

**ANALYSING SAMUEL BECKETT'S *WAITING FOR
GODOT* IN NEW HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project work entitled. **ANALYSING SAMUEL BECKETT'S WAITING FOR GODOT IN NEW HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE** is a research work done by **SWETHA.S** under the guidance and Supervision of **Dr.S.JHON WESLY REGAN, Ph.D**, Assistant Professor, Department of English Mary Matha College of Arts and Science, Periyakulam and Submitted to Madurai Kamaraj University as Part of the Degree of Master of Arts and science.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project work title **ANALYSING SAMUEL BECKCT'S *WAITING FOR GODOT* IN NEW HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE** is the result of the study carried out by me for M.A Degree in English Under the Guidance and Supervision of **Dr. S. JOHN WESLY REGAN, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor Department of English Mary Matha College of Arts and Science, Periyakulam. This Project had not been previously submitted for any degree or diploma and has not formed part any paper and lecture.

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ABSTRACT

The paper talks about Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" as The Wonders, that eradicates all indications of Waiting like the fleeting and mental idea. The fundamental heavenly body of Beckett's play is the gathering between the Subject and the Other, where the Other is a mind-boggling Sign-Self, Another, God, that occurred in the peripheral time-space of Waiting. In Beckett's Waiting time has transformed into space, the Subject is immortal, space is frozen. The Other fizzles in its work to intervene any Meaning of Life.

The holding up is a sort of non-action, which is self-eradicating. Beckett signifies "self-deleting" in the feeling of decentring the subject, trading one regular Character for another in an interminable arrangement. In any case, this non-action likewise can exhaust out or eradicate the substance of the brain all the more profoundly, in this way advancing a non active condition of mindfulness by and large past friendly character. Beckett's non activity reflects and furthermore prompts a propensity toward unadulterated awareness.

The primary concern is the thing that occurs during the time spent Waiting. Perhaps it is the Life itself

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CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

Samuel Beckett was born on 13TH April 1906 at Foxrock. Near Dublin. His father Mary Beckett was a Surveyor by profession .The Becketts were a middle class family and were reasonably well off. He had his schooling at portora Royal school in a country in ulster.Samuel Beckett Had a good school record and got distinctions in studies as well as athletics. He was born on Good Friday: hence his life became a symbol of Christ's crucifixion and bad luck of human existence. Becket received his university education at Trinity College, Dublin.He graduated in French and Italian literature with the highest distinction.

The university Because of distinctions nominated him as its representative to a French Institution of higher learning. Where he served as a Lecturer in English for two years.Beckett visited France first as a school boy. Then as a teacher of English, and came in touch with eminent men of letters. Out of such people one was the ultramodern novelist James Joyee.He became a friend of Joyce and defended him as his champion in literary circles.He contributed essays to silence hostile criticism of Joyce. There was a natural bond between Joyce and beckett.Their backgrounds and their intellectual tastes were similar. Later on after wandering all over Europe for about five years, he settled in France and participated in the French Renaissance.

Samuel Beckett took an active part in the French Resistance for two years, during the world war II. After his European tour from 1931 to 1937, he settled in Paris in 1937 when the Germans invaded Poland in 1939 he was in Ireland with his mothers. He was annoyed by the Nazi treatment of the Jews among whom he had many close friends. So he joined the Resistance group with agents all over France, gathering details of the movements of the German troops. His writing helped to take his mind off the war and the German occupation. But his life as a peasant reduced his physical strength. He had an experience of living close to death every minute of the day, and saw those around him butchered suddenly and ruthlessly. He had Personal experience of poverty and misery.

Beckett wrote an essay on Dante ...Bruno...Voice Joyce". James was highly impressed by this essay. He also wrote a poem entitled Whoroscope. This poem brought him a small prize and gained him a modest reputation as a poet. In 1950, Beckett was known only to the most devoted followers of the avant garde (the pioneers or innovators in some field)

In 1945, the beginning of the most productive period in Beckett's life. Beckett chose to write in French because he felt that he needed the discipline which the use of an acquired language would impose upon him. Beckett won his fame gradually. His novel *Molloy* (1951) created a stir. But his real triumph was his play, *Waiting for Godot*, which has appeared in book form in 1952. The play was really enigmatic and complex.

It was a new kind of drama; it is the glory of the theatre of the Absurd. Only 16 Years after the first performance of *Waiting for Godot*,

Beckett was awarded the Noble prize for Literature. His right to the honour as unquestioned and obvious. He was a recognized world figure, an authority, a major influence.

Samuel Beckett is known for his innovation of newtypes of plays.His plays is highly unconventional. The dramatist of his time mostly focused on the action of the play.Therefore,the action was considered as a crucial was in every drama. His play shows the concept of action in his plays. He showed that drama/play is possible without action. This is the way; the beckett audience takes an interest in his plays.

In his plays, Becket added the subject of boredom. The audience not only watches his play but also feels it. His every dialogue and word is full of meaning and symbols. Intense knowledge of things is required to understand the plays of Becket. Moreover, the readers/audience has to feel the play rather than simply watching it.

For the audience, it was an entirely new experience to watch this sort of drama on stage, which lacked actions. This lack of action and focus on the internal complexities of the character of the play makes Samuel Beckett a renowned dramatist of his time. Because of his innovative contribution to the theatre, he is still known in the world of dramatists. With his contributions, Beckett enlarges the concept of theatre, and therefore, it can never be underestimated.

Anatomy of a Literary Revolution is a 1997 book by French literary critic Pascale Casanova about the Nobel Prize-winning Irish playwright,

novelist and poet Samuel Beckett. She contends that rather than the representative of literary existentialism that he is popularly understood to be, Beckett is best viewed as a creator of a highly autonomous form of literature, that is, a literature that is largely devoid of external references. The book was published in English translation in 2006.

Famous quotes by Samuel beckett such as “Memories are killing. So you must not think of certain things, of those that are dear to you, or rather you must think of them, for if you don’t there is the danger of finding them, in your mind, little by little.”

In 1929, James Joyce asked Samuel Beckett to write an essay on “Work in Progress”, in which he planned to incorporate a dozen articles altogether. He planned to write on Dante and the love of Italian and French was a common bond between Samuel Beckett and James Joyce. Among the many articles on James Joyce’s book, Samuel Beckett’s articles was very interesting. Samuel Beckett fascinated James Joyce’s experiments with English language. James Joyce tried to bend and form the words to convey meaning to new words from existing words, to stretch language beyond its established frontiers. Samuel Beckett showed his general interest in mental disorders and psychiatry coupled with Carl jung’s ideas and beliefs.

The dramatic works of Samuel Beckett reflect the evolution of his interests in various means of artistic expression, as he composed plays for stage, radio, cinema, and television. His themes are not constant, but they are grimly developed through a steady mood of ironic method.

As a critic, a transitional thinker, an innovator, and a postmodernist who probed the human condition and sensed the absurdity of the modern world, Beckett tried to link art and life into unusual theatrical images in order to etch human beings' inner world and the human experience of consciousness. Beckett is best known as the author of four intriguingly powerful stage plays; *Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame*, *Krapp's Last Tape*, and *Happy Days*. There are many different aspects of time that Beckett explores in his novels, such as its inevitability, its end and the overlap of past and present.

Beckett attempts to convey his deeply philosophical observations about topics we encounter in everyday life. Beckett touches on everything from the daily passage of time, to the way humans communicate, to the overriding uncertainty that is part of every aspect of life. These themes are not only strong in one work, but Beckett touches on each idea in every piece in his catalogue of great plays and novels. Beckett's most prominent theme in many of his works is his humanity's use of words and language. For example, Beckett often expresses his opinions about language in *Waiting for Godot*, specifically how society abuses it. First of all, Beckett shows how people use language without expressing any real meaning with their words. His works contain very little of a linear plot or story. These are the highlight of his works.

Happy days is one of work by Samuel Beckett. This work has a theme about loneliness and the need for companionship. The author moves

this play very interesting method. This play revolves around pairings. The sounds of Winnies and names suggest a light ascent and heavy drop.

Endgame is one of another work by Beckett. This play has a theme such as meaning, Narrative and Engagement. Samuel Beckett tells this play is a confounding piece of theatre. Furthermore; Beckett is concerned with language as a theatrical construct. Language is what drives a play, which begins when characters speak and ends when they utter the last lines of the script.

Krapp's last tape is a famous play Beckett provides this play about memory and the contrast between a lost past and the sour present. This play is a one act play, Beckett makes use of the tape recorder to show the elusiveness of the human personality, Krapp is a very old man who throughout his adult life has annually recorded an account of the past years impressions and events on a tape. Beckett has found a graphic expression for the problem of the ever changing identity of the self, which he has already described in his essay on Proust. In Krapp's Last Tape, the self at one moment in time only to find it utterly strange. This is the theme of this play by Samuel Beckett.

Waiting for Godot is a first play by Samuel Beckett. This play has many themes such as Humor and the Absurd, Human condition, Suffering, Time and waiting. Humor and the Absurd is one of the themes, it tells that waiting for Godot is a prime example of what has come to be known as the theatre of the Absurd. The play is filled with wordplay and characters.

Human condition is one of central theme of waiting for Godot. Vladimir and Estragon represent those who have been left behind by society; the poor; the infirm who feels as though they have been abandoned by god and doomed to lives of misery and discontent. The play suggests that is man natural state.

Suffering is another theme of this play and it is deal of physical, mental and emotional suffering. Vladimir and Estragon are starved for food in physical pain and “bored to death”. Both have a anonymous fear that’s why are constantly waiting for Godot.

Time is one of main theme of this play and it presents a slew of problems in waiting for Godot. The very title of the play reveals its central action waiting. The two main characters are forced to whittle away their days while. Anticipating the arrive o a man who never comes. Because they repeat the same actions every day, time is cyclical actions of this play waiting for Godot.

New Historicism is a method of literary criticism that emphasizes the history of the text by relating it to the configurations of power, society, or ideology in a given time. New Historicism acknowledges not only that a work of literature is influenced by its author's times and circumstances, but that the critic's response to that work is also influenced by his environment, beliefs, and prejudices.

New Historicists and Cultural Materialists are interested in recovering lost histories and in exploring mechanisms of repression and

subjugation. The major difference is that New Historicists tend to concentrate on those at the top of the social hierarchy (the church, the monarchy, the upper-classes)

Cultural Materialists tend to concentrate on those at the bottom of the social hierarchy (the lower-classes, women, and other marginalized peoples). Also, though each of the schools practices different kinds of history, New Historicists tend to draw on the disciplines of political science and anthropology given their interest in governments, institutions, and culture, while Cultural Materialists tend to rely on economics and sociology given their interest in class, economics, and co modification.

Stephen Grenbelts created the term ‘New historicism’ .He is a American critic and he is a major figure commonly associated wit New Historicism.Indeed, his influence meant that New Historicism first gained popularity among Renaissance scholars.

Michel Focowlt is one of also a major figure in new Historicism. It is quite possibly the most influential critic of the last quarten-century .His interest in issues of power,epistenmology,the edeology have influenced critics not only in literary studies but also political science, history and anthropology.

KEY CONCEPTS OF NEW HISTORISM:

Class is a more specifically cultural Materialist concept,Since New Historicists might suggest that all levels of socity share in the circulation of

power through the Production and distribution of the most elementary cultural and social “texts”.

IDEOLOGY:

The major thing to remember is that to recognize your own ideology is like pushing the bus you’re riding on, since it is so much a part of the way you perceive the world and its workings.

NEW HISTORICIST PREMISES:

Images and narratives do important cultural work. They function as a kind of workshop (or playroom) where cultural problems, hopes, and obsessions are addressed or avoided. New Historicists also tend to stress that authors and poets are not secular saints--that even though they may be more circumspect about their societies than the average citizen, they nonetheless participate in it. Consequently, New Historicist critics often point out places in artists' work where their attitudes do not anticipate our own, or may even be distasteful to us.

New Historicism applies the poststructuralist idea that reality is constructed and multiple, and the Foucauldian idea of the role of power in creating knowledge. The discipline of New Historicism has been influenced by Althusserian concept of ideology; the Derridian deconstructionist idea that a text is at war with itself; Bakhtinian dialogism which posits that a text contains a multiplicity of conflicting voices; and most prominently by Foucauldian Power/Knowledge and discourse. Analyzing the nature of

power, Foucault expounds that Power (for instance, in the form of the panoptic surveillant state), defines what is truth, knowledge, normalcy.

New Historicism believes in the Foucauldian idea of the “capillary modes of power” which like Althusser’s Ideology interpellates the lives and actions of the citizens. New historicism and cultural analysis never suggests “conclusive” ideas; rather, it offers multiple readings and Possibilities.

New Historicism rejects the idea of art as a purely aesthetic concept. It instead argues that art is connected with material realities in which an artistic entity was produced. Within New Historicism, the emphasis is not on the internal details of a text.

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Some of the scholars associated with New Historicism are Stuart Hall, Raymond William, and Stephen Greenblatt. New Historicism is generally a literature analysis tool which focuses on interpreting the social, cultural and political factors which affected the author thus influencing the context in which the writer wrote the text.

CHAPTER-2

SATIRE AND IRONY IN THIS PLAY

Waiting for Godot is steeped in satire and irony. Irony is not here and there but it is everywhere in the play. It can be seen in the title, situations, dialogue, characterization, motif of the play, and in the meaning of the play. The play shows the irony of human fate. Though a man is an intellectual having the best brain amongst all the creatures of the world, yet is the most miserable of the creatures. He comes on the earth not to enjoy life but to suffer various kinds of misery.

The two tramps in the play, with their boredom, their fear of pain, their shreds of love and hate, are a surprisingly effective version of the whole human condition- condition for which action is no answer, chiefly because there is no obvious action to be taken, nothing to be done. Beckett comes to a nihilistic conclusion. Thus the whole meaning of the play is covered in the shroud of irony.

Waiting for Godot is full of ironical situations. The waiting by the tramps itself is an ironical situation. They wait and wait and yet Godot does not arrive. Probably he would never arrive. Their situation is our situation. We also go on waiting for something or the other in our lives. Estragon is trying to take off his boot, saying “Nothing to be done”, ironically referring to the action less and meaningless lives of the people of this world. People do not do anything worthwhile despite their tall claims of activities and actions. They gather and squander, eat and drink, sleep and wake, and then they die without a purpose. The other situation which is ironical is the play with the hares by Pozzo and Lucky.

The play is full of verbal irony, too. There are numerous instances of it. For example,

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 for our honeymoon. We'll swim. We'll be happy.

Then they hint at ironical situation of Christ's crucifixion. He was hanged along with two thieves. Satire is the main weapon for correction, reformation and improvement in the eighteenth century which was an age of prose and reason. Hence satire has become a major tool not only in the hands of novelists and poets but also the dramatists. The Theater of Absurd, which is attempted by Beckett, is satirical when it criticizes a society that is petty and dishonest. In it man is "stripped of the accidental circumstances of social position of historical context, confronted with basic choices, the basic situation of his existence" (Dan Davin).

Serious subject matter has been treated under a farcical surface. The genuine concern of one tramp with the possibility of salvation is constantly broken into by the other with remarks like, "I find this most extraordinarily interesting," and the discussion follows a carefully constructed comic pattern, with Vladimir's logic steadily frightening only to be punctured by Estragon's final People are bloody ignorant apes. This tug between subject- matter and form runs through the whole play.

Much of the surface is taken up with farcical satire of conventional social behavior. Pozzo, for example, is unable to take a simple action like sitting down without attendant paraphernalia of ceremony; and the two tramps are always trying to strike up what will pass for a polite conversation, using

catch-phrases like Vladimir's "this is not boring you, I hope?" But the satire is not mere incidental comedy.

The emphasis on the surface aspects of life has its part in the meaning of the play. At one point fat Pozzo is lying on the ground, unable to get up. Spasmodically he shouts Help. Vladimir, glad of this chance to be useful for once, says: "Let us not waste our time in idle discourse" and launches into a long speech. This is a typical Beckett scene.

The situation itself is farcical and yet has serious implications; and Vladimir's speech, though mock-pompous in tone, contains the real meaning of the play. He says: "What are we doing here, that is the question. And we are blessed in this, that we happen to know the answer. Yes, in this immense confusion one thing alone is clear. We are waiting for Godot to come."

The surface proceedings of life, of which the play is made up, keep mankind's attention off the despair beneath it all. For Beckett it is a relief because he does not have an optimistic Christian faith in redemption beyond the despair. Beckett uses words very economically. Yet he is able to make his satire more meaningful. For example, mark the following satiric utterance against the Englishmen:

Estragon: an Englishman having drunk a little more than usual goes to a brothel. The bawd asks him if he wants a fair one, a dark one, or a red-haired one.

The satiric tone of his dramas is general. He does not attack individuals. Paradoxically, however, Beckett's refusal to be more than a painstaking recorder of his modes of existence, his categorical refusal to allow any philosophical meaning or thesis to be attributed to his work, makes his satire and irony much more meaningful

Beckett's writings are more than mere illustrations of the point-of-view of existentialist philosophers like Heidegger and Sartre; they constitute the culmination of existential thought itself, precisely because they are free of any abstract concepts of general ideas, and thus escape the inner contradiction of existentialist statements that are couched in the form of generalizations.

The general features of Beckett's satire are mild tone, understatement, brevity and objectivity. He is never bitter, harsh or personal. He exposes not the individual but the existence; he satirizes not character but his situation. In *Waiting for Godot*, satire is against man's tendency to false hope and vain glories. He attacks falsity of life. He also shows the conflict and tension between the temporal and the infinite

Beckett's says, "an art ... weary of its puny exploits, weary of pretending to be able, of being able, of doing a little better the same old thing, of going a little further along a dreary soul... and preferring the expression that there is nothing to express, nor power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express." Hence instead of including in generalizations and abstract truths, Beckett uses the weapons of satire and irony to make us realize and experience our own consciousness, which in turn is constantly in flux and ever changing and therefore negative rather than positive, the empty space through which the fleeting images pass. The existential experience is thus felt as a succession of attempts to give shape to the void; when nothing can lay claim to final, definitive reality, we enter a world of games, of arbitrary actions structured to give the illusion of reality. So Vladimir and Estragon think up their ways to pass the time; Murphy finds illumination in a game of chess: Hamm and Clov are pieces in such a game; Molloy painstakingly constructs a system of sucking stones. Watt works out his strings of permutations of the series of dogs, the series of men, the series

of pictures, his system of the Krak! Krek! And Krik! of frogs. Thus, irony in Beckett's plays is a tool of fulfilling the obligation to express his experience of being, in trying to communicate his existential experience.

Beckett does all this with skill and sense of style of a highly conscious craftsman, using the full discriminatory faculty of a skilled literary artist. Beckett shows through his satire and irony that the world is absurd, that man is alone and in despair

Samuel beckett's play waiting for Godot is commonly interpreted within the context of the theatre of the Absurd, existentialist literature or christianallegory. This play recognizes the validity of all such readings while attempting to merge these seemingly contradictory perspectives. By reading the play within the context of Christian Existentialism, new insights are uncovered as to what the play may be saying about the existential dilemma.

Christian faith:

Christianity is the most widely practiced religion in the world, with more than 2 billion followers. The Christian faith centers on beliefs regarding the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Five Basic beliefs of Christianity

- 1) Uniqueness of Jesus (Virgin Birth)
- 2) One God (The Trinity)
- 3) Necessity of the Cross (Salvation)
- 4) Resurrection and Second Coming are combined
- 5) Inspiration of Scripture

Samuel beckett's play waiting for godot are indirectly compared to the church

In this play Vladimir and estragon are main characters and they may not be role models for the Christian faith or men anyone would normally

admire: The play clearly has Christian elements, but it is a far cry from a morality play or pilgrim's progress. Through references, the main characters of waiting for Godot refer 'Godot' as a god of Jesus.

Through an examination of the characterization, dialogue symbolism, and language in waiting for Godot, it demonstrate how these elements of the play work together to create the preposition of concerning man's existence and relation to the outside world and then provide that correlates with the basic principles of Christian existentialism.

CHRISTIAN MYTHICAL INTERPRETATIONS:

When someone asked about the theme of "Waiting for Godot", Beckett is reported to have referred to the sentence in the writings of St. Augustine,

"Do not despair: one of the thieves was saved. Do not presume: one of the thieves was damned."

The theme of the two thieves on the cross, the theme of the uncertainty of the hope of the salvation and the chance bestowal of divine grace, does indeed pervade the whole play. Two characters Vladimir and Estragon are shown as tramps or thieves. At the beginning, Vladimir refers this,

"One of the thieves was saved. It's a reasonable percentage."

And in the act 1, he refers this several times. Even Vladimir is shown talking about repentance. He several times says to Estragon to wait for Mr. Godot and when Estragon asks the reason, he says, Mr. Godot, otherwise punish them!

Beckett, though, wrote these dialogues quite funny and in light mood, it has strong meanings.

"Vladimir: One of the thieves was saved. It's a reasonable percentage.

Gogo Estragon: What?

Vladimir: suppose we repented.

Estragon: Repented what? Vladimir: Oh...we wouldn't have to go into the details. Estragon: Our being born?"

It means Vladimir has faith in the myth and he is craving for salvation. He wants to be one of the thieves, who saved.

In the second act, while passing the time, they are thinking and talking about dead voices, it also seems that they are thinking about their past acts and evaluating their own deeds. Vladimir and Estragon talk incessantly because they want to hear the 'dead voices' which explore the mysteries of being and the self to the limits of anguish and suffering.

There is another Christian myth described in the dialogues between the boy and Vladimir. The boy, who looks after the goats is not beaten but, his brother who looks after Mr. Godot's ships is beaten. This incident refers to myth of two sons of Adam Cain and Abel. There too the Lord's grace fell on one rather than other without any rational explanation.

Here Godot also acts contrary/similarly to Jesus Christ. It can be interpreted as God's punishment or nature of giving punishments. And Vladimir also gives reason to Estragon that if they don't wait for Mr. Godot, he will punish them.

The act of waiting and Vladimir's dialogue to boy, "Tell him that you saw me" seems that he is waiting for damnation. Even the thought of repentance is also present in the play.

Thus, the play has very strong effect of Christian ideas of salvation, repentance including its myths.

BIBLICAL ELEMENTS IN “WAITING FOR GODOT”:

As it has many Christian ideas, it is also related with many biblical elements and symbols. At the beginning of the play, Vladimir asks Estragon, have he read the Bible or not. Throughout the play, biblical, Christian elements are very much presented with the symbols.

The background image of ‘Tree’ has multiple meanings, and religious interpretation see as it is an image of cross where Jesus Christ was crucified. Their waiting also reflects the basic biblical idea of Christ’s returns on the Doomsday. This play has strong religious connections, as it is also known as religious allegory. As William Mueller observed,

“The human predicament described in Beckett’s first play is that of man living on the Saturday after the Friday of the crucifixion, and not really knowing if all hope is dead or if the next day will bring the life which has been promised.”

Mr.GODOT AND SECOND COMING:

One popular interpretation of waiting for Godot is the second coming aspect. One meaning of Mr. Godot is none other but ‘God’ and there are many clues and evidences in the play which symbolically says, that Mr. Godot is a symbol for God.

Religious interpretation posits Vladimir and Estragon as humanity waiting for the elusive return of a saviour. This interpretation makes Pozzo into the pope and Lucky into the faithful. Evidence is the title itself; the name ‘Godot’ also proves it. The name suggests ‘God’-OT it must have some significance. And it must be interpreted religious way. It is also seen in the dialogues between Vladimir and the boy.

“Vladimir: (softly) has he a beard, Mr. Godot? Boy: yes, sir. Vladimir: fair or ... (he hesitates)... or black? Boy: I think It’s white, sir.”

The personality, Beckett describes is much related with image of Christian God. This description clearly shows that Mr. Godot means God.

Other dialogues between Vladimir and Estragon describe characteristics of Mr. Godot. Let's evaluate these dialogues.

“Estragon: And if we dropped him? (Pause) If we dropped him?

Vladimir: He'd punish us. Estragon: And if he comes? Vladimir: We'll be saved.”

It means Mr. Godot will give punishment if they leave and Mr. Godot is saviour also, they will be rewarded, if they wait. As it is already described, the tree symbolizes cross where Christ was crucified and they are waiting there.

Throughout the play, the mute character Godot symbolizes God, as we are waiting for God – a saviour from our sorrows and sufferings. This uncertain, second coming of God is well presented, who, when, where – questions about God and Godot both are unanswered in reality as well in the play.

“WAITING FOR GODOT” WITH HINDU PHILOSOPHY AND IDEAS:

In Hindu religion, there is also an idea of an ‘Avatar’ for whom people are waiting. Though the play has not much connection with Hindu religious ideas, it can be interpreted and connected with some philosophical and spiritual ideas as the play is multi-layered.

The concept of ‘Nothingness’ can be interpreted with Hindu philosophy, According to it, the world and everything, every action is ‘Maya’ has no meaning but only ‘illusion’. Other interpretation of Hindu philosophy says, ‘karma’, the act must be done. The dialogue of Vladimir,

“Let us do something while we have the chance....Let us make the most of it, before it is too late!”

This ‘performative’ potency suggests the finally achieved actions means ‘karma’. There are several other interpretations of Hindu philosophy and spirituality can be possible. The idea of hope as waiting (without dying) is also a Hindu philosophic idea. Though it has no connection with Hindu ideas, it is worthy to be studied with many interpretations.

RELIGIOUS DILEMMA IN “WAITING FOR GODOT”:

The play is mostly interpreted as an Existential play. There are many elements which favor existentialism more than even religious interpretations. But to promote existentialist views and ideas, and to present religious ideas’ irrationality, Beckett presents religious dilemma, counter arguments against religion. It becomes very strong, interesting point of discussion and debate in the play.

The famous myth of two thieves used in the play, is deconstructed by the writer. When Vladimir says, “One of the thieves was saved. It’s a reasonable percentage.” Later he enlarges on this subject. He asks why only one of the thieves is supposed to have been saved and other damned? He raises questions why only one of four Evangelists speaks of a thief being saved, not other three. So, it cannot be hundred percent true! He intelligently points out that, it is curious fact that everybody seems to believe that one witness. This deconstructing point can be seen in Vladimir’s and Estragon’s dialogues.

Estragon: Who believes him? Vladimir: Everybody. It’s the only version they know. Estragon: people are bloody ignorant apes.

Estragon speaks, criticizes human mentality, whose attitude has been one of scepticism throughout the play.

Beckett, very intentionally, created these two characters- Estragon and Vladimir. Among them Vladimir is shown more intelligent, craving for salvation, moral, religious, and thinker than Estragon.

Estragon seems dumb, irreligious, sleeping-not thoughtful, only craving for necessary things for body but not interested in spiritual thinking.

Two ideas about existentialism and spiritual/religious waiting clashes in the play. When Vladimir says to repent, Estragon asks for reason. Two concept of religious and atheist are put together with these two characters.

Throughout the play, Vladimir is thinking about repentance, salvation, God, Bible and many other religious things. He, very hopefully, waiting for Mr. Godot to come and to be saved. But Estragon is very forgetful, he forgets everything, he has no concern with these religious thoughts.

Uncertainty of God or Mr. Godot is also questioned in the play. Both characters are waiting and passing time without doing anything, but Mr. Godot does not come. It can also be interpreted that, “Nothing to be done” while waiting for god and human being become passive while waiting.

As an existentialist idea, they want to die, and wait for another day with hope. It is quite confusing, they both have hope for God or Godot to come but they find hopelessness or meaningless to wait, so they die. The play has idea of existentialism as well as religious. And throughout the play, this dilemma goes on. Perhaps, it shows Beckett’s own dilemma as he is atheist

As biography suggests, Beckett knows about all the Christian philosophical, spiritual ideas from childhood. So, the play has many Christian values like repentance, craving for salvation, faith in God, fear of God and hope for to be saved, and ‘coming of Mr. Godot’. Even Vladimir’s character is full with Christian values like he feeds and helps Estragon as true friend, he wants to help Pozzo and has desire to be saved.

As it is discussed earlier, “Waiting for Godot” has many Biblical, Christian symbols; one of the interpretations of the play is as ‘religious allegory’. But as the play has many interpretations and deep layers, it cannot be final and only interpretation.

“Waiting for Godot” shows the genius of Beckett and has very strong literariness that reader can interpret many meanings out of this small play.

SYMBOLISM OF BECKETTS WAITING FOR GODOT:

A symbol, by definition, refers to an object or situation which is used to represent an idea or belief in a non-literal sense. The author utilizes literal scenarios or objects to evoke a deeper understanding of, or insight into an idea which he/she may believe has universal application and relevance. Obviously, there would be different interpretations in this regard since it is natural for us to perceive the author's supposed message within different contexts.

These are the way beckett provide different symbols in the play waiting for godot. Beckett’s Waiting for Godot is full of symbolism including the names of characters like Viladimir and Estragon, Lucky and Pozzo and even the hidden character; Godot.

TREE:

It is one of symbol of this play and the two characters are sit under the tree. This tree portrays the world as barren or meaningless, lack of purpose. For some critics, the cross on which Christ was crucified is sometimes called a tree. From Beckett’s view, he said that he was puzzled by people trying to take away “a broader, loftier meaning” from the play, making it unlikely that he intended any broader religious symbolism.

LUCKY'S BAGGAGE:

Lucky never puts down the items he carries, except when Pozzo orders him to do something. He again picks it up without any reason. This action shows the human tendency of enslavement and burdens which are unnecessary.

The relationship between Pozzo and Lucky is shown as capital and labor, master and slave, exploiter and exploited, between old testament God and new testament Christ.

POZZO'S ROPE:

Lucky is a slave for his master Pozzo. Lucky is tied with rope, holding both master and slave together. This is the symbol of distance between the God and his slave.

NIGHT FALL:

While Estragon and Vladimir are waiting for Godot, they also wait for the nightfall. This nightfall shows that darkness is like a death and falling of night is like to relieve from daily suffering as death is death to relieve from life.

HAT:

Hat represents thinking, as the long monologue of Lucky in Act 1 and stops when his hat is knocked off. Estragon and Vladimir also exchange their hats with Lucky's hat back and forth. This scene is the representation of instability of individual identities and exchanging represents the exchange of identities.

NAMES:

The most important example of hidden meanings in the play is Godot, which is similar to God. Godot symbolizes salvation that religion promises but never comes true Estragon means "tarragon" in French, while Pozzo is Italian for

water. Lucky's name suggests the unluckiness of the sufferings. However, nihilist viewpoint is that, these names hold no meaning at all.

BOOTS:

Boot symbolizes daily life struggling and Estragon is the most affected by boots. He takes off and putting again them on. This shows daily struggles in life which cannot be changed.

THE BONE:

Bone is the symbol of poverty, the characters do not have enough food for themselves and they beg for their survival. This shows the relationship between Feudalism or Capitalism who has dominated over the poor.

literary techniques in samuel beckett play waiting for godot

Because Beckett was more interested in the stage as a presentation of a philosophical position rather than as "literature," his techniques are more theatrical than literary—that is, he uses stage language (proxemics, imitation of an action, mimesis) rather than such tools as [syntax](#), [metaphor](#), or rhythm (although manuscript genetics reveal that he was very careful about the rhythm of dialogue). Some historical references, notably the vaudeville echoes such as the hat-juggling routine, may be considered "technique." Having said that, however, it is important to note that the entire play is a metaphor for Man's existential dilemma.

The two-act play structure itself was an innovation during this time in stage history. This literary (and theatrical) technique is sometimes called polarization—a way of underlining distinct features of a character.

INDETERMINATE TIME AND PLACE IN BECKETT'S PLAY:

In this play *Waiting for Godot*, on the whole, clearly detaches itself from particular aspects of the historical and cultural context in which Beckett wrote in order to universalize the experience of Vladimir and Estragon. And it

achieves this universal quality initially by placing the two figures in an indeterminate setting and time. As the play opens, the setting and time is simply described as “A country road. A tree. Evening.” In the second act, the description is simply, “Next day. Same Time. Same Place.” This backdrop is left unspecified in order to emphasize that the action of the play is a universal “situation” rather than a particular series of events that happened to a particular set of characters.

At one time in our century this waiting could have stood for South Africans waiting for apartheid to end in their native land. More than a half century after the unleashing of atomic energy, this waiting could still represent our fears of nuclear catastrophe. On a more personal level, many know what it is like to wait for news of a test for cancer. But all of these specific situations reveal how specificity can reduce the poetic evocativeness of Beckett’s waiting to a mundane flatness. The unspecified nature of what Vladimir and Estragon wait for is what gives Beckett’s play its extraordinary power.

The peculiar quality of Vladimir and Estragon’s waiting, of course, is that they wait with only the vaguest sense of what they are waiting for and that they wait without much hope while still clinging to hope as their only ballast in an existential storm. But even this narrower description of the play’s “waiting” leaves many possibilities for corresponding situations. For example, one of the most famous productions of waiting for Godot perhaps reveals most clearly how the indeterminate time and place of the play permits it to speak to a wide variety of audience experiences.

Samuel Beckett, in his landmark play, waiting for Godot, scrutinizes “the notion of time” in order to present human condition in the light of an absurd universe.

Considered the fourth dimension of space, Time in *Waiting for Godot* represents duality of change and changelessness. In doing so, Beckett strips his characters of all essences and depicts them in their bare situation of existence. In the play, the couple that embodies the dual aspect of time is that of Pozzo and Lucky. In Act I of the play, Pozzo is shown to be very particular about time. He seems certain that he has travelled for six hours. But in Act II, his wonderful sight changes to complete blindness. Lucky, too, transforms from a thinking/speaking animal to a dumb automaton, unable to even groan. Throughout the play we see repetitive actions with slight variations, which in turn make us aware of passing of time. As time lapses, we are all changed, but without any warning. This absurd universe has no logic; therefore, time as a changing agent has no logic either.

The dual nature of time causes immense anxiety to Didi and Gogo who keep oscillating between hope and despair, especially Didi. Full of hope, he leaves everything to future (“time will tell”), yet at the end of each action he feels despair for uncertainty ensues hopeful thoughts and there is “nothing to be done”. This uncertainty is interestingly exposed through the reference to Saturday in Act I, when Gogo and Didi are discussing the specific day they are supposed to meet Godot.

Estragon: You’re sure it was this evening?

Vladimir: What?

Estragon: That we were to wait.

Vladimir: He said Saturday. (Pause.) I think.

...

Estragon: (Very insidious). But what Saturday? And is it Saturday? Is it not rather Sunday?

This reference to Saturday recalls the Biblical story of Christ's Crucifixion (on Friday) and Resurrection (on Sunday). Saturday lends to uncertainty as it falls between Friday and Sunday. On Saturday, one hopes for resurrection of a divine power, but nothing is for certain. Thus, one succumbs to uncertainty as one oscillates between faith and doubt while waiting in anticipation.

Similarly, for modern human beings, life is but a series of Saturdays when uncertainty prevails. This is the cause of angst in modern human beings. In order to deal with this anguish, one lapses into rituals and routines. And that is how one copes with the "accursed time". Here we are reminded of Hamlet's angst: 'Time is out of joint, O cursed spite/If ever I was born to set it right'. Modern human beings feel the pricks of time in the same way as Shakespeare's Hamlet does, but have no hope to set it right, for them there is "nothing to be done". Beckett's genius lies in depicting this situation of every human being through his art, and *Waiting for Godot* is a prime example of the same.

CHAPTER-3

FACTS AND TRUTH IN THIS PLAY

Waiting for Godot, tragicomedy in two acts by Irish writer Samuel Beckett, published in 1952 in French as *En attendant Godot* and first produced in 1953. *Waiting for Godot* was a true innovation in drama and the Theatre of the Absurd's first theatrical success.

This play translated into English by Beckett himself as *Waiting for Godot*, the play was produced in London in 1955 and in the United States in 1956 and has been produced worldwide. Beckett's play came to be considered an essential example of what Martin Esslin later called "Theatre of the Absurd," a term that Beckett disavowed but which remains a handy description for one of the most important theatre movements of the twentieth century.

The spectator shares this experience of waiting for someone who might not come with the characters which made it possible for Beckett to give his audience an understanding of the intentions of the absurdist drama. *Waiting for Godot* is not only completely detached from the conventions of the classic drama, namely the unity of time, place and action, this unity is instead substituted by illogical actions, absurd scenarios and dialogues that appear to be linked randomly. In this play Beckett provides the mingling of comedy and tragedy and it's a way of meeting the challenge of the age's new science, violence, confusion, self-alienation and sense of time as non-perfecting.

BECKETT'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE BRITISH THEATRE:

The mind reels before all this in neurosis. Yet comedy and tragedy have always been equally part of daily life; and life has never lacked joy and fun and threat and agony. Beckett has interwoven all these in this play. The dialogue is clipped, staccato, threadbare, repetitive. This sparser and sparser rubric of lost certainties is Beckett's contribution to the British theatre and to his century's abandonment of the previous concept of steady "progress". His plays have inspired younger dramatists.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A BECKETT PLAY:

A typical beckett play has certain recognizable characteristics which differentiate it from the work of other writers. They have no plot or action in the ordinary sense of the word. Really happens to them, in fact the very sense of them is that there is nothing really significant that can happen in the world of today. In one of the plays they talk thought the play.

In *Waiting for Godot* the non-action of futile waiting by the two tramps is enacted twice. In this and several other plays there are no female characters. Even when there are no women Beckett does not exploit their femininity for any purpose. His plays create an effect of timelessness and universality. They are independent of age, country and nation.

THE MAINFOLD APPEAL OF THIS PLAY:

One critic described *Waiting for Godot* as a statement in dramatic terms of the wretchedness of man without god; it is a "general expression of the futility of human existence when man pins his hope on a force outside of himself"

THE IMPACT OF BECKETT'S PLAYS:

Beckett's plays leave their indelible impression on the minds of their audiences, because they challenge some of their assumptions about life and living.

Beckett said he wrote *Godot* as "a relaxation, to get away from the awful prose I was writing at the time." That was in 1948-1949. *Waiting for Godot* was not only a change of pace and genre but of language: he hoped writing the play in French would help trigger something new. The play is so stripped down, so elemental, it invites all kinds of social and political and religious interpretation", wrote Norman Berlin in a tribute to the play in Autumn 1999, "with Beckett himself placed in different schools of thought, different movements

Throughout *Waiting for Godot*, the audience may encounter religious, philosophical, classical, psychoanalytical and biographical especially wartime – references

The two keywords in the play are 'waiting and Godot'. These two words are the keys to the as well as to the theme. Since the main theme of the play is waiting for some 'Godot' stands for god , or Jehovah or Christ. People, the characters of the play are waiting for him so that he may deliver them free from misery and suffering or from their salvation and redemption. Godot refers the supernatural agency. Or perhaps Godot stands for a mythical human being whose arrival is expected to change the human situation.

Waiting for Godot is a complex and puzzling play. It offers a variety of meanings and interpretations. The play has a widespread appeal and each set of audiences interpreted it in its own manner.

THE THEATRE OF THE ABSURD:

“The theatre of the Absurd” is a phrase taken from Albert Camus’ essay, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942) in which Camus defined the absurd as the tension which emerges from man’s determination. The writers in the theatre of the Absurd diagnosed humanity’s plights as purposelessness in an existence out of harmony with its surroundings. Awareness of this lack of purpose in all produces a state of metaphysical anguish which is the central theme of these absurdist. The absurdist is a dramatist of a philosophical bent who places the greatest value on their thematic statement. They wish to be intellectual, ideological, objective and cerebral and want their audiences to accompany them on their celebrations.

THE RELIGIOUS THEME OF THIS PLAY:

Some critics have found a religious meaning in the play. Vladimir raises the issue of human salvation early in the play. The tramps wait for Godot who may represent God, and their persistence in waiting for Godot shows their faith in God. The mutual attachment of the two tramps and Vladimir’s protective attitude towards his friend have been interpreted as Christian virtues. Pozzo’s being mistaken for Godot to begin with, may also be linked with this religious interpretation. So the play is a consistent and elaborate religious allegory.

The playwright has also incorporated some minor themes as the means of communication and the illusory nature of such concepts as past and future.

THE VARIOUS DEVICES USED BY THE ABSURDISTS:

The absurdists have resorted to various devices, none of which are new to the theatre. They have taken up every conceivable symbolized device employed in allegory and dramatic expressionism. Several of them have discarded psychology as a control of action . the action of these plays is intended to demonstrate symbolically the ideas of the playwright and to create the dramatic temperature necessary to maintain the interest of the audience. At first glance some of their plays appear to be utterly illogical until we realize that the logic of the author's thought is not directly expressed but rather symbolically stated in action. Finally, the absurdists are not afraid of obscurity in art since they employ it as a direct symbol of the obscurity they find in life.

The Absurdist play seeks to explore the spiritual loneliness, complete isolation anxiety of the down-and-outs of society. In this kind of play action and speech are reduced to a minimum, for the playwrights believe that real communication with others is not silence is more communicative than speech. The Absurdist play is anti-audience and anti-theatre, and so it is doomed by its nature. Doris Lessing's the truth about Billy Newton and each of his own wildernesses are among the best plays of this school

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE THEATRE OF ABSURD:

The drama of absurd arises from the disillusionment and loss of certitude characteristics of our times. It faces a universe that has lost its meaning and purpose. Its first and more obvious role is satirical when it criticizes a society that is petty. Its second and more positive aspects are shown when it faces up to Absurdity in plays where man is "stripped of the

accidental circumstances of social position or historical context, confronted with basic choices, the basic situations involved in the relatively few problems than remain: life, death, isolation and communication. Historians of the drama prefer to believe that the Absurdist movement exhausted itself in the early 1960's.

WAITING FOR GODOT: AN ABSURD PLAY BY BECKETT

Samuel Beckett is revolutionary playwright. He is an iconoclast and an image breaker. He has shattered conventions and pioneered a new kind of drama. His drama is above categories of tragedy and comedy. It is called absurd drama.

Waiting for Godot is an absurd drama. In fact, absurd drama presents human life and human situation as absurd. This type of drama is free from traditional plot, story or division into acts and scenes. There we get few characters. They have symbolic significance. Dialogue are very short and crisp.

Nothing significant happens on the stage it prefers existential themes. Things are not explained but they are merely hinted at. One can find all these features in waiting for Godot. Lack of action is one of the major characteristics of an absurd play. There is nothing significant in the play. So is the case with waiting for Godot. In this play nothing significant happens except waiting and waiting. The waiting also becomes meaningless because no Godot arrives. As soon as the play opens. We find Estragon, a tramp.

In an absurd play, the characteristics generally lose their identity. In waiting for Godot, we find tramps as characters. They lose their identity in act II. Their relationship is in doubt.

They spend the night apart. Life to them is an endless rain of blows Estrogen and Vladimir have lost their identity. The other pair of characters pozzo and lucky become blind and dumb respectively. Suicide is a recurrent temptation. Waiting for Godot deals with the absurdity of man's existence in this universe. When the play starts Estrogen and Vladimir agree that they have nothing to do.

They think that they have lost each other. They admit struggle has been of no use. Sometimes they feel that they should jump from a tower and kill themselves. On another occasion they want to hang themselves immediately with a tree. The existence of pozzo and lucky is also absurd. They become blind and dumb respectively.

The setting of the play is bare. We find only one tree in the first act, it is without leaves. In the second act this tree attains some new leaves. In the second act this tree attains some new leaves. The whole background is absurd. It reminds us of man's loneliness and alienation. There is suffering , agony, anxious wait, futility and all sorts of absurdity.

Thus from the points of view of structure, theme, motif, characters, setting and language, waiting for Godot is an absurd drama. It mocks at the futility of man's life and its meaninglessness. Life as well as death is treated as a joke. God is made a non-entity. There is nothing to do is man's life.

TIME AND MODERNISM IN SAMUEL BECKETT'S "WAITING FOR GODOT":

In 20th century, a crisis in Enlightenment humanism had began to emerge; from the ashes of a dying romantic era, a cultural revolution known as the modernist movement arose as' a progressive force promising to liberate

humankind from ignorance and irrationality ‘.A conscious experimentation with language to express both its power and limitations became apparent components in a vast body of modern literature.

An established vein of modern thought developed that progress as an individual was dependent upon directing the eye inward. One particular modernist who became fascinated with the idea of the individual and perception was to be the Irish playwright, Samuel Beckett. A key piece of his work which has been heralded as a defining piece of modernist literature is his abstract play, *Waiting for Godot*.

Frequently noted for its minimalist style, Beckett’s absurdist play has invited a multiplicity of possible interpretations. Whilst *Godot* does technically still reside in the ‘modern’ bracket of literature, elements of a postmodern nature can also be subtly detected within Beckett’s work the characters of Vladimir and Estragon for example, have been noted to resemble the tragic comedic figures Laurel and Hardy, as their methods of ‘passing the time’ act as a pastiche to classic American vaudeville routines. The play thus appears to swing between both modern and postmodern attitudes to form a wholly complex and unique piece of work. Within Beckett’s play, a palette of primarily modern features can be protagonists await the arrival of an absent character named ‘Godot’. Awaiting this absent person, Vladimir and Estragon perform an array of activities to pass the time, from silly things such as playing games and swapping hats, to darker matters such as contemplating suicide.

The serious matters within the play are treated with the same gravity as the trivial; this dissolve between the serious and the comic earns the play title as ‘tragicomedy in two parts’ and is a feature distinguishable in a number of Beckett’s other works (Beckett’s 1965 Film for example, uses a comic figure in the form of Buster Keaton to highlight the tragic nature of the protagonist ‘O’ as he tries to escape his own self-perception). As highlighted in the production title, the theme of ‘waiting’ provides the core of the play, as time becomes the underlying force which propels the production forward; that is, if the play is to move forward at all. Beckett’s bizarre piece explores the concept of time and its effects upon the protagonists involved. So this play waiting for Godot is regarded as a strong example of modern literature is due to Beckett’s breakdown of time

CHAPTER-4

CONCLUSION

It is in the act of waiting that we experience the flow of time in its purest, most evident form. If we pass the time, but if we are merely passively waiting, we are confronted with the action of time itself.

The current investigation attempted to decipher Samuel Beckett's play "Waiting for Godot" from another and imaginative point of view through Derridean deconstruction. It showed how the power of essence and messianic logocentrism engrave preventive consequences for mental construction of people, and fall them in the aporetic trap of ubiquitous and all-powerful logoi. Consequently, they carelessly acknowledge the authority of the messianic theocentric and human-centric logoi. The examination attempts to demonstrate that the procedures of meta-theater utilized in Samuel Beckett's play, reject the customary emotional authenticity, make the content of the play delogocentric text, and brings it near Derridean deconstruction, which dismisses and deconstructs the semantic peculiarity and fixity of significance or covered up supernatural importance of the content.

As Beckett's point out: There is no escape from the hours and days. Neither neither from tomorrow nor from yesterday because yesterday has deformed us, or been deformed by us. The flow of time confronts us with the basic problem of being.

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