

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA  
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF MOHAMED BOUDIAF  
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



# **Visions of Absurdism in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot***

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Literature**

## **Candidates**

**Mr. Chawki Moussa Aouina**

**Mr. Yassine Sahraoui**

## **Board of Examiners**

Mrs. LAOUIDJI Karima	University of M'sila	Chairperson
Mr. Mohammed SENOUSSI	University of M'sila	Supervisor
Dr. MIHOUBI Houria	University of M'sila	Examiner

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## Abstract

Philosophical ideas diversified and multiplied to a great extent within the chronology of literary discourse, that they grew much dependent upon each other, for instance, existentialism and absurdism. And the present case study of Samuel Beckett's waiting for Godot is one example of this intertwining. Samuel Beckett's dramatic work *Waiting for Godot* (1952) is one of the most enigmatic plays of the modern era, and an embodiment of the twentieth century philosophies, it is a play where nothing happens twice. Hence, the purpose of the present research is to examine the visions of the absurd and futility of human situation in a world devoid of eternal values .it analysis Samuel Beckett's *Waiting For God* both thematically and stylistically, From what was demonstrated in the sociohistorical context to the work of Beckett and how it represents the philosophy of the absurd form on side and existentialism from the other. This leads us to study the play thematically and stylistically thorough the examination of the idea of death and suicide as an answer to the absurd. The intermingled presence of religious themes within a discourse full of uncertainty. Moreover, it focuses on the meaning behind the title and how waiting makes the whole play, rather than Godot. It also examines how language fails to convey any meaning. Last but not least it points out symbolic elements lying in the play settings.As a result, we conclude that waiting for Godot is much more than a play where nothing happens. It is a work of an inquisitive mind that portrays the human condition and hopelessness of any system of thought that can provide a definitive answer to what does it mean to exist.

**Key terms:** Absurdism, Existentialism, Theatre Of The Absurd, Postmodernism, Modernism.

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## **Introduction**

*Waiting for Godot* stands as a literary work that epitomise the absurdity of Modern and Post-Modern era. As well as, the reality of a falling world and reason that are stretched to their ends, this masterpiece captures the meaningless of meaning and the absurdity of the world, of a generation that lost faith after two world wars that brought chaos and wreaked havoc of which their repercussion are still felt today. A generation utterly hopeless and desperate, yet strives to create and find meaning for its life.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century witnesses an upsurge in the works that tried to examine the existence of man in the world, where man is left alone to determine which path he will choose and what meaning to impart on his life, this can be conspicuous in the works of many writers like: Dostoevsky, Kafka, Jean Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger, Samuel Beckett and Albert Camus. All this momentum in existential works is driven partly by the atrocities of a turbulent age, and the impending fear that the human existence is threatened under such circumstances.

Absurdism as philosophy systematized in a form of philosophical reflections by Albert Camus in which he states that the individual should embrace the absurdity of the world and should always seek meaning. Absurdism was embodied in a form of Drama in 1960' and was called "the theater of the absurd", a term coined by Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* demonstrate the world as an inconceivable place. The audience see the happenings on the stage entirely from the outside, without ever comprehending the full meaning of these bizarre patterns of event.

Both Beckett's life and work are the product of tumultuous times, Beckett is critic, playwright and Nobel Prize winner .he was born in the suburbs of Dublin in 1906 to a protestant Anglo-Irish background from a middle class family. He studied languages at Trinity College

from 1923 to 1927 where he graduated which paved him the way to Paris for a teaching career and meeting the self-exiled Irish writer James Joyce.

This influenced him into writing several short stories and poems, but they did not receive any credit and were not successful. Beckett could not bear working a lecturer because he thought of the daily routine and habit as the reason for anxiety, death in life and loss of creativity that led him to travel from Dublin to Paris and London, Germany and back to France where he settled permanently and started working as a laborer and a volunteer in the Red Cross unit.

During the World War II, Samuel Beckett joined the French resistance as a French citizen against the German Nazi; he fought with them until 1942, when most of the resistance group members were arrested by The Gestapo, which led him to flee for his safety to war-free zone.

After the World War II, Samuel Beckett was awarded the *Croix de Guerre* for bravery due his contribution to the French resistance. He settled in Paris and began his most prolific period as a writer. The Second World War experiences modeled Beckett's perspective towards life and his outlook was pessimistic view to humankind. In five years, he wrote *Eleutheria*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame*, the novels *Malloy*, *Malone Dies*, *The Unnamable*, and *Mercier et Camier*, two books of short stories, and a book of criticism.

## **Statement of the Purpose**

Samuel Beckett's *waiting for Godot* turned upside down all theatrical conventions that were established before and commonly used. By the introduction of the new convention on the pre-existing one we are on a new whole dramatic type of theatre commonly known as *The Theatre of The Absurd*. This work is usually associated with existentialism and absurdism. Thus, in this work we are going to investigate the reasons behind why this work is ascribed an existential dimension and on what basis is considered and absurd work.



## **Aims and Objectives**

The current study focuses on bringing into light on one of the defining works of absurdism, as well as, one of its masterpieces .both thematically and stylistically we are going to examine this work.From a philosophical point of view we are going to consider the characters of Vladimir and Estragon and how do they fit or they do not as a typical modernist anti-heroes.

We will analyse the language and explore how it fails or succeeds in conveying any meaning. In addition to all this and that , we will challenge the literary interpretation offered by some scholars and provide an interpretation that defy some of the current interpretation relying on the insights that are offered by contemporary writers and of our ability to reason and draw conclusions .

## **Research Questions**

This dissertation attempts to answer the following main question: how the thematic and stylistic interplay within the text creates tension and give rise to the absurd logic in Samuel Beckett's *waiting for Godot*? This question will be answered by introducing sub-questions. What are the defining themes of the absurd within the play? Are they all addressed or only some of them? Does the style of the play sufficient to label it as an absurd work?

## **Literature Review**

Many researches have shown interest in the masterpiece of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* which is considered by many critics as a defining work of absurdism. In this two act play, Estragon and Vladimir engage in a meaningless conversation while waiting for an unknown character called Godot. While these two men are sitting on the side of the road for two successive evenings Godot fails to come. At the end of this play nothing virtually happens.

Martin Esslin a leading author and critic who was the first to coin the term of the *theatre of the absurd*. In his seminal work the *theatre of the absurd*, he took upon his shoulders the burden of introducing this new convention within the realm of theatre as new independent convention that parted with any sort of theatre. He said If a good play was known to have a good story or plot to tell, these have none; if a good play is judge by subtle characters and motivation; these are introduced with barely recognizable characters; if good play has clear themes which are apparent; these are open-ended; if a good play is a depiction of real life; these seem to be a mere reflection of the subconscious; if a good play sounds clear and familiar; these sound gibberish.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the seminal work of Esslin, Camus' Essay *The Myth of Sisyphus* is an indispensable work, since it provides the philosophical basis to notion of the absurd, and men's futile search for meaning, in the face of an unintelligible world devoid of God and any exclusive eternal truths or values that can work as a signposts for men to construct any intelligible picture of life apart from that it is entirely absurd.

Furthermore, Aho Kevin's book *An Introduction to Existentialism*; the Co-authored book *Existentialism for Dummies* by Christopher Panza and Gregory Gale; Walter Kaufmann *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* and Jean-Paul Sartre *Existentialism is a Humanism* (2007) give a holistic and elucidated overview of existentialism that offer a solid background to understand the human condition and how Vladimir, Estragon, Pozzo and Lucky fit into this world.

One of the widest inviting works to many interpretations is *Waiting for Godot*. Critics have shown a tendency to interpret *Waiting for Godot* form either a religious or atheistic perspective but neither of them can be considered as valid or least what the real picture Beckett

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<sup>1</sup>Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* 3ed. (New York: Vintage ebooks, 2001).Epub edition,INTRODUCTION: The absurdity of the Absurd

tried to draw in his work, Spyridoula Athanasopoulou-Kypriou argues for that in his article: *Samuel becket beyond the problem of god*. He defies any of the two sided interpretations and that his work remain open and rise above all the henceforth interpretations.<sup>1</sup>What Beckett tried to do is to depict the real life and the human condition rather than to argue for anything. Therefore, Spyridoula sees Beckett to be more of an anti-theist rather than theist or an atheist.

Perhaps one of the common denominators that drags the attention is the both Nietzsche and Beckett share and express their repulsion to the absolute systems of thought whether be it secular or religious .Nietzsche's famous declaration that God is dead heralded the coming of a turbulent age (which is to become known subsequently as the post-modern age) where faith is lost and man is left alone to seek his path in a meaningless universe. Nietzsche announcement can be interpreted in two ways. Literally, that god is no longer considered as viable source of value, or it can be regarded as an attack on the absolute systems of thought: reason, science and religion. These top-down systems played the role for a long time as the final arbiter and provide the only truthful way of seeing the world.

## **Methodology Justification**

My research method is going to be primarily based upon a **philosophical approach** since our work entails dealing with abstract notion such as death, anxiety, boredom, time and existence, and more specifically we are going to utilise this approach to discuss and illuminate the world of the absurd and how it is sketched In the work of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*.

Besides, the **stylistic approach** will serve well the progress of the study by examining the style in the text

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<sup>1</sup>Spyridoula Athanasopoulou-Kypriou, "Samuel Beckett Beyond the Problem of God," *Literature and Theology* 14, no. 1 (2000): p34.

## **Plan of the Research**

This dissertation will be structured as follows, the work will be divided into two chapters.

**Chapter One** :will be devoted to the Theoretical Framework and the Socio-Historical Context;

**Chapter two**: Waiting for Godot a Post-Mortem

**The first chapter** attempts to locate the play within the socio-historical context. Hence, we are going to give a clear picture of the spirit of the Age, the turbulent age of the twentieth century and the sense of despair that spread all over Europe and the world after the second world war which led people to believe that human life is worthless, this paved the way to the emergence of the philosophy of the absurd and its companion the theatre of the absurd and rise to the scene as a new Genre. Light will be shed on the language used on this work and its futility and meaninglessness. This research also focuses on the idea of suicide as an escape from the absurdity of the world and questions whether life is worth living.

Moreover, this chapter will provide a succinct overview to the philosophy of Existentialism and some of its leading figures along with some of the major works in this field. We refer to the prevalent common themes and concepts within the existential philosophy.

**The second chapter** main concern is analysing the play of *Waiting for Godot* both thematically and stylistically. And to what extent the writer was successful in capturing the absurdity of the world and reflecting it in the play. First we are going to start by tackling the themes present in the play (suicide, boredom, religion, salvation, time and memory). Then we move the stylistic side of the play where we give the significance of the title, point out the futility of the language than deal with the symbols in the play

# **CHAPTER ONE: SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

During the twentieth century , Europe witnessed two World Wars that caused an atmosphere of disappointment and eroded the faith in the continuous development of human civilization . And in literature, it emerged two literary movements : modernism and postmodernism, These outcomes of the 20th century paved the way for the theatrical tradition, the absurd drama. Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1948) is a leading play in the Theatre of Absurd, a theatrical outcome of postmodernism which was inspired by existential philosophy and its view that at the origin of our being there is without purpose . It represents the psychological infertility of modern people that arouse after two bloody world wars

The absurdists like the existentialists are troubled with the essential dilemma of finding solution for the unsolved problems of the universe and the human condition. The idea that existence is absurd turns out to be a denial of sufficient reason.

Thus, this chapter , the study is going to be focused on a form of drama that emphasizes the absurdity of human existence by using disjointed, repetitious, and meaningless dialogue, and the ability of religion to give any meaning to our existence and whether the absurd dictate death , moreover it explored existentialism movement in the twentieth century, concepts and some of its major contributors

## 1.The Notion Of The Absurd

Absurdism and its more specific companion term Theatre of the Absurd, refers to the works of a group of Western European and American dramatists writing and producing plays in the 1950s and early 1960s. The term “Theatre of the Absurd” was coined by critic Martin Esslin. He presented this denomination in 1961 during his seminal in Paris. By studying the works of various authors, that presented their plays during the post-war Paris, he established a corresponding connection between the idea of the human condition to a completely new set of rules of the dramatic theater - this new set of rules overcome the established well-made drama by disregarding of its traditional standards.

For this reason, Esslin established this term to the works of four major pioneers of the particular genre; the Irishman Samuel Beckett, the Romanian Eugene Ionesco, the Russian-Armenian Arthur Adamov and the Frenchman Jean Genet. Though the fact that these playwrights did not work together, their work undoubtedly seems “*to share certain attitudes towards the predicament of man in universe*”<sup>1</sup>

Esslin noticed that the playwrights rejected the traditional Aristotelian plot structure that based on the static nature of reality, in the meaning of the story and the lack of causality on the stage. The scenario of the plays illustrates an inspiration that’s entirely outside of what was the goal of the real world goal, even sometimes can show a nightmarish feature that can be associated with, what is now known passed artistic movement, the Surrealism. The individuals on this plays regularly display acts that are absurd and ludicrous and are often unnamed and easily substitutable. The point of this new harsher artistic playwrights is to explore the human mind and or condition at its worse; the despair of the individual when he is confronted with the

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<sup>1</sup>A.P. Hinchliffe, *The Absurd* (Methuen, 1969), p1.

lowliness and isolation, whether caused by personal failed ambitions or by the outcast of his own community. It also explores the human condition by placing the individual in an insignificant and useless position when facing the meaning and absurdity of life and death and the objective of the human existence. The playwrights of this time all conveyed in the same main theme: “*the sense of metaphysical anguish at the absurdity of the human condition*”<sup>1</sup>

## **1.2 Language and the Absurd**

The failure of language to convey meaning is major theme in the literature of Absurdism. Language is either detached from any interpretation that can be agreed to by all characters, or it is reduced to complete gibberish. Language also becomes an instrument of mockery and meaninglessness when it is targeted in an offensive manner. The language we come across in the Theatre of the Absurd is Language as a Metaphor of Meaninglessness and Absurdity. Full with such meaningless conversations that the characters do not really want to communicate with each other meaningfully. It is aimed rather at exposing the absurd condition of their relations. Instead of indulging in any valid or meaningful conversation, characters in absurd drama undermine the dignity of one another in the process, aiming rather to hurt and abuse.

Language has been an essential mean of communication for centuries. Its denotative, literary and symbolic functions remain largely the reason for ascertaining meaning in communication. The same language, however, may acquire derogatory, vulgar and obscene status if directed unwisely towards others. On the other hand, the use of silences and pauses is another literary device to express futility of language. However, it must be mentioned that silences and pauses are a devices used by the author deliberately, Harold Pinter in particular, to let the readers indulge into the situations of the characters who are otherwise involved in

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<sup>1</sup>Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* pp23-24.

nothing else but meaningless conversation. Many writers explore the use of language in a way that language no longer carries its conventional purpose of conveying something meaningful. Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party* (1957), Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953) and Edward Albee's *Who is Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962)

### 1.3 The Absurdity Of Religion

The belief that human life is absurd, i.e., meaningless, was rooted, to a great extent, in the post-war cultural atmosphere of disappointment. Thus, religious beliefs and also faith in the continuous development of human civilization had been seriously erode by the war experience: “*the certitudes and unshakeable basic assumptions of former ages have been swept away (...) they have been discredited as cheap and somewhat childish illusions*”<sup>1</sup> This loss of metaphysical certainties and the lack of belief in the mystical meaning of human existence was tackled philosophically in the works of French existentialists Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, whose ideas became popular among post-war intellectuals and presented the main conceptual basis for absurdist drama. Some of the most important ideas that fashioned the character of the Theatre of the Absurd can be found, in a succinct form, in Albert Camus’s essay *The Myth of Sisyphus* (*Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, 1942), which predicates the problem of life's absurdity as the central problem of modern philosophical thinking. In effect, Camus opens his discussion with the following words:

There is but one truly serious philosophical problem and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy. All the rest – whether or not the world has three dimensions, whether the mind has nine or twelve categories – comes afterwards. These are games one must first answer.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd*.

<sup>2</sup>Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*  
trans. JUSTIN O'BRIEN (Vintage, 1991), p 3.



With this statement, Camus completely moves the focus of philosophy from the previous thoughts of explorations of the objectivity of the world and the subjectivity of the mind to the discussion of the problems related to human situation in the world, the meaning of human existence and the value of life itself.

As Camus argues, human existence is absurd in its very core, due to the lack of any intellectual evidence which suggests a transcendental purpose for human life. From a philosophical point of view, the meaninglessness of life arises from the inefficacy of reason and the failure of human knowledge: *“Of whom and of what indeed can I say: I know that! This heart within me I can feel, and I judge that it exists. This world I can touch and likewise judge that it exists. There ends all my knowledge, and the rest is construction”*.<sup>1</sup> According to Camus, there are only two certainties in human life - the fact that we exist and the fact that we will die; everything else which we think we know are nothing more than constructs of reason which remain unable to give any objective truth about the world and our part in it. Due to the limitations of human knowledge, we are only familiar with its surface elements; with the phenomena of the world but not with its core. As a result, one can only ever identify the world in its parts but never as a whole picture. The human condition is critically defined by this inability of human reason to reveal any unifying principle of the world or to prove that exists a godly authority which gives meaning to life. Hence, man ends up as a stranger both to himself and to the world, and is forced to live in an *“unintelligible and limited universe”*<sup>2</sup>

Camus's agnostic philosophical idea does not state that God does not exist, but that the existence of God remains unknowable to man and is therefore beyond his limits; quite simply it does not exist for him. As he writes, *“I don't know whether this world has a meaning that transcends it. But I know that I do not “know that meaning and that it is impossible for me just*

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<sup>1</sup>Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* trans. JUSTIN O'BRIEN (Vintage, 1991), p 3..

<sup>2</sup>P.S. MacDonald, *The Existentialist Reader: An Anthology of Key Texts* (Routledge, 2001), p161.

now to know it. What can a meaning outside my condition mean to me?"<sup>1</sup> Thus, people, born into a world without meaning, living their lives trapped in a sequence of random events (eating, working, sleeping, etc.) ultimately leading to the unavailability of death might well encounter a profound sense of the emptiness or absurdity of life. It is at this moment that the problem of suicide arises.

#### **1.4 Absurdity and Suicide**

What Camus asks is "*Does the Absurd dictate death?*"<sup>2</sup> Camus sees this question of suicide as a natural response to an underlying hypothesis, namely that life is absurd in a variety of ways. As it is observed, both the presence and absence of life (i.e., death) give place to the condition; it is absurd to continually search for meaning in life when there is none, and it is absurd to expect for some form of continued existence after death given that the final results in the human extinction. Finally, there are those who do commit suicide. About those who do Camus says: "*Dying voluntarily implies that you have recognized, even instinctively, the ridiculous character of [the] habit, the absence of any profound reason for living, the insane character of that daily agitation and the uselessness of suffering*"<sup>3</sup>

However, it is important to note that suicide can only be seen as a form of freedom from the meaningless habit of living and daily routine, but not as liberation from the sense of absurdity. In fact, Camus believes that suicide is a man's defeat, or as his yielding to the sense of absurdity, a condition which can only be triumph over when the full understanding of the absurdity of his situation leads to a radical revolt against it: the will to go on living despite the lack of any meaning for life . This liberation lies in the assertion that if there is no innate meaning in life which is given by an external factor like divine authority, then we are free to create our own purposes for living. The ordinary man is ignorant in his beliefs of a higher

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<sup>1</sup>Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*  
p51.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p9.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p 9.

purpose of his existence in the world. He lives under the false impression that he is free, but in reality he has “*adapted himself to the demands of a purpose to be achieved and became slave of his liberty.*”<sup>1</sup> Yet as soon as the “*absurd man*”<sup>2</sup> acknowledges the absurd nature of life, which undoubtedly leads to death, he starts his journey towards freedom.

The ability to accept death, as the ultimate end of human existence, offers us the chance to escape from the trivial habitual struggles of everyday life and to become “*sufficiently remote from one's own life to increase it and take a broad view of it*”.<sup>3</sup>

In this way, Camus’s philosophical argument, which opens with what looks like a superficial statement concerning suicide, gradually develops towards a more optimistic finale, in which he maintains that the absurd man, who embraces and at the same time rejects the absurdity of existence, can achieve not only freedom but also happiness. Camus uses the example of Sisyphus, the mythological figure who is usually seen as a symbol of a man with a meaningless activity, to explain his argument. For Camus, Sisyphus is the classic example of a man in an absurd situation; endlessly rolling a rock to the top and then watching it falling down. Sisyphus fate could be considered as tragic, but paradoxically, Camus insists that “*one must imagine Sisyphus happy*”<sup>4</sup> We can imagine Sisyphus happy if we imagine him as accepting his destiny and creating his own meaning onto the seemingly meaningless activity. The belief that “*the struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man's heart*”<sup>5</sup> allows Sisyphus to rise above his fate and to become a happy man. Therefore, although Camus begins *The Myth of Sisyphus* with a seemingly pessimistic point of view to human existence – its total meaninglessness – his way of thinking leads him to an optimistic end. The acceptance of the

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<sup>1</sup>MacDonald, *The Existentialist Reader: An Anthology of Key Texts*, p178.

<sup>2</sup>Soňa Šnircová, *Realism, Modernism, Postmodernism: Five Modern Literary Texts in Context*, first ed. (Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, 2015), p51.

<sup>3</sup>MacDonald, *The Existentialist Reader: An Anthology of Key Texts*, p179.

<sup>4</sup>Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*  
p123.

<sup>5</sup>Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*  
P 111.

lack of actual meaning in human life opens up the possibility, not only of the individual's freedom from the absurd condition, but also the possibility of happiness.

The leading representative of this new trend in the post-war theatre is Samuel Beckett whose play *Waiting for Godot* is the most famous example of what has become known as the Theatre of the Absurd. When *Waiting for Godot* was performed for the first time in Paris, in 1953, it was immediately acknowledged as an important contribution to the development of modern drama. Since then, the play has been translated into more than twenty languages and has been performed all over the world. Due to its vast popularity, the expression "*Waiting for Godot*" has become everyday speech, referring to act where nothing happens, twice.

## **2 The Socio-Historical Context**

### **2.1 Modernism**

The second half of the nineteenth century was dominated by the attempts of the realists to represent the world with scientific objectivity, but the twentieth century saw a new literary style that arose to overcome the limitations that realistic movement imposed with their artistic and limited representation of the world.

Literary modernism achieved its peak in the period between 1910 and 1930, when Anglo-American authors as T.S. Elliot, Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, Henry James, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf introduced a series of important stylistic developments and experimental techniques, which opened a wider range of possibilities in the artistic representation of human perceptions of reality.

Modernism is a literary and cultural international movement that emerged as a reaction to the socio-economic, cultural and intellectual changes which had been changing the lives of modern societies since the dawn of the Enlightenment in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Although the Modern era is often known with the rise of Reason and the development of Western societies, it surely had its darker aspects and caused major economic, social and

political conflicts which eventually resulted in the First World War. The Great War (as it was known at the time) is usually seen as the historical event that shaped Modernism.

The character of the Modernist movement more than any other, and, indeed, some of the most significant works of modernist literature appeared in the post-war period; these works consist of T.S. Elliot's poem *The Wasteland* (1922), James Joyce's masterpiece *Ulysses* (1922), Virginia Woolf's series of great experimental novels such as; *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *The Waves* (1931). Nevertheless, it is not the battlefields of the Great War which form the main point of these works. For modernist intellectuals the Great War served as a symbol of the long-term socio-cultural processes which effected in a wide range the essential changes in the relationship between the individual and society.

The Great War increased the process of alienation within societies, a trend which had been slowly emerging in tandem with the modernization of Western societies during the previous century. The processes of industrialization, urbanization, and the introduction of new technologies had improved everyday life, but had also reduced the dependence of individuals on communities.

Modern writers no longer believe that loneliness and isolation from the wider community as the tragic fate of a few number of unhappy individuals, but began instead to perceive this as inevitable aspects of the reaction of the human emotional condition to the shock caused by the Great War.

## **2.2 Post Modernism**

The sense of despair, with which the modernist Theatre of the Absurd confronts the incapability of reason to grant any transcendental meaning to human existence, is harmonized with equal intensity, in the postmodernist forms of literary representations of the world. Postmodernism emerged as the dominant intellectual, artistic, literary and cultural movement of the late twentieth century (1960s-1990s), and continued the modernist's iconoclastic

rejection of the glorification of reason, which had been prevalent since the Enlightenment. Postmodernists took the ideas of modernist scholars, such as Albert Camus, about the constructed nature of rational knowledge and its incapability to provide metaphysical truths as their starting point, and revealed the misleading notion of the universality of human understanding, revealing the Eurocentric nature of Enlightenment approaches to knowledge and thought.

The early 20th century bared two World Wars and in literature, it emerged two recognizable literary styles: modernism and postmodernism. These events paved the way for the theatrical tradition, the absurd drama. Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1948) is a leading play in the Theatre of Absurd, a theatrical outcome of postmodernism which was inspired by existential philosophy and its view that at the root of our being there is nothingness. It represents the psychological unfruitfulness of modern people that arouse after two bloody world wars. As a postmodernist work, the play has its own literary features such as fragmentation, truth and its

Denial clear central hierarchy or organizing principle. Actually, postmodernism is a dramatic deviation of man's thought line. It dismisses the existence of an absolute reality. It believes in the premise 'irrational is real, real is irrational'. There is no pre-determined rules, well-established and long term principles of the literary works of postmodernism. There is no unity of time, place and action in literary work in it. The ending of it can be interpreted in many different ways. Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* shares some postmodernist features.<sup>1</sup>

The characters in this play, *Waiting for Godot*, give major importance to the nature of each individual, and not to the world that surrounds them. The daily routines, essential or not, are despised by the characters, since they have no real meaning in what is the point of life. In a simpler approach one can say that the present it's the only thing that matter, considering that

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<sup>1</sup>Jayawant Ambadas Mhetre, "Post Modernism in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*," *an international multidisciplinary journal* vol 3, no. 1 (2017).

death is the only certainty that we can have for the future. With this type of mentality, the individual manage to be untroubled with the facing of life, even though they remain hopeful for the uncertain course of their future that will eventually end in death.

This untroubled life style is possible with the simple line of thinking that no action of the future can put a meaning to any action done in the present, therefor there's nothing no one can do control is own destiny that will, eventually, have an end, and there's nothing that can give us any certainty of what wait us after death, if there's something at all, showing like this that life is just hollow and insignificant. Even though the play is about the nothing of life, in the meaning itself, it's a very good subject of study in order to recognize the style of postmodernism. The character mental state, linguistic style and scenario where they are insert are a prime example of the literally movement of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Post-Modernism.

### **3.Existentialism as a Way of Philosophising**

Existentialism is the movement in nineteenth- and twentieth-century philosophy that is preoccupied with different interpretations of human existence that emphasis its concreteness and problematic character .What does it mean to exist? Does life have a purpose? Are we free? Do we hold accountable and responsible for our actions? What is the right sort of religious, political or sexual commitment? How should we encounter death? All these questions are addressed and investigated thoroughly.

The word *Existentialism* is officially introduced by the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel in 1943 and was adopted by his compatriots Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir.<sup>1</sup>Despite the misleading impression of a coherent and unified school of thought *Existentialism* cannot be considered as a school of thought nor is reducible to any set of tents and its major figures vary widely in their views but the common thread that hold them together

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<sup>1</sup>Kevin Aho, *Existentialism: An Introduction* (United kingdom: Polity Press 2014).What is existentialism?

is the human situation *it is lived*.<sup>1</sup>Existential is to refuse to belong to any school of thought and they repudiate any body of knowledge whatever, especially, all the systems of thought. A relentless attack on traditional philosophy is undertaken by condemning it as superficial, academic and a remote form life.

Many philosophers repudiated this label such as Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Albert Camus, and nineteenth-century pioneers like Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche had never heard of it. Existentialists are generally discerned into two trends or categories theistic and atheistic, the former includes Jean-Paul Sartre ,Albert Camus and Simone de Beauvoir while in the latter we find Marcel, Kierkegaard, and Martin Buber and they start from a common denominator which hold religion as more of a lived experience of individuals rather than a systematic philosophy of the church or the holy book<sup>2</sup>.

From the existential perspective, to understand the human being it is not merely knowing all that knowledge or truths that is coming from natural sciences such as psychology. Because disciplines like this sometimes fall into the trap of Reducing what it means to be human by reducing it to “mind” and “body” and therefore they know no good than what’s offered by a physicalist who explains it in terms of fundamental physical constituents. Existentialism does not deny of the validity of what is offered by the other sciences but it only emphasizes that explaining what it means to be drawing on these fields of study is not accurate to give us a clear understanding on its essence.

## **4. Existentialists and Absurdist From Dostoyevsky to Sartre**

### **4.1Albert Camus: Absurdism Inside Out.**

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<sup>1</sup>Walter Kaufmann, *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), p 11.

<sup>2</sup>Christopher Panza; Gregory Gale, *Existentialism for Dummies* (Indianapolis: Wiley 2008), p20.



*I tell you that absurdities are all too necessary on earth. The world stands on absurdities and without them perhaps nothing would happen.*<sup>1</sup>Dostoevsky

*One does not discover the absurd without being tempted to write a manual of happiness.*<sup>2</sup>Albert Camus

Albert Camus(1913-1960)French-Algerian journalist, playwright, novelist, and philosophical essayist.<sup>3</sup>He was born in French Algeria to a Pied-noir family and studied at the University of Algiers. His view contributed to the rise of the philosophy know as absurdism. And he is widely known for his three notable works *The Stranger*(1942),*The Plague*(1947), and *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942), in addition to other published plays. He received the Noble Prize in literature at the age of 44 in 1957.

Camus explores the themes of alienation and absurdity inherent in the world. In his work *The Stranger*Camus presents a study or a portrait of an ‘outsider’ condemned to death much more for the fact that he refuses to conform to society’s rules and regulations rather than for his murder of the Arab. While in *The Myth of Sisyphus*he puts his reflection on the sense of nihilism and the absurd that characterises the contemporary world. Camus by putting his ideas into fiction he succeeded in giving them wider accessibility because of the closeness to the language of the masses.

For Camus, absurdity has more significance than mere irrationality and it is not a statement about the world itself. In fact, it can be regarded as a statement about how human beings relate to the world. Camus himself described it as combination of two things: as an

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<sup>1</sup>Cited in Aho, *Existentialism: An Introduction*.Authenticity

<sup>2</sup>Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, p122.

<sup>3</sup>"Albert Camus (1913—1960)" by David Simpson *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://www.iep.utm.edu/>, Accessed on 05.06.2019.

irrational world and a person who is looking out at it to make it rational.<sup>1</sup>He wrote “*The world itself is not unreasonable, that is all that can be said. But what is absurd is the confrontation of the irrational and the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart.*”<sup>2</sup>

In the face of this feeling of ‘absurdity’ that strikes out of the blue Camus explores in *The Myth of Sisyphus* the possibility of suicide for those who are not able to stand up for the truth of ‘the absurd’ as a logical outcome to “*the unreasonable silence of the world*”<sup>3</sup>. But he sees the temptation to kill oneself is akin to the temptation to flee into the metaphysical comforts of religion or the tranquilizing routines of the public; they are incarnations to the flight of who we are.<sup>4</sup> For him “*suicide is a rejection or ‘repudiation’ of one’s own freedom a freedom that defiantly and passionately affirms the absurdity of life and which alone can be ‘enough to fill a man’s heart’*”<sup>5</sup>. His last word on the matter is unqualified and clear: The only courageous and morally valid response to the Absurd is to continue living—“*Suicide is not an option.*”<sup>6</sup> And life can “*be lived all the better if it has no meaning.*”<sup>7</sup>

The best example of this option of spiritual courage and metaphysical revolt is the mythical absurd hero Sisyphus who is doomed for eternity to roll a rock to the top of a mountain, entirely conscious of the essential hopelessness of his situation. Despite his torment he continues pushing on incessantly, Sisyphus in doing so he represents for Camus a symbol of

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<sup>1</sup>Gale, *Existentialism for Dummies* p74.

<sup>2</sup>Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* p21.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p28.

<sup>4</sup>Aho, *Existentialism: An Introduction*. Authenticity

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>“Albert Camus (1913—1960)” by David Simpson *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://www.iep.utm.edu/>, Accessed on 05.06.2019

<sup>7</sup>“Albert Camus (1913—1960)” by David Simpson *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://www.iep.utm.edu/>, Accessed on 05.06.2019.

the spirit of revolt and of human condition. At the end Camus leaves his character at the foot of the mountain urging the reader to “*imagine Sisyphus happy.*”<sup>1</sup>

#### 4.2 Fyodor Dostoyevsky: The Underground Man.

*I am a sick man . . . I am a spiteful man. I am an unattractiveman. I believe my liver is diseased. However, I know nothing at all about my disease, and do not know for certain what ails me.*<sup>2</sup>Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821–81) is a Russian novelist and a short-story writer whose insightful and deep psychological penetration into the dungeon of the human heart along with the intermittent moment of illumination made him one of the influential figures of the twentieth-century fiction. Dostoyevsky is regarded as one of the finest novelists throughout history. His acuteness and deep understanding of the human psyche made an unprecedented influence on many literary movements such as Modernism and Existentialism, as well as, on various schools of Psychology, Theology and Literary criticism.

He was a prolific writer and among his major works *Notes From Underground* was first published in 1864 and followed by *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, *The Possessed*, and *The Brothers Karamazov*. He became a major influential figure after World War One. Nietzsche by accident came across his book *Notes from underground* in a bookstore and this book made a lasting impression on him he wrote “*I did not even know the name of Dostoevsky just a few weeks ago . . . An accidental reach of the arm in a bookstore brought to my attention L'esprit souterrain, a work just translated into French . . . The instinct of kinship (or how should I name it?) Spoke up immediately; my joy was extraordinary.*”<sup>3</sup>Walter Kaufmann says “*it is an*

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<sup>1</sup>Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, p121.

<sup>2</sup>F. Dostoyevsky, A.R. MacAndrew, and B. Marcus, *Notes from Underground, White Nights, the Dream of a Ridiculous Man, and Selections from the House of the Dead* (NEW YORK: Signet Classics, 2004), PART ONE UNDERGROUND.

<sup>3</sup>Kaufmann, *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, p52.

*altogether new voice that we hear...the pitch is new, the strained protest ,the self-preoccupation...what we perceive is an unheard-of song of songs on individuality: not classical, not biblical ,and not at all romantic ”*<sup>1</sup>Kaufmann adds “*The atmosphere of Dostoevsky's Notes is not one of soft voices and dim lights : the voice could not be shriller, the light not more glaring... it is man's inner life, his moods, anxieties, and his decisions, that are moved into the center until, as it were, no scenery at all remains*”<sup>2</sup>.

His novel *Notes from the Underground* is considered as one of the major and defining works of *existentialism* .The first part of the novel Dostoevsky’s misanthropic, reclined protagonist in *Notes from the Underground* Speaks in rambling and sometimes in nonsensical way.

He talks about his life and his perspective on the world about various topics such as his ailing body, reason, and utopianism. The recurrent theme is that of reason and of enclosed systems of thought that sees humans as rational beings.<sup>3</sup>In which Dostoevsky’s man engaged in chain of reasoning to refute it. The underground man understands the truth of scientific principles which he states as laws of nature, but despite this fact he dismiss them when it comes to human action, because it relegates it to mere object acted upon by these laws in which he is usurped from his free will, thus, he is turned to a machine whose behavior can be predicted and directed on the basis of mathematical formulations. this suggest that everything man have done “*he never has really had any caprice or will of his own, and that he himself is something of the nature of a piano key...so that everything he does is not done by his willing it, but is done of itself, by the laws of nature.*”<sup>4</sup>, the underground man argues .He goes further to debunk the idea

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<sup>1</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p 12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p 13.

<sup>3</sup>Gale, *Existentialism for Dummies* ,p344.

<sup>4</sup>Kaufmann, *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, p 70.

that our motivations and purpose can be explained or justified by any logical reasoning or any system of thought in which he elucidates

[E]ven if man really were nothing but a piano-key, even if this were proved to him by natural science and mathematics, even then he would not become reasonable, but would purposely do something perverse out of simple ingratitude, simply to gain his point. And if he does not find means he will contrive destruction and chaos, will contrive sufferings of all sorts, only to gain his point! He will launch a curse upon the world, and as only man can curse (it is his privilege, the primary distinction between him and other animals), may be by his curse alone he will attain his object—that is, convince himself that he is a man and not a piano-key!<sup>1</sup>

In this novel Dostoevsky tries to capture the existential claim that human essence is not something fixed and determined like any other object in the world but that it is always in the process of becoming. In fact we are nothing for one reason because we are always negating ourselves through a perpetual and continuing process of decision making.

### **4.3 Søren Kierkegaard: The Insider's Perspective**

*The way of objective reflection makes the subject accidental, and thereby transforms existence into something indifferent, something vanishing.*<sup>2</sup> Søren Kierkegaard

Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) a Danish philosopher, theologian and cultural critic who is considered by many as the founding father of existentialism in the twentieth century. He was the son of a wealthy Dutch businessman, religious and melancholic father. Which he inherited his piousness and sense of unsettlement. He attacked the literary philosophical ecclesiastical establishments of the day for distorting the highest task of human existence which is becoming one self.

One of the major eventful moments in his life which pops up constantly in his works is that when he was engaged to Regina Olsen. They both fall in love: only for a while. He

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<sup>1</sup>Kaufmann, *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, p75.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Flynn, *Existentialism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p9.

broke his engagement for unowned reasons probably driven by his melancholic character which he thought made him unfit as a spouse.

He embarked on a journey of self-discovery hunted both by anguish and melancholy, to give us after that an illuminating reflection about the human condition. Throughout the way he discusses in extended way central existentialism themes such as absurdity and forlornness, the need to bear one's responsibility and weight of his choices and the need to live passionately and authentically.

Kierkegaard focuses on the individual and the individual's experience and this what made his philosophy very personal. He regards the big questions in philosophy have meaning only when they are lived individually by each person, and any body of reasoned calculations or heavenly commandments cannot give us answer about how we should live. The individual is left alone in this world without any supreme authority to become and create what he wants to be.

He rejects the idea that reason and faith can be reconciled. He sees that reason has its place, but it shouldn't have a standing ground when it comes to individuals' freedom to choose, to believe and to have faith.<sup>1</sup> Kierkegaard rises these questions to explain his case how can one make a rational sense of God's command for Abraham to kill his son? How do we explain the intrinsic sinfulness of human beings? or the embodiment of the God-man? This point of view is shared by most religious existentialist. Dostoyevsky shares a similar opinion about this he wrote "*you see ,gentlemen, reason is an excellent thing, there's no disputing about that, but reason is nothing but reason and satisfies only the rational side of man's nature*"<sup>2</sup>.

Perhaps one of the persistent thematic concepts in existentialism emerge in the writings of Kierkegaard's philosophy is *Anxiety*. Kierkegaard in his book *the sickness unto death*

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<sup>1</sup>Gale, *Existentialism for Dummies* p 20.

<sup>2</sup>Kaufmann, *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, p 73.

describes anxiety as “*the dizziness of freedom*”<sup>1</sup>. He asks us to imagine a man standing on a high place, when the man looks from the precipice a sense of fear will pervade him, this fear reveals itself in two ways: the first is the fear of falling, while the second is the fear brought by the impulse of throwing oneself.<sup>2</sup> He regards that the second fear arises only when we realize that we have an absolute freedom whether to jump or not, and this what causes dizziness. By the same token this applies to our moral choices when realize that we are absolutely free in taking them.

Kierkegaard's criticism was directed toward G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831), who managed to construct a system that holds in its core an absolute knowledge of reality in his seminal work *the phenomenology of spirit*. In which he introduced the *dialectical processes* “thesis”, holds in its core a contradiction, or “antithesis”, which is only resolved by the appearance of a newer, higher concept in which they find resolution, called a “synthesis”<sup>3</sup> by this attempt his system is understood as ‘absolute idealism’ for one reason because it holds that all of reality is an aspect of ‘*Spirit*’ (*Geist*) where spirit is viewed as shared historical spirit rather than a singular individual.<sup>4</sup> Hegel's inclination to see the human condition as dialectical tension that culminates in the final stage of absolute knowledge, whereas Kierkegaard sees this tension's resolution not in rational mediation but only through the passionate commitments of existing individual. In his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* Kierkegaard describes how Hegel's absolute system entails taking the vantage point of eternity, and how this detached standpoint alienates the philosopher from existence.

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<sup>1</sup>S. Kierkegaard, H.V. Hong, and E.H. Hong, *The Sickness Unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Upbuilding and Awakening* (Princeton University Press, 1983), p xi.

<sup>2</sup>Will Buckingham, *The Philosophy Book* (United Kingdom: Dorling Kindersley, 2011), P159.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., P 182.

<sup>4</sup>Aho, *Existentialism: An Introduction*. Subjective truth

#### **4.4 Frederick Nietzsche: GOD IS DEAD.**

*Where is God?...God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed him! How can we console ourselves, the murderers of all murderers!*<sup>1</sup>Friedrich Nietzsche.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) stands as one of the hallmarks of existentialism, a very enigmatic figure and ardent social critic. He was the son of Lutheran pastor which Nietzsche followed his steps to become a clergy with devoutness and deep piety. Nietzsche leveled criticism at the religious establishment from an insider's perspective as a former Christian and spent most his life waging an intellectual war on what he regards as falsehoods that he had been taught. In fact, nothing escaped his vitriol. He made his works into a literary dance of destruction, a space of creation and celebration.<sup>2</sup>Existentialism draws its optimism from Nietzsche's writings, he holds a belief that after we tear down the veil of falsehoods that we have created and embraced. We will enjoy the world as it is.

Nietzsche's announcement that 'God is dead' marked a turning point in the whole western philosophy, and heralded much darker times in the first half of the century. What followed only came to affirm his prognostications: two world wars that brought the whole European continent to its knees, the rise of Nazi party, atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the threat of cold war, increasing environmental devastation and this all intrigued by absence of moral absolutes. A veil of nihilism descended on the European continent.

The death of god has its implications, for humanity have been for long time drawing its meanings and values from the presence of God. Buckingham explains "*God' here does not only mean the god that philosophers talk about or the religious pray to; it means the sum total*

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<sup>1</sup>F. Nietzsche et al., *The Gay Science*, trans. OSEFINE NAUCKHOFF (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp119-20.

<sup>2</sup>Gale, *Existentialism for Dummies* p17.



*of the higher values that we might hold. The death of God is not just the death of a deity; it is also the death of all the so-called higher values that we have inherited.*"<sup>1</sup>Of course the deed is great that Nietzsche's madman is startled, he asks "*How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon?*"<sup>2</sup>For Nietzsche the death of god is momentous, but he hails as a golden opportunity that we should seize. He reflects on the death of god by asking "Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and whoever is born after us-for the sake of this deed he will belong to a higher history than all history hitherto."<sup>3</sup> The death of god brings face to face with the fact that we no longer have a ready source of meaning, and we are left alone to create meaning.

Nietzsche shares a similar point of view with Kierkegaard, he was very skeptical and highly suspicious of systematic philosophy and absolute systems of thought (philosophy, science and monotheistic religions), in his view they are 'weak' and 'dishonest' because they simply fail to question the principle that holds the system together and in this he announces his "I mistrust all systematizers and avoid them. The will to system is a lack of integrity"<sup>4</sup> death of god brought the death of absolute systems of thought as a viable source of meaning. When the system collapses the individual confronts the existence directly.

#### **4.5 Martin Heidegger: Existentialism Systematized.**

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<sup>1</sup>Buckingham, *The Philosophy Book*, p218.

<sup>2</sup>Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (NEW YORK: Vintage, 1994), p125.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p 181.

<sup>4</sup>Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (United States Penguin Books, 1977), p470.

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) a German philosopher and academician, one of the main exponents of existentialism. His philosophy exerted a wide influence in various disciplines like theology, hermeneutic, psychology and literary criticism. In his magnum opus *Being and Time* he tried to examine what it means to *be* in the way that this is revealed through one's own existence (*Dasein*). He draws his term from colloquial German. 'Dasein' is a concept that indicates the uniqueness of human existence as distinct from the usual interpretations of the self as an object or substance.<sup>1</sup>

Heidegger attempted a rigorous analysis and description of existence in his seminal work *Being and Time* in a way that had completeness, but his endeavor was an attempt from the inside, the subjective, human point of view. His work is stamped by the difference and the uniqueness of his themes. Central to his works are the examination of the irrational side of man, *Authentic* living, and *Death* as a significant and defining feature of human existence.

In his book *Being and Time* he argues that in order to understand what existence means we need first to acknowledge that we are beings immersed in the world. Heidegger sees that our first and basic way of being in the world is as a "THEY" and not as "I". A Being-in-the-world characterizes *Dasein* Heidegger wrote:

Being-in is not a 'property' which *Dasein* sometimes has and sometimes does not have, and *without* which it could *be* just as well as it could be with it. It is not the case that man 'is' and then has, by way of an extra, a relationship-of-Being towards the 'world'—a world with which he provides himself occasionally. *Dasein* is never 'proximally' an entity which is, so to speak, free from Being-in, but which sometimes has the inclination to take up a 'relationship' towards the world. Taking up relationships towards the world is possible only *because* *Dasein*, as Being-in-the-world, is as it is. This state of Being does not arise just because some entity is present-at-hand outside of *Dasein* and meets up with it. Such an entity can 'meet up with' *Dasein* only in so far as it can, of its own accord, show itself within a *world*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Aho, *Existentialism: An Introduction*. Phenomenology

<sup>2</sup>S. Earnshaw, *Existentialism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2006), p62.

Simon Critchley explains this “If the human being is really being-in-the-world, then this entails that the world itself is part of the fundamental constitution of what it means to be human. That is to say, I am not a free-floating self or ego facing a world of objects that stands over against me. Rather, for Heidegger, I am my world. The world is part and parcel of my being, of the fabric of my existence”<sup>1</sup> to use Heidegger vocabulary crucial to what it means to be you is to realize that we are *thrown* into this situation, into a world that is already rich with meaning and this shows you the way how you understand yourself and your surroundings. This leads us to say that your world view is constructed by the store of meanings that we draw as a result of our nature as a thrown into the world.

#### **4.6 Jean Paul Starter: Existence Precedes Essence.**

Nothingness lies coiled in the heart of being \_like a worm.<sup>2</sup>— Jean-Paul Sartre

Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) is one of the iconic figures in the literary and philosophical scene. A French novelist, playwright, thinker and witty essayist. He is known for his political activism and as an exponent of *existentialism*. In 1964 Sartre was awarded the noble prize for literature but he dismissed it. Sartre is an existentialist to the core, a practitioner of that style of philosophizing which is preoccupied with the basic problems of human existence: death, anxiety, political commitment, freedom, responsibility and meaning of existence in general.<sup>3</sup>

In his works Existentialism is promoted to as humanistic philosophy in Starter’s most widely read manifesto ‘*Existentialism is A Humanism*’.in which he clarified the meaning of the existential philosophy and demystify the ambiguities that surrounded this movement. His work

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<sup>1</sup>Simon Critchley, "Being and Time, Part 3: Being-in-the-World," <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2009/jun/22/heidegger-religion-philosophy>. Accessed on 29.06.2019.

<sup>2</sup>J.P. Sartre and H.E. Barnes, *Being and Nothingness* (Washington Square Press, 1992), p56.

<sup>3</sup>Jean Paul Sartre, *Jean-Paul Sartre: Basic Writings* (London: Routledge, 2001), p1.

was written not for professional philosopher rather it was an attempt defend his philosophy against the misconception and criticism of the day from different rivaling ideological and religious philosophies as well as, to introduce it to the general public at large in nontechnical terms.

Sartre elucidates and argues for the optimism inherent in his philosophy he argues that we are “*condemned to be free*”<sup>1</sup> that is we always have choice and for this reason free. It is up to us to choose how to interpret, react, stay or get out of our situation.

Sartre illustrates his points in his work *Existentialism is Humanism* by bringing the story of the priest who went through a series of setbacks. He lived his life in stark poverty and endured the consequences of this fact. He failed in school as well as in his military service and went through an unsuccessful love affair. On the light of this the priest chooses to interpret this as a sign that he was not meant for worldly success and he decides to enroll to the priesthood.

What captures the attention is how the priest chooses to interpret his misshapen. Sartre wrote “*it was a sign - but a sign of what? He could have sought refuge in bitterness or despair. Instead - and it was very clever of him - he chose to take it as a sign that he was not destined forsecular success.*”<sup>2</sup>.with this starter gives primacy and stresses on our ability of freedom to respond and interpret the events that happen to us on daily basis, despite the fact that our choices maybe unpleasant, but they are present nonetheless.

Another crucial point made by Sartre is that ‘existence precedes essence’ that is to say For human begins our existence precedes our essence .the essence of thing is the basic constituent of what it *is*. So by saying that existence precedes essence, Starter means that we

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<sup>1</sup>Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'existentialisme Est Un Humanisme* [Existentialism is a Humanism], trans. Carol Macomber (Yale University Press 2007 ), p 29.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p34.

first exist \_\_\_ are born and conscious of our lives \_\_\_only after that we are something. In other words no ingredient can define what human being is and nothing literally can serve as an essence. Human being is a creature that creates his own essence through a perpetual choices and actions only then you start to define yourself and develop and create meaning to your own existence.

## **5 Existential Themes and Concepts**

### **5.2 Angst, Dread and Boredom**

Moods and feelings have a special place in existentialism for their power of disclosing insights about the human condition and more specifically what it means to be human. They have the power to shake us from *Inauthenticity* and different modes of self-deception Camus wrote “*Like great works, deep feelings always mean more than they are conscious of saying*”<sup>1</sup>. Existentialist are interested in some moods and feelings for their powerful revealing nature and the daddy of all of them is anxiety.

In fact, the existential insights revealed by anxiety are of a paramount importance because they make you aware of the nothingness that supports the foundation of who you are and what the world means. This frightening experience brings us face to face with sheer fact of nothingness as the single foundational pillar of human existence.

Existentialists see emotions as tool for gaining insight which put them in contrast with traditional philosophy that excludes emotion as way of distorting the objective truth .But this label them as irrationalists. What they emphasis is the exclusivity of reason to answer the big questions concerning life limit our findings and our knowledge about the world.

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<sup>1</sup>Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*  
p10.

Kierkegaard and Heidegger see that the existential confrontation is revealed to us through ‘anxiety’ (*Angst*) or ‘dread’. But *Angst* shouldn’t be confused with fear, for fear is directed toward something external while *Angst* arises and is directed toward *oneself* when the individual is confronted by the nothingness and meaninglessness of the world. And Kierkegaard called it “*the dizziness of freedom*”<sup>1</sup> in his book *The Concept of Dread*. “*He whose eye chances to look down into a yawning abyss becomes dizzy. ... Anxiety is the dizziness of freedom which [when] freedom gazes down into its own possibility, grasping at finiteness to sustain itself*”<sup>2</sup> anxiety brings me face to face with my own freedom and show me that I am not constant and immutable thing rather I am a mere *possibility* .

Anxiety can show itself at any moment whether in a profound crisis such as when close relative passes away, in an emotional breakdown or under harsh circumstances or calamities. Anxiety is an integral part of what it means to be. Thus, it can arise without any pre-warning identifiable cause or reason. Jaspers captures this moment when he described them as ‘limit’, ‘boundary’ moments. Referring to the experience as “*when everything is said to be valuable and true collapses before my eyes*”<sup>3</sup>

Nietzsche in the other hand describe this feeling in terms of the “terror”<sup>4</sup> that pervade us when language and reason fail and our understanding of the world as place of order and reliability collapses. While Sartre refers to it as ‘nausea’ that gets hold of us when everything that used to be intelligible and meaningful ceases to do so. Sartre explains this through his character Roquentin in his novella *Nausea*, he says and then all of a sudden, there it was, clear as day:

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<sup>1</sup>Kierkegaard, Hong, and Hong, *The Sickness Unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Upbuilding and Awakening* p xi.

<sup>2</sup>CITED IN.Aho, *Existentialism: An Introduction*. Moods and the problem of the real self

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Aho, *Existentialism: An Introduction*. Moods and the problem of the real self

Existence had suddenly unveiled itself. It had lost the harmless look of an abstract category: it was the very paste of things, this root was kneaded into existence. Or rather the root, the park gates, the bench, the sparse grass, all that had vanished: the diversity of things, their individuality, were only an appearance, a veneer. This veneer had melted, leaving soft, monstrous masses, all in disorder – naked, in a frightful, obscene nakedness. ... This moment was extraordinary. I was there, motionless and icy, plunged in a horrible ecstasy; I understood the Nausea, I possessed it.<sup>1</sup>

Camus goes beyond them all, to explore the possibility of suicide in the face of these feelings, in his philosophical reflections on the absurd he refers to the feeling of ‘absurdity’ that gets grip of us out of nowhere when our need for reasonable explanations is confronted with “unreasonable silence of the world”<sup>2</sup> giving rise to “The absurd”<sup>3</sup>.

### 5.3. Freedom and Responsibility

*What man wants is simply independent choice. ... And choice, of course, The devil only knows what choice.*<sup>4</sup>Fyodor Dostoevsky

Freedom is sought by many and is the ultimate goal of others, everyone wants to be free and everyone fights for his own freedom. Freedom is a noble thing to crave but the problematic question is: what is freedom? According to Sartre “Freedom is precisely the nothingness which *is made-to-be* at the heart of man and which forces human-reality *to make itself instead of to be.*”<sup>5</sup>

Freedom means many things for different people. Some see it as the freedom from constraints. But Sartre reject this viewpoint about constraints and argue for absolute freedom. Guingona wrote “*Sartre’s point is not that there are no constraints on the ways I interpret my*

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<sup>1</sup>Aho, *Existentialism: An Introduction*. Moods and the problem of the real self

<sup>2</sup>Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, p28.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>cited in Aho, *Existentialism: An Introduction*. Freedom

<sup>5</sup>Sartre, *Jean-Paul Sartre: Basic Writings*, p185.

situation, but that constraints and obstacles gain their meaning from me, and since there are indefinitely many possible meanings any situation can have, there is no way to identify any supposedly 'hard' facts that could be said to compel me to see things one way rather than another."<sup>1</sup> He sees that we are always free, in fact, we are "condemned to be free"<sup>2</sup> freedom is coiled into the heart of our existence.

For the existentialists nothing is more valuable and central to their philosophy than freedom as Kierkegaard puts it "The most tremendous thing which has been granted to man is choice [and] freedom"<sup>3</sup>. Existentialists mean by we are free is we have no pre-given essence and that we are left alone to create our essence on the basis of ongoing choices and actions.

According to Dostoevsky, freedom is the ability to overcome the compelling desires and wants. And he sees that acknowledging the fact that our capricious impulses "distort our nature" is a dishonest when we deny our ability to transcend them. This is why Sartre says "Every man who takes refuge behind the excuse of his passions... is dishonest man"<sup>4</sup>.

Existentialists link human freedom with the sense of anguish and dread that accompany it when we realize that we are alone and responsible for the choices that we make in our lives, There is no moral absolute, ethical calculus or natural law that can justify our choices; there is no higher tribunal than the individual himself or herself.

## 5.4 Authenticity

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<sup>1</sup>Guignon Charles B., "Freedom and Responsibility. Existentialism," 2019 (1998), <https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/thematic/existentialism/v-1/sections/freedom-and-responsibility>.

<sup>2</sup>Sartre, *L'existentialisme Est Un Humanisme*, p29. Accessed on 29.06.2019.

<sup>3</sup>CITED IN. Aho, *Existentialism: An Introduction*. The core idea of existentialism

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



*What does your conscience say? – You shall become who you are.*<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche

Authenticity holds a considerable space in the existential discourse, and it is a craved virtue for the existentialists. Authenticity simply means to be original or genuine to your concerns and commitments that matter to you rather than fall to the already given or to the roles and values prescribed by the public. As Charles Taylor writes, “*is a certain way of being human that is my way. I am called upon to live my life in this way, and not in imitation of anyone else's. But this gives a new importance to being true to myself. If I am not, I miss the point of my life, I miss what being human is for me*”<sup>2</sup>

## **5.5 Alienation**

*Alienation as our present destiny is achieved only by outrageous violence perpetrated by human beings on human beings.*<sup>3</sup> Ronald David Laing

Alienation is the feeling that you're a stranger in your own life, a stranger in the world. In border sense it refers to any psychological feeling of separation from persons, groups, institutions, ideas, and ideals, places and things. This notion is basic to the existential thought and characterizes the Modern and Post-Modern Age. Henry Winthrop states in his article *Alienation and Existentialism In Relation To Literature and Youth* that “*alienation is the most chilling cloud which hangs over the lives of men and women in modern industrial society*”<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Aho, *Existentialism: An Introduction*. The core idea of existentialism

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. Moods and the problem of the real self

<sup>3</sup>R.D. Laing, *The Politics of Experience* (England: Penguin Books Ltd, 1967), p12.

<sup>4</sup>Henry Winthrop, "Alienation and Existentialism in Relation to Literature and Youth," *The Journal of General Education* 18, no. 4 (1967): p289.

Alienation is regarded by many prominent writers as the disease of society. Fromm sees alienation as “*the most spiritually searing feature of modern mass society*”<sup>1</sup> and he explains

By alienation is meant a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the center of his world, as the creator of his own acts -- but his acts and their consequences have become his masters, whom he obeys, or whom he may even worship. The alienated person is out of touch with himself as he is out of touch with any other person. He, like the others, is experienced as things are experienced; with the senses and with common sense, but at the same time without being related to oneself and to the world outside positively.<sup>2</sup>

This sense of alienation can be categorized into seven forms as Henry Winthrop divided it in his article: alienation from one self, and this means an interruption from the quest for identity; alienation from the opposite sex, this happens when one member of the opposite sex fails to understand the psychology and needs of the other sex; alienation of man from his fellow man, this can be conspicuous and very apparent in the daily misunderstanding and sensitivities that engender injustice, unconcern between any two individuals; alienation from society, another form of alienation that goes back to the incongruous relationship of individuals with their society and culture; alienation from work, another aspect of alienation which can be noticeable in the daily endeavor of the members of society to meet and afford their basic needs; and the last one is alienation from nature, and this type of alienation refers to the disregard and carelessness toward one's natural surroundings and environment .

This sense of alienation is not merely the result of dualistic philosophies. In fact, it is the outcome of perceptual process that is integral to the human condition that every single

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<sup>1</sup>Winthrop, "Alienation and Existentialism in Relation to Literature and Youth." p289.

<sup>2</sup>E. Fromm and D. Ingleby, *The Sane Society*, 2 ed., (the United Kingdom: Routledge, 2001), p117.

individual experiences at one time or another which gives rise to the ‘ambiguity’ of human beings.<sup>1</sup>

The world doesn’t have any pre-given meaning, it is only through my engagement and projects that this world gain its meaning, otherwise, the world retains its otherness and thus is experienced as utterly alien.

## 5.6 Death

*A free man thinks of nothing less than of death, and his wisdom is a mediation on life, not on death.*<sup>2</sup> Spinoza

The theme of death has always been present in western philosophical tradition. And it pops its head throughout the existential works as one of the most problematic philosophical issues that is taken as an object of contemplation and analysis. Socrates once defined philosophy as “*the pursuit of death*”<sup>3</sup>. Among the existentialist who gave considerable space to *death* we find Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Sartre, Camus, and Nietzsche.

Gray in his article *the idea of death in existentialism* he asks some questions that are pivotal to our review: what gives death its significance and meaning that man should one day die? How should I regard my death as an upcoming event? What should I gain if I forget all about it and pursue my life without giving any notice to it? All these questions are addressed in existentialism and discussed thoroughly.

Karl lists death as one of the ‘boundary situations’ that disclose the limits of our being to us, this experience cannot be understood on the basis of a conceptual term because its

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<sup>1</sup>Steven Crowell, *The Cambridge Companion to Existentialism* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p32.

<sup>2</sup>B. Spinoza, B. de Spinoza, and E.M. Curley, *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works* (Princeton University Press, 1994), p235.

<sup>3</sup>J. Glenn Gray, "The Idea of Death in Existentialism," *Journal of Philosophy, Inc.* 48, no. 5 ( 1951): p113.

implications are hidden from our ordinary logic. According to Gray “*the most extreme spiritual exposure is the exposure to death, and it is the most impenetrable of the boundary situations. It is the one which makes shipwreck of all human life inevitable.*”<sup>1</sup>

For Heidegger and Jaspers death is a constitutive part of life and like this we should regard it. In Heidegger’s term death is “*the most personal, the most detached, unrelated and unsurpassable potentiality*”<sup>2</sup> for him in order to become aware of death as an opportunity to increase being, is to acknowledge that is always my own, something that is part of my essence.<sup>3</sup> For both Heidegger and Jaspers the decisive fact about death is that each person must regard his own death as the paramount reality. “it is the most isolated, separate, and unrelated of life’s possibilities and for that reason the most significant” wrote Gray.<sup>4</sup>

Heidegger maintains that we escape from death by giving a public dimension to the phenomenon, and not something that effects every one of us indiscriminately, we tend to make of this event just a casual event as any other that affect everybody, but it doesn’t concern me. In order to pass the state of unreality, we should recognize that we are ‘being toward death’ that is we are constantly in the face of death, and our life should be understood accordingly and on the basis of this fact. Heidegger puts it this way: “*Death is a possibility of being that Dasein always has to take upon itself. With death, Dasein stands before itself in its own most potentiality of being.*”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Gray, "The Idea of Death in Existentialism," p118.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p119.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Gale, *Existentialism for Dummies*, p182.

## Chapter TWO: *Waiting for Godot* a Post-Mortem

By the time of writing *waiting for Godot*, humanity have tried and produced different philosophies, through which it tried to examine the world from different perspective. Though, these lenses succeeded in times and failed in others to provide an explanation to certain phenomena in the world. Absurdism came as the last resort, after much long deliberation about how everything hangs with everything else.

The coming chapter presents a new perspective on the Theatre of The Absurd's identification with absurdism. Additionally, this chapter provides a thematic and stylistic readings of the play, And how does it exhibit visions of absurdism.

### 1. Philosophical Suicide Disguised as Death :

*The end is in the beginning and yet you go on.*<sup>1</sup> — Samuel Beckett, *Endgame*

*It takes more courage to live than to shoot yourself.*<sup>2</sup> — Albert Camus

Existentialism and the theatre of the absurd share a common ground from which both movements go to announce both implicitly and explicitly certain visions about the world. In which the latter is condemned as non-rational and the former as rigorously rational. While existential writers like Camus and Sartre “*present their sense of the irrationality of the human condition in the form of highly lucid and logically constructed reasoning,*”<sup>3</sup> the theatre of the absurd on the other hand “*strives to express the senselessness of the human condition and the*

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel Beckett, *Endgame a Play in One Act Followed by Act without Words a Mime for One Player* (NEW YORK: GROVE PRESS, 1958), p69.

<sup>2</sup>Albert Camus, *A Happy Death*, trans. R. Howard (New York: Vintage International, 1995), p54.

<sup>3</sup>quoted in Crowell, *The Cambridge Companion to Existentialism*, p311.

*inadequacy of the rational approach by the open abandonment of rational devices and discursive thought.*"<sup>1</sup>

The work of *Waiting For Godot* holds this existential stamp because in addition to the work's preoccupation with idea of the absurd it bears the seeds of existential work for its portrayal of the human condition that is central and critical to the integrity of the work.

One of the major themes that are prevalent and common in existentialism and absurd theatre are Death and suicide which are two of the predicaments of the human condition as a 'being unto death'. In *Waiting for Godot* the first glimpses of suicidal allusion occurs very near the start of the play

ESTRAGON:

*Ah stop blathering and help me off with this bloody thing.*

VLADIMIR:

*Hand in hand from the top of 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?*<sup>2</sup>

This attempt explains and shows that Vladimir and Estragon live in world devoid of reason and "What is called a reason for living is also an excellent reason for dying"<sup>3</sup>reverberating

The thought hold by Camus. Camus addresses this alienation from the world that has psychological implications on the human psyche

A world that can be explained even with had reasons is a familiar world. But, on the other hand, in a universe suddenly divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, is properly the feeling of absurdity. All healthy men having thought of their own suicide, it can be seen,

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<sup>1</sup>quoted in Crowell, *The Cambridge Companion to Existentialism*, p311.

<sup>2</sup>S. Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts* (Grove Press, 1994), p4.

<sup>3</sup>Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*,p4.

without further explanation, that there is a direct connection between this feeling and the longing for death.<sup>1</sup>

Once the absurd makes its presence and reveals itself to become more tangible and an adopted state of mind, it becomes more and more difficult to be avoided. *Waiting for Godot* portrays the two tramps helpless efforts toward the end.

The play's stage consists of a country road, a large rock, and a single tree. After learning from the young messenger that Godot is unlikely to come Estragon gazes at the tree and laments, "*Pity we haven't got a bit of rope*"<sup>2</sup> and he demands from Vladimir to remind him to bring a rope the following day, he remembers a past attempt at suicide "*Do you remember the day I threw myself into the Rhone?... You fished me out.*"<sup>3</sup> Later Estragon proclaims "*The best thing would be to kill me, like the other.*"<sup>4</sup>

Death, however offers no easy solution. When Vladimir speaks musingly of "*The last moment*"<sup>5</sup> he discloses his profound disquiet of this inevitability "*Sometimes I feel it coming all the same. Then I go all queer. ... How shall I say? Relieved and at the sametime . . . (he searches for the word) . . . appalled. (With emphasis.) AP-PALLED.*"<sup>6</sup>

The prospect of death is more appalling than the prospect of going on to confront the tedium and despair of existence. [. . .] Thus the characters, even Lucky, favors to wait for death rather than escape the hell of existence by the only effective means available That of suicide.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, p 6.

<sup>2</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p84.

<sup>3</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p84.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p94.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p5.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Cited in Richard Durán, "'En Attendant Godot' or 'Le Suicide Philosophique': Beckett's Play from the Perspective of Camus's 'Le Mythe De Sisyphé'," *The French Review* 82, no. 5 (2009): p986.

The play seems to go in frantic advances and retreats, to commit suicide or not, none of the characters commits suicide, though it is frequently discussed and attempted by Didi and Gogo. This sense of unsettledness prevents them from settling on one choice whether to choose life or succumb to death; they cannot even determine what is to be done, their inability to commit suicide, in fact, gives the impression of their inability to do anything, They are framed within the situation.

Vladimir and Estragon problem from the outset of the play is a problem of realization, they cannot realize themselves and the world around them. This is a typical example of absurdity as defined by Albert Camus in *The myth of Sisyphus*. It is crystal clear that Gogo and Didi do not know whether God exists or not. And the world for them goes beyond the confines of any certainties. They find themselves thrown into a world devoid of moral restraint, so the world is meaningless. The characters in the play of *waiting for Godot* are doomed to move within the fixed loop of futility and hopelessness. Camus notices in the *Myth of Sisyphus*:

*I see many people die because they judge that life is not worth living. I see others paradoxically getting killed for the ideas or illusions that give them a reason for living.<sup>1</sup>*

In the second act of the play committing suicide was at their arms reach since Pozzo went blind and lucky deaf the two of them are helpless. In fact, they forget about it when the devices are before them. In reality, they are not serious about killing themselves, they are merely thinking of it. Suicide is part of the blathering that would help them while away time, bringing consolation and forget about the boredom of everyday life where nothing can be done at all.

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<sup>1</sup>Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* p4.



They come to the point of nothing to be done. Suicide is proposed as way out of this meaningless absurd life. In *The Myth of Sisyphus* Camus claims that suicide is an escape from the consciousness of the absurd. However, Camus insists that we should not surrender to it. Didi and Gogo don't commit suicide physically, but they yield to stark reality of the absurd situation. Rather suicide was intellectual by losing their ability to relate to bigger picture and make sense of what is going around.

Against all the odds, Vladimir and Estragon predisposition is to resume life rather than giving up. Vladimir elucidates at the beginning of the play "*All my life I've tried to put it from me, saying Vladimir, be reasonable, you haven't yet tried everything. And I resumed the struggle.*"<sup>1</sup>

## **2. Boredom the Spring of Creativity or a Lethal Poison?**

What keeps all living things busy and in motion is the striving to exist. But when existence is secured, they do not know what to do: that is why the second thing that sets them in motion is a striving to get rid of the burden of existence, not to feel it any longer, 'to kill time', i.e. to escape boredom.<sup>2</sup> — Arthur Schopenhauer

Boredom is one aspect of human existence. In fact, Heidegger sees boredom as an existential mood that foreshadows the finitude of our existence. He outlines three forms of boredom varies from basic to the profound. Heidegger says that we all in some sorts have or experience a profound sense of boredom with ourselves.<sup>3</sup>Boredom Sometimes it is used as a blank label applied to whatever fails to appeal or grasp our interest.It is primarily something we

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<sup>1</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p2.

<sup>2</sup>Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p239.

<sup>3</sup>A Moran, P A Scott, and P Darbyshire, "Existential Boredom: The Experience of Living on Haemodialysis Therapy," *Med Ethics; Medical Humanities* 35, no. 2 (2009): p72.

live with, not so much something we think about systematically.<sup>1</sup>In act one of *Waiting for Godot* after much time tinkering with his boots He succumbs to the universal existential experience ESTRAGON: “(giving up again). *Nothing to be done.*”<sup>2</sup>.Profound sense of boredom is essential existential experience. As Jon Hellesnes has asked: “What can possibly be more existentially disturbing than boredom?”<sup>3</sup>

In his book the *philosophy of boredom* Lars Svendsen wrote “to investigate the problem of boredom is to attempt to understand who we are and how we fit into the world at this particular point in time.”<sup>4</sup> He adds “The more I thought about it, the more boredom seemed to be seminal for understanding contemporary culture. We live in a culture of boredom,”<sup>5</sup>

The term boredom is not used frequently in Beckett’s literary production, yet we do find discussion of boredom in Beckett’s *Proust*, which is strongly influenced by Schopenhauer.<sup>6</sup> In it Beckett considers the fundamental condition of life as a pendulum movement oscillating and vacillating between suffering and boredom.<sup>7</sup>Beckett goes to incarnate this claim in his play as Estragon and Vladimir go through the ups and downs of life:Vladimir says “*We wait. We are bored. ... No, don't protest, we are bored to death, there's no denying it. Good. A diversion comes along and what do we do? We let it go to waste. Come, let's get to work! ... In an instant all will vanish and we'llbe alone once more, in the midst of nothingness!*”<sup>8</sup>

ESTRAGON:  
*What am I to say?*

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<sup>1</sup>Lars Svendsen, *A Philosophy of Boredom*, trans. John Irons (Great Britain: Reaktion Books, 2008), p8.

<sup>2</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p2.

<sup>3</sup>Svendsen, *A Philosophy of Boredom*, p11.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.,p7.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., P94.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, P135.

VLADIMIR:  
*Say, I am happy.*  
ESTRAGON:  
*I am happy.*  
VLADIMIR:  
*So am I.*  
ESTRAGON:  
*So am I.*  
VLADIMIR:  
*We are happy.*  
ESTRAGON:  
*We are happy. (Silence.) What do we do now, now that we  
are happy?*<sup>1</sup>

This ontological condition i.e. boredom arises in the play from the want of order and logic in the lives of characters which is met with meaningless void that informs their day-to day existence. The futility in waiting for Godot who shows no signs that he will come soon, and the incongruous sense of time experienced by them all these are factors that may trigger the sense of boredom.

ESTRAGON:  
*In the meantime, nothing happens.*  
POZZO:  
*You find it tedious?*  
ESTRAGON:  
*Somewhat.*<sup>2</sup>

Estragon moans subsequently *“Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful!”*<sup>3</sup> as they go on they devise new strategies to kill this sense of tediousness and dullness of their mundane lives. Notwithstanding Estragon's disinterest, Vladimir insists on reciting the story of the two thieves crucified with Christ because *“It'll pass the time.”*<sup>4</sup> He says. But Camus warns that the protective walls of habit may collapse bringing to consciousness the absurdity of life *“It happens that the stage sets collapse. Rising, streetcar, four hours in the office or the*

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<sup>1</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, P91

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p56.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p62.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p8.

*factory, meal, streetcar, four hours of work, meal, sleep, and Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday and Saturday according to the same rhythm-this path is easily followed most of the time. But one day the "why" arises and everything begins in that weariness tinged with amazement.*"<sup>1</sup>

## **2.1. Instances of Boredom Through Heideggerian Lens:**

To understand boredom from a Heideggerian perspective it is crucial to understand Heidegger's notion of time. Heidegger proposes that time is not only the irreversible succession of "nows" that we understand as a clock time.<sup>2</sup> Instead, time as *originary temporality* is a rudimentary structure of our existence of being.<sup>3</sup> According to Heidegger, *originary temporality* is a unified structure consists of the intermingling past, present and future.<sup>4</sup>

The originary future is connected to the way we project ourselves into possibilities in life.<sup>5</sup> It lays the basis for the entire three fold structure of originary temporality.<sup>6</sup> Whereas the originary past is made of set of practices, relationships and language that we have to imbue from our being into a particular world.<sup>7</sup> These contextual features affect us in different ways. However, the originary present consists of the tasks and activities we perform in-order-to project into forward possibilities in the originary future.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, Heidegger proposes that 'World-time is part of the originary present. World-time is the qualitative experience of time We are quite familiar with in our daily basis activities and engagement in the world.'<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* pp12,13.

<sup>2</sup>Moran, Scott, and Darbyshire, "Existential Boredom: The Experience of Living on Haemodialysis Therapy," p70.

<sup>3</sup>Moran, "Existential Boredom: The Experience of Living on Haemodialysis Therapy," p70.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Moran, "Existential Boredom: The Experience of Living on Haemodialysis Therapy," p70.

Heidegger's conception of time paves the way for his existential account of boredom. Boredom happens when time or temporality is disrupted or suspended and as it is depicted throughout the play of *Waiting for Godot* the existential perspective that Beckett managed to create goes hand in hand with Heidegger's existential perspective of boredom. We can argue that as Estragon and Vladimir as they go on waiting they don't have any clear and definite time for the arrival of Godot.

VLADIMIR:

*He said Saturday. (Pause.) I think.*

ESTRAGON:

*You think.*

VLADIMIR:

*(He fumbles in his pockets, bursting with miscellaneous rubbish.)*

ESTRAGON:

*(very insidious). But what Saturday? And is it Saturday? Is it not rather Sunday? (Pause.) Or Monday? (Pause.) Or Friday?*

VLADIMIR:

*(looking wildly about him, as though the date was inscribed in the landscape). It's not possible!*<sup>1</sup>

According to Heidegger, the first kind of boredom arises when we find ourselves compelled to wait in a particular situation, for example, for a bus or a flight <sup>2</sup>the time passes slow and time becomes long, thus we try to do things to dodge boredom. Though if our mechanism of passing time are ineffective, we will watch the clock ticking away <sup>3</sup> as boredom continues to torment us, we experience sense of restlessness and disquiet.<sup>4</sup> Didi and Gogo engage in pointless conversation as mechanism of whiling away time and escaping the sense of boredom "*In the meantime let us try and converse calmly*"<sup>5</sup> Estragon says.

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<sup>1</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p14.

<sup>2</sup>Moran, Scott, and Darbyshire, "Existential Boredom: The Experience of Living on Haemodialysis Therapy," p72.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p96.

The second form of boredom happens when world-time comes to a halt. And when we find ourselves bound to wait for an elongated period of time, our daily activities are disrupted, hence, the world time comes to a stand-still .according to Heidegger that in our everyday conception of time is that time flows.<sup>1</sup>Therefore, it is when world-time comes to a halt instead of flowing that intrigues the sense of boredom.<sup>2</sup> This shows clearly from the start of the play when declared as if everything is already predestined and that Godot will never come “*Nothing to be done*”<sup>3</sup>

Heidegger sees that in deep sense of boredom, the threefold structure of originary temporality Is suspended or stopped, as it was indicated earlier, world time constitutes the originary present, and the originary present is already included within the unified structure of originary temporality.<sup>4</sup> When world-time halts for elongated period of time, the originary present ceases also. And originary temporality is suspended. Which give rise to the third form of boredom. When the originary present is brought a stand-still, inaction is its trait.<sup>5</sup> This means the person is no longer acting in the originary present to project himself into future originary possibilities. Consequently, the threefold structure of originary temporality is suspended or is brought to secession. The person is forced to recognise and withstand empty time<sup>6</sup>this is empty time of profound boredom.<sup>7</sup>The reaction to the third form of boredom is very indicative of the degree of hopelessness and boredom Estragon response “*Let's hang ourselves immediately!*”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Moran, Scott, and Darbyshire, "Existential Boredom: The Experience of Living on Haemodialysis Therapy," p72.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p2.

<sup>4</sup>Moran, Scott, and Darbyshire, "Existential Boredom: The Experience of Living on Haemodialysis Therapy," p72.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p73.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p18.

### 3. Religion and the Irreligious

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.<sup>1</sup>

Samuel Beckett's open and frank disbelief in the Christian enterprise during a conversation with Tom F. Driver's in *Columbia University Quarterly*, summer, 1961 he states clearly that when he was asked what does he think about those who find religious elements in his plays his reply was like this

Well, really there is none at all. I have no religious feeling once I had a religious emotion. It was at my first communication. No more. My mother was deeply religious. So was my brother. He knelt down at his bed as long as he could kneel. My father had none. The family was protestant, but for me it wasirksome and I let it go. My bother and mother got no value form their religion when they died. At the moment of crisis it had no more depth than an old-school tie. Irish Catholicism is not attractive, but it is deeper....<sup>2</sup>

Despite Beckett's disbelief the language of faith kept its presence in his literary productions and biblical allusion is abundantly present.

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<sup>1</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p7.

<sup>2</sup>V. A. Kolve, "Religious Language in "Waiting for Godot"," *The Centennial Review* Vol. 11, No. 1 (1967): p103.

### 3.1 Godot or God ?

*Given the existence ...of a personal God quaquaquawith  
white beard quaquaquaua outside time withoutextension  
who from the heights of divine apathia divine athambia  
divine aphasia loves us dearly with some exceptions for  
reasons unknown but time will tell<sup>1</sup>*

The reader of the play, at first glance on the title can distinguish the word *Godot* from the phrase on the cover page of the play *waiting for Godot* that bare similarity to the word of God to some extent both in spelling and pronunciation which makes the reader associate it immediately with the word God. In addition to other descriptions in the play that are encouraging to consider it so. Mercier says that it might be appealing to take it as step further and interpret the title of the play of *Waiting for Godot* as waiting for Christ's second coming.<sup>2</sup> Whereas for Esslin whether Godot is meant to suggest the intervention of supernatural agency, or whether he stands for a mythical human being whose arrival is expected to change the situation... his exact nature remains of secondary importance.<sup>3</sup>

The boy, a messenger from *Godot* when he was asked by the two tramps about the appearance of *Godot* his answer was quite alarming to Vladimir

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.*  
*Silence.*  
VLADIMIR:

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<sup>1</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p65.

<sup>2</sup>Tatiana Liljeström, "Waiting for Godot - What Is Everybody Waiting For? : Existential Atheism in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*" (Student thesis, 2012), p11.

<sup>3</sup>Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd*, p32.



*Christ have mercy on us! Silence.*<sup>1</sup>

Godot's description by boy is similar to that described by John in the holy bible he had seen the revived Savior in Revelation "he has golden belt in his waist. His hair is as white as snow like wool. His eyes are shining like fire and his feet are glittering as copper. When he speaks, his voice is like flood roaring."<sup>2</sup>As well to his physical attributes, he has the power for punishment and redemption. Vladimir and Estragon think if they wait for Godot they will be saved

VLADIMIR:

*We'll hang ourselves tomorrow. (Pause.) Unless Godot comes.*

ESTRAGON:

*And if he comes?*

VLADIMIR:

*We'll be saved.*

On the contrary if they don't keep up to their promise and give up waiting

ESTRAGON:

*And if we dropped him? (Pause.) If we dropped him?*

VLADIMIR:

*He'd punish us. (Silence. He looks at the tree.) Everything's dead but the tree.*<sup>3</sup>

The boy during his conversation with Didi and Gogo reveals that *Godot* treats him well but not the boy's brother who minds the sheep.<sup>4</sup>As well, the figure of Godot gives the impression of something that is simultaneously present and absent.<sup>5</sup> Anders claims that the dichotomy of presence and absence that that Beckett uses accentuate his presence and thus god's existence is formulated like this "He doesn't come, therefore He is"<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p160.

<sup>2</sup>Jing Wang, "The Religious Meaning in Waiting for Godot," *English Language Teaching* Vol.4, no. 1 (2011): p197.

<sup>3</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p162.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p79.

<sup>5</sup>Liljeström, "Waiting for Godot - What Is Everybody Waiting For? : Existential Atheism in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*," p16.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

### 3.2 Waiting for Salvation

The waiting of Vladimir and Estragon is not purposeless, they are waiting for something and that something is salvation. Vladimir announces that they will hang themselves by tomorrow, unless Godot comes. And if he would come they will be saved.<sup>1</sup> Esslin states in his book *The Theatre of the Absurd* “*The theme of the two thieves on the cross, the theme of the uncertainty of the hope of salvation and the fortuitousness of the bestowal of grace, does indeed pervade the whole play. Vladimir states it right at the beginning: ‘One of the thieves was saved. ...It’s a reasonable percentage.’*”<sup>2</sup>

Critics’ views differ: there are those who argue that the main theme might be existentialism and in the other hand, there are others who see Christianity and salvation as the main themes, but there is a middle ground in-between opinion of those who share Beckett’s argument that this play’s main theme is whatever you can imagine.<sup>3</sup>

However, when Beckett was asked in an interview how salvation could hold such space in his attention his reply was I do not believe in it, “*I am interested in the shape of ideas even if I do not believe in them*”<sup>4</sup> it is the ‘shape’ of idea of salvation that interests him.

Esslin, despite the fact that he reads the Christian elements within the play he dismisses them by condemning them as “bad faith” ascribing to Sartre’s notion.<sup>5</sup> He notices that the “*hope of*

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<sup>1</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p164.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p6.

<sup>3</sup>Santiago Rianza Martínez, "Theatre of the Absurd: "Waiting for Godot" by Samuel Beckett" (UNIVERSIDAD DE JAÉN, 2016), p14.

<sup>4</sup>A.L. Kelsch, "Reading Waiting for Godot through the Lens of Christian Existentialism" (Eastern Michigan University, 2007), p27.

<sup>5</sup>ibid., p38.

*Salvation may be merely an evasion of the suffering and anguish that spring from facing The reality of the human condition”<sup>1</sup>*

### **3.3The Tree of Life and Death**

The willow tree has a great religious significance in the play of *Waiting for Godot*. From the beginning of the play, Beckett’s wanted to underscore that fact by describing the place, he wanted to bring to our attention the presence of the tree “*A country road. A tree.*”<sup>2</sup>According to Morrison the tree is a very useful plot device that anchors both of Vladimir and Estragon to a specific location.<sup>3</sup>And it represents In the Judeo-Christian tradition the promise of new life as well as chastity.<sup>4</sup>

From the play we know that Godot told them to wait for him by the tree Vladimir says “*He said by the tree.*”<sup>5</sup>

The tree for both Didi and Gogo is where they are waiting for Godot to come and therefore for salvation. But also while they are waiting boredom starts to creep in they decided to turn that tree to an instrument to hang themselves. They tried to hang themselves from that tree while waiting for Godot

VLADIMIR:  
*It's the tree.*

...

VLADIMIR:

...

*Estragon draws Vladimir towards the tree. They stand motionless before it. Silence.*

ESTRAGON:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p2.

<sup>3</sup>"What is the significance of the tree in "Waiting for Godot"?" *eNotes*, 21 Feb. 2009, <https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/what-significance-tree-samuel-becketts-waiting-for-65939>. Accessed 26 May 2019.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p11.

*Why don't we hang ourselves?<sup>1</sup>*

The tree to their disappointment wouldn't bear the heavy weight, even it wouldn't do the task for them because the tree is the tree of life. This is why they reclined from pursuing their action when they came to realize that their attempt is doomed to failure

ESTRAGON:

*Don't let's do anything. It's safer.*

VLADIMIR:

*Let's wait and see what he says.*

ESTRAGON:

*Who?*

VLADIMIR:

*Godot.<sup>2</sup>*

#### **4. Time and Memory in Waiting for Godot**

*Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time!  
It's abominable! When! When! One day, is that not enough  
for you, one day he went dumb, one day I went blind, one  
day we'll go deaf, one day we were born, one day we shall  
die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for  
you? ...They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams  
an instant, then it's night once more.<sup>3</sup>*

By implementing the dramatic elements of time and space Beckett managed to imply important ideas that afflicted the modern man and still do. The hazy notion of time, fragmentation of memories which results in the absent mindedness and loss of direction and a disintegrated sense of self. Beckett's work also can be seen as a commentary on the transient and brevity of life.

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<sup>1</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p162.

<sup>2</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p20.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p145.

Reading the play of *Waiting for Godot* discloses under close scrutiny the incongruous sense of time that the two tramps experience as they wait for Godot. Richard remarks that despite the presence of The Aristotelian dramatic elements in *Waiting for Godot* the links are broken, the discontinuity of time is reflected on this more abstract level of structure.<sup>1</sup>

Esslin argues that “*the subject of the play is not Godot but waiting, the act of waiting as an essential and characteristic aspect of the human condition.*”<sup>2</sup> He adds “[and] *it is in the act of waiting that we experience the flow of time in its purest form, most evident form. If we are active, we tend to forget the passage of time, but if we are passively waiting, we are confronted with the action of time itself*”<sup>3</sup>

It is the passionate waiting for Godot to come and their active absorption to the temporal situation that make them inattentive to the passage of time, as well as, to the tramps’ uncertainty that Godot might actually come which deprive them from any hope to ascribe to the flow of time, Because by assigning consciously to the passage of time this only would increase their sense of hopelessness and intensify their desperate situation, James wrote “*For Estragon, time has no real meaning; his only concern with time is that it is something to be used up while waiting for Godot*”.

Esslin highlights this point of view he wrote by “*Being subject to this process of time flowing through us and changing us in doing so, we are, at no single moment in our lives, identical with ourselves. Hence ‘we are disappointed at the nullity of what we are pleased to call attainment.*

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<sup>1</sup>Harold Bloom, *Bloom’s Modern Critical Interpretations: Waiting for Godot—New Edition* (New York: Bloom's Literary Criticism, 2008), p7.

<sup>2</sup>Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* .The search for the self

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

*But what is attainment? The identification of the subject with the object of his desire. The subject has died - and perhaps many times on the way.”*<sup>1</sup>

This way of dodging the passage of time certainly has its consequences. Vladimir refers to “*all these years*”<sup>2</sup> that the two have been together indicates his confused and imprecise sense of time when it was followed by “*million years ago, in the nineties.*”<sup>3</sup> Which make him unreliable to determine accurately for how long they have been together.<sup>4</sup>

According to Kelsch this leads us to think about where they spent the previous day and the day before it, exposing to the audience the faltering memories of the men and time for them is shifty and difficult concept to handle.<sup>5</sup>

In the second act of the play Pozzo and Lucky reappear, completely deformed by the passage of time even Vladimir and Estragon they are skeptical whether they’re the same people they met the previous day. Pozzo doesn’t remember anyone ‘I don’t remember having met anyone yesterday. But tomorrow I won’t remember having met anyone today’

Beckett’s characters suffer from memory lapses and partial amnesia and most of the time show their incapacity to move forward as they cannot grasp a single event in their memory for long, which make time pass unnoticed.

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<sup>1</sup>Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd*. The search for the self.

<sup>2</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p4.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Kelsch, "Reading Waiting for Godot through the Lens of Christian Existentialism," p1.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

## **2 . Plotting the Absurd in *Waiting for Godot***

### **2.1 The Title**

A lot of controversy has risen since the publication of ‘waiting for Godot’. Critics have not been able to reach any agreement about this play. Even Beckett himself did not give much help to understand the play. The main concern of this absurd drama is ‘waiting’ and ‘Godot’ which are ever puzzling., human beings always wait for something Throughout their lives, and in this play Godot simply represents the objective of their waiting — an event, a thing, a person, death. Beckett has thus depicted in this play a situation which has a general human application.

The title of the play has evoked a greater controversy than anything else . An earlier version of the play was simply called ‘waiting’. Martin Esslin holds the view that the subject of the play is not Godot but waiting. There is a general agreement that waiting is of more importance in the play than Godot, but the source of the word Godot has aroused much curiosity. Beckett himself was of little help and, when asked about the meaning of Godot he replied, “If I knew I would have said so in the play.” .this waiting can be understood as a struggle to find God. Even if Beckett himself denied that the play would have any religious connotations, Godot’s name can be a derived word from “God” . And this is not the only religious reference in the play. For example, Vladimir and Estragon talk about the two thieves that were supposed to be crucified with the saviour at the same time , they confess having read the Bible, even Pozzo tells them that “*You are human beings[...]Of the same species of*

*myself[...]*Of the same species as Pozzo! Made in God's image"<sup>1</sup>Pozzo's words also express one of the Christian beliefs, namely that men take after God. As they idolize God, this can suggest that this waiting is just a metaphor for this life. It gets to be pointless because they know that God (Godot) would save them and that, as Christian religion teaches, the afterlife is a better place to live than this. As this life is just a transition to the afterlife, to Heaven, Estragon and Vladimir only have to wait, as waiting will be give them a better life. As they are two poor tramps, they put all their trust in God. Martin Esslin states that:

*They are hoping to be saved from the evanescence and instability of the illusion of time, and to find peace and permanence outside it. Then they will no longer be tramp, homeless, wanderers, but will have arrived home.*<sup>2</sup>

This point leads us to another interpretation of the waiting, waiting seeming as hope. this waiting can also be understood as hope. This pointless waiting is meant to anticipate Godot's appearance . However he is not coming. The comic situation in the play, apart from the characters, is the fact that those two people seem to be naive enough to think that Godot is going to come after so many times when he failed to do this. But this humorous reality soon becomes a tragic one. Godot is not coming and he was supposed to save them. This waiting represents the hope, even if they have to wait for some time , they know that this would lead to a something meaningful as they hope for Godot's help. This can also be related to the mundane, suggesting that people always wait for something, they always wait for a someone or something to come and after coming, they wait for another moment. Even if that moment is so important, the waiting is the one that makes it special. Hence, the moment when they would met Godot would be a very important moment because of this waiting. The critic Martin Esslin states that:

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<sup>1</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p30.

<sup>2</sup>Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* .The search for the self



*“the habit of hoping that Godot might come after all is the last illusion that keeps Vladimir and Estragon from facing the human condition and themselves in the harsh light of fully conscious awareness”<sup>1</sup>*

What Esslin means in this quote is that Godot represents the meaning of this life to the two tramps, and this waiting can stand for hope as they do not want to give up and to keep the struggle. They passively wait for a meaning, for Godot. Their silly waiting represents their hope that Godot is going to come, that their lives will finally make sense. They are aware of the feeling of uselessness as Vladimir states: *“Let us do something while we have the chance! It’s not every day that we are needed.”*<sup>2</sup>. His claim suggests their need of meaning. They need to feel useful, to make a sense out of nonsense.

On the other hand, the symbol of waiting can be understood as the passing of time. Time is an abstract concept, but the only condition that makes someone really face time is waiting. Time passes differently. When people have to deal with different things, time seems to pass quickly, but when people have to wait for something to happen, time seems to pass slowly. Even if time is seen as an objective reality carefully calculated, it also represents an inner reality, the reality of the self which means that time is subjective. *‘Waiting for Godot’* is a play that plays with both dimensions of time. The play has two acts which represent two different days. Both days, Vladimir and Estragon wait for Godot to come in the evening, in the same place. However, Beckett seems to show us the pointlessness of time through the undependable memory of the two tramps. Even if the reader is given the impression that the action of the play happens in the same place, Vladimir and Estragon seem not to remember it. They have an uncertain feeling that they have already been there, but they are not sure about it. More than this, Estragon seems to forget everything, even the events that happened recently. As they have

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<sup>1</sup>Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd*. The search for the self.

<sup>2</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p133.

nothing to do while waiting, the two characters start discussing different things. Martin Esslin argues in his essay that “*waiting is to experience the action of time, which is constant change. And yet, as nothing real ever happens, that change is in itself an illusion*”<sup>1</sup>. This means that while waiting, Vladimir and Estragon have to deal with time. However, time is subjective as they feel that they have only waited for two days, but there are some clues of the passing of the objective time which make us believe that the real period of time is even longer: the tree that grows leaves, Pozzo’s sudden blindness and Lucky’s dumbness. As the time passes, some elements in the play change subtly. Despite the passing of time, characters are not aware of it. In the second act, Pozzo even states that: “*The blind have no notion of time*”<sup>2</sup>. This means that the passing of time does not affect him anymore as he is unable to notice the changes brought by it. This statement seems to emphasize the idea that all the characters in this play have no notion of time. Vladimir and Estragon know that they had already waited for Godot, but they are not able to remember when or how much time it has passed ever since, they are not even sure about what time of day they talked to each other about it. This suggests that in *Waiting for Godot* time becomes subjective as it is perceived differently by every character. They seem to live in a timeless world

## **2. The Futility Of Language**

Language use in *Waiting for Godot* have mainly concentrated on the insufficiency of language to address the present needs of man or how the fragmented language used by the characters reflect their dislocation in space and time.

It is a way of communication between the characters but it is also way of showing how they have totally lost their way in the world around them. They go on speaking despite this, for

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<sup>1</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p51.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p148.

words are all they have . Beckett’s language in his dramas is usually based on repetition of words, phrases, and sentences as they reoccur endlessly, these facts destroy the essence of language. The technique of repetition does not only show the boring repetitiveness of human action, but also breaks the sense of linear progression, for everything ends the way it begins.

The first statement in *Waiting for Godot* is Estragon’s pessimistic view that there is “Nothing to be done”<sup>1</sup> and absurdly, in parts of the play Vladimir and Estragon dialogue also shows the blankness of language. The clear example of this belief is Vladimir’s statement, “Let us do something”<sup>2</sup> and on the other hand. Vladimir refuses to listen to Estragon's nightmare, saying “Don’t Tell Me”<sup>3</sup> By contradicting each other and by questioning each other is a definition of vacuity of language.

Language in Beckett’s plays expresses the breakdown of language. Where there is no certainty, there can be no define meanings and the hopelessness of ever attaining certainty is one of the main themes in plays for example in play, the conversation between two characters proves vacuity of language.

VLADIMIR:  
*We're waiting for Godot.*  
ESTRAGON:  
*(despairingly). Ah! (Pause.) You're sure it was here?*  
VLADIMIR:  
*What?*  
ESTRAGON:  
*That we were to wait.*  
VLADIMIR:  
*He said by the tree. (They look at the tree.) Do you see any others?*  
ESTRAGON:  
*What is it?*  
VLADIMIR:  
*I don't know. A willow.*  
ESTRAGON:

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<sup>1</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p02

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p133.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p15.

*Where are the leaves?*  
VLADIMIR:  
*It must be dead.*<sup>1</sup>

Language as a theme-bound concept is deployed by the playwright to control the stream of the play to showing the desired theme. Whenever Vladimir and Estragon get serious, Beckett turns them to vaudevilles and clowns through their tone, words, or their actions; therefore, he creates the atmosphere of breaking the logic of conventional language. This is applied to all characters on the same line. The quality of the talk of the high and the low, the comic and the serious adds to the strangeness of the play and its difference to from the everyday language use making it possible to present a serious subject matter through a comedy form.

Estragon: We have no right anymore?  
Vladimir: You'd make me laugh if it wasn't prohibited.  
Estragon: We have lost our rights?  
Vladimir: (distinctly). We got rid of them.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, related to what was discussed is the ambiguous use of language in order to make serious subjects understandable. Estragon' being beaten or sleeping in a ditch is totally vague as there is no clear justification for what happened or what's the motif behind it . The tramps, in times, get involved in talking as if the other person does not understand and each is involved in his own soliloquy. They *launch into what appears to be familiar territory of complaining about life, philosophizing about life, quibbling back and forth and specially about their own private thoughts.*<sup>3</sup>The words have lost their meaning apparently and turn into a device to communicate the incommunicable though in an ambiguous manner.

Vladimir: I missed you.... And at the same time I was happy. Isn't that a strange thing?  
Estragon: (shocked). Happy?  
Vladimir: Perhaps it isn't the right word.  
Estragon: And now?

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<sup>1</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, pp11-12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p23.

<sup>3</sup>Saeid Rahimipoor, Henrik Edoyan, and Masoud Hashemi, "Self Revelation in Samuel Beckett's Language," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol.28 (2011). pp 820-824; p 822

Vladimir: Now?... (Joyous.) There you are again...  
(Indifferent.) There we are again... (Gloomy.) There I am  
again.<sup>1</sup>

This way of talking shows they are all out in their endeavor, waiting, to get the meaning of self and existence.

Throughout the play Beckett has shown the breakdown of communication in the form of pauses and silence which stands for uncertainty and waiting as the characters are not at all sure if Godot will appear at all. Beckett was always irritated by the idea of using meaningful language. The world of *Waiting for Godot* represents a world that has lost all meanings; as such it was absurd to represent the meaningless with meaningful words. His characters speak but not out of reason to communicate but only to register their being on this wasteland. The long drawn silences of Beckett unsettle the audience but at the same time astonish and allure the readers; you become a part of it. The adherence becomes more self-satiating as we appreciate the hidden sentiments cloaked in the silence as Aspasia suggests, "*In Waiting for Godot, the catalysts of speech are 'Silence' and 'Pause,' the very elements which undermine the emotions to which the characters lay claim and which prevent them occupying any decisive area of commitment. Silence breaks the continuity of words and conveys meaning in its totality.*"<sup>2</sup>

ESTRAGON:

*They have to talk about it.*

VLADIMIR:

*To be dead is not enough for them.*

ESTRAGON:

*It is not sufficient.*

*Silence.*

VLADIMIR:

*They make a noise like feathers.*

ESTRAGON:

*Like leaves.*

VLADIMIR:

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<sup>1</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p89.

<sup>2</sup>Sakeen Khan, "Roaring Reticence: Listening the Unsaid in the Plays of Samuel Beckett," *International Journal of English and English and Education*, vol4, no. 1 (2015): p3.

*Likes ashes.*  
ESTRAGON:  
*Like leaves.*  
*Long silence.*  
VLADIMIR:  
*Say something!*  
ESTRAGON:  
*I'm trying.*<sup>1</sup>

Another place of occurrence of pause is definitely significant as it derives the sense of part and whole. The whole play is a drama of waiting and this waiting simultaneously makes any philosophy of deciphering it impossible. The hearty laugh of Vladimir is immediately followed by his contorted face of being in a physical pain out of this act of laughing. He starts:

VLADIMIR: One daren't even laugh anymore.  
ESTRAGON: Dreadful privation.  
VLADIMIR: Merely smile. (He smiles suddenly from ear to ear, keeps smiling, ceases suddenly.) It is not the same thing. Nothing to be done. [Pause.] Gogo.  
ESTRAGON: [Irritably.] What is it?<sup>2</sup>

### **3.Symbolism**

Beckett refused to interpret *Waiting for Godot* famously, letting his writing speak for itself. "No symbols where none intended"<sup>3</sup>(223p) the last line of Beckett's novel *Watt*—is often read as a word of warning against assigning symbolic meaning to objects in his writing. This doesn't mean that no symbolism was intended, only that audiences should be careful about assigning meanings not supported by words and actions in the play.

#### **3.1Duality**

The most profound symbolism seen in the play is that of dualism, which manifests in several forms. Vladimir and Estragon, Pozzo and lucky and even the two acts of the play themselves . Emphasizes the arbitrariness and 50/50 chances of the play: Godot may or may not come, if

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<sup>1</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, pp97-98.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p7.

<sup>3</sup>Samuel Beckett, *Whatt* (London: Faber and Faber 2009), P223.

Vladimir and Estragon hang themselves the bough may or may not break. Dialogue is also used to this effect. Duality is also an important part of the play because it allows for the use of foils; Vladimir and Estragon are even more interesting characters when compared with each other. The use of two characters together also allows them to identify each other's existence.

The play owes much of its absurdity to the use of pairs. Notice all the two-person arguments, back and forth dialogue, and ridiculous questions with insufficient answers. Many questions in the play demand a response to complete them: "ESTRAGON: *Is that all?* POZZO: *Encore!*"<sup>1</sup>. Also, it is important to realize that basically all the characters in the play have a companion: Vladimir has Estragon, Pozzo has Lucky, the boy has his brother. The only one who doesn't have a partner is Godot, but then he is the exception to all rules after all. The allusions to the Bible refer always to pairs: there's Cain and Abel, and the two thieves. The duality is also present in the situations of the characters: "VLADIMIR: *One is supposed to have been saved and the other. . . damned.*"<sup>2</sup> One thief was saved, the other damned, but for no particular reason. Vladimir is never beaten, but Estragon is beaten every day. The boy is not beaten, but his brother is. twisting through Lucky's speech are the words: "for reasons unknown" and that's clear response for much of what happens in this play.

The symbol of duality allows for many interesting foils. The best example of this is with Vladimir and Estragon. While Vladimir is very much in control, Estragon seems to be simply wandering around. Vladimir has a certain degree of pride but Estragon has no problem playing the beggar. "ESTRAGON: *you've done with the. . . you don't need the bones now, Sir?*"<sup>3</sup> Vladimir has faith in Godot, Estragon doesn't really know what to think. Vladimir tries to bring some logic into his life, while Estragon clearly has lost hope a long time ago. Pozzo and Lucky

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<sup>1</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, P59.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., P8.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., P37.

also give interesting foils for each other. Pozzo comes off as arrogant windbag with a great notion of self-importance, while Lucky is clearly a submissive man who never talks.

An important part of duality in this play is the fact that none of the characters can really exist without their counterpart. Each character is missing something that the other possesses. Estragon depends on Vladimir to relay to him what happened the previous day, while Vladimir needs Estragon to provide him with some company and conversation. Often they consider leaving one another: “*ESTRAGON: Perhaps it would be best if we parted*”<sup>1</sup>.but in the end they will always remain, for they need each other. This is also shown in Pozzo and Lucky’s relationship: Pozzo needs someone to order around, to do all the heavy work; he’s incapable of doing it himself. Lucky has grown so that he must serve someone or else die from lack of action. the theme of duality is heavily developed. The author uses pairs to make absurd contrasts between characters

### **3.2 The Hat And Shoes**

The hat symbol fits in perfectly with Beckett's exploration of the absurd, playing a leading role all of its own. A hat can bestow identity upon someone, yet at the same time, can all too easily be lost, stolen, or exchanged for another one. Identity is fluid in this meaningless world, subject-hood radically dispersed. Vladimir is forever taking off his hat and putting it back on again. He's developed a suitably absurd, almost childlike attachment to this object. But the fact that he keeps on removing it indicates that it doesn't provide him with the security he so desperately seeks. This is no security blanket, whatever he might think.

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<sup>1</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p95



Lucky also has a fixation with his hat. He claims not to be able to think without his bowler; his lengthy monologue stops when his hat gets knocked off. Once again, the hope of achieving a stable identity proves at best temporary, at worst downright illusory. When Vladimir, Estragon, and Lucky start changing hats in Act 2 what little sense of identity there was completely collapses. No one seems to know exactly who he is, where he's come from, or where he's going to. Yet even when the characters eventually return to wearing their own hats, their identities still remain deeply uncertain. The suggestion is that, however we try to deal with the absurdity of our existence, whatever we fixate upon to give ourselves and our lives structure and meaning—whether it's hats, boots, trees, or a vaporizer—it is ultimately a hopeless task.

The boots that Estragon wears serve several purposes in Samuel Beckett play. They can be considered in literal and metaphorical ways Both Vladimir and Estragon seem to be homeless drifters. As such, Estragon owns only one pair of footwear. He generally sleeps outside and does not take off his boots. The single pair of shoes symbolize his poverty. Also, the boots are literally too small and cause him pain. Metaphorically, they stand for the social confines against which he struggles. That struggle is established as central at the outset, as Estragon is first shown wrestling with his boot to get it off his foot. Furthermore, Vladimir remarks several times on his friend's boots. He points out that Estragon's habit of leaving his boots on is incorrect; this can mean antisocial or harmful to himself: "Boots must be taken off every day." This blanket statement can also refer to humankind's daily struggle with society.

Vladimir also comments on the human tendency to avoid responsibility and blame external forces or perhaps fate for negative events. "*There's man all over for you, blaming on his boots the faults of his feet.*"<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p6

### 3.3 The Boy

The arrival of the boy with a message from Godot only increases the uncertainty. He calls Vladimir "Mr. Albert," giving the possibility that the message is not even meant for Vladimir or Estragon. Their questions show how little they know about Godot, and the boy's answers are not revealing anything. Much of the time, the boy merely confirms answers Vladimir has suggested with his questions. This raises the question of whether they are actually learning anything about Godot or simply confirming their own assumptions.

One Biblical allusion appears in this discussion about Godot. The boy tells them he looks after Godot's sheep and his brother watches the goats, seeming to reference the New Testament allegory in which Jesus Christ separates the sheep, representing people who will be saved, from the goats, and representing people who will be damned. But the play seems to reverse the allegory. It is the boy's brother, who tends the "blessed" sheep, whom Godot beats, while the boy who tends the "damned" goats, is not beaten. This reversal could suggest that Godot is not God perhaps even that he is God's opposite or simply emphasize the pointlessness of religion and concepts of salvation and damnation.

Vladimir's message to Godot that the boy has seen them looks simple but reveals that one of the things Vladimir and Estragon are hoping for from Godot is proof of their own existence. If Godot sees and acknowledges them, their existence is confirmed and their waiting has meaning. Because Godot never comes, their existence remains uncertain.

Even though Estragon and Vladimir agree they must depart for the night, Act 1 ends with them absurdly standing by the tree motionless. They must leave at some point, because we see them both arrive again at the beginning of Act 2. In act 2 the boy's appearance with the message that Godot will not come tonight makes it obvious that the promise that Godot will arrive

"tomorrow" is hopeless. maybe he does not even exist and he is just some sort of shared delusion. The boy's description of Godot having a white beard seems to call to mind classical depictions of God , of having white beard. But the boy may be simply fulfilling Vladimir's expectations. Vladimir once again tries to confirm his existence by asking the boy if he has seen him, but his desperation frightens the boy off without answering his question, leaving him with no reassurance whatsoever. but how or when they leave is left obscure, and it is not important anyway because they inevitably return. They are tragically trapped in this place and in time, waiting for someone or something that never comes and may not even exist. They are basically trapped by their own expectations.

### **3.4 Pozzo And Lucky**

Pozzo and Lucky, two travelers on the road of life, always appear together at the same time every day. While Vladimir and Estragon do not belong in any stratum of society, Pozzo and Lucky obviously represent the domination of the lower classes by Pozzo, the power-hungry dominant, flaunts his superiority over .Lucky, the dominated slave who does not even know he is oppressed. In fact, Lucky considers himself “lucky” to be bound to someone who can make decisions for him. Pozzo and Lucky represent the relationship between body and mind, the material and the spiritual sides of a man, with the intellect subordinate to the appetites of the body

In Act II, Pozzo has become blind and Lucky has become dumb. Pozzo’s blindness symbolizes his blindness to his cruelty and his own conformity to society’s rules. Previously, Lucky could still think and speak, although only when ordered by Pozzo. Now he has lost even the ability to speak out.

Lucky is a slave to Pozzo, Pozzo often orders Lucky to perform for Vladimir and Estragon and again the dialogue between these two characters play into the meaning of Lucky's position in the play. Lucky could have received his name because he is the only one who is given specific tasks that might not make time so daunting. When Pozzo orders Lucky to dance the characters contemplate the name of his dance and again imply significance to the role of Lucky,

ESTRAGON:

*The Scapegoat's Agony.*

VLADIMIR:

*The Hard Stool.*

POZZO:

*The Net. He thinks he's entangled in a ne.*<sup>1</sup>

Often such names are ironic . Here, the one "lucky" feature of Lucky's existence is that he has jobs to do, which means (on the superficial level) a purpose in life. Even though he is enslaved by Pozzo, but that is not "unlucky," just a fact according to Beckett's point of view at things, as we are enslaved by our own facticity. Compared to Gogo and Didi, Lucky is fortunate in having found his "Godot," his purpose for being. Also, Lucky can dance and speak, which we can see as artistic expression and the ability to give voice to thought ("*Think, pig!*"), however illogical it may seem to others, including the audience. So, what Beckett is saying is that anyone not aware of the meaninglessness of life is basically lucky, not burdened by the torment of existentialism. In the second act, Lucky is dumb and Pozzo is blind, so that Lucky's ties to Pozzo are by his own will. He puts the rope in Pozzo's hand, and it is tricky who is the slave and who is the master. And he is "lucky" in that he does not have to deal with "*your accursed time.*"<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: Tragicomedy in 2 Acts*, p60

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p154

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

In this study, we explore the visions of the absurd in Samuel Beckett's *waiting for Godot*, and the sense of despair and futility that governs the whole play. Because it conveys the sensation of the absurd that Beckett wants the audience to feel more than words. Action and form are more significant in this play than many other modern plays where the dialogues overtake action and *waiting for Godot* successfully portrays the human condition where words speak louder than deeds.

The first chapter examined the socio- historical context and the theoretical framework of the play. The sense of despair, with which the modernists confronts the incapability of reason to grant any transcendental meaning to human existence, is harmonized with equal intensity, in the postmodernist forms of literary representations of the world. Postmodernism emerged as the dominant intellectual, artistic, literary and cultural movement of the late twentieth century. It highlighted the birth of a new unconventional theatre known as the theatre of the absurd, this term was first coined by Martin Esslin , he established this term on the works of four major pioneers of the particular genre : Samuel Blackett , Eugene Ionesco , Arthur Adamov and Jean Genet . The point of this artistic playwrights is to explore the human mind and conditions at its worse , the sense of despair that was left by the world war impacted the entire world and left them confronted with loneliness and isolation , it left them with the position of facing the meaning and absurdity of life and death and the objective of human existence

Moreover, Theater of the absurd embodied this feeling and turned it into a playwrights that had its own language. the failure of language to convey meaning is a major theme in the theatre of the absurd , language is either separated from any interpretation that can be agreed by all characters or it is minimized into complete gibberish, the language that we see in the theatre of the absurd is a language that gives no meaning and the characters do not really want to communicate with each other meaningfully, but it rather aims at exposing the absurdity of the situation they are in .characters of the drama tend to undermine the dignity of each other; aiming at hurting and abusing one another. Beckett succeeded in devaluing the language in his play by the use of pauses and silences during the conversation among the characters.

Both readers and critics detect in Samuel Beckett's way of writing that he is influenced to a great extent by the post-war cultural atmosphere of disappointment thus, religious belief and also faith in the continuous development of human kind had been seriously eradicated by the war experience , this led to the loss of metaphysical certainties and the lack of belief in the meaning of human existence , moreover Beckett was also influenced by the argument of Albert Camus that human existence is absurd in its very core , due to the lack of any intellectual evidence which suggest a meaning or a purpose for human life and there Is no higher authority that can prove otherwise nor any human being knows about it , because its beyond his limits as it can be seen in the play the waiting for a person named GODOT that does not seem to come or appear and it happen to be out of the limit of the two tramps to reach this person nor have any knowledge about him

Nevertheless, first chapter tackled a way of relief from the absurdity of the world as a final solution, and that is suicide. Albert Camus believes that the absurdity of life can be dealt with before actually suiciding and this can be seen in waiting for Godot, where characters engage in a meaningless conversation or occupying their time by indulging their selves in a trivial things, and last but not least, the option of suicide is always on the table, to hang themselves from the

tree .However, it is important to note that suicide can only be seen as form of freedom from the meaningless habit of living the daily routine, but not as a freedom from the sense of absurdity .Since suicide is considered a man's defeat, when human beings acknowledges the absurd nature of life, which undoubtedly leads to death, he starts his journey towards freedom. And the ability to accept death, as the ultimate end of human existence, offers us the chance to escape from the trivial habitual struggles of everyday life.

Additionally, the first chapter explored existentialism as movement in the twentieth century, some of its major contributors and the two main trends that characterizes it (theistic and atheistic), in a retrospect some of the major literary figures of existentialism and the absurd were tackled to set the tone,in accordance with some of the representative works of these philosophies. Besides, some of the existential emotions are referred as they are of paramount importance Because they introduce us to nothingness and absurdity of human life

The second chapter focused on the thematic aspect of the play by examining the idea of death and suicide as universal experience and where the two tramps announces their first intention to commit suicide.Furthermore it expounded the argument that what can be as a reason for living can also be a good reason for dying. It follows as well Vladimir and Estragon and how their musings about death are turned to a way of whiling away time.However, in the end they did not commit suicide but they gave up their will to live and relate to bigger picture of the world.

We attempted to shed light on the notion of Boredom as a fundamental aspect of human existence and how the two characters devised a strategy to kill time. Moreover, Boredom observed from Heidegger's point of view through his notion of time and how the experience of time gives rise to the three forms of boredom.

We aimed to highlight the non-theistic side of Beckett's disposition toward life and the frequent use of images from the Christian tradition and the language of the bible. We illuminated how the word Godot is meant as disguised god and their waiting was not for waiting but for salvation, the second chapter progressed to consider another point which is the tree and how it relate to the bigger picture that of religion.

Likewise, we explained how the incongruous sense of time was a mean to ease the hopelessness and boredom of the two tramps that had deformed their memories

Furthermore , this chapter of the study dealt with the stylistic elements , it examined how the choices made by the author helped in understanding the absurdity of the world and how its hard to embrace it or even to end it . First aspect explained is the meaning behind the title "*Waiting for Godot* " it rose a lot of controversy than anything else, It holds the view that the subject of the play is not Godot but waiting. There is a general agreement that waiting is of more importance in the play than Godot, but the source of the word Godot has aroused much curiosity to the similarity between it and the word "God" .and the waiting can be related to it as a struggle to find this person "Godot" whose expected to be the salvation for their situation. Samuel Beckett was able to portray the waiting as a hope, a hope that the two tramps do not want to give up on ,Cause it gives their lives meaning and a purpose

Afterwards, Blackett's have mainly concentrated on the insufficiency of language to address the present needs of a man and how it is used as a vehicle of communication without meaning, it is a way of showing how the two tramps lose their way in the world, but they go speaking despite that,for words are all they have. Beckett focused on reputation of words, phrases and sentences that reoccur endlessly, and the use of pauses and silence as a way to show the breakdown of language and pointlessness of it



Samuel Beckett refused giving any explanation to the play nor the setting of it, and left it to the audience and readers to understand it themselves. First aspect of the play is the Duality in the play, one of the most profound symbolism in the play everything comes in pairs in the play. With these pairs comes the repeated notion of arbitrary, 50/50 chances. The symbol of duality that pervade the play is meant to express the ambiguity of not really knowing about existence, time, God. It shows the notion that we all have fifty-fifty chances in who we are and where we will eventually end. Either we are right or we are wrong in our decisions about what we are supposed to do with our life. and then moving the symbol of shoes and hats , The hat symbol fits with Beckett's exploration of the absurd, playing a major role all of its own. A hat can grant identity upon someone, yet at the same time, can all too easily be lost, stolen, or exchanged for another one. Identity is fluid in this meaningless world, subject-hood radically dispersed, where else

The boots that Estragon wears serve several purposes in Samuel Beckett play. They can be considered in literal and metaphorical ways both Vladimir and Estragon seem to be homeless drifters. And not fit in any society. Additionally the boy that bring hope, the boy that knows about Godot. the symbol of the boy is considered the only salvation for the two tramps , as he was the only one that meets Godot .even though the answers he gave are hopeless , but the Vladimir keeps holding on to that glimpse of hope that his existence has a purpose,

In addition Pozzo and Lucky two travelers on the road of life , Pozzo and Lucky obviously represent the domination of the lower classes by Pozzo, the power-hungry leading, flaunts his superiority over .Lucky, the dominated slave who does not even know he is oppressed but many believe that "lucky" fits his name , since he's the only Character in the play that actually has a purpose , which is serving Pozzo , even after Pozzo went blind , Lucky held the rope that his neck with tied with .

*Waiting for Godot* is a play that had a huge contribution in understanding the absurdity of the human condition and the notion of despair that people felt after the world war , it gives a clear idea about the present situation and how ridiculous human efforts are in trying to live in this world

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## المخلص

تنوعت الافكار الفلسفية وتوسعت كرنولوجيا بشكل كبير في الخطابات الأدبية؛ بحيث ارتبطت نشأتها ببعضها البعض مثلما فعلت الوجودية بالعبثية مع بدايات القرن العشرين. ومن أصحاب هذه الاخيرة صمويل بيكيت في عمله " في انتظار غودو" والذي كان محل الدراسة. يعدعمل صمويل بيكيت الدرامي " في انتظار غودو" (1952) واحدًا من أكثر المسرحيات غموضا في العصر الحديث ، وهي تجسيد لفلسفات القرن العشرين ، إنها مسرحية لا يحدث فيها شيء مرتين. وبالتالي ، فإن الهدف من هذا البحث هو دراسة رؤى العبثية والوضع الانساني في عالم خالٍ من القيم الأبدية. من خلال ما تم عرضه في الفصل الاول حول السياق الاجتماعي التاريخي لعمل بيكيت وتجسيده للفلسفة العبثية من جهة وتركيزه على الوجودية من جهة اخرى الأمر الذي يقودونا الى دراسة المسرحية من جانب موضوعي أسلوبى من خلال البحث في فكرة الموت والانتحار كتيمة عبثية. ونرى التداخل بين الخطاب الديني مع سياق مفعم بالشكوك. علاوة على ذلك ، فإنه يركز على المعنى الكامن وراء العنوان وكيف ان المسرحية تتمحور حول الانتظار بدلا من غودو . كما يفحص فشل اللغة في إيصال اي معنى واخيرا وليس آخرا سنشير الى رمزية الاشياء الموجودة في العمل المسرحي نتيجة لذلك ، نستنتج أن في انتظار غودو مجملا هي أكثر بكثير من مجرد مسرحية بدون حدث ، إنه عمل عقل فضولي يصور الحالة الإنسانية ويأس أي نظام فكري لتقديم إجابة محددة لما يعنيه الوجود.

الكلمات المفتاحية : العبثية ، الوجودية ، مسرح العبث ، ما بعد الحداثة ، الحداثة .



