

A Thematic Study on the Futility of Life in Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot

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Abstract

The futility of Samuel Beckett's famous play "Waiting for Godot" is the subject of this study. One of the best examples of absurdist writing is "Waiting for Godot" by Samuel Beckett. Everything in this play is viewed through the lens of nothingness, including the title, the setting, the structure, the topic, the characters, the conversation, and the actions. The absurdist aspects in this play are exciting and appealing. Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" centers on the absurdity of human existence. This play concentrates only on modern man's futility in the face of perpetual concern. Absurdist believe life is senseless. Men are everywhere, but nobody is. This play argues that the modern world is meaningless and that people's yearning for order makes them disregard objective reality. This essay intends to demonstrate that "Waiting for Godot" is a completely absurd drama.

Keywords: Waiting for Godot, Samuel Beckett, absurdist literature, Godot, nothingness

ملخص البحث:

يتجلى موضوع هذه الدراسة من خلال اللاجودي والعبثية في مسرحية صمويل بيكت الشهيرة (في انتظار غودو)، إذ عُدَّت هذه المسرحية من أصدق وأفضل الأمثلة على الأدب العبثي واللاجدوي، وينظر إلى كل ما هو متضمن في هذه المسرحية من خلال عدسة اللاجودي ولا شيء بما في ذلك العنوان، المكان، التركيب، الموضوع، فضلاً عن الشخصيات والحوار والفعل المسرحي للشخصيات... الجوانب والعناصر العبثية في هذا العمل المسرحي مشوق وجذاب.

تركز مسرحية في انتظار غودو لكاتبها صمويل بيكت على اللاجودي وعبثية الوجود الإنساني، إذ تهتم المسرحية على محنة اللاجودي في حياة الإنسان المعاصر إزاء ما يثير قلقه واهتماماته. يؤمن كاتب العبث واللاجدوي بمقولة عبثية ولامعقولية الحياة الانسانية، فالبشر في كل مكان، ولكن ليس هناك صلة تواصل بينهم. تقيم هذه المسرحية فكرتها على قضية أن العالم المعاصر بلا معنى، وشوق البشر للنظام

والمعقولة يجعلهم يزدرون ويرفضون الحقائق الموضوعية. تظهر الغاية والهدف من هذه المسرحية بشكل بارز على أنها مسرحية عبثية جملة وتفصيلاً.

1. INTRODUCTION

In order to understand Samuel Beckett's viewpoints on the ultimate truths of the human condition and the fundamental issues of life, the research displays the diversity of critical opinions on him. This concept of man's finite condition seems to underlie all of Beckett's literary and philosophical implications; man is not so much tragic as he is absurd, even comical, because in his attempts to alleviate the basic misery of his existence, he makes use of subpar tools, thereby generating a web of contradictions (Mahat, 2007). Wherever he attempts to attain independence, his dependence becomes even more pronounced. Wherever he attempts to provide rational explanations, he is impeded by the inadequacy of his reasoning. Every time he attempts to communicate, he fails. All attempts at systematization result in chaos. His memory, which includes his sense of time and individuality, is flawed and disorderly. Social institutions, which are products of his own flawed nature, are ineffective in resolving the problems with which he is confronted in his life. This is how Samuel Beckett describes this universe: "A world that can be explained by reasoning, no matter how flawed, is a familiar world. However, in a universe abruptly devoid of illusions and light, man feels alienated (MENOUER, 2022).

2. Importance of the research

The purpose of this research is to demonstrate how the contemporary world has abandoned its guiding ideals. In a state of miserliness, all values decline. The absurdity and tragedy of this universe seem to belie a complete lack of order and logic on the part of its inhabitants. Therefore, the plight of humanity is completely incomprehensible. Human existence is utterly miserable, consisting of endless boredom and foolishness. It is fair to argue that man finds himself adrift in a limited, meaningless environment (Bellioti, 2019).

This research seeks to define the debate that has been labeled "The Theatre of the Absurd" by Martin Esslin, to represent the work of its major exponents—Samuel Beckett, Albert Camus, and Eugene Ionesco—and to offer a sound critical analysis, elucidating the meaning and intention of some of their most significant plays. This research aspires to explain the significance of trend as an expression, since it is one of the most representative ones of the current state of western man, and to portray the manners and mannerisms of the era.

The current research also demonstrates the use of language as noise to fill the hole left by the lack of meaningful human touch, as well as a tool for communicating ultimate truth. Dramatists regard it as an aesthetic medium. They have employed gesture and movement language to make inanimate objects participate in the action and to downplay discourse. They relegate language to a minor function.

They utilize a language with a circular structure that ends precisely where it began. As Gunther Anders in "Being without time" points out, the characters that say it are abstractions (Fuchs, 2017). This study demonstrates that these writers employed everyday language; regular speech is extremely clear in their successful usage. Words are employed as instruments of instruction and diversion as well as weapons of dominance and devastation. Actually, my study provides light on several themes during the time of Beckett's play, including the social and theological atmosphere in which these dramatists were raised, as well as the major literary movements that impacted them and dictated the tone of their works. As a societal backdrop, the last decade of the nineteenth century shows a complete collapse and fast social transformation that can be seen in all aspects of life. Moral and ethical principles are no longer considered as absolutes, and the cosmos is dominated by certain powers focused on evil and opposed to man. These thoughts were heightened by the destruction and violence of World Wars I and II. The social structure, which is detrimental in and of itself, is the source of human unhappiness. Instead of encouraging and rewarding everything predatory and destructive, it encourages and rewards everything predatory and destructive. According to the widespread impacts of absurdity at the time, I believe there was no longer a single, unifying religious theory embraced by everyone in the community. Many individuals have begun to question God's existence and the foundation of their religion. For modern dramatists, the concept of God's absence is self-evident. They consider the human intellect and emotions as products of their biological and social surroundings, rather than divinely inspired (Rosenfeld, 2011).

3. Research Objectives

1. To explore the meaningless of life in "Waiting for Godot"
2. To define the need of valuable human life
3. To know weaknesses of modern man in present world.

4. Research Questions

1. In what manner does Beckett promote the essence of life in "Waiting for Godot?"
2. What is the important factor that contributes to the meaninglessness of human life?
3. Why is modern human existence so meaningless?

5. Literature Review

"Waiting for Godot" features a complex framework built on visuals and concepts. As a result, it has always been the primary topic of research all throughout the world. Many specialists examined its fundamental components from various perspectives. Holder Bloom published "Samuel Beckett: Modern Critical Views" in 1985. It is a critical examination of practically all of Samuel Beckett's major works, including "Waiting for Godot." The book is a compilation of critical articles written by many experts who examine the same author from various perspectives.

An *Anatomy of Drama*, written by Martin Julius Esslin, is a piece of literature that encourages introspection. In addition, he was the author of the book "Samuel Beckett: Twentieth Century Views," which was first released in the year 1980. It is a collection of many people's viewpoints on the author in issue, with some individuals likening him to the "Theatre of the Absurd." A definition of absurdism offered by Martin Esslin describes it as "the unavoidable devaluation of ideals, purity, and purpose." A slogan that proclaims, "Draw your own conclusions and make your own mistakes," is used in an absurdist drama. Even though it may appear to be ludicrous, Theater of the ludicrous actually has a sense and can be understood.

A work titled "The Myth of Sisyphus" was written by the French philosopher Albert Camus and published in (1998). He said that an absurdity is a disagreement or split between two different ideas that are included in it. He explains the absurdity of the human state by referring to the conflict that arises between man's desire to be significant and the indifferent nature of the cosmos.

The absurdity of the world was a frequent topic of discussion for the Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard (Glass, 1987). In his journal from 1849, the Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard wrote a lot about how silly the world is and how foolish people are. Kierkegaard wrote on the ridiculous in his journals under the heading, "What is the ridiculous? In spite of the fact that my

logic and capacity for introspection tell me that I have a choice between two courses of action, the circumstances in which I find myself compel me to take one of the options. This is an easy concept to grasp. To put it another way, I have to take action even when my common sense and capacity for introspection tell me I should not. Faith may be defined as either believing or acting on the basis of something that is illogical. I have to take action, but my powers of reflection have kept me from doing so. As a result, I pick one of the options and say, "This is what I do." Due to the fact that my talents of reflection have kept me immobile, I am unable to engage in any other activities.

The American theatrical researcher Samuel Beckett cites "Waiting for Godot" as one of the best examples of absurdist literature and believes it to be a masterpiece. Hooti & Torkamaneh, (2011) describe "Waiting for Godot" as "an attack on modernism with its ideological and Grand Narrative that claims to interpret the world." Estragon and Vladimir are imprisoned by their modernist desire for legitimation in Godot. "Waiting for Godot" is a play written by Samuel Beckett.

According to Esslin and Martin (1992) "in a world that has lost its meaning, language also becomes a meaningless buzzing" for Beckett, as it does for many other absurdist authors. Because man lives "in a world subject to incessant changes," language falls short of transmitting man's ideas and feelings; thus, his use of language investigates the limitations of language as a method of communication as well as a vehicle for the articulation of accurate claims, as an instrument of thinking. Despite the multiple illnesses and deficiencies of language in Absurd theatre, there are some wonderful elements, particularly in Beckett's works, such as presenting his characters' bodies in beautiful imagery. "He leaves no stone unturned and no maggot lonely," says Horald Pinter about Beckett (Jones, 2022).

Albert Camus (1998) highlights in his classic book "The Fall" that man always needs some type of authority, such as religion or the state, to teach him what is good and bad, and to lead him through basic and obvious norms and ideals. The absence of an authority frightens the ordinary man because he would not know how to deal with life, which would appear chaotic and frightening, and how to find his way out of his chaos and ambiguity, whereas the absence of God, on the other hand, would be disastrous. As a result, man must pick a master to protect himself from uncertainty and confusion. According to the

beliefs and thoughts of notable absurdist playwrights, I can claim that at the time, man had lost confidence in God of ancient religion and had yet to find new faith, living in an impersonal, mechanical, urbanized, and industrialized social environment. His agony worsens, and he becomes despondent; his restless lifestyle leads to a primitive animal-like existence.

6. Research Methodology

The absurdity in "*Waiting for Godot*" is the emphasis of this research work. The research is qualitative in character, and a descriptive method is employed for analysis. The text "*Waiting for Godot*" is used as an example to demonstrate the absurdity in the referenced drama.

7. Findings

In fact, the Absurdist's mix of thoughts, beliefs, and ideas makes my research focus on the variety of opinions to evaluate or assess the deluge of critical words and expressions about their views on the ultimate realities of the human condition and life's basic problems. "*Waiting for Godot*" by Samuel Beckett has no female characters. All characters lack identity. "*Waiting for Godot*" illustrates modern existence. This play explores life's pointlessness. Samuel Beckett's "*Waiting for Godot*". Godot has no inspiring characters, typical plot, locale, beginning, middle, or end. This drama's characters, speech, and actions show human stupidity. "*Waiting for Godot*" has most elements of an absurd play.

8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, "*Waiting for Godot*" by Samuel Beckett contains nearly all the hallmarks of an absurd drama. Its two major characters, Vladimir and Estragon, represent the whole range of absurdity. The absurdity of human existence is emphasized in *Waiting for Godot* through cyclical events, meaningless conversations, and situations that defy logic. The characters in Beckett's drama "*Waiting for Godot*" embody these sentiments and worldview through universal archetypes. In his drama, the characters come to terms with the fact that their lives are entirely at the mercy of chance and, by extension, that time is meaningless, leading them to seek guidance from an unknown, supernatural source. According to Beckett, life is a matter of chance, of probabilities. In addition, he emphasizes how pointless it is to worry about the past, present, or future.

Beckett's language is tedious and fruitless to decipher since it has no true meaning and is therefore divorced from the truth. Beckett's characters use nonsense to kill time and make an impression. If we take these ridiculous ideas at face value, we may conclude that they use language as a means of comforting themselves, but without actually connecting with one another. Because of this, Beckett has developed a deep mistrust of language itself. Conventional, stereotypical, and meaningless communications have become facilitated by language. Absurdist language, imagery, structure, and point of view effectively portray the breakdown in communication that leads to alienation in human beings. The goal of Beckett's plays is to make the audience feel lonely and sad. Furthermore, my studies illuminate the dramatic shift and transformation in human behavior, from the reality of life to the alienation and illusion, from the revival of ethical values and unifying principles to the state of degradation and misery, from the meaningful to the meaningless, from the optimistic and hopeful to the desperate and depraved, and from the human to the inhuman. The absurdist's writings portray a world that is as absurd as it is tragic, as utterly chaotic, and devoid of sense and sanity; a world where there is no apparent meaning to life; a world depicted not as land of living together with real roots of intimacy.

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