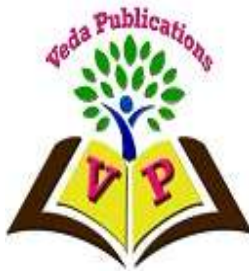


**WAITING FOR GODOT AS A DRAMA OF EXISTANCE**Syeda ujala Fatima^{1*}, Tehseen Fatima², Lubna shabir³^{1*, 2, 3} (M.Phil English Literature, Department of English Language & Literature, University of Lahore.)**ABSTRACT**

This research paper highlights the existential philosophy in Samuel Beckett's work "waiting for Godot" (1949). *Waiting for Godot* is one of the first examples of Theatre of the Absurd. It focuses on human life as 'Sisyphean'. The ludicrousity, however, is found in the existentialist belief that life has no purpose, and while the choices that we make are irrelevant on grand scale, they ultimately influence our self-definition. Everything is repetitive and going on in a cyclic way. Life is meaningless as a bubble. All these issues emerged after the mishap of world wars and consequences of that brutality. Existence of human being and God was in question. All writers of existentialist school of thought suggested that human being should acknowledge his own individuality and stop looking towards a messiah or a divine power to tackle issues of men savagery. This research paper elucidated existentialism in Beckett's work with the help of textual evidences from "Waiting for Godot" to prove how writer successfully opened ways for discussion about human degradation.

Keywords: *Sisyphean, Existentialism, Degradation, Godot.***Citation:**

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- MLA** Fathima,Syeda Ujala, Tehseen Fatima, and Lubna Shabir,eds." *Waiting for Godot* As A Drama of Existence." *Veda's Journal of English Language and Literature JOELL*, Vol.5, no.1, 2018, pp.137-142.



INTRODUCTION

Waiting for Godot is a play that presents conflict between living by religious and spiritual beliefs, and living by an existential philosophy, which asserts that it is up to the individual to discover the meaning of life through personal experience in the earthly world. Man himself became an evil for himself and destructed everything that is soothing for his life. This philosophy of actuality actually abandons the idea of religion as a source of life for human being. It teaches its audience that an individual can bring meaning to its actuality in this world.

It surely reflected all characters of that time who were brutally killing man's self and giving a passage for their thinking of their life as raw and incompetent. Desolation became the center of all people in that era while facing massacre in events like world wars and cold wars. It manufactured economic and social annoyance among young citizens. Samuel Beckett sketched all possible sides of this modern society where people were dying; suffering from disenchantment; devastation caused by evil science; poverty became reason of mistrust in religion and God and described man's stupidity in this world with eloquent language merged with insightful explanation.

In that time absurd art became significant to express reality of human existence because of major contributions of art in human life. Major ideas in the art were like idea of man's aloofness from world, brutal reaction of a man for other, no particular goal of life, fatuous feud in life and waiting for something that is vain. This play had a proper context in which it was written because of different and unholy events of human beings caused by bloodshed of other innocent human beings. It looked like people were killing others just for sport as they were degraded and useless.

These all events created sense of dissatisfaction among people and this sort of writing came into existence. Life was stagnant that no one wants to clearly define anything. Concept of nothingness came into life. Life is like a circle, from the point where life starts it ends without any gains and everything is moribund. Everything is in a repetition mode in this play because no one wants a change in their life, all of them stuck somewhere and

they themselves are not struggling for their survival in fact they are looking for God to come and rescue them. But reality is that "God helps those who help themselves". Play truly reflects the process of human degradation and events are proof of all the despair and dissatisfaction in the life. With the help of textual evidences, the researcher proved how the element of existence had been the focus of Beckett's writing and artists are true representation of society and their surroundings.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research paper addresses following questions:

1. How Samuel Beckett explored the idea of existentialism in this drama?
2. What is significance of existence of human life?
3. Why modern man faced existence issues in his life?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To illustrate idea of existence in Beckett writing.
2. To know drawbacks of modern man in uncertain world.
3. To draw significance of decision power in man
4. To analyze the state of mind of modern man
5. To define the need of valuable human life

SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

The research is totally focused on human psychological degradation, loss of humanity in new and advanced world, idea of existence in modern writers, uncertainty of man's life and most probable issues of modern man and how he is dealing with this all without any proper guidance and zero focus of his life even when worse is waiting.

This research will help other researchers have an understanding about philosophy of existentialism and the sufferings of the modern man. The researcher is concerned with major issues of modern man in that time of uncertainty and how he managed to tackle all those and how he emerged in all this process. The Purpose of research is vast and it tackled different ideas at the same time as all those were relevant to this topic. The Play of Beckett was under consideration and it truly reflects the process of human degradation and events are proof of all the despair and dissatisfaction in the life.



LITERATURE REVIEW

As this play is questioning even the existence of God and letting reader think about phenomenon of individual capacity and power of human actions, most of the characters are inactive and stagnant here. All are in denial condition as they do not consider to be valuable or significant. Camus (1955) explained phenomenon of existence and boring life routine as *"it is possible that when people understands their life as cyclical and full of sameness they will for sure commit suicide intentionally"*. Tatiana Liljestrom (2012) elucidated the basics of existentialism from the perspective of Sartre work *"existentialism is humanism"* that human beings are suffering from different mental, behavioral and physical issues.

All are without any goal in their life and God is nonexistent in this world. All one can do is to believe on himself not on god. Because no one is coming and no one is going to help us. Edvinas Belevicius et al, 2014 in his research paper, *"Existentialism and happiness in Samuel Beckett's waiting for Godot"* explained the idea of absurdity from opening lines and gave multiple directions of religion, philosophy and psychology for analysis and how bond of goal and life are necessary.

Tarek Baziz (2013) drew different authors as main source of existence writing e.g., Faulkner, Hemingway, Albert Camus, and Samuel Beckett. These all focused on human freedom and honor of choice for man from divine force. They managed to explain that purposeless life invents absurdity and it is base of existential philosophy that creates loneliness, ruined life, destructed ideas and wasting of life as nothing is happening. Everyone is pessimistic and negatively viewing life as God is absent from their lives and when they went for search of divine force this also is absent. It preaches that even writers believe that God has left this world and not answering only hope is individual and his power of choosing good ideas for himself. Existentialism is about knowing about being and life as a stupid way to spend time that has no proper way to deal with it *"panza and gale"* (2012).

METHODOLOGY

Here major idea of existentialism from Samuel Becket *"waiting for Godot"* is under discussion; qualitative approach and descriptive method is used for analysis. Specific passages are chosen for the purpose of textual analysis.

MAIN BODY

For the purpose of textual analysis from Becket work, as he is considered a big gun of this notion of human existence in this world after such a massive massacre on the face of this world. Idea of human kind as 'good' in nature also came under a mode of denial from many critics of social sciences. Why it is that human being is much cruel and bad tempered that people face such killing and destruction of mankind from all aspects.

This phenomenon of bloodshed and disasters from the hands of mankind to its own specie is still continuing in different third world countries for the sake of few worldly benefits; this is a question on humanity of man. But the way Samuel Becket discussed human insignificance in their lives and for whole mankind in such manner that it actually attracted a whole lot of writers and analysts that it became a school of thought. He illustrated the lives of all people as baseless and futile. They were ratchet, hungry, stupid, lack of decisive power, poor, sick and full of disaster.

It truly represented condition of human being after wars. Still it is condition of many people in this time. Most of analysts explained this situation as all prevailing disasters will definitely construct an environment when human beings will go back to the primitive mode of living. Man will reach toward a point that emptiness of man and hollow identity of its existence lead him to a lower standard of his life style. Life is full of choices; fault is within us not in something else. It is man's wrong decisions. Sartre gave a new idea about human existence as *"existence precedes essence"* it illustrated that for this man, no predefined design is made for this creature to live a life in fact human is free in his choices about life. It is a true definition of man.

Men without any essence happen to exist on the surface of earth and *"man is indefinable, it is because he is nothing at first"*. As Samuel Becket portrayed the idea of human existence on this earth



from main characters of his play, Estragon and Vladimir both are waiting for some holy being to come and rescue them and give them a secure life, shelter and direction to their life. They are struggling to pass time that is stagnant and they are inactive, they do not know how to talk, what to talk, seriously sick and short memory. Their dialogues and situation is describing their physical and mental destruction. They do not know what to do with their life even they are lifeless, nothingness is prevailing in their life.

Everything is going in some stupid way. Their talk, dresses, food, surrounding even everything sounds absurd and without any logic. They stuck somewhere in their life, their low life style is representing aftermath of wars and disaster in low tiers of society. From the text of this play it is evident that Samuel tried to mirror people situation and their condition on this earth as pointless and waste of time. Here researcher highlighted certainly specific quotes of characters as how life is derogatory and purposeless for man after wars. Even how human being left his status of humanity and went towards animalistic life style.

From start of this drama it is openly enchanting that things are useless, life is just for the sake of time pass and events are happening just because it is written to happen. Man can do 'nothing' just to wait for some 'holy being' to come and rescue. All 'presenters' on the stage are even portraying the specific absurdity, illogical discussion that is over flowing with the habit of forgetting.

This all is so much true about the man of that time that even naming some stupid person as 'man' is too wrong, because manhood is considered for someone as phenomenal but here after effects of people are so disturbing that it gave a way to new ideas and concepts about those stupid people who are living in this meaningless direction. Even they are not even living the way they are supposed to live.

1. ***"Nothing to be done"***

This sentence shows how man has lost his belief on himself and even on things around him. It highlighted the downfall of humanity as they all failed to exist on earth gracefully and lost in wars and fights. They did not focus on the gift of God that is 'life' also did not take it as an advantage or

opportunity to serve themselves and whole humanity but they are still waiting for someone whom they do not know exactly. It may be a caricature of God or something like this. They do not know how to fight for themselves; how to stand in time of disaster. This all is such a waste of their whole life time period; they are not taking its advantage. All are seen as useless and on earth without any purpose. Human being on earth is for a purpose but they are illustrating that human life is nothing even human being is nothing. This is a sheer insult of humanity that human being is in such embarrassment. This is not the purpose of man to be useless during time that demands man courage and strong nerves.

2. ***"Hope deferred maketh the something sick"***

This refers toward reason of less wanted existence of man as he believes that hope that is logic of life is no truer because their condition is weak. And they accused divine power for this situation of lifelessness.

3. ***"It'll pass the time"***

This highlights the significance of time in the life of modern man as they just want that time must go on and this made them useless. They are involved in those events those are negating the purpose of life. This is dilemma of the man that he wasted his life for nothing and just continuing it. Characters like 'pazzo and lucky' are amusement for them nothing else.

4. ***"People are bloody ignorant apes"***

This line from Samuel Beckett expressed the life of mankind as pointless and they are compared with animals which is downfall of humanity. As animals are lower cadre of living beings but equating two different levels of creatures is totally insult of humanity. Man has lost its superiority and awareness in this disastrous time. It is not fault of time that ruined human being in fact they themselves lost their integrity, purpose and awareness.

5. ***"We are waiting..."***

It is a most famous quote from Beckett writing; it defined necessity of humanity as it is a satire on human being as he is waiting for someone to come and rescue them from this degenerated situation. This is what went wrong with people of modern society that is why they cannot change their own situation and make it better. This caused a



failure in man's character as they are falling from their status of humanity and doing such stuff that is invaluable and no one expected this much disaster from a man who is considered as human being. But he lost its place after such bad decisions.

6. "I've nothing to say..."

Again it defined that no one has anything to say to anyone around them. This drew attention toward human existence as just because they are on earth somehow. They do not know why they are existing, for whom they are waiting, who is he, why to wait, forgetting everything, repetition is there and no rules or regulations found.

7. "Let's hang ourselves immediately"

This is peak of their wasteful life that they decided to hang themselves for what. They think it is a safe way to exit from this world. This quote refers toward majority of the literary figures who attempted suicide just because they felt they have nothing new or different to give or take from this world. This became dilemma of all society that they felt this uselessness in themselves.

8. "Don't let's do anything"

This situation lead toward a stagnant society they decided to be inactive and waste people. They believe that to do nothing is good. That is why they stayed on waiting, in activity in their life as things are solvable by someone else from other universe. This is because they do not want to live anymore and that is why what is condition of this earth they are not concerned.

9. "We have lost our rights?"

This created a new way toward debate that is it so people are not holding any right because this new destruction on earth gave voice to humanity basic rights. It is evident that killing and migration of people caused a new issue for people as how to deal with emerging problems of citizens. And condition of characters represented that people are suffering for what and why, who is behind all this carelessness. And why because of few group of people fault whole mankind is suffering from mental and physical violence. Why things have reached this much far that now no one can hold these.

10. "Old dogs have more dignity"

This is describing situation of human beings as zero integrity and value that they are treated as

animal who are on one order can act what master wants. This is downfall of humanity as they suffered from loss.

11. "Time has stopped"

This may have multi meanings because on one hand it is that because of ruination everything is just struck. And may be writer wants to say that this progress of technology just stopped humanity and led to lack of humanity. No one is going toward progress in fact everything is terminated and nothing happened new. As all were waiting for some savior but as he is not coming so it can be assumed that it is wrong with time that has stopped their savior. They all feel that they have nothing to do anymore so they are doing nothing.

These are dilemma of man that nothing good is happening to them. As they believe that someone else will come for them; it is denoting toward stillness of the time because nothing is happening, no one is coming. Time is recurrent in this play explaining the existence of time as zero movement forward. For modern man time has no significance they are just sending it with no usage, yes technology has enhanced so much but these inventions are not devising correct ways; this is itself a big reason of man's destruction.

As human being is suffering from all disasters because of himself as he is habitual of waiting for someone to rescue him. But why is it this is big question. Why we need someone else to rescue us, according to existential point of view 'man is free to select his ways' but characters are looking for other to come.

It is obvious that estragon has tilt towards existence oriented philosophers; he does not believe on religious beings as such. But Vladimir has tilt towards godly bodies.

CONCLUSION

Key to all issues of daily life is to seek help from heavenly bodies, supreme powers of whole universe, God; to help you to look forward all the choices, all of people have in their life and it is a way forward to go for a way or a destination man chose for himself for progress in the life. The application of this all theory is that everyone should create their own world for which they are living; this is their purpose of life. This is authentic and theistic way to



exist. Define certain importance of life, our actions and particularly 'individuality' should not be compromise. Make own identity do not follow others blindly and create meaning of life. Human being has nothing to do; no activity this is why they felt their life is without purpose they all have to make their life purposeful. They can make things better but they are not in mood of any progress. This is what made critics think that human existence is questionable.

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