

## The Rebellious Maxims of Conversation in Postmodern Absurdity Focusing on Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party* & Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*.

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### I. Overview

Linguists say, "A Maxim of Conversation which states, "be relevant," supporting the co-operative principle, that is, avoid abrupt changes in topic. In linguistics, and more specifically pragmatics and discourse analysis, we identify maxims of conversation: the (usually) unwritten, subconscious rules that govern how people talk to each other, and what constitutes cooperative (or "polite") conversation. As the term maxim implies, a maxim of conversation is to account for how competent language users are able to derive from the linguistic form of an utterance, and the context in which it occurs, the communicative intention of its author. However, the author of Postmodern Absurdity would look forward to a pessimistic vision of humanity struggling vainly to find a purpose and to get a pointless way. Human beings think there is no existence of absolute being. It is very difficult for them to communicate in a natural language. The Absurdist is skeptical to the human being's talk. "I talk of chalk, and you talk of cheese." It is natural to disobey the maxims of conversation. Their maxims in their plays can be used in rebellious or absurd dialogue related to the story. So, authors' different speech communities have different maxims and their identification and comparison is an important part of understanding a language's speech analysis through their plays or drama. Maxims can be used in three basic ways which would break out the principle of cooperative conversation, depending on the situation.

1. Exploit - to exploit a maxim is to follow it. If the maxim is, "Give some answer to answer to a question, even if it isn't true," you do so.
2. Flout - to go against the command of a maxim in order to achieve a certain end, which is understood by the listener (see flout for more information on this often difficult to understand distinction.)
3. Violate - to go against a maxim, causing communicational breakdown. The maxim says, "Give some answer to a question, even if it isn't true," and you say, "I'm sorry, but I don't know where it is." When the character's conversation or speech "hangs together", it keeps the cooperative principle. When it is "disjoined," we call it the "rebellious maxims of conversation."

The maxim of conversation is related to "Pragmatics in Discourse Analysis" as follows. When communication takes place between two interactants who do not share the same language or the same culture, unintended violations of the maxims can easily occur. . . As we have seen, successful communication takes place when **speakers** share knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions and when they adhere to similar rules of cooperative interaction. Language, however, is not only a vehicle to exchange thoughts and ideas; we often use utterances in order to perform social actions or functions.<sup>1</sup> In the passages above, **speakers** are maybe the playwrights or the characters described by a playwright in this paper. The reader or audience should be searching hard for author's central idea, especially Harold Pinter's literary world. Generally speaking, the notion of "conversational maxim" is broadly construed so as to include any principle of language use that is hypothesized to play a role in inferential pragmatic interpretation. To our understanding of Pinter's conversational maxims, his relevant literature overlaps with his distinctive features: his philosophy, linguistics and psycholinguistics in his context. Pinter is the legitimate son of Samuel Beckett, and so has a position in contemporary drama that is both assured and, perhaps more ultimately, rather difficult to sustain. . . . Pinter writes of the open wound, and through him, we know it open and know it closed. We tell when it ceases to beat, and tell it at its highest peak of fever. I have plagiarized those last two sentences from Pinter, substituting "Pinter" for "Shakespeare." As an insight into Shakespeare, it hardly exists, and would be almost as inadequate if I had substituted "Beckett." But it does very well for Pinter, except that he cannot close any wound whatsoever. <sup>ii</sup>These Contemporary playwrights are the major practitioners of the Theatre of the Absurd. In this sense, the human life is absurd universe. It is naturally not to obey the cooperative principle. Pinter's discourse analysis is not clear, ambiguous: although the speaker, hearer, and any third parties involve in the conversation, it is difficult to communicate among themselves. The Postwar mood made the Contemporary playwrights reflected an era of spiritual emptiness, and thought that the people those days kept going to the pointless direction aftermath of the World War I and II.

The origin of the Theatre of the Absurd is being born from ashes of post war Europe. In *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942) by Albert Camus who is the Existentialist philosopher, the human situation is essentially absurd, devoid of purpose. Following the atrocities of World War Two, to some the world itself had become absurd: a frightening and illogical place in which life had lost all meaning and human existence seemed futile. The growing popularity of Existentialism in Europe (notably in Paris, where many of the absurdist playwrights lived as exiles), will also have been influential. The philosophy of **Albert Camus**, who is credited with first using the word absurd in this sense, certainly had a role to play in the creation of this kind of theatre. It's important to note, however, that absurdism in theatre was not necessarily an example of playwrights trying to directly translate philosophy into drama but perhaps more of a shared intellectual outlook and a common need to communicate the social situation, through a different form of art.<sup>iii</sup> , Samuel Beckett engaged in the absurdist movement. The term of the absurd is also loosely applied to those dramatists and the production of those works. Though no formal Absurdist movement existed as such, dramatists as diverse as Samuel Beckett, Eugène Ionesco, Jean Genet, Arthur . This style of writing has been called "Theater of the Absurd" by Martin Esslin, referring to poet Albert Camus' concept of "the absurd." The plays focus on human despair and the will to survive in a hopeless world that offers no help in understanding.<sup>iv</sup> They say that Beckett's plays are not written along traditional lines with conventional plot and time and place references. Instead, he focuses on essential elements of the human condition in dark humorous ways. Recognizing the Absurdist's ideology of man's existence which, in the universe, is absurd, Pinter would show his admiration of Beckett who is the best prose writer. Although two absurdist, Pinter and Beckett make the readers feel ambiguous, disoriented with their non-explicatory manner, the readers absorb or are sold on their conversations in their drama with counterpoints, common consent, or talking at cross purpose. We have considered Pinter shows how to create the theatrical nature of words in one of his dramas, *The Birthday Party*, and Samuel Beckett explicates how to articulate the dramatic narration of tones in his *Waiting for Godot* as a lively nihilist. Why should we have to make sense of disconnecting maxim of conversation? How do two playwrights develop the conversation and relate the story in their natural words? When addressees avoid the answers in the texts, how can the reader/audience feel the mood of the tone of the script?

Among the things that happen on stage –what the audience sees and underlying what it hears – is that the questioner usually receives no answers and that he is placed in a position wherein he might forfeit his life, perhaps because he questions, perhaps arbitrarily.<sup>v</sup> By examining them, I will attempt to identify the absurd utterance or tone from non-cooperative dialogue dealing with speaker meaning and contextual meaning from two texts in this paper.

## II. Non-cooperative Principle in Speeches from *Waiting for Godot* and *The Birthday Party*

Their conversations are awkward and crucial points in the dramatic drama from two texts. Linguistic absurdity may break out the rule of universal grammar and also may create free variation from the feature of language to communicate with the generative transformation in the natural language. Communication is successful if interlocutors keep the rule of cooperative conversation. Becket and Pinter deliberately violate a maxim in order to convey additional information or add some special meaning beyond what is actually said. Two playwrights make the readers/audience so ambiguous that they may be sold on the speeches from the texts.

Vladmir. When I think of it . . . all these years . . . but for me . . . where would you be . . . [*Decisively.*] You'd nothing more than a little heap of bonnes at the present minute, no double about it. Estragon. And what of it? Vladmir. [*gloomy*] It's too much for one man. [*Pause. Cheerfully.*] On the other hand what's the good of losing heart now, that's what I say. We should have thought of it a million years ago, in the nineties. Estragon. Ah stop blathering and help me off with this bloody thing. (*Waiting for Godot, Act I*). P.2

Their dialogues above violate politeness principle between the emitter and addressee with unfavorable behavior towards the interlocutor while author is attempting his reader to involve in the conversation as a third party. Following the dialogue as follows

Vladmir. Hand in hand from the Eiffel Tower, among the first. We were respectable in those days. Now it's too late. They wouldn't even let us up. [*Estragon tears at his boot.*] What are you doing? Estragon. Taking off my boot. Did that never happen to you? Vladmir. Boots must be taken off every day, I'm tired telling you that. Why don't you listen to me? (*Waiting for Godot, Act I*).p.2

We have no idea of who is emitter or who is addressee in this context and the situation, however, it is clear that the conversations consistently give irrelevant answers to the questions. If Estragon asked "Did that never happen to you?", Vladmir should answer politely, "No, I didn't." or "Yes I did." Vladmir should give more information to Estragon who flouts the maxim of conversation. In addition to. Vladmir's too many details cause ambiguous and impolite to Estragon. The interpretation on the part of hearer or a thirty party has the block or the barricade so that the readers/audiences may be curious in the end of the drama with chasing the paper. The readers have considered why Estragon adheres his boots. Vladmir. There's man all over for you, blaming on his boots the faults of his feet.

[He takes off his hat again, peers inside it, feels about inside it, knocks on the crown, blows into it, put it on again.]

This is getting alarming. [Silence, Vladimir deep in thought, Estragon pulling at his toes.]

One of the thieves was saved. [Pause.] It's reasonable percentage. [Pause.] Gogo.Estragon. What?

Vladimir Suppose we repented. Estragon. Repented what?

Vladimir Oh. . .[He reflects.] We wouldn't have to go into the details.

Estragon. Our being born?

[Vladimir breaks into a hearty laugh which he immediately stifles, his hand pressed to his pubis, his face contorted.]

Vladimir. One daren't even laugh any more.

Estragon. Dreadful privation. (*Waiting for Godot, Act I*), p.3

The boots are symbolized by Estragon, whereas the hat is the character of Vladimir. "Just as the hat is representative of Vladimir's role as a thinker and philosopher, the boots show us that Estragon is the more "earthy" character... more emotional, a more concrete thinker, and less convinced that this unknown man Godot will actually show up. " Vladimir is looking for an ideal thinker for Godot. As an earthy character, Estragon is more concerned with the moment, right now. While Vladimir is trying to find out his Savior. They are talking at cross purposes. Their communication should require some degree of co-ordination between communicator and audience on the choice of a code and a context. The notion of mutual knowledge is used to explain how this co-ordination cannot be achieved: given enough mutual knowledge, communicator or interlocutor can't break a kind of icy mood. Estragon belongs belongs to the world so that he doesn't know what "repent". is in the biblical meaning however, Vladimir has read, at least, one time, the bible, we suppose.

Vladimir. Merely smile. [He smiles suddenly from ear to ear, keeps smiling ceases as suddenly ]. It's not the same thing. Nothing to be done. [Pause] Gogo.

Estragon. [irritably] What is it?

Vladimir. Did you ever read the Bible?

Estragon. The Bible. . . [He reflects.]I must have taken a look at it.

Vladimir. Do you remember the Gospels?

Estragon. I remember the maps of the Holy Land. Coloured they were.

Very pretty. The Dead Sea was pale blue. The very look of it made me thirsty. That's where we'll go, I used to say, that's where we'll go for our honeymoon. We'll swim. We'll be happy. .

Vladimir. You should have been a poet.

Estragon. I was.[Gesture towards his rags.] Isn't that obvious?

[Silence] (*Waiting for Godot, Act I*), p.4

Those who belong to the earthly world are different from those who belong to the heaven, according to John 17: 16 -17 from New Testament as follows: They do not belong to this world any more than I do. Make the holy by your truth, teach them your word, which is truth. Therefore there are speeches to exploit the maxims of the conversation between Estragon who belongs to the world and Vladimir who knows the existence of Absolute Being because Vladimir is Existentialist and is looking for something ideal.

Estragon. [with exaggerated enthusiasm] I find this really most Extraordinarily interesting.

Vladimir. One out of four. Of the other three two don't mention any Thieves at all and the third says that both of them abused him.

Estragon Who?

Vladimir. What?

Estragon. What's all this about? Abused who?

Vladimir. The Savior.

Estragon. Why?

Vladimir. Because he wouldn't save them.

Estragon. From hell?

Vladimir. Imbecile! From death.

Estragon. I thought you said hell.

Vladimir. From death, from death.

Estragon. Well what of it?

Vladimir. Then the two of them must have been dammed.

Estragon. And why not? (*Waiting for Godot, Act I*), p.5.

Those conversations between Estragon and Vladimir have caused off beat humor with counterpoints each other. They continue going against a maxim, causing communicational breakdown, semantically. Estragon has already recognized that the dialogue between he and Vladimir is toward contrary diction each other. However, ridiculously, do they keep speaking each other like the voices of counterpoints. Estragon. That's the idea, let's contradict each other.

Vladmir. Impossible. Estragon. You think so?

Vladmir. We're in no danger of ever thinking any more.

Estragon. Then what are we complaining about?

Vladmir. Thinking is not the worst.

(*Waiting for Godot, Act II*), p.54.

They give some answer to answer to a question, relating the story of drama. Beckett makes use of offbeat dialogue and consists of the plot of *Waiting for Godot*.

Estragon. Wait.

Vladmir. I'm cold!

Estragon. Wait! [He moves away from Vladimir.] I sometimes wonder if we

Wouldn't have been better off alone, each one for himself. [He crosses the stage and sits down on the mound.] We weren't made for the same road.

Vladmir. [*without anger*] It's not certain.

Estragon. No, nothing is certain.

[*Vladmir slowly crosses the stage and sits down beside Estragon.*]

(*Waiting for Godot Act I*), p.44.

Estragon says, "Wait," Vladimir answers, "I'm cold." Beckett had knowledge of the importance of the context of the utterance. Without performative verb, it seems that the speeches above are composed of the performative sentence with interlocutors' counterpoint and conflictive sound like the same bed, different dreams each other. Vladimir doesn't want wait because it is too cold to wait with presupposition which can be used to communicate information indirectly. However, Vladimir answers, "It's not certain." We have no idea of why Vladimir says, "I'm cold," replying Estragon's imperative sentence in this contexts.

Estragon. Que voulez-vous?

Vladmir. I beg your pardon?

Estragon. Que voulez-vous.

Vladmir. Ah! Que voulez-vous. Exactly.

[*Silence*]

Estragon. That wasn't such a bad little canter.

Vladmir. Yes, but now we'll have to find something else.

(*Waiting for Godot, Act II*), p.55.

Estragon asks, "Que voulez-vous?" Vladimir doesn't understand what Estragon says. Although Estragon doesn't explain and doesn't translate French into English, Vladimir may understand and recognize exactly "Que voulez-vous," or he may pretend to understand it. To be ridiculous, they are able to communicate each other. It is sure that Estragon would violate the politeness principle, however, it seems that Vladimir answers to minimize "Ah!" with keeping politeness principle. Let's give another example of violating the politeness principle in Act 1.

Estragon. An Englishman having drunk a little more than usual Proceeds to a brothel. The bawd asks him if he wants a fair one, a dark one or a red-haired one. Go on. Vladimir. STOP IT!

[*Exit Vladimir hurriedly. Estragon gets up and follows him as far as the limit of the stage. Gestures of Estragon like those of a spectator encouraging a pugilist. Enter Vladimir. He brushes past Estragon, crosses the stage with bowed head. Estragon takes a step towards him, halts.*] (*Waiting for Godot, Act I*), p.8.

Vladmir's utterance is so rude that his voice is flouting the conversation. In universal grammar, each language has developed a repertoire of speech act realizations that enable the language user to be a "polite" interactant and an accurate interpreter of discourse. His expression has violated universal pragmatics easily to communicate and to compromise the other side. In Act 1, Estragon, Pozzo and Vladimir, say, "Goodbye./ Adieu," however they don't move they stand still there. In the end of Act 1 and 2, the Vladimir says, "Well, Shall we go?" Estragon says, "Yes, let's go." But they do not leave. Beckett uses in natural language and make unnatural situation absurdity. In principle, at least, the performative breaks into the link between meaning and the intention of the speaker, for what action is moving or leaving, Vladimir and Estragon are waiting for Godot, which is not showing up from the first and the last. Although the readers finish chasing the paper with the intensive reading, they are confused whether Godot is really coming soon or not.

The situation and the dialogues are at a cross purpose however their aim is same direction for finding out the Godot which is applying the title: *Waiting for Godot* into the real society. It is ridiculous to happen the situation: they are looking for the Godot but they don't move and are still standing at the same place. As a dramatist Pinter creates the context itself with an inadequacies of words, the presupposition of speech and the communication barriers to the readers. His perception of the varying effectiveness of words is particularly dramatic. He is interested in speech as barriers and as bridges between people, as elements in a social combat.<sup>vi</sup>

*The living-room of a house in a seaside town. A door leading to the hall down left. Back door and small window up left. Kitchen hatch, centre back. Kitchen door up right. Table and chairs, centre. Petey enters from the door on the left with a paper and sits at the table. He begins to read. MEG's voice comes through the kitchen hatch.*

Meg. Is that you, Petey?

[Pause.]

Petey, is that you?

[Pause]

Petey?

Petey. What?

Meg. Is that you?

Meg. What? (Her face appears at the hatch.) Are you back?

Petey. Yes.

Meg. I've got your corn flakes ready. (*She disappears and reappears.*) Here's your cornflakes.

*He rises and takes the plate from her, sits at the table, props up the paper and begins to eat. Meg enters by the kitchen door.*

Are they nice?

Petey. Very nice.

Meg. I thought they'd be nice. (She sits at the table.) You got your paper?

Petey. Yes. (*The Birthday Party, Act I.*), p.20.

John's *Words and Silence: The Birthday Party*, "At the centre of Pinter's plays is a skepticism about language of unusual tenacity. Can anything ever be said to be stated correctly words? Can anything ever be said to be "stated?" We play with words, and words play with us. We can neither say what we know, now know what we say. When we stop to think, we do not trust words."<sup>vii</sup> In Pinter's *The Birthday Party*, we can't see the ceremony, event, or festival of any kind of the birthday party or birthday ball from the First One. Every traditional play has the clue related to the title of drama from the First One. In the morning, the character begins eating the cornflake in the morning. In the last Scene of Act three, we can't feel the mood of the birthday party.

Meg. Wasn't it a lovely party last night?

Petey. I wasn't there.

Meg. Weren't you?

Petey. I came in afterwards.

Meg. Oh.

[Pause]

It was a lovely party. I haven't laughed so much for years.

We had dancing and singing. And games.

You should have been there.

Meg. I was the belle of the ball.

Petey. Were you?

Meg. Oh yes. They all said I was.

Petey. I bet you were, too.

Meg. Oh, it's true. I was.

[Pause]

I know I was.

[Curtain]

(*The Birthday Party, Act III*), p. 97.

It seems that the characters have talked about nothing to do with the birthday party in Act 1 and in Act III. In Act 1, just only cornflake is serviced on the table in the morning. It is not serviced for a special life day, but for an ordinary life day. The readers are wondering when the scene of the birthday party is being appeared. They desire to get further information of the scene and dialogues for developing the story of the birthday party.

They are chasing the paper of Pinter's *The Birthday Party*. These scripts are broken down into one more acts, or major divisions of the play, reminding of whose birthday party. Plays are not written in paragraphs like a novel or short story, but written in the form of script with the dialogue for characters. Each act is then subdivided into a scene, or smaller divisions within the title of the birthday party. The readers can't imagine the scene or stage of the party. *The Birthday Party* by Harold Pinter is lack of the information of the birthday party in its script. Pinter creates each culture between the Petey and Meg which are acceptable ways to "deliberately" violate maxims, giving unfamiliar situations to his readers. Aristotle tells us, through the imitation of life and their rhythm. The narrative patterning that produces a twist, as when the biter is bitten or the tables are turned, gives pleasure in itself, and many narratives have essentially this function: to amuse listeners by giving a new twist to familiar situations.<sup>viii</sup> Pinter may aim that the playwrights like himself make their readers ask such questions about the links between their desires and the authors' stories and that Pinter leads their readers to enjoy getting the knowledge of his hidden meaning in his text. It is effective for them to feel a kind of pleasure from the script to make non-cooperative principle.

Meg. I 'm going to wake that boy.

Petey. There's a new show coming to the Palace.

Meg. On the pier?

Petey. No. The Palace, in the town.

Meg. Stanley could have in it, if it was on the pier.

Petey. This is a straight show.

Meg. What do you mean?

Petey. They just talk.

[Pause]

Meg. Oh.

Petey. You like a song eh, Meg?

Meg. I like listening to the piano. I used to like watching.

Stanley play the piano. Of course, he didn't sing. (Looking at the door.) I'm going to call that boy. (*The Birthday Party, Act I*) p,23

Emitter, Meg says that she is going to wake Stanley. Addressee, Petey answers there's a new show coming to the Palace. Meg says on the pier, They are talking at cross purpose. Meg talk of chalk, and Petey talk of cheese. We think generally about the show for the dancing or music, ironically, we can hear the true meaning of show is talking. The readers continue how the talking shows are developing, instead, they are talking about song and piano being irrelevant answers to questions. They are saying each separate issue. It seems their dialogues are floating on the cloud. The situations show us the pointless directions of the human beings in the modern society. Our lives are wandering without our certain direction like vagabond after World War I and II.

Petey. Didn't you take him up his cup of tea?

Meg. I always take him up his cup of tea. But that was a longtime ago.

Petey. Did he drink it? Meg. I made him. I stood there till he did. I'm going to call him. (*She goes to the door.*) Stan! Stanny! (*She listens.*) Stan! I'm coming up to fetch you don't come down! I'm coming up! I'm going to count three! One ! Two! Thre!. I'm coming to get you! (*She exists and goes upstairs. In a moment, shouts from Stanley, wild laughter from Meg. Petey takes his place to the hatch. Shouts. Laughter. Petey sits as the table. Silence. She returns.*) He is coming down. (*She is panting and arranges her hair.*) I told him if he didn't hurry up he'd get no breakfast.

Petey. That did it, eh?

Meg. I' ll get his cornflakes.

They are still eating cornflakes in the morning. It takes too much for them to have a breakfast, even though the meal is just only the cornflake. The morning is all occupied in the Act I.

Stanley. I feel like something cooked.

Meg. Well, I'm going to give it to you.

Petey. Give it to him.

Meg. (sitting at the table, right). I'm going to. (*The Birthday Party, Act I*), p. 25.

If Stanley wants something better food, she should answer politely to him. Meg is impolite, inconsiderate and does not value hearer's well-being. In the scene, we can't find out the rules of politeness can be obeyed from one speaker to another hearer. In a nut shell, the readers don't feel that situation and scene in the boarding house have the mood or clue of the birthday party in Act I.

Stanley. What's it like out today?

Petey. Very nice.

Stanely. Warm?

Petey. Well, there's a good breeze blowing.

Stanley. Cold?

Petey. No, no, I wouldn't say cold.

Meg. What are the cornflakes like, Stan?

Stanely. Horrible.

(*The Birthday Party, Act I*), p.24.

The utterances between Petey and Stanely are composed of offbeat and the devoid of communication with contrasting question and answer. It seems that the readers feel the mood of talk show. They are just talking above that Petey said, "They just talk," in Act I.

It seems that it is Stanley's birthday morning, however, Meg and Petey have not serviced the food and have not greeted to meet with him, without saying, "Happy Birthday" or at least, "Good Morning." They forget the ordinary life conversation in their natural language. The readers don't know it is Stanley's birthday until the mid of Act II.

Meg. But what do I say?

Goldberg. Say what you feel. What you honestly feel. (Meg looks uncertain.) It's Stanley's birthday. Your Stanley. Look at him. Look at him and it'll come. Wait a minute, the light's too strong. Let's have proper lighting. McCann, have you got your torch?

McCann (*Bringing a small torch from his pocket*). Here.

Goldberg. Switch out the light and put on your torch.

(McCann goes to the door, switches off the light, comes back, shines the torch on Meg. Outside the window there is still a faint light.) Not on the lady, on the gentleman! You must shine it on the birthday boy. (McCann shines the torch in Stanley's face.) Now, Mrs. Boles, it's all yours. (*The Birthday Party, Act 3*)p. 64. Although it is a Stanley's birthday party, Stanley's happy face cannot be seen by the readers. McCann insists Stanley stay for the birthday party that night, even though Stanley claims it is not his birthday and that the party will be just another booze-up. McCann whistles "The Mountains of Morne," an Irish folksong which Stanley recognizes. They whistle the tune together. Stanley then tries to leave again, but McCann insists he stay. Stanley acquiesces, and they sit together at the table. Stanley asks McCann if they have ever met before. McCann denies it, and grows angry when Stanley touches one of the strips of newspaper. Stanley insists that they have met before, but McCann again denies it.<sup>ix</sup>

It's not birthday party for Stanley. We have not yet recognized exactly whose the birthday party holds. The tension between Stanley and McCann also reflects this conflict. On the surface, both men do their best to subscribe to social convention. Stanley is clearly unnerved and paranoid, and yet will not deliberately accuse McCann of what he suspects. Instead, he attempts to talk around the perceived threat, which further reflects the play's theme of imperfect communication. Similarly, McCann remains civil despite Stanley's bad attitude, at least until the latter touches the newspaper. By threatening to disrupt the semblance of order, Stanley insults McCann and leads him towards violence.<sup>x</sup>

In the texts above, plays are developing quickly and violently, with the ridiculousness of Pinter's natural language not breaking icy mood. Stanley's situation also reveals the sinister nature of the play. Ironically, he is most frightening because he is suddenly so presentable. The reprise of their Act II interrogation now has the sense less of attack and more of a bedside vigil. All of his delusions shattered, Stanley can only receive these promises silently. With repeated readings or viewings of the play, an audience might realize how Stanley's breakdown could be any person's fate if he or she were forced to confront his or her past sins and delusions too forcibly. From this perspective, the scene is even more horrifying.<sup>xi</sup> There is no conviction of the salvation with them. They are talking each other without the feature of politeness and common variations on expressing politeness in Pinter's natural language in use in his texts. Pinter describes that Stanely are avoiding joining in the conversations because of his past sins. Stanely begins feeling uncomfortable. Goldberg is trying to control order of Stanley's chaos which may create a suspense and tension as counterpoint to the civility of the celebration with joining in McCann's voices as an interlocutor.

Stanely. It's late.

Goldberg. Late! Late enough! When did you last pray?

McCann. He's sweating!

(*The Birthday Party, Act II*), p.60.

As a whole, the structure of *The Birthday Party* seems very traditional in one of general plays. There are three acts, to balance the first and third acts making parallel one another with the counterpoints. Both Act I and Act III begin with Meg and Petey's morning routine, not for a special day, such like a birthday. The readers feel that Meg does not have breakfast to serve in Act III because 'she was going to the party last night'. The readers cannot know she was attend what kind of party was.

She says to Petey, “We had dancing and singing,” but Petey didn’t go the ball. Petey is a third party. It is sure that a third party, Peter didn’t go with Meg to the ball. We don’t understand Meg indicates “we”; who are we? Who is Meg’s dancing partner? The readers are curious or confused to it chasing the papers. However Petey is not interested in that who Meg’s dancing partner is. Just because Petey turns toward the table and sits down. He picks up his newspaper and begins to read. Meg enters and asks where Stanley was. Petey lies and says Stanley is still sleeping. Meg tells him that she had a lovely time at the party, forgetting that Petey was not there. In her closing remark, Meg insists that she was the belle of the ball, and Petey agrees with her assessment. At the end, Meg remains blissfully unaware of the situation. It is telling that the play ends with a confirmation of her delusion. The final exchange is full of dramatic irony - she has constructed a reality that we know to be false, both because Meg was not the belle of the ball, and because Petey was not there to know it. The play ends with a scenario of ambiguity and delusion, which falls perfectly in line with the themes it explores throughout.<sup>xiii</sup> Although Meg is in the kitchen, she is not busy cooking, but serving the cornflake in the morning in Act I. In Act III, the end of the play is developing chronological order to their ordinary morning. We have no idea of what she is doing exactly in the morning. Their morning is not a kind of “begin of order,” but a kind of start of chaos and pointless direction.

### V. conclusion

Human’s ordinary life is universal but sometimes is in vain. Human condition is absurd. However, two playwrights, Beckett and Pinter clearly trust words from the human being’s language. It is natural to acquire our language to communicate. Although the absurdists would violate the maxim of conversation, their hearts are looking forward to their body of active and positive thought in the right place (Dukore, p.29). Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*, although Godot has not shown, Vladimir and Estragon is waiting for it. Beckett describes that they feel like thinking positively at the same place because they don’t like revolution. It seems that they are ridiculous to a liberalist. Therefore, the Absurdists would like to show those who are living in the contemporary society, maybe, get lost in the way at the pointless point after World War II to the readers or audience. In one of Meg’s phrases from the last scene of *The Birthday Party*, “We had dancing and singing. And games. You should have been there.” The readers are wondering who “we” are what Meg said. It is sure that Petey didn’t go there. It is said that the role of “we” is the person speaking or writing, or a single person writing or speaking when referring to himself and one or more others or a single person denoting himself, as a sovereign, editor, writer or speaker, when wishing to give his words a formal or impersonal character in the Webster Concise Dictionary.<sup>xiii</sup> It is very difficult to interpret the pronoun of ‘we’ which would have been referred in the text. It makes the readers be ambiguous in the situation because there is the pointless direction in the modern society. The reader doesn’t know the pronoun ‘his’ is indicated or pointed in *his* birthday party hold.

True to its title *The Birthday Party* contains a birthday party – for Stanley who insists it is not his birthday. Birthday not only means the anniversary of one’s birth, it also means the day of one’s birth, and in *The Birthday Party* the celebration of the former helps to create the latter. The intruders turn Stanley into what McCann calls a new man. At their hands he is reborn, made into a different kind of person on a birthday that becomes a birth-day.<sup>xiv</sup> In addition to, Pinter had better not answer the *wh-* questions to ‘Who?’ and ‘Why?’ and ‘How?’ by himself. So the readers cannot find the clue in Act I. Even in the end scene it is difficult to find out the conclusion. He committees a guilty to his readers with non-cooperative principle. In *Waiting for Godot*, why there are violating the maxims of conversation? The reason is that not only is its plot not following the traditional play’s, but its characters are also just created mechanically like playwright’s controlling his puppets with their incoherent colloquial language. We have no idea of its theme of *Waiting for Godot*. We can’t catch up with the story why the characters are waiting for Godot. It is just an absurd play because it is the destitute of characterization and motivation being related to the title, *Waiting for Godot*. Their characters desublimates from the maxim of conversations. Emitters and addressees don’t know how to wear their shoes and their hat. They are not able to put their shoes in themselves. They are going to one way without their direction. The overall tone of the play, the reader already gave up Godot, however the characters are waiting for Godot. They are not move. It is very ridiculous situation. We can hear the voice of “Gogo,” Vladimir and Estragon are turning around the same place. Samuel Beckett would feel unrest and uncomfortable after World War II. During World War II, he fought in the resistance movement until 1942 when members of his group were arrested by the Gestapo. He wrote in both French and English, but his most well-known works, written between World War II and the 1960’s were written in French, focusing on essential elements of the human condition in dark humorous ways. His language style has the illocutionary goal conflicting with the social goal. The politeness may relate to the degree of directness expressed in the actor’s speech. He had experienced in the war. He would avoid escaping from any kind of conflict: such as revolution, or civil war. The conversation in a natural language is based on the fact human beings want to communicate with one another to harmonize the society. It seems that the ordinary life conversations are characteristically and generally cooperative efforts, and each participant tends to recognize some common purpose with the politeness principle.

In two plays, however, their characters' expressions are losing the politeness, not knowing, nor greeting the relevant conversation. They are talking about their cross purposes. The addresses, often would avoid the answer not to join in the conversations. Speaker's meaning is concerned with the analysis of what people mean by their utterances rather than what the words and phrases in those utterances might mean in and of themselves. Pragmatically viewed in the postmodern Absurdity, the young generations would feel ridiculous to the old generations: producing rebellious creation for the absurd context. Why do two playwrights, Beckett and Pinter commit a guilty of maxims of conversation? Because they make it clear to be the effectiveness of defamiliarization. There are many pieces of an offbeat conversation with counterpoint which hang together and twister the plot with their own style words. They told the story with the conversation and made it the absurd drama. It is natural that they be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

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### Extended Links

<http://everything2.com/title/maxim+of+conversation>

<http://www.theskinny.co.uk/theatre/opinion/theatre-of-the-absurd>

<http://www.gradesaver.com/the-birthday-party/study...>The Birthday Party study guide contains a biography

<sup>i</sup> Marianne Celce-Murcia & Elite Olshtain, *Discourse and context in Language Teaching A Guide for language Teachers*, (NY: Cambridge University, 2006), P.20.

<sup>ii</sup> Harold Bloom, Ed., *Modern Critical Views, Harold Pinter*, Bert O. States. *Pinter's Homecoming: The Shock of Nonrecognition*, . NY: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987, p.7

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.theskinny.co.uk/theatre/opinion/theatre-of-the-absurd>

<sup>v</sup> Bernard F. Dukore, *Macmillan Modern Dramatists, Harold Pinter*, London: Macmillan Press, 1982, P.36.

<sup>vi</sup> Harold Bloom, Ed., *Modern Critical View, Harold Pinter*, John Russell Brown, *Words and Silence: The Birthday Party*, (NY: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987), p.25.

<sup>vii</sup> Harold Bloom, Ed., *Modern Critical View, Harold Pinter*, John Russell Brown, *Words and Silence: The Birthday Party*, (NY: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987). p.23.

<sup>viii</sup> Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory, A Very Short Introduction*, (NY: Oxford Univ., Press). 2011, p.92.

<sup>ix</sup> [www.gradesaver.com/the-birthday-party/study...](http://www.gradesaver.com/the-birthday-party/study...)The Birthday Party study guide contains a biography

<sup>x</sup> [www.gradesaver.com/the-birthday-party/study...](http://www.gradesaver.com/the-birthday-party/study...)The Birthday Party study guide contains a biography

<sup>xi</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>xii</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>xiii</sup> Sidney. I. Landau., Ed. Et al., *The New Webster's Concise Dictionary of the English Language Encyclopedic Edition*, (Maples: Trident Press International, 2003.)

<sup>xiv</sup> Bernard F. Dukore, *Macmillan Modern Dramatists, Harold Pinter*, London: Macmillan Press, 1982, p.29.