

THEATRE OF THE ABSURD

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The term (now genre) Theatre of the Absurd was coined by critic Martin Esslin to bring attention to a group of playwrights whose plays conveyed a common sense of anxiety, confusion and hopelessness in reaction to an unexplainable, unpredictable and absurd universe.

Two major contributing factors to this genre were the atrocities of World War II and the philosophical questions regarding the meaning of life raised by Existentialists.

Perhaps the best-known existentialist, Jean-Paul Sartre's works included essays, novels and plays

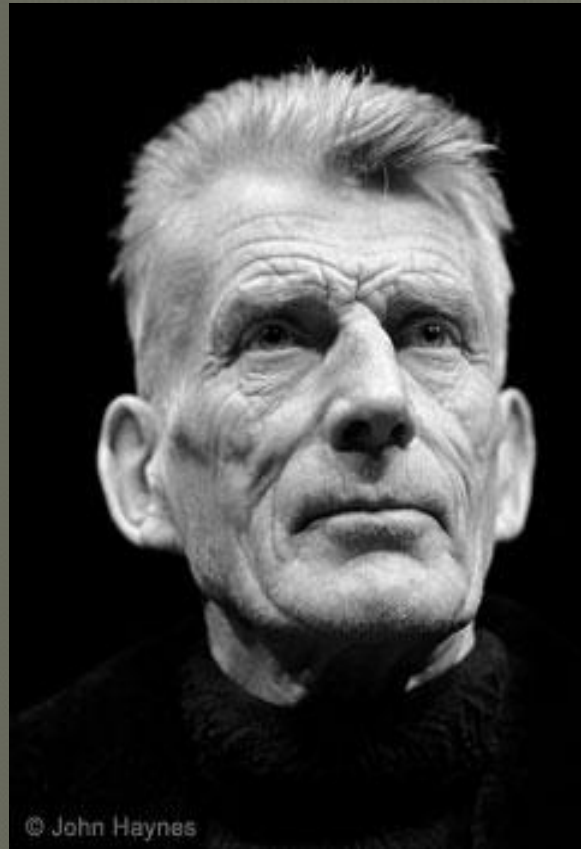


Albert Camus, wrote The Myth of Sisyphus, among other works with existential themes. Using the Greek myth to show the futility of existence, Sisyphus is eternally condemned to roll a rock up a hill and every time he reaches the top, the rock rolls back down and he has to start over. Existence seems pointless, but perhaps Sisyphus finds purpose and meaning in his eternal task by never giving up and continuing to push the rock up every time it rolls back down.

Remember: Image of Naranath Bhranthan



The father of Theatre of the Absurd Samuel Beckett wrote,
Waiting for Godot, Happy Days,
and Act Without Words, I



Eugene Ionesco's plays The Leader, The Rhinoceros,
The Bald Soprano, Macbett, The Killing Game, and The Chairs.



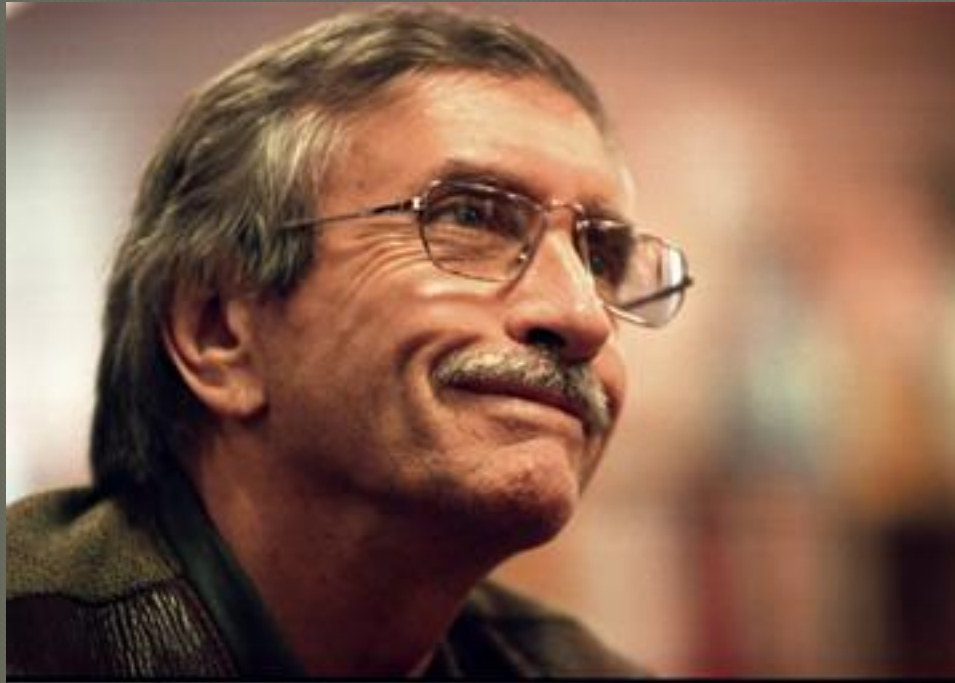
Tom Stoppard wrote, among others, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, The Real Thing, Jumpers, and he co-wrote the screenplay for Shakespeare in Love.



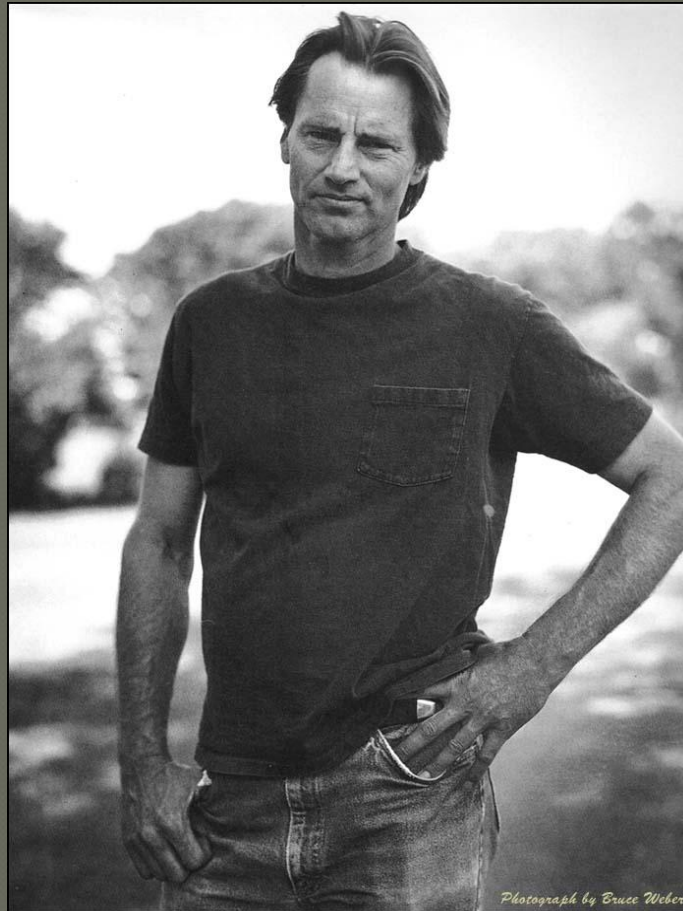
Harold Pinter's plays include The Room, The Birthday Party, The Homecoming, and Betrayal.



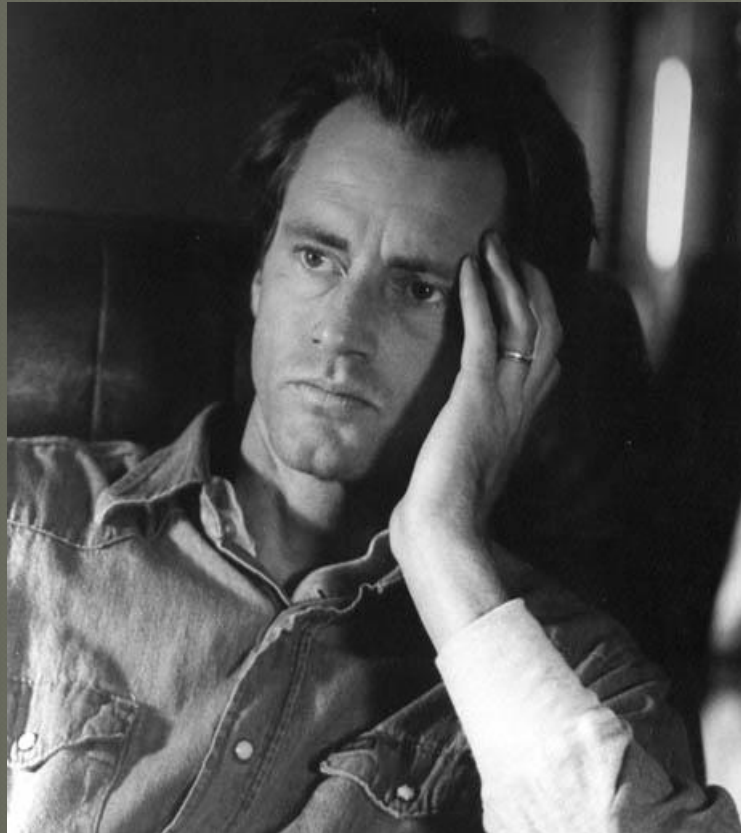
Edward Albee's plays include The Zoo Story, Sandbox, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, and Seascape.



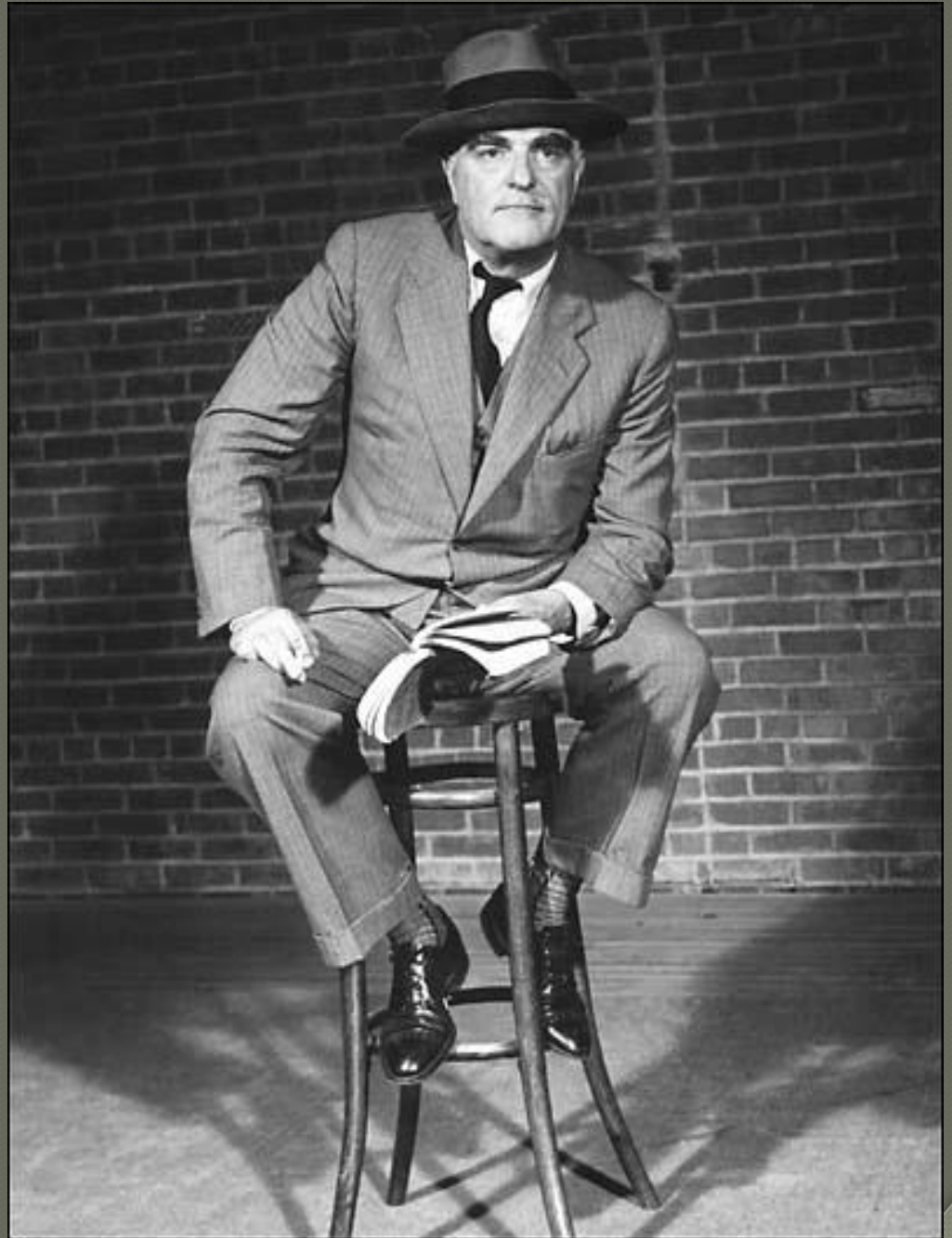
Sam Shepard's many plays include A Lie of the Mind,
Fool for Love and his Pulitzer Prize play Buried Child.



Sam Shepard is also a respected actor and director. He's acted in 39 films including Black Hawk Down, The Right Stuff, Crimes of the Heart, and Steel Magnolias.



Thornton Wilder, known
for writing Our Town
also wrote the
absurdist play
The Skin of Our Teeth.



Christopher Durang's many plays include Death Comes to Us All, Mary Agnes, 'dentity Crisis, The Actor's Nightmare, Baby and the Bathwater, and The Marriage of Bette and Boo.



Christopher Durang

The plays of these and other Absurdist playwrights have common themes including the uselessness of human actions, the failure of human communication, an illogical universe

**However most plays of this genre are considered to be
in the tradition of tragicomedy.**

THANK YOU