

What Goes Around Comes Around: *Godot's* Circularity and World Literature

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Waiting for Godot is generally acknowledged to be one of the major works of world literature. The reasons for this include the universality of its setting, its characters, imagery and themes. However, the play's circular narrative structure is also a crucial factor, echoing, as it does, ideas of circularity in various cultures across the world.

This paper will analyse *Godot's* circularity with the purpose of assessing the effects and implications of this narrative form, and illustrating the parallelisms between the circular structures found in this play and those to be found in other plays by Beckett. It will then consider adoptions of this device by a number of later playwrights, and show that one of the parameters used by Esslin in order to categorise Beckett and his successors under the simplifying label of 'absurdism' was their reliance on the device of circularity. Although deployed by preceding dramatists, Beckett endowed his circularity with a heightened significance as well as with a distinctive *twist*: that of engendering a degenerative cyclicality. Moreover, his use of circularity bestowed the text with a universal message, allowing it to circulate beyond the frontiers of the European continent.

Short Bio:

Juan Luis Toribio Vazquez is a PhD candidate in Comparative Literature in the School of European Culture and Languages at the University of Kent. His research project has the working title 'Nihilism and Narrative Form' and examines the influence of the philosophical concept of nihilism on the narrative structure of twentieth century European and Latin-American literature. The specific aims of the project are to highlight the existence of a cyclical literary trend, emerging in Europe towards the end of the nineteenth century, developing and reaching Latin-America throughout the twentieth; to subcategorize a number of different instances of narrative circularity; and to assess the aesthetic and philosophical implications of this type of structural experimentation. Moreover, the thesis aims to present an innovative framework with which to classify and interpret unnatural narratives.