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Beckett

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Reviews of *Endgame*

Atkinson, Brooks. Rev. of *Endgame*, by Samuel Beckett. *New York Times* 29 Jan. 1958. Ed. Graver, L and R.

Federman. Samuel Beckett: *The Critical Heritage*. New York: Routledge, 1979: 171-172. Print.

Atkinson states plainly, "Don't expect this column to give a coherent account of what—if anything—happens. His argument takes the same shape as most of the other reviewers as he states that Beckett is preparing his audience for oblivion. The play offers a "nihilistic" viewpoint that is often contrasting between the characters. Even though he understands the viewpoints of the characters, he thinks the play "never comes precisely to the point." Overall, he thinks the play is telling its audience that "the jig is up," and life must be gloomier than Atkinson thought before he saw *Endgame*.

Bernard, Marc. Rev. of *Endgame*, by Samuel Beckett. *Nouvelles Litteraires* 9 May 1957. Ed. Graver, L and R.

Federman. Samuel Beckett: *The Critical Heritage*. New York: Routledge, 1979: 166-168. Print.

Bernard also argues that Beckett's play gives man a sense that there is no hope. He believes that the play "strangely resembles a parody." He describes Clov's character to be very animalistic in physical appearance and describes Hamm as a rather intellectual being. He thinks that Hamm is not content with life and therefore punishes his parents for committing "such a heinous crime: procreation." The four characters, he believes, represent all of mankind. The play continues to turn "aimless, gloomy, absurd, and desolate" reassuring Bernard's belief that Beckett is trying to tell his audience there are no chances or hopes in life.

Hobson, Harold. Rev. of *Endgame*, by Samuel Beckett. *Sunday Times* 7 Apr. 1957. Ed. Graver, L and R.

Federman. Samuel Beckett: *The Critical Heritage*. New York: Routledge, 1979: 161-164. Print.

In this review by Harold Hobson, he argues that *Endgame* is a beautiful piece of work that fans of *Waiting for Godot* would have also loved. However, he admits that Beckett is a poet, so Beckett's main goal is "not to clarify... but to imply." He believes there is not an actual point or lesson to the play, but the apocalyptic setting implies that in death our "meaning will be revealed." He concludes by applauding the actors and directors for their brilliant performance, especially during the final lines.

Lemarchand, Jaques. Rev. of *Endgame*, by Samuel Beckett. *Figaro Littéraire* 11 May 1957. Ed. Graver, L and R.

Federman. Samuel Beckett: *The Critical Heritage*. New York: Routledge, 1979: 168-171. Print.

Lemarchand spends the first three paragraphs explaining the apocalyptic setting of the play rather than analyzing the meaning like the other reviewers. He believes the play relates very closely to reality and explains that each of the character's main motivation is self-interest. He also relates the play to real life by saying, "this may be the game we play all the time." He argues that the four main characters are "stripped down and reduced to an elemental level" in order for their roles to represent real life better. He also says there is no other point to the play as each viewer is to understand it to their own liking.

Tynan, Kenneth. Rev. of *Endgame*, by Samuel Beckett. *Observer* 7 Apr. 1957. Ed. Graver, L and R.

Federman. Samuel Beckett: *The Critical Heritage*. New York: Routledge, 1979: 164-166. Print.

Tynan analyzes the play and comes to the conclusion that it is about a power-complex. He states that Clov represents perception and imagination, but he is the character who is a slave and animal-like in his physical appearance and his obedience to Hamm makes *Endgame* an "allegory about authority, an attempt to dramatize the neurosis that makes men love power." He also argues that Hamm, being all powerful, represents numerous things such as the Church, the State, and even Godot. His only problem with Beckett's logic is that Beckett his problem is "insoluble." Tynan concludes that while viewing the play, he noticed "glimmers of hope," but after watching, realized there was no hope at all in *Endgame*.