

Example of an abstract. The abstract describes the content of the thesis. The maximum length is 200 words.

Joanne B. Doeman

AGING IN FACT AND FICTION:

BECKETT'S PLAYS AND THE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Thesis under the direction of Nancy J. Cotton, Ph.D., Professor of English.

Samuel Beckett's major plays - Waiting for Godot, Endgame, Krapp's Last Tape, Happy Days – use aged protagonists who suffer from conspicuous physical and mental disabilities. This study compares Beckett's representation of old age with recent research data produced by gerontologists in studies of actual aging. The comparison shows that the disabilities portrayed reflect actual experience to some extent, but more often they function as metaphors for human limitations. The characters are paradigmatic human beings representing the plight of mankind in an absurdist universe; their blindness and lameness represent our inability to understand and act.