donne le signe au symbole [lecteur/récepteur, (état de recontextualisation)] ⇒ compréhension (état de contextualisation).”

Yang Gi chan, *L’Etude littéraire de Beckett et d’O’Neill*, Ph.D. thesis, p.42-43.

- 12) “By postulating a theater that is at the edge of appearance and disappearance, Beckett brings us to the most fundamental moment of theatrical perception - the moment in which one asks what it is that makes ‘it’ theater, the moment in which the mind’s eye perceives itself seeing, and thinks itself thinking the mise-en-scène. Certainly the entire Beckettian project impels us at times to perceive the dissolution of boundaries between mind and stage, impels us to see the profound scenic qualities of consciousness itself.”  
Kubiak, A., “The Trauma of Theater,” *The World of Samuel Beckett*, p.108.

s.13)

However, even though they seem to regulate the very nature of the images of the cities for the benefit of the dialogues and imagination the images of cities are not fully lost in both theatres. The subtleties of representing the city and its characteristics in a more symbolic way can be noted in the representations whenever necessary.<sup>14)</sup> Direct usage of images that relate to the image of the city in question, even if it is symbolic, compromises the city which is suggestive of the play itself, and thus is not discarded for the benefit of the imagination through the usage of dialogues. For example, we can see this type of direct implication in the fog, which surrounds the house used as the background, and which in more permanently denote the tone of the play itself in the *Long Day's Journey into the Night*. The same type of representation is used when we examine the tree, which sprouts a single leaf in Act II of the *En Attendant Godot*. The above examples signify that the used décors are to be comprehended and seen for what they are, in terms of representation, symbolization and signification<sup>15)</sup>. Of course these décors maximizes the effect they have on the

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13) "One reason O'Neill kept changing styles was that many of them disappointed him, while some of the '-isms' that were briefly successful in Europe proved unamenable to American topics and tastes, or simply uncommercial. Through trial and error, however, one particular dramatic mode came to the fore. Theatrically effective, easy for audiences to relate and respond to, remarkably flexible in its adaptability to the demands of different authors, the natural voice of American drama was revealed by the 1930s to be in realistic contemporary middle-class domestic melodrama and comedy."

Berkowitz, G. M., *American Drama of the Twentieth Century*, p.2.

14) "Life is moving, influences are playing on actor and audience, and other plays, other arts, the cinema, television, current events, join in the constant rewriting of history and the amending of the daily truth....In the theatre, every form once born is mortal ; every form must be reconceived, and its new conception will bear the marks of all the influences that surrounds it. In this sense, the theatre is relativity."

Brook, P., *The Empty Space*, p.19.

15) "Everything the audience saw, from costumes to curtains, had to establish itself as part of

spectator, rather than if they were simply represented in the dialogues between the characters, which would make it somewhat less symbolic. This in contrary does not obscure nor downplay the importance of the dialogues in the plays, in that the majority of the images are contained/(attributed to) in the dialogues. And so, it would be correct to suggest that the directions in the plays are used to provide a stable décor for the play, a basis on which the dialogues are built upon by incorporating the visual aspects with that of imagination. In other words, because the dialogues are subject to the contextual ‘time duration/span’, which constitutes one of the limitations of the dialogues, the indicated directions are to be seen as that which gives more credence to the imagery denoted in the dialogues.

The dialogues and what they represent presents a world that is compromised by the traditions that are dictated and formed through societal and historical boundaries.<sup>16)</sup> In this respect one can associate the very nature of the symbolic intonations of the avant-garde or that of the American dramatists with the poetic symbols that one finds in poetic works. Furthermore, the relation between the fiction and the society that has graced this century, taking into account the modernization of the society and all the changes in the artistic domains, should be viewed in relation to what the consequences represent.

The dialogues representing the images of the city is not in direct reference to the society to which it is related as stated in the above. The dialogues, brings into play the domain of psychology in modern drama to address the world of imagination that needs to be entrusted as being the reality for the spectators.<sup>17)</sup>

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the plays meaning.”

Worth, K., *The Irish Drama of Europe from Yeats to Beckett*, p.26.

- 16) “Le théâtre est l’espace d’un simulacre, d’un artifice vrai : il donne à voir ce qui n’existe pas *comme si cela existait*... Il y a bien présence ; c’est en cela que plus qu’un autre art il re-présente, il rend présent quelque chose. ”

Viala, A., *Le Théâtre en France des origines à nos jours*, p.8.



Thus it is the relationship between the fictional world, which denotes the world of 'make believe' and the 'proposed reality' that which is represented on the stage. The dialogues signify to a large extent the intentions of the authors. The 'intentionnalité' represented in the dialogue itself is the very key to the representation of images in a said play. Of course, the whole representation is played out and is recontextualisé in the minds of the spectators, within the context of the reality that the spectators identify, based on the traditional surroundings of the spectator.

The images of the city between the European and the American theatre are very different. Not in the manner, that each uses the same contemporary approach of denoting the world in a manner psychological and tragic, but in how the reality is incorporated into the plays (through monologues; décor; and also the main theme etc.).

In the plays of Beckett, the images that represent the city and its surroundings can be defined as being destitute and catastrophic. The plays take place in the aftermath of the world destruction, where 'hope' is a non-significant thing and a luxury. The definition of 'existence' is based on the factual relationship with another character, but as soon as the liaison between the reality and the imaginary world is lost, the existence itself becomes problematic.<sup>18)</sup> The images in the plays of Beckett could be summarized as images that do not correlate with that of the city. Even though this might be true, when one considers the landscapes suggested by Beckett in his plays,<sup>19)</sup> for a better and more mutual understanding of the play and its significance one would be

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17) "The aim was to reach a deeper level of reality than deceptive surface appearances - to embody the inner nature of archetypal man in concrete symbols, in contrast to the naturalistic depiction of socially defined individuals."

Innes, C., *Avant Garde Theatre*, p.20.

18) *En attendant godot; Oh les beaux jours; Fin de partie* etc.

19) *En attendant godot; Fin de partie* etc.

inclined to view it as a proposed image of what one may expect in the future. The 'landscapes/the stage' represents worlds that are non-habitable, 'a basic non-society' or a society that does not have 'meaning' as described in the long monologue of 'Lucky' in *En attendant godot*, which explains the futility, and the finality of society in a humorist manner. To this effect the plays of Ionesco is not very unlike as those of Beckett. The same destitute ideas that can be noted in Beckett tend to summarize the plays of Ionesco. In *Les Chaises* the setting draws its meaning from a distant/abandoned lighthouse. While, in *La Leçon* the image of the city and the society seems to be in clear opposition to one another when one considers the description of the city in the dialogues of the main characters the 'étudiante' and the 'professeur'.

The American plays of O'Neill, Williams or Miller, in contrast to that suggested of the avant-garde, rely on themes that are associative of the surrounding societal reality. The type of character representation and the world portrayed is suggestive of the difference that one finds when compared with the European avant-garde. The American theatre deals with and puts emphasize on the social life, in short it puts importance on the social status, any and all that are relevant that which reflect life in the mainstream society in relation to the theme is proposed for the psychological significance and symbolization. To this effect, the characters and the themes that are portrayed in the American theatres are representations of stereotypes such as 'salesman' like in the case of 'Hickey' or 'Willy' or 'families' like the Mannon's in *Mourning becomes Electra* or the Tyrone's in *Long Day's Journey into the Night*, etc. Although these representations are not new to both theatres when associated with traditionally dominant themes that characterize the two theatres, they nonetheless constitute the main difference that separates the two theatres. In short, one may suggest that the American theatre deals with the direct consequences of life and its crisis associating the images with economics and mans futility to be comprehended by

the surrounding society. The European avant-garde by putting more emphasis on the definition of modern 'man/life' is associated more so with philosophical movements that defines the contemporary stage.<sup>20)</sup>

The city images that are denoted in the American theatres come alive not as metaphorical situations as seen in avant-garde but as that, which is the very reflection of the reality. The mirroring effect of the reality is in many cases depicted in the dialogues of the characters.<sup>21)</sup> The dialogues in *The Iceman Cometh* by O'Neill are relative to the dialogues that are found and used in the actual dock areas of real life New York. By suggesting the problems within the society, through the usage of dialogues that mirrors the reality, they provide the basic foundations through which the spectators identify the city image of New York, which is in no way beautified. The other trait of the dialogues that are suggestive denotes the psychological world as seen in Willy's dialogues in *The Death of a Salesman*. This philosophical question of 'life' and which in retrospect is close to what the dialogues of the Europeans dramatists were associated with may be the two different levels of the use of communication mode that we as spectators identify with through dialogues.

While the two types of dialogues denoted seem to be quite different in nature and mode, they should be viewed as denoting the same significations because in

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20) "Dans le théâtre d'avant-garde, ces techniques sont presque devenues une nouvelle convention par le fait qu'elles sont si fréquemment utilisées. L'objet concret a remplacé dans une certaine mesure le mot audible comme moyen de communication, car là où le langage a échoué, un nouveau langage a été inventé à sa place."

Pronko, L., *Théâtre d'avant-garde*, p.245-246.

21) "As for characters, the social drama puts contemporary society on the stage and draws its dramatis personae from the middle class. The protagonist is subject to the same laws as the rest of us, shares the same ambitions (or lack of them), performs the same domestic duties, speaks the same unlovely prose. Human stature shrinks to average height, and man's surroundings close in."

Brustein, R., *The Theatre of Revolt*, p.23.

reality they symbolize and denote the same metaphoric signification. In other words, the dialogues do not in anyway depict images of cities in any direct relative fashion, but try to promote the image in the minds of the spectators in a more or less gradual fashion. This mode of approach allows the spectators to fully identify with the dialogues and through it with the reality that surrounds them, thus bringing the image of the city and its symbolization to a complete circle. The city image is related to the spectators through the social problems, and the connotations it infers, are the means that is used in providing the images of city as destitute/hopeless/meaningless due to modernization.

The non-communicability, between the characters, especially in the *avant-garde*, depicted in the play, symbolizes the very philosophy and the essence of the two theatres. In short both theatres represent the society and the cities as having lost the ingredients that make up a genuine society. And to further this point, it would be a misinterpretation if one was to limit the scope of the two theatres as plays that only dealt with the societal breakdowns instead of the imagery that the two theatres represents in a larger context.

The modernization effect could be seen in two different ways in distinguishing how it affected the two different cultures. On the American side it became to signify the very traits of everyday life depicted as it is, the expressionistic culture leading the way for the incorporation of such elements as “stream of consciousness” in the play itself.<sup>22)</sup> This type of monologue allows

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22) “He grasped with a thoroughness which is astounding in a master of words, that words were not enough for the theatrical task he had set for himself, the exploration of the ‘interior’. ‘A deep of the mind can only be approached through what is most human, most delicate’. It was a paradox to delight his contradictory heart that, to achieve this delicacy, a technique of intense physicality was needed. All the resources of the theater - scene, colour, music, dance and movement - had to be brought into play: only synthesis of the arts, supporting and high-lighting the words, drawing attention to their value by allowing spaces between them, stretches of silence, unanswered questions, could hope to render

the basic insight into the city life and in consequence depicts the image of city as viewed by the American dramatists and their spectators. While in the avant-garde the modernization symbolized the communication breakdown between members of the same society.

The two theatres differentiate from each other in that one denotes a society coping with industrial baroness while the other relates more to the humanistic values/morals that are lost in the modern society. Of course, in stating humanistic values/morals, it should be understood not in the literal sense of the term but that, which symbolizes the very irony that surrounds the modern society. In a manner of speaking they are not to symbolize something vulgar but to denote the imaginary conceptualization as a possibility and a solution where as in the other there seems to be no apparent solution that would extradite the situation.

The self-imposed societal environment is subjugated to the space and time of the writers in question. While the European dramatist's definition of societies and cities might not be ideological, it is the connotation and the denotation that which makes up the implied environment that is important. The less than human approach in the American dramatists is suggestive of the America in its hay days of industrialization where man lost interest in ideals and values that signified 'man' and economics dictated the very essence of life. Thus the difference in the representation of city images can be suggested as being idealistic or pessimistic for the European theatre while the American theatre belongs to the reality.

The vastness and the harsh reality come to life in most of the American dramas of the 1930-1950 period. In conjunction with these developments one

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anything like the complexity of the mind's process, its intuitions and fine shades of feeling, the whole undertow of the stream of consciousness."

Worth, K., *The Irish Drama of Europe from Yeats to Beckett*, p.3.

sees the very foundations of American life depicted in the characters that are represented in the theatres. The ‘salesman theme’ of Tennessee Williams and Eugene O’Neill does not deviate far from these explications. The salesman is an American lifestyle, and how he is characterized and what his philosophical perspective might be does not constitute a direct representation of the American urban city *per se*. Therefore importance rests in identifying the symbolic effect of the city that surrounds and influence the character, which in turn leads almost always to a tragic ending; signifying the solitude and the destitution of city and society life on its inhabitants. The representation in the dialogues is not simply imagery of a city, but in a way, the totality of symbolic effect of the city, and one may identify the signification’s that are inferred through the imagery of the city within the context of the dialogues of the characters. In this regard, the representations of cities in European and American theatres are suggestive of not only the distance between the two societies, but to a greater extent the movement of ideals and futuristic expectations of the spectators.

The image of the city that can be contemplated in the dialogues of the American theatre is not a ‘packaged image’ where everything can be denoted as being on the bright side. The images one sees in most modern American plays (*The Iceman cometh; The Long day’s journey into the night; The Streetcar named desire; The Death of a salesman* etc.) is a disturbing picture of urban stress and life, which leads to a hopeless dead-end street. The ‘theatrical symbolic theme’ that we witness in American theater today is more relevant to the economical situations created rather than that, which deal with philosophical inquiry about the future and the depiction of life of the modern man.

These difference between the two theaters stems from the very origins of the societies where the dramatists originated. The various movements, whether ideological or economical, that the dramatists were subjected to and identified with, in their works, became the major theme line or context of what the work

represented or mirrored.

In *Fin de Partie* as in *En attendant Godot*, the prevailing city imagery is not something that one may relate to in any consequential fashion, since, the images are themselves based on abstraction and are more philosophical or imaginative than real. The outside world that Beckett and Ionesco referred to can and only be understood in light of the movement that had defined the European society, in which the future of mankind and society as a community, is suggested as being non-existent or more directly 'dead'.<sup>23)</sup> However, the avant-garde itself follows two distinct paths when one considers Ionesco's works. The world as symbolized and described by Ionesco is something quite different from the world denoted by Beckett. In the later you find the world represented in a cynical manner while in the world represented by Ionesco the world is represented using a more humorist approach.

The psychological aspect/attribute is important since in the modern theatre the implication in the dialogues and its symbolic nature seems to provide the imaginary settings for the decor that are needed to accommodate the difference of changes that are so conditional in today's literature.

The modern colloquial of theater represents a complete change in theater aesthetics due to incorporation of new ideas and new theories that has redefined theater itself. The modern theater is a witness and to a certain degree an accomplice of the new methods that we see in today's approach to 'representation'. It not only is a revolutionary change in the ideas defining the theatre itself, which have dominated the theatrical scene in the past, but also,

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23) Of course, the argument on the movement of avant-garde and its relevant aesthetics of trying to do away with words or language for that matter should be considered also, but it is also true to a certain degree that the movements and the future of the human society was at a point where the problem of existence itself was questioned due to proliferation of the nuclear and other means which could destroy the civilization at any instance.

represents the novelties with which the modern spectator/reader identifies, by introducing and inducing a total theatrical experience through the diverse engagements that summarizes the total theatrical experience. This identification of the spectator/reader to the fictive world of theater experience is achieved by and through the adaptation of objectivity into the confines of literature and fiction through the means of ‘dialogues’ instead of materialistic décors.

The ‘dialogues’ should not only be looked upon as thematic in essence but also descriptive in nature. In suggesting the importance of objectivity, we are suggesting the importance of ‘perspective’ (narration; point of view; intentionality etc., which define a literary work). It is not only due to engagement purposes that the spectator/audience is seen as an important element in the modern theatre, but because they form the basis of redefinition/recontextualisation and resymbolization of the social attributes that are represented in the plays.

#### IV.

The theatre of today is a suggestive domain, in that they are not only representations of the society as a reflection but also representations of the society and therefore its values. Because they implicate societal problems generated in relation to city and modernization whether in metaphoric or in connotative ways.

The two theatres are suggestive of the diversification that one denotes in the field of modern literature by showing how the incorporation of the image of cities in a literary work has come to represent not only the materialistic world, but also the problems that are more associated with psychology. It is not a direct implication of the image of a city that is represented as noted in the above, but



the symbolic characteristics that is associated with the modernization of the city and what it has become to symbolize today. Furthermore, the images in the dialogues are suggestive of the very foundation of the modern society and its consequences, by a 'representation' that not only implies but also suggests that which is identifiable to the general spectator.

The importance of the modernism and its effects on literature can be seen in the evolution of the modern theatre, which is based on the consensus general and not on the elite few who define the society. Finally, Modernism not only represents divers' attributes of society and its changes but also signifies the importance of the theories that which govern the theories of reception. Because the theories concerning the reception and its diverse consequences and aspects concerning the spectator has become the most important criteria in defining literature and 'non-literature' the dialogue should be seen as the means of communication between the spectator and the author.

In conclusion, the usage of the dialogues and its 'décontextualisation' by the spectator/audience is relevant to the problems of deciphering the suggested images of cities in modern drama. Because the only pertinent means of depicting images that are suggestive and denotative remains with the dialogues. The dialogues even though they may be arbitrary or ambiguous are the only real stable means available to the modern authors to deliver the representation.

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[Abstract]

## **Literary Study in Representation of City Images in Contemporary Theater: A Comparative Study of Modern American and Modern European Theater**

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The difference between presentation of cities in the European modern drama and its counterpart the American modern drama denotes and comes from two very different images of cities. While the European modern drama presented cities that were desolate and fantastic to certain measure, the American modern drama presented the images of actual cities that can be identified by the spectators and readers.

Although one cannot 'actually' identify any actual representation of cities in both the European and the American dramas, the images of cities can be discerned in the dialogues of the characters in the plays themselves. In this perspective the

images of cities that are represented in any work of modern drama are actually represented through metaphors and connotations. The images in this instance rests and can only be identified within the boundaries of psychology.

The dialogues are means through which the author communicates with the spectators. Because drama is above all categorized as being a work of text before representation, deciphering drama also falls in to same cadre as any other literary texts. Through the means of 'décontextualisation' the reader/spectator identifies with the associated images that the text proposes.

접 수 일 : 2005년 4월 20일

심사기간 : 2005년 4월 29일~5월 20일

재 심 사 : 2005년 5월 30일

게재결정 : 2005년 6월 4일(편집위원회)