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Existentialism and Religious Allegory in Samuel Beckett's
Waiting for Godot (1954)

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Dedication

... to my mother.

Acknowledgment

I would like first to thank ALLAH for giving me strength and capacity to complete this work.

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Abstract

Since the first performance of Samuel Beckett's master piece *Waiting for Godot*; the play suffered various remarks and comments. Beckett in this work presents a clear picture of human existence together with the issue of beliefs; by emphasizing on the figure of Godot, and the relations between the characters: Estragon and Vladimir, Pozzo and lucky. The play is regarded as an ambiguous piece of art, as the critics debated whether it is existential or religious. This work aims to juxtapose these views rather than highlighting the various reading of the play; by analyzing it through philosophical view concentrating on how Beckett employed and reflect existentialism in literature, then set off the religious allegory that are founded within the play; providing evidences from Beckett's oeuvre. After all, the play reveals that Beckett succeeded in assembling between Existentialism and religion creating one of the most absurd play in the history of literature.

Key term: Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, Existentialism, Absurdism, Religion.

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General introduction

During the late of the ninetieth and the beginning of twentieth century European life was dominated by industrialization and globalization. People started adopting to live together in peace, believing the possibility to construct a real Utopia. Soon this dream was shattered by the horror of WWI, WWII and followed by the Cold War. These events altered their beliefs; they question everything, even religion, and started searching for a meaning to their existence.

During that era Existential philosophers and absurdist play writers were one of the pioneers to reflect the problem of existence, the absurdity of life and the question of God in their works. *Waiting for Godot* is one of the good examples that portrayed what people were going through. Samuel Beckett lived the events of Second World War, and was eyesight for the damages of nuclear bombs by himself.

The play which took place in nowhere near a leafless tree, characterized by two trumps called Estragon and Vladimir, or Gogo and Didi; who converse, argue and narrate stories, reveal that they are waiting for a person named Godot. Two other characters interrupt their waiting; Pozzo taking his slave Lucky to sell him for unknown reasons, whom entertains them with a dance and a long monologue. After their departer, a boy arrives claiming that he is the messenger of Godot to deliver a message to the trumps to delay their meeting to the next day. The second act which is remarkably similar to the first; the characters meet in the same place make the same actions, and waiting the same person. Pozzo and Lucky enter again, but this time Pozzo is blind declaring that he loss of memory, while Lucky is mute and declare nothing; for the second time Godot boy come to verbalize the same passage, insisting that he never met them before, once again the trumps decide to go, but they don't move.

This study is based on several reading. Existentialism review is supported by Thomas R. Flynn book *Existentialism*, where he provides a clear definition of this philosophy together with its themes and characteristics. Jean-Paul Sarter in his lecture *Existentialism is Humanism* redefines existentialism according to his beliefs referring to all of Soran Kierkegaard and Martin Heidegger.

Martin Esslin in his famous work *Theater of the Absurd* relates existentialism to literature, mainly drama or as he named theater of the absurd; in this work he considers Samuel Beckett as one of the pillars of this new drama, and *Waiting for Godot* as one of the first examples of absurdism. The absurdist philosopher Albert Camus in his famous story *the Myth of Sisyphus* portrays loss of existence meaning, and absurdity of life; which is similar to the problematic discussed in *Waiting for Godot*.

On the other hand; others scholars and critics regarded waiting for Godot as merely religious play like Amanda L. Kelsch in her work *Reading Waiting for Godot through the Lens of Christian Existentialism* analyzed the play as religious but related it to the philosophy of Kierkegaard. While; Jing Wang stated that the play is full of religious allegory, namely Christianity.

Samuel Beckett in his master piece *Waiting for Godot* presents a conflict between living either by an existential philosophy that gives the individual the chance to detect the meaning of his/her life, or through the religious beliefs.

However, the play was interpreted through several readings; while some considered it as existentialist, absurdist or an atheist others as merely religious; and few illuminated it within both. But the fact how Beckett could integrate between absurdism and religion presents a real dilemma, which might interest other researchers. This research aims to obtain knowledge and insight concerning the existential themes, together with the religious allegory in the presented works; analyzing the same element in both studies.

To achieve this aim the following questions are raised:

- What are the existential themes in *waiting for Godot*?
- What are the absurdist elements in *Waiting for Godot*?
- To what extent is *Waiting for Godot* a religious/ an atheist piece of art?

Several hypotheses can be drawn from the preceding question:

- The play is full of uncertainty, nothingness, and meaningless, it has neither place nor time. It discusses also the existence of two characters, whom have no purpose in life.
- From the beginning; the play presents a picture of absurdity: two characters near a tree arguing on nothing. In addition; it is plotless, open-ended, and has no story to develop.
- *Waiting for Godot* is full of religious stories, and reference from the bible might confirm the religious statement of the play; thus the presence of existentialism speculates the presence of atheism.

This thesis will be divided into three chapters; the first will highlight Beckett's background, starting with his biography to his literary works and statue. Firstly, he was considered as the last modernist as he was inspired by the modernist James Joyce; thus after the death of Joyce, Beckett hopes of getting rid of the shadows of this modernist came true. He finally could establish his own movement, following the existential philosopher to be the first Post Modernist. The second chapter will be devoted to explore the existential themes within *Waiting for Godot*, starting with its definition as a philosophy than as literary movement, and analyzing it as an illustrative example of absurdism. Lastly, exploring the main existential themes were reflected in the play. The last one will look into the religious allegory presented in the play; referring to Beckett religious upbringing, synthesize the Christian religious picture founded in the play, than shed the light on atheism as Beckett was regarded as an atheist in his last years.

To sum up, Beckett insisted that the play it about "waiting" or time, it discussed the absurdity of human existence and conditions in the modern world; but the one can't denied the fact that *Waiting for Godot* is religious as well due to the religious references depicted in the play.

Chapter one: Historical background and theoretical frame work

1.1 Introduction:

The Irish writer, Samuel Beckett was born in Dublin, in a protestant middle class family. After years of hard studies, he succeeded in becoming a French lecturer; this opens the doors for him to travel to Paris and practice his job there, where he met his self-exiled Irish friend James Joyes.

Beckett was influenced by Joyce at the beginning of his career, he wrote some poems and several short stories, but it was not that successful. Nonetheless, due to several family issues Beckett started his journey travelling in between England, Germany and Paris; this long journey made him aware of what is happening in the world. During the WWII time Beckett exiled himself to Paris, the city of artists; where he fought beside his Jewish friends. The end of the war coincided also with the death of the modernist Joyes life.

Beckett decided to get rid of the shadow of Joyes together with Modernism; as it was a need to portray the world after the WWII, by focusing on the poverty of language, and the failure of man as a human being together with the absurdity of the world. After this Beckett was considered as the late modernist, yet he was mostly recognized as the first Post Modernist due to several issues, which will be mentioned in this chapter.

1.2 Samuel Beckett

1.2.1 Early life

Samuel Barclay Beckett is an Irish novelist, play writer, poet and theater director. He was born in Good Friday, April 13th, 1906; at Fox Rock, Dublin. In a protestant, middle class family, living in a Catholic society. Beckett must felt isolated and ignored.

He studied languages (French, Italian and Germany) at Trinity College, in Dublin; where his love to French emerged, he got his BA degree in 1927. Beckett was a brilliant student and one of the few students, who were selected in the exchange program with L'Ecole Normal Superior Paris to represent Trinity College. Where he worked as a

lecturer in 1928, and met his Irish -self exiled- friend James Joyes, Who influenced to write his first poem “*Whoroscope*”.

At 1930, Beckett returned to Dublin to work at Trinity College, same while he started writing short stories that grouped under the name “*More Pricks than Kicks*”. But after a short period of time, he faced some problems with his mother about a girl he used to date. So he quit his job and travelled again to France in 1932 then to London. In 1933 Beckett received the news of his father’s death which brought a great shock for him the reason why he faced a health problem even psychological illness. So he went to London to begin his session with Dr. Wilfred Bion for two years (Uhlmann: 29).

In 1936, Beckett start his journey travelling to Germany, London and Paris; where he settled permanently, and met a lot of artist among them Giacometti, who sculpt the tree of “*waiting for Godot*”, and Suzanne Deschevaux-Dusmesnil (who became his wife in 1960); he also published his novel “*Murphy*” in English in 1939, then translated it to French (25).

In the summer of 1939 Beckett return to Dublin, but his visit didn’t lasted for a long period as he faced problem with his mother again, so his sense of exile finally come to an end, as he went back to Paris. It wasn’t a surprise, as this European Country was the home land of artists and writers throughout the twentieth century, like: Picasso, and Joyes. It provided the cosmopolitan air of a city in touch with literature, the train of writing in another language permitted him to escape both the explained, intellectual lyricism and the scholarly and social legacy that he had acquired from any semblance of James Joyce. By writing in French, then, he was hunting down a plain way of expression, and in doing as such accomplished the gratefulness that until then had sidestepped him.

1.2.2 Beckett’s engagement in WWII movements

In 1940, Samuel Beckett exiled himself to France, which was occupied by the German at that time -saying his famous words “I prefer France at war to Ireland at peace” (Uchman: 89).

When, most of the artist and citizen were escaping due the Nazi invasion, he was one of the few people who decided to fight together with his Jewish friends like James Joyes. In interview with James Knowlson he said: "You simply couldn't stand by with your arms folded"(Knowlson: 1997).

He joined a French group of British SOE (Special Operations Executive) named "Gloria SMH", with his Friend Suzanne Deschevaux-Dusmesnil. Where, he worked as a courier and shifted his literary skills to typing and translating secret information. Unfortunately, the whole operation collapsed due the betrayal of one of the members, who supposed to be a priest. More than 50 members were arrested, while Beckett and Suzanne were obliged to leave Paris. They escaped south on foot, and settled in small village in Roussillon d' Apt. During this hiding Beckett completed his novel "watt" which was published in 1953 (Ghazi: 02).

Beckett worked as a farmer in exchange for room, the couple did nothing during their residence; their activities consistence of endless walks, narrating stories and playing games. In 1945 Germany was defeated, and Beckett went to Ireland as a volunteer in the Irish Red Cross, where he worked in military Hospital at Saint- Lô. During his service there, Beckett notice that people were dying without any reason and their existence was not that important. He wrote his famous article "The Capital of the Ruins" , in which he depicted this suffer, saying "Saint-Lô was bombed out of existence in one night" ; Which pushed him to resign and went back to Paris, where he was awarded by the Croix de Guerre for his work in the resistance (02).

After the WWII Beckett wrote only in French, as it was easier for him "to write without style" (Knowlson: 1997), in 1948-1949 he wrote his famous work *En attendant Godot* (*Waiting for Godot*) in French, then translated it to English (1954), this piece of theater is tragicomedy in tow acts, which represent the absurdity of life and questioning the meaning of human existence. It was first performed on January 05th 1953 in the Theatre de Babylone, under the production of Roger Blin, who also played the role of Pozzo, "Endgame" is another well-known play written in the same period, portraying the same issue

In 1969, Beckett was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature, but he was in Tunisia with his wife Susan. He accepted the award but he gave away the money. He wrote his last work, the 1988 poem “What is the Word” and died in December 22, 1989 in Paris (Biography.com: 2017).

1.2.3 Beckett’ s Works:

Samuel Beckett's novels were plotless and his characters are hopeless, miserable, lonely and evacuated, they are victimized by the meaningless of the world, gotten in existential foolishness; they are wind up considering their possess being, attempting to relate brain, body and the outside universe of protest (Maztinez: 08).

It was fundamentally through his plays that Beckett became well known. He uncovered the sad isolation in man, well exemplified by Vladimir and Estragon, the two trumps of “*Waiting for Godot*” who continue waiting for Godot whom no body now. In *Endgame* also, the foolishness of the holdup offers route to the claustrophobic climate of a nearby room where four characters have located a last shelter from outside (Fears of Entropy and Futility: 282).

In spite of the fact that Beckett is the discipline of James Joyes, but he was prevailing with regards to making his own position through his playfulness of language, jokes, hilarious and outrageous remarks, and surprising grammar that mirrors the mind's meanderings and the utilization of satire .

In his letter to the director Alain Schneider Beckett wrote: “my work is a matter of fundamental sounds (on joke intended) made as fully as possible, and I accept responsibility of nothing else. If people want to have a headaches among the overtones let them, and provide their own aspirin” (Knowlson: 1997)

1.3. Beckett as the last Modernist:

1.3.1 Modernism:

The last half of the ninetieth century witnessed the emergence of new aesthetic theories, which emphasized on individual and subjectivity; reacting against the realities

of political and social fragments. These theories were led by two of the most significant thinkers: Charles Darwin in biology, who provided the idea that human beings are derived from 'apes' questioning the sense of human uniqueness; together with Karl Marx in political science, who argued on the fundamental contradictions within the capitalist system that the workers were not totally free.

These two scholars were among the first who led to the establishment of Modernism "a term which was prevalent as an international movement during the 1900s, a term which had two bloody world wars under its shelter" (Hooti: 40). The definition of modernism is not precise though each scholar had his own explanation, for Tyrus Miller in his book "*Late Modernism*" presents it as "the liberation of formal innovation; the destruction of tradition; the renewal of decadent conventions or habit encrusted perceptions; the depersonalization of art; the radical subjectivization of art" (04), while Alba Iulia in her lecture "*modernism, postmodernism (general outline)*" defines it as "the massive change of forms and sensibility that came around the turn of the century" Though; the common fact is that this movement represents a radical break with all the preceding movements, and a rejection of the traditional forms of literature (282).

It took its first breath on Europe and America, whereas its exact date is elaborated; some critics refer it to the Enlightenment age exactly to thoughts of Isaac Newton (1687-1789)¹, Rene Decart (1596-1650)² and Emmanuel Kant (1724-1804)³; who through their beliefs in reason established a universe of truth and individualism (Barrett:17). Other scholars related it to twentieth century; as the world changed together with life style. So there was a need to change the writing form as well. According to Christopher Reed: "the writer sought to write appropriate to the sensibilities of the modern outlook" (course guide Twentieth century English literature: 12). For these writers truth can't be acquired from the environment, but through analyzing the

¹ Isaac Newton "Plato is my friend, Aristotle is my friend, but my greatest friend is truth". (Brainy quote)

² Rene Decart "I think therefore I exist"

³ Emmanuel Kant "to be is to do". (Brainy quote)

individual mind. “Stream of consciousness” technique by James Joyce and Virginia Woolf tends to explore the inner mind of the characters and their deep thoughts.

Most of the modernist -like W.B Yeats, D.H Lawrence, T.S Eliot and Ford Madox Ford get rid of the reliable narrator and adopt this narrative technique as truth can’t be relevant to anyone. They also paid less attention to the forms of literature like the plot and structure to show the meaningless of life, most of the stories are plot less and open-ended, which make the reader feel that the story is continued. Their characters were anti-heroism; they are miserable, hopeless, fail to be good and rejected both religion and social system. They are also antisocial, lonely, isolated, and alienated; which make them feel to communicate and express their feelings; as they were disappointed by the War (Brooks: 1956).

1.3.2 Late modernism:

The Post/ wars together with the Wars time was a turning point for Britain and the whole world; people style, system and life changed radically, they became miserable, insecure, and absurd. The reason why some writers want to bring change to literature as well, which was dominated by modernism. The Chinese culture was the first to reject the norms of Modernism adopting what was called Late Modernism as the first focused on individual, but there was a need to present what was happening during the war; like *revenge* the story Wang Zengqi, which called for peace shifting the focal from individualism to society. (FitzGerald: 09).

This new movement was pioneered by British and Irish writers, who published and wrote during and after WWI; Tyrus Miller in his book “*Late Modernism: Politics, Fiction, and the Arts between the World Wars*” (1920, 1930) come up to recognize the wars time together with post wars as an independence movement from Modernism, naming it Late Modernism. This term was also appeared in Jameson's earlier study of Wyndham Lewis. Miller refers to late modernism as “a reaction to a certain type of modernist fiction dominated by aesthetics of formal mastery, and it drew on a marginalized "figural" tendency within modernism as the instrument of its attack on high modernist fiction” (18). Alan Wild shared the same idea, he defined late modernism as “a

reaction against modernism by writers who retain a good many modernist presuppositions and strategies and who, in a variety of ways, differ from one another as much as they do from the early modernists” (qtd: Davis: 326). While Anthony Mellor recognized it as a clarification to Modernism, he said: “if modernism dissolved, its solution was more modernism”; defining modernism as “a paradoxically enduring mode of progress in ending – a kind of I can’t go I will go on – which the readers of Samuel Beckett will recognize” (qtd. Miller: p147). There is neither specific date nor definition to this movement; the mutual thing that all the previous Scholars agreed upon is that it refers to the works published during 1930-1945; and to the works of Samuel Beckett especially, as he was considered as the last modernist.

Late modernists were mostly influenced and integrate with modernism writers, but their works turn toward uncertainty and doubt, they also focused on society rather than individuals to portray the realities of the War and Post War; Esty Jed in his study “*A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England*,” argued with Miller and Mellor; he figures that late modernism is the exact style for the British loss of its imperial power, due to its decline from the top of the world system, he also linked this movement to the migrants writers arriving to the English shores after the War.

These authors’ styles differ from one another -they had different biographies- though they had the same concern, and represent the same issues. Beckett works for instance were full of repetition, but all of Beckett, Wyndham, and Barnes shared the interest in doubt, uncertainty, and playfulness of the characters language. They don’t represent meaning; they lead the reader to search for the meaning, they led chaos, doubt, and nothingness to inter without trying to fix it out.

Late modernism differs from high modernism, as the latter was controlled by what was called stream of consciousness to explore the inner thought, employing myth to express chaotic; while late modernist used dialogues to state reality and celebrate doubt, showing that myth is misleading. Miller also differentiated Modernism then Late Modernism stating that “Modernist irony, helps bring to life a richly inclusive and interconnected fictional world as a symbolic compensation for the chaos and impoverishment of modern life...In contrast, late modernist irony engages with social

realities less profoundly and offers no embracing vision in which the contradictions of modern life would be resolved” (Miller: 11).

However, late modernism expressed two decades of economic, social, and political regression; they were minimalist and anti-expensive in capturing transience uncertainty without solving this dilemma. Beckett was the pioneer to depict this issue in his works which took place during wartime and post second war, his novels, plays, and poems presents nothingness, doubt and the absurdity of human being, who lived in nonsense world. Millers in his book *Late Modernism* identify all of Samuel Beckett, Wyndham Lewis⁴ “, and Djuna Barnes; Fredric Jameson stated that “where modernists saw themselves as seers, late modernists see themselves as modernists” (Akhter: 46).

1.3.3. Beckett and late Modernism:

In 1986, Hugh Kenner declared “The last modernist is alive and well in Paris where he lives under the name of Beckett”; in 1996 Anthony Cronin also named Beckett’s biography “*the last modernist*”. Through the works of Beckett there is also such hint like in the opening line of *Murphy* “the last at last seen of him”; in *Krapp’s Last Tape* “They’re all dead. ... I’m the last”, and in *What Where* also started with “we are the last five”.

Samuel Beckett acts as the disciple of James Joyce, he was influenced by him in the beginning of his career; but through his journey to Germany, and engagement in the WWII his style of writing, interests, and forms differ from those of the modernist. He turns his focus toward the small stylistic elements, and the ambiguous ends; to create his own narrative voice which was remarkably full of repetition in order to adjust specific facts, and get the readers attentions.

This new style is depicted in *Molly*-Beckett’s novel –in the starting line “I am in my mother room”, leads the reader to question: where is her mother, if Molly is in her room? In the next passage things became ambiguous, when she says: “it is I who live in her there now”. The use of the pronoun “I” is somewhat ambiguous she could say “I live

⁴ We are not only the "last men of an epoch." . . . We are the first men of a Future that has not materialized. We belong to a "great age" that has not "come off."” (Miller: 03)

here no”, but instead this used the “I”, like if she is addressing someone else such as “it she who lives there now” Beckett became doubtful and uncertain.

These notions were clearly present in his plays as he used silent and pause like in *Waiting for Godot*; Godot were took as God, but he deny this claim in interview with Knowlson he said “if he is God I would say he is”. The play presents some of the late Modernism characteristics, like bourgeoisie and Marxism who took place during that period of time. It is plot less and open-ended start with waiting for Godot and ends with waiting. The protagonists are anti heroism, like if they are victimize by the war, don’t have jobs or work to do they just sit and wait for Godot, who can be anything; he might be the one who will give them home and jobs, or he can be the hope that everyone need to continue his life.

The play also expends self consciousness, and emphasis on individual and selfishness, that late modernist still affected with, like in Act I when Godot boy ask Vladimir what he should say to Godot he said: Tell him . . . (he hesitates) . . . tell him you saw us, while in Act II Vladimir say “tell him you saw me”. Existentialism also one of *Waiting for Godot* themes; as it represent the meaningless of the world, where human being lost hope and struggle in a non sense world.

Samuel Beckett represents absence, uncertainty, nothingness, and the use of new verbs; which were different as it were not to control, order, give a shape, or significant; but to accommodate and admit, as he claimed to present life as it is.

To sum up, the birth of Late Modernism led to the decline of Modernism and the emergence of Post-Modernism “it’s linkage forward into Post-Modernism and backward into Modernism” (Sabatini: 38). Though, it has some similarities with post modernism as both texts reflect self reflexivity; but it is differ from both Movements like Jencks remarks "To call a late modernist a postmodernist is tantamount to calling a Protestant a Catholic because they both practice a Christian religion" (10).

1.4 Beckett as the first Post-Modernist:

1.4.1 Post-Modernism:

The Second World War was a landmark for Britain and the world; it didn't bring just financial crises, end of peace and progress, it also coincided depression, chaotic, rejection of God and norm of society. This change was depicted in Architecture, then to literature during the 21th century. Post modernism dated back to France; and to the first performance of *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett (1954), the publication of *Howl* in (1956) and *naked Lunch* (1959).

The term post modernism was and still a dilemma for numerous scholars, critics, and literary student; as it has no precise definition. According to Lyotard "post means back again" (06). While, others related modernism to post modernism - post means come after (13); so post modernism is the development of modernism. Ramen Sharma in his article "*Common Themes and Techniques of Postmodern Literature of Shakespeare*" recognized it as a reaction to the reaction against the Enlightenment ideas, which was found in Modernist literature, after the death of the Irish novelist James Joyce and the English Virginia Woolf (190).

The term postmodernism is "a style of art, especially in the 1980s, which uses an unusual mixing of old and new forms"(Alba: 283), this movement departed from modernism revisiting the old text, as the writers sought a radical change for a radical change, removing far away to reach minimalism, in which less means more. They used pastiche and collage to create text for their awns without being accused of plagiarism.

Like modernism, post modernism had no exact definition; though there is an agreement of its characters, which were not also grouped under one category, they often used together and by all the writers.

Playfulness, irony and black humor: it wasn't used for the first time by the post modernist, but it became the hallmark on their works as most of their works related to Second World War, and cold war; it is well exemplified in Donald Barthelme stories "*the school*", where he treated death ironically. Thus these techniques used most in plays.

Pastiche: it means to combine or to paste together several elements, styles, or genres to create a new literary text. Thomas Pynchon, one of the most important

postmodern authors combined elements from detective fiction, science fiction, and war fiction, songs in his works. Thought this technique represent the chaotic life of the post modern writers.

Intertextuality: the post modernist focused on Intertextuality, as it grouped tow literary text or more. So, when text can be, an adaptation to the other style, a discussion to it, or even a reference. They mostly cited from a fairy tales such as the works of Margaret Atwood, or to the detective works.

Metafiction: it is basically a written about a written; it is employed to weaken the authority of the writer, so the readers focus in the text rather than his text. It is utilized by several post modernists, as the writers had different identities. For example, Italo Calvino's 1979 novel *If on a winter's night a traveler* is about a reader attempting to read a novel of the same name.

Fabulation: this term is used interchangeably with Metafiction, it reject realism which regarded a literary text to not be related to monists, challenging the traditional structure and the role of the narrator of literature, it is best exemplified by Salman Rushdie's "*sea of stories*".

Poioumena: came from an ancient Greek name means product; it mostly refer to a specific type of metafiction, where the story is about the creation According to Fowler, "the poioumenon is calculated to offer opportunities to explore the boundaries of fiction and reality—the limits of narrative truth." he self-conscious narrator in Salman Rushdie's "*Midnight's Children parallels*" in which he create independent India.

Historiographic metafiction: Linda Hutcheon coined the term "historiographic metafiction" to refer to works that fictionalize actual historical events or figures; it is well presented by Julian Barnes in his work "*Flaubert's Parrot*".

Temporal distortion: literary technique that uses a nonlinear timeline; the author may flashback and forward in time, it was also used by the modernist.

Participation: as response to the modernist who separate the author from the reader, post modernist seek to the engagement of the reader in the story, mostly by asking questions.

Maximalism: exists in the tradition of long works like *The Odyssey*. Authors who use this technique will sometimes justify their work as being as long, depending on the subject material that is covered.

Minimalism: it was a merely post modernist technique, acts as a style of writing in which the author presents characters that are unexceptional and events that are taken from everyday life. He also provides a general context of the story and let the reader to imagine the details. (Sharma: 194-198)

All in all; the post modernists were known by the works of post second world war, which influenced all forms of literature. “Theater of the Absurd” identifies post modernist drama; it was mainly related to the first performance of “*waiting for Godot*”, Beckett’s master piece, the play which start with waiting and ends with waiting and the title is waiting.

Samuel Beckett was considered as the first who reacted against his modernist friend’s ideas James Joyes, creating his own movement by focusing and question on language the mean of communication, to show the absurdity of human being and the world.

1.4.2. Beckett and post modernist:

David Lodge refers to Beckett as “the first important postmodernist writer”, while Lance Butler and Robin Davis described Beckett as “the poet of the Poststructuralist⁵ age”, Ihab Hassam also considered the publication of *Murphy* (1938) as the beginning of the postmodernist era, as it broken all the boundaries between drama, fiction and poetry.’(Sabatini: 07) in a letter to his German friend Axel Kaun (1937) expressed his desire to catch up with painting and music, as the modern literature stayed behind (49).

⁵ An intellectual movement for motive post modern thoughts emerged in France after WWII influenced by the theory of Fredinand de Saussure, who identify language as system of signs.

Samuel Beckett escaping from the modernist handcuffs, celebrated language itself rather than anything else, he used irony, black humor, and language game i.e to exist is to speak, White confirm this through his comment on Beckett's style "he is, however a writer who confronts the realities of existence through language that himself deems to be ultimately ineffectual" (Akhter: 45).

"*Waiting for Godot*" is namely the first post modernist work; as the characters represent the dilemma of the post modern society (21th society), they are identified by absurdity, meaningless, nothingness, selfishness, humanism, lack of communication and identity crises. The play involves several post modernist aspects.

Globalization: it is a process where all human being are unified; Estragon and Vladimir are ordinary people doing ordinary affair "waiting", which is a usual thing can happen in any place with anyone. University can be seen through the name of the characters: Vladimir a Russian name, Estragon a French name, Pazzo Italian name, and lucky English name. Their interaction with each other's is a conformation about how the world became one culture, suffering from chaos. They feel lonely and alienated even, as they can communicate even though they are with each other.

Marxists: it is a theory of Karle Marx about the socioeconomic status, especially the division of labor. It is one of the major themes subordinate branches of existentialism. It is mainly related to Pazzo the rich and bourgeois, who humanize Lucky and Estragon. Pazzo wants to get rid of his servant lucky although he is very helpful, just because he is bored of him.

Imperialism: according to Merriam Webster imperialism is government systems, which advocate the extending power of a nation by gaining indirect control over the political or economic life of other. Different types of this policy, where presented in several points of the play. Neo-imperialism is when Lucky rejected the bone of Pazzo; the rejected bone is given to well-subjugated Lucky by, Estragon's competitive suppression marking ultra-imperialism, and combined

subjugation of Pozzo, Vladimir and Estragon suggest super-imperialism. (Azmi: 504)

Although; both modernism and post modernism presented a break from the nineteenth century realism, they also paid a less attention to the story structure, characters, plots and ends, exploring the inner self, sometimes treating the nearly same themes like existentialism. There are some differences that make each movement special and differ from its preceded ones.

Modernism was influenced by scientists like Newton, Freud, and Decart; while post modernism was inspired by philosopher, more specifically existential philosophers such as Albert Camus, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Martine Heidegger who presented human being and the world absurd aspect. They also declared that truth no longer exist adopting chaos, the truth that Modernist search for.

1.5 Conclusion:

Modernism brought change to the world of literature, as it broke with all the preceded movement and, carrying new techniques, styles, and characteristics, mainly to explore the inner thought of the person. Yet this fame didn't last for long, it was disturbed by the WWI; which witnessed the emergence of late modernism, this new phenomenon seeks to present what was acutely in the world as it is.

WWII, and post war experienced the emergence of new face of literature that react against the modernist features. Post modernist dint pay much attention to structure, grammar, actions, or the order of thoughts; to present the meaningless of the world and the absurdity of the world. Samuel Beckett was considered as the last modernist, and first post modernist; as he transfers the complicity of the language through silence and pauses in most of his plays, inspired by existentialist philosophers.

“Waiting for Godot” is one of his plays that leaded the new theater, or what was called the Theater of The Absurd; therefore the following chapter highlights the main Existential themes depicted in this master piece together with its absurdity.

Chapter two : Existential themes in *Waiting for Godot*

2.1 Introduction:

During the twentieth century, Europe witnessed two bloody Wars followed by the horror of the cold war, these events devastated the European citizen. Hope, norms and religion haven't any place among them.

This events pushed Existential thinkers to rethink about the meaning of existence criticizing that of Decart. The existentialists: Jean-Paul Sarter, Soren Kierkegaard, and Martin Heidegger and others redefined existence and related it to the essence each one according to his beliefs. While Sarter claimed that essence is a result of the man exercise, Kierkegaard related man existence to God; yet they common themes that were treated are: individualism, personal choice and freedom.

These existential thoughts were reflected in literature, mainly drama or what was called the theater of the absurd. *Waiting for Godot* is one of the absurd plays that reflected several points of existentialism, portraying the meaningless, and the purposeless life of the modern man, who struggle to survive in the absurd word.

2.2 Existentialism as a philosophical movement

Existentialism was mostly related to certain social and historical development in Europe. It dated back to the nineteenth century namely to the works of Soran Kierkegaard and Frederic Nietzsche, one a devout Christian; while the other an atheist, who declared the death of God pointing on the decline of religion and the loss of faith on the new urban society.

While the twentieth century witnessed two bloody wars, which raised the feeling of disbelief, unsecure and despaired. The emergence of Fascism⁶, Nazism⁷, and communism⁸ made the human being helpless, voiceless and treated him as merely a tool.

Existentialism can't be considered as a philosophical school; it is more like a new style of philosophy, which concentrates on the individual and his life, decisions, purpose and existence, in order to understand the sense of life because "being an individual in our mass society is an achievement rather than a starting point".(Flynn:24)

The definition of Existentialism is often hard to pin down; as there are different opinions and views, Charles worth for example describes it as: "[it] was, one could say, more an intellectual mood or atmosphere than a coherent creed or body of doctrine; more an outlook or "mind-set" than a philosophical "party line"; more a method or approach than a school of thought. And it was very much a creature of the Waste Land that was Europe during and after the last world war"; while, Mounier and Blow point out that existentialism is "... a reaction of the philosophy of man against the excesses of the philosophy of ideas and the philosophy of things." (Nellickappilly: 01).

This philosophy is often related to the statement '*existence precedes essence*' adopted by the philosopher Jean-Paul Sarter, who claimed that the essence (what you are) is the result of the existence (your choices) (Flynn: 08); yet Albert Camus argued Sarter, emphasizing on the existence rather than the essence saying his famous statement: "This heart within me I can feel, and I judge that it exists. This world I can touch and I likewise judge that it exists. There ends all my knowledge, and the rest is construction." (10)

There also is an argument about what consists the essence of man; while religious like Soren Kierkegaard, Martin Buber, and Karle Jasper related it to the existence of God; atheist such as: Jean-Paul Sarter, Simon de Beauvoir, Martin Heidegger, and Fredrik Nietzsche denied the existence of God. This differentiation in beliefs led to distinction of

⁶ A governmental system led by a dictator having complete power, forcibly suppressing opposition and criticism regimenting an aggressive nationalism and often racism (Dictionary.com).

⁷ The body of political and economic doctrines held by Nazi in Germany from 1933-1945including the totalitarian principle of government (Merriam Webster).

⁸ A theory or system of social organization based on the holding of all property in common, actual ownership being ascribed to the community as a whole or state (Dictionary.com).

themes, but they all concentrate on the individual and his/her existence subject, not just a thinking one, focusing on his feeling such as: love, hate, desire and wishes.

Thomas Flynn in his book “*Existentialism*” set five themes for existentialism:

1. Existence precedes essence: the essence is the result of existence rather than the reverse. So, the essence can be determined by the one the way he/she want.

2. Time is of the essence: the person is bound to time, so the meaning and value ‘not yet’, the ‘already’, and the ‘present’ differ from one another.

3. Humanism: the human individual is the centre of this philosophy. “Though not anti-science, it is a pursuit of identity and meaning amidst the social and economic pressures of mass society for superficiality and conformism”.

4. Freedom/responsibility: Existentialism is a philosophy of freedom. The individual is free in his decisions; he is not bound to anything or anyone.

5. Ethical considerations are paramount: the existentialist mostly link ethics to freedom, so they invite the one to examine his authentic life together with his society. (Flynn: 08)

Existential thinker point out that man has been manipulating with over history, as each philosopher described him differently. Plato for instance emphasized on the rational aspects; while, Descartes associated the capacity to think as the essence of man. Other philosophers consisted man as a unity of mind and body. Though, they agreed on the same idea, that the individual is the focal point on their studies, although each philosopher had his own philosophy.

Soran Kierkegaard (1813-1855)

He is mainly regarded as the founder of existentialism, as in his work existential elements are founded for the first time. He was a religious philosopher; Susan Leigh Anderson stated that: “Kierkegaard, faith constitutes a sphere all by itself and every misunderstanding of Christianity may at once be recognized by its transforming it into a doctrine, transferring it to the sphere of the intellectual” (Webber, 2015).

The focal point of his philosophy is subjectivity, in interview he said "I marked my writings to which I attached my name with the category of the individual from the beginning; and it continued like a formula to be repeated in stereotyped fashion so that the individual is not a later invention of mine but has been there from the beginning" (Irvine: 1998). His works were merely religious, and more specifically Christian, he thinks that God is the ground and the center of every human longing. In his journal he confirmed that: "[t]he most important thing of all is that a man stands right toward God, does not try to wrench away from something, but rather penetrates it until it yields its explanation. Whether or not it turns out as he wishes; it is still the best of all." (Kierkegaard: 133)

Kierkegaard set three major spheres or stages of life for the individual existence. The atheistic sphere, which means to live for physical and intellectual pleasure; or in ethical one, where the one should lead his/her life of duty to the moral laws. The third level, and the highest one, is to devote the one life to God rejecting everything else. (Nellickappilly: 05)

Fredric Nietzsche (1844-1900)

Nietzsche is also a known philosopher of the nineteenth century and one of the founders of existentialism. He is mostly considered as the grandfather of Post Modernism, he was the one, who mapped the limits of the modern mindset; while the literary figure Samuel Beckett explored these limits, paving the way for Post Modernism to dominate the literary world. (Webber: 02)

The common themes of his works turn around religion, meaningless of life, and the concept of time. Like in his famous work "*God is Dead*", where he discussed the decline of religion and the loss of faith; which was really a catastrophe of the world. He also predicted that in the next centuries people will replace the faith of God with something else. He also declared that truth is suspicious, as everything is doubtful in this new Godless world (Nietzsche: 1954). While, in his work "*On the Genealogy of Morals*"; he represents the change of human joy to revenge, which leads to question what

makes good as good and bad as bad. The most common fact is that Nietzsche had a great influence on the stands of Existentialism, and influenced several thinkers and writers.

Matin Heidegger (1889-1976) and Jean-Paul Sarter (1905-1980)

Existentialism of the twentieth century coined the works of several existentialists such as Sarter and Heidegger. The latter is German philosopher, who brought a new complicated philosophy and influenced several European thinkers and literary critics Michael Wheeler stated that: “his thinking should be identified as a part of such philosophy [Existentialism] only with extreme care and qualification” (2011) .

Heidegger related essence to existence when the one enjoy his/her existence. In his book “*Being and Time*”, which is based on the philosophy of Aristotle, he raises the question of *being*, and continues his investigation through several themes like morality and anxiety.

Jean-Paul Sarter rejected Heidegger definition for existence and he related it to the human ethical values in his lecture “*Existentialism is Humanism*” (1945); so existence is related to human i.e man ‘*exist*’, while the existence of rocks and plants ... etc denoted as ‘*being*’, in another word “human *exist* but, so far as we know all the other things merely *are*” (Webber: 03). Though in this lecture he seemed to be inconsistent as defined some Christian philosophers as Kierkegaard, then he pointed out that Existentialism is a purely atheism (08). By the expression “*Existence preceded essence*”, Sarter challenged the traditional philosophy, which saw all human as a mere copies and shadows with a universal essence. He claimed that Man first exists, then through his actions create his essence (Nellickappilly: 09).

2.3 Existentialism as a Literary Movement

The world of literature was tremendously impacted by the philosophy of Existentialism, as several philosophers saw that literature is the suitable landscape to convey their messages and reflect their thoughts. The existential philosopher Sarter deserved a noble price in literature, although his literary achievements were few, but they were significant. (Baziz: 11).

Albert Camus is mainly related to existential literature, although he denied this and considered himself as an absurdist. Yet, his works reflected several elements of existentialism; like in his essay “*the Myth of Sisyphus*”. The hero Sisyphus defeated his existence, creating one for his own, and challenging Gods, though the punishment was harsh he accepted it with a happiness as Camus pointed out (Camus : 14).

The common theme of this literature is absurdism, according to Albert Camus: “[t]he absurd is born out of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world” (Camus: 01); Soren Kierkegaard although he was religious, he declared faith in God to be absurd, since it was impossible to know God, or to understand His purpose. Many philosophers considered absurdism as a branch of existentialism.

2.3.1 Absurdism

This literary genre emerged on the twentieth century, in drama; it reacted against naturalism and realism, as life was represented only through imitation of realities. This “new theater”, “anti-theater or “theater of the absurd” as Martin Esslin called it,

Theater of the Absurd appeared for the first time in Albert Camus essay “*the Myth of Sisyphus*” (1942), which is about the meaningless of the human condition. Then it became widely used in Martin Esslin work “*The Theater of The Absurd*” (1961). Where, he describes the plays written in 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s by Samuel Beckett, Eugen Ionesco, Jean Genet and Harold Pinter; whom portrayed the world view after the WWII, expressing the absurdity of the modern life through their works in illogical way.

According to Martin Esslin absurd means “out of harmony” in musical context, while in a common usage it means “illogical, unreasonable, and ridiculous” (Esslin: 23); Eugen Ionesco also defines it as: “ something that has no aim(...) when man is cut off from his religious, metaphysical and transcendental roots, he is lost. All his actions became senseless, absurd, and useless” (Esslin: 23). Albert Camus described adds that it is a conflict, an opposition; that one come to face in their searching for meaning in cold universe (An International Literary Journal: 198).

On the other hand; theater of the absurd acts as a drama that provides deliberation and violations of the usual conventions of plot and characters, to undermine ordinary expectations of continuity and rationality, and to foster a rise in consciousness for the audience. This, leads to the increase of irrationality, as a consequence to the decline of religion by the end of WWII (200).

However; Theater of the Absurd goes back to the Greek drama, particularly to the plays of Aristophanes. Then, it traced back to the Middle Ages plays, as it dealt with illogical and existential problems. In the Elizabethan drama, the writers such as John Webster and Jacob Biederman depicted the mythological archetypes. The Ninetieth Century plays by Ibsen and Strindberg, “[present] a mythical, grotesque figure, set amidst a world of archetypal images” (theater of the absurd). Yet; after the WWII the trauma of living under the nuclear threat, opens the doors of absurdity and existentialism to be apart from everyday life.

“The Myth of Sisyphus” is the first absurd work. Though, it was written in the traditional forms. This essay is about Sisyphus a Greek hero, who challenges his faith and Gods, and defeated death, to be immortal. Then; the Gods punish him, and make him pull a rock from the top of a mountain, but whenever it reaches the highest point, it rolls down to the bottom of it. Camus portrayed this hero as an absurd, who tries all his life long to complete a meaningless task, with joy and happiness; because he accepts his faith. Though, the way how Sisyphus defeated death and escaped from the underworld is unknown. Albert Camus in this work gives a clear picture of the decline of the religion, which gives the man the feeling of absurdity; as it developed due to the world wars, and the loss of the self, and security.

Martin Esslin in his book “The Theater Of The Absurd” said that this theater “draw his own conclusions, make his own errors. Though Theaters of the Absurd may be seen as nonsense, they [the audience] have something to say and can be understood” (Esslin: 21). He also explained the characteristics of this philosophy:

Language: one of the most elements of any play is language, which is namely use for communication and contribute in developing the plot. Thus, the theater of the absurd

questioned this role, which is communication or conveying a message or information. So; people don't always mean what they say, and frequently mean more than what they said. The characters talk in pointless dialogues, they use language of games just to full time without any purpose.

The characters: in the theater of the absurd there is no hero; the protagonists are naïve, foolish, miserable, and isolated, they see the world as a threat. They have no purpose in life, they just waiting for something to happen or appear, to change their life like in *Waiting for Godot* of Samuel Beckett, or to break their safety like in *Room* by Harold Pinter.

Time: is elastic and non-linear, the structure is often circular, similar scenes and repeated passages, such as in *Waiting for Godot* the act one is much similar to act 2 too.

Place: the characters are often outside in nowhere like a road in “*Waiting for Godot*”, or stick to one place like a room in “*Endgame*”, where all the actions take place.

The events: the actions are arbitrary and unpredictable; the absence of the plot makes the events illogical, some while emphasize futility of human existence.

Samuel Beckett acts as one of the most popular absurdist playwright. In his plays, he questions the function of language; by using pauses and silence, which goes beyond the language. Beckett defines this as: “a kind of ‘gap’ to ‘go on’ in the unfamiliar, unknown, unsaid and yet representable” (Shahid: 311). He presents the meaningless, and the uselessness of humans, who fail to communicate.

2.3.2 Absurdism in *Waiting for Godot*

Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett was written and performed in French in 1954. It is one of the most successful absurdist plays; it contradicts with the traditional form of theater, and uses unconventional language. There is no plot, setting, nor background information to facilitate the audience's and reader's comprehension.

This master piece is in two acts and about two tramps Vladimir and Estragon, who wait for the mysterious Godot, whom never appear. In the first act: on stage

Estragon and Vladimir in ragged clothes on a country road; near a leafless tree. From their conversation it becomes clear that they believe to have an appointment with a Godot, even though they are not sure about that.

During their waiting, they do nothing except nonsense action, like: Estragon trying to get out his boots, and Vladimir looking inside his hat, which is totally absurd. They think of suicide as a way to escape, as they feel bored and lonely; but they recede and wait for what Godot can offer.

Meantime, two other characters walk by. Pozzo taking his servant Lucky to sell him, because, he fed up with him, even though he is carrying all his baggage. Pozzo gets into a conversation with Estragon and Vladimir and makes Lucky – to their amusement – dance and think. Then, Pozzo and Lucky move on, while Estragon and Vladimir stay in the same place. A boy appears and tells them that Godot will not come today, but that he will surely come the next day. Vladimir and Estragon decide to go, as it is already night, but they do not move. Suddenly night full which is totally absurd and nonsense, as it goes from day light to dark.

The second act (the tomorrow of the first act) starts, the tree is slightly leaved. Vladimir and Estragon appear in the same place, and still waiting for Godot. Estragon seems that he can't recall what happened on the other day, and he depends on Vladimir to restore his memory. They talk about the past, their memories; to pass the time they think up games. Again, Pozzo and Lucky walk by, but this time, Pozzo is blind and depends on his slave to guide him and care about; whom became dumb may because he lost his hat. Estragon and Vladimir tell them that they are still waiting for Godot but Pazzo cannot remember that they had met the day before. Lucky and Pazzo move on and again the boy appears to tell them that Godot will not come today but certainly tomorrow. As the night before, the two men decide to go but do not move as the curtain falls.

The reason why the two tramps wait for Godot is to fill the empties in their lives, even though their waiting is meaningless as they didn't reach what they want. They just wait and forget, they might be waiting for Godot more than two days, and they might keep waiting for him the coming days, as the play have no end. They will return to the

same place, do the same nonsense actions, play games, ask unanswered questions, and hope that Godot will save them; repeating the same mistake and losing their selves.

The play is one of the absurd plays, that shows the absurdity of human conditions, as nothing happen, nobody come, no body go, no developed plot (no beginning, middle, or end), no setting. Just tow man sitting in nowhere waiting for Godot, who will save them, may be from the war, or the absurd word, he might offer them jobs, home, or safety. Godot is the hope, whom they live for.

2.4 Existentialism in waiting for Godot

Beckett is one of the writers, who reflected some of the existential thoughts through his writings, mainly plays, paving the way to the creation of what was called the theater of the absurd. In the existential universe the man is striving to survive, or get an identity for him/her self; they have no purpose in life, and question everything even truth and reality. These themes are reflected in Beckett's master piece "*Waiting for Godot*".

2.4.1 Freedom

"*Waiting for Godot*" is a tragicomedy in two acts by Samuel Beckett; the play took place in a country road near a dead tree, where Vladimir and Estragon wait for the mysterious Godot, hoping that he will offer something to change the banality of their lives and full fill it with hope. While waiting they meet Pazzo and his Slave Lucky, and after a while the latter go in their way, while Godot boy come to deliver his master message which is that: "he won't come this evening but surely tomorrow" (Beckett: 42).The same actions take place in the second act the same place, the same characters and the same deeds.

Even though the characters seem to be free in what they say and what they do, but apparently they are tied to the place, to each other and to Mister Godot, whoever it is. Estragon and Vladimir keep coming to the same spot even though they are not sure it is the right place:

Vladimir: A—. What are you insinuating? That we've come to the wrong place?

Estragon: He should be here.

Vladimir: He didn't say for sure he'd come.

Estragon: And if he doesn't come?

Vladimir: We'll come back tomorrow. (07)

They might also be in the same place the days before, as Estragon claimed that: “[they] came [there] yesterday” (07). The trumps are also bound to each other; in the opening of the first act Vladimir mention that they were separated for a long period of time, and now they assemble:

Vladimir: I'm glad to see you back. I thought you were gone forever.

Estragon: Me too.

Vladimir: Together again at last! We'll have to celebrate this. But how? (*He reflects.*) Get up till I embrace you. (02)

They don't seem to be happy with each other, as they feel lonely, miserable and anxious; like if their reassemble is curse more than a bless as they keep hurting one another. Such as when Vladimir asks Estragon for a hug he replied testily (as it is mentioned in the description, which hurts Vladimir:

Estragon: (*irritably*). Not now, not now.

Vladimir: (*hurt, coldly*). May one inquire where His Highness spent the night? (02)

For a moment Estragon think that it would be better for them to separate, but Vladimir is sure that Estragon can't handle to be far from him; as it they are body and mind, due to the fact that Vladimir has a good memory, he keep reminding Gogo for the reason of their waiting, and for the events that took place the other day (in act 2), while Gogo is just there to make a company for him.

Estragon: (*coldly*.) There are times when I wonder if it wouldn't be better for us to part.

Vladimir: You wouldn't go far. (09)

The trumps also are tied to the unknown Godot, they can't go because they are waiting for Godot:

Estragon: Charming spot. (*He turns, advances to front, halts facing auditorium.*)

Inspiring prospects (*He turns to Vladimir.*) Let's go.

Vladimir: We can't.

Estragon: Why not?

Vladimir: We're waiting for Godot. (06)

This passage is repeated through both acts several time; Estragon keeps asking to go while Vladimir keeps reminding him for whom they are waiting, as if Didi is the one who is waiting for Godot, which is confirmed by Godot boy when he looks for Mr. Albert (Vladimir) to pass Godot message.

Estragon nick name is Gogo, which may means go-go as he wants to leave, while Vladimir's Didi may means say or 'dit' in French as the play was originally written in it, as he is the one who keeps talking and opening new subjects.

Gogo and Didi can't do nothing, they can't even suicide because of Godot

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

Estragon: And if he comes?

Vladimir: We'll be saved. (88)

Even one the messenger came and told them that Godot won't come; they kept waiting and didn't move.

The end of act one:

ESTRAGON: well, shall we go?

VLADIMIR: Yes, let's go.

They do not move. (46)

The end of act tow:

Vladimir: Well? Shall we go?

Estragon: Yes, let's go.

They do not move. (89)

Not only the tow trumps are bound to one another, the other two characters Pazzo and Lucky are dependent on each other as well. In the first act Pazzo tells the tow that he is taking his slave to sell him because he fed up of him even though he is very helpful

Vladimir: (*to Lucky*). How dare you! It's abominable! Such a good master!

Crucify him like that! After so many years! Really!

Pozzo: (*sobbing*). He used to be so kind . . . so helpful . . . and entertaining . . . my good angel . . . and now . . . he's killing me. (27)

Lucky seems to be much tied to his master as he doesn't want to be a part of him even though his master treats him so badly

Estragon: He's crying!

Pozzo: Old dogs have more dignity. (*He proffers his handkerchief to Estragon.*)

Comfort him, since you pity him. (*Estragon hesitates.*) Come on.

(*Estragon takes the handkerchief*) Wipe away his tears, he'll feel less forsaken. *Estragon hesitates.* (25).

In act two Pozzo is blind and Lucky is dumb, they still with each other, the master didn't sell his slave, and he is depend much on him to guide his more than ever.

2.4.2 Uncertainty and unreliability

The play mainly reflects the modern world, where no one has an absolute knowledge about the meaning of the universe or even life. The trumps seem to have a lack of cognition of actions, place, emotion, and relation; they are only certain about their existence, because they speak according to Beckett "to speak is to exist" (Akhter: 45).

According to Withanage: "a person's name is an important signifier of his existence" (20), but throughout the play the characters are not presented no one know their situation or their names, which makes the audience remain in dark

Vladimir calls Estragon Gogo, while the other calls him Didi, yet these names has no relation to the real one. Estragon presents himself to Pozzo as Adam (Beckett: 29), Vladimir on the other hand is called as Mr. Albert by Godot boy (40).

In the first act, Pozzo introduces him Self as Pozzo. In the second he is blind; when the trumps call him with his name, he doesn't respond. But when they yell with other names, he responds to them asking help; as if he wants to get rid of his identity.

Vladimir: Pozzo! (*Silence*) Pozzo! (*Silence*) No reply.

Estragon: Together.

Vladimir and Estragon: Pozzo! Pozzo!

Vladimir: He moved.

Estragon: Are you sure his name is Pozzo?

Vladimir: (*alarmed*). Mr. Pozzo! Come back! We won't hurt you! *Silence*.

Estragon: We might try him with other names. (...)

Estragon: We'll soon see. (*He reflects.*) Abel! Abel!

Pozzo: help!

Estragon: Got it in one!

Vladimir: I begin to weary of this motif.

Estragon: Perhaps the other is called Cain. Cain! Cain!

Pozzo: Help! (76-77)

The only certain thing is that they are waiting for Godot, as Vladimir claims: "...one thing alone is clear. We are waiting for Godot to come" (30); though they had never met him before. But it seems that they doubt his identity as well, they are not sure of his name and before:

Estragon: His name is Godot?

Vladimir: I think so. (16) (...)

Estragon: Personally, I wouldn't even know him if I saw him. (17)

The identity of Godot is doubtful over history Martin Esslin stated that: "It has been suggested that Godot is a weakened form of the word God" (The Theatre of the Absurd, 49), while other critics took him for happiness, hope, love, death and others (: 21). Though, the possibility of representing God is more acknowledged due to the several similarities between the tow and which will be mentioned in the third chapter.

Angela Hotaling point out that he is the hope: "Godot will bring purpose and meaning" (21), the other possibility is that he might represent the tomorrow. The trumps every day came by the tree talk, argue, play games, try to commit a suicide, and wait for

the arrival of Godot; but if Godot come this series of nonsense action will come to an end and they may have nothing to do after.

The play is centered by uncertainty every as Esslin states: “In *Waiting for Godot*, the feeling of uncertainty it produces, the ebb and flow of this uncertainty—from the hope of discovering the identity of Godot to its repeated disappointment - are themselves the essence of the play. (The Theatre of the Absurd, 45), Estragon also insists: “nothing is certain” (Beckett: 46). Vladimir also confirms that the only certain thing in life is uncertainty: “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’ll be alone once more, in the midst of nothingness” (73).

The loss of memory which took place in the second act makes the audience suspect every detail in the play. Estragon forgets his meeting with Pozzo and Lucky but he remembers the kick and the bone, yet when Vladimir tries to remind him he keeps saying: “I don’t know” (75), Pozzo loses his memory and his sight, and doesn’t remember his meeting with the tramps, he asserts that “I don’t remember having met anyone yesterday. But tomorrow I won’t remember having met anyone today. So don’t count on me to enlighten you” (82). Estragon doesn’t want to remember, Pozzo insists he will forget what will happen with his and live every day with new memory; as if these two are trying to forget their meaningless life and the absurd world they live in.

Godot’s boy seems also that he has the same problem of memory, in the two acts he denies his meeting with the tramps, which made Vladimir anxious, asking the boy to remember their meeting “You’re sure you saw me, you won’t come and tell me tomorrow that you never saw me!” (86). He seems to be sure that Godot won’t come tomorrow and he will send his boy over again.

This uncertainty which dominates the play reveals one of the existential outlooks of the modern society, where nothing is certain, and everything is questioned and manipulated with even language and memory.

2.4.3 Nothingness and meaninglessness

Nothingness or nothing mainly refers to the absence of something; the sense of nothingness mirrored the life of the European after the WWII. The existentialists were the pioneer who depict this problematic within their work. Sartre's book "being and nothingness" proclaims that anything with consciousness present nothingness as consciousness has no essence.

"*Waiting for Godot*" is one of the absurd plays, which characterized by the sense of nothingness in both form and content. Despite the fact that this master piece lack plot, communication, and the presentation of the characters, the content is also provides nothing.

By "Nothing to be done" (02) Beckett starts his play "*Waiting for Godot*" to introduce the audience to the meaningless world they live in. this statement is repeated through the play several times, "nothing to be shown" (04), "nothing is certain" (07), "nothing to say" (09), "nothing very definite" (11), "nothing you can do about" (15). The title as well is a significant that it is about nothing except waiting.

The setting is a mere country road featured by nothing but a tree that mainly portrays spring and life; but it is apparently dead, which presents the meaningless of life. The characters do nothing they just sit by the tree waiting for Godot. They argue, talk, play games and narrate religious stories just to pass the time to feel their existence, as Estragon claims: "We always find something, eh Didi, to give us the impression we exist?" (60). There is nothing inside the boots of Estragon, nothing inside the hats of Estragon. Vladimir suggests to do some exercise but Estragon gets tired as they start warming up, Estragon is tired even to take breath. Even Godot do nothing as the boy tell the trumps.

Boy: I didn't see anyone, Sir *Silence*.

Vladimir: What does he do, Mr. Godot? (Silence) Do you hear me?

Boy: He does nothing, Sir. (85)

One of the major themes of nothingness is repetition, and it is presented throughout the play; the structure of the first act is paralleled in the second, the appearance of the two trumps, discussing the idea of suicide, the coming of the master and his slave,

and end by the arrival of Godot messenger to deliver his message, even both act finished the same way:

Act one: Estragon: Well, shall we go?

Vladimir: Yes, let's go.

They do not move.

Act tow: Vladimir: Well? Shall we go?

Estragon: Yes, let's go.

They do not move.

The same action, the same people, the same conversation, like Estragon claimed: “Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful!” (33); everything details are repeated. The only change is the few leaves that grew on the tree, and it has several meanings as each critic analyzed it the way he/she wants, which may means nothing at the end.

2.4.4 The use of time

“*Waiting for Godot*” is a story of time, sets during two days; about tow trumps waiting the coming of Godot, thus his absence made them waste their time in meaningless conversations, doing nothing which makes time one of the major themes of this work.

Samuel Beckett created these characters as victims of time, they can't stop time, and Anthony Chadwick claims that: “We seem to have a choice between waiting for one “better” thing after another or simply living with what we have. Both past and future are illusions, and seen under this aspect, we begin to taste the notion of eternity.” (Withanage: 07). Which means that they should live each day for itself and don't worry about the future.

Everything depends on Godot the characters are tied to him, Vladimir repeats that: “Tomorrow everything will be better” (Beckett: 45), because the boy said that Godot

will come. Godot is hope by meeting him “[they] will be saved” (88); they will be saved from suicide, and they may use Godot as form to escape, this idea is mentioned by Albert Camus, he said that: “since life had lost all meaning, man should not seek escape from suicide” (Esslin: 23). The trumps wait for the coming till night, though the fall of night is somehow absurd, day light then suddenly moon rise as Beckett directs: “The light suddenly fails. In a moment it is night. The moon rises at back, mounts in the sky, and stands still, shedding a pale light on the scene” (Beckett: 43); at that moment Vladimir shouts: “at last” (43), like if he is waiting for the night to fall to go. According to the classical interpretation night=dark=death; so the tow trumps wait till night to stop waiting, like death release man from the suffer of life.

Time is the essential theme of the play as Beckett confesses: “The subject of the play is not Godot but waiting” (Withanage: 12). Esslin points out “Waiting is an essential characteristic of the human condition” (Esslin: 48). Every one for the whole of his life waits for something to change his life, time passes quickly if the one is active, and slowly when he/she is passive; this thing is reflected in Godot.

2.4.5 The use of place

“In Waiting for Godot a space without identification of its background, either materially or culturally, is created or applies to the world in general. This allows the audience to focus on the dialogue itself rather than the scenery. The audience is presented with a desolate, unfamiliar and strange space where almost nothing exists. Nothing noticeably changes in the appearance of the stage, except for few leaves growing on the tree in the second day of the second act” (Withanage: 15).

The setting is abnormal, strange, and without identification, though there is hint that they are in Paris, or France as Vladimir says: “Hand in hand from the top of the Eiffel Tower, among the first” (Beckett: 03). Though, the stage is void there is nothing peculiar in it:

Act one:

Estragon: In my opinion we were here.

Vladimir: (looking round). You recognize the place?

Estragon: I didn't say that.

Vladimir: Well?

Estragon: That makes no difference (Beckett: 07-08).

Similarly in act two the doubts of the place:

Estragon: And here where we are now?

Vladimir: Where else do you think? Do you not recognize the place?

Estragon: (*suddenly furious*). Recognize! What is there to recognize?

The tree is the center spot, which is struggling to survive with the trunks. It is the only thing linked to Godot is the tree:

Vladimir: He said by the tree. (10)

According to Symbolictionary.net, one of the symbolic importance of the tree is "The manifestation of demise in the winter-losing their leaves, just to grow new development with the reappearance of spring. This perspective makes the tree an image of restoration". So the few leaves which appeared in second act may be a sign of better tomorrow.

3.5 Conclusion:

Waiting for Godot is one of the existentialist plays, which is identified by the theater of the absurd. Though Beckett insisted that the play is about time focusing on the notion of waiting, several critics contributed this master through religious studies.

This work can be analyzed through religious existentialism which means that man is related to God, a theory that adopted by Soren Kierkegaard; whereas the atheistic one, which is based on Sartre and Heidegger, claims that man is alone in godless world.

The third chapter will deal with a religious side of *Waiting for Godot*, and try to figure if the play is religious or atheist depending on the religious allegory presented in the play.

Chapter three: religious allegory in *Waiting for Godot*

3.1 Introduction:

“*Waiting for Godot*” (1953) is regarded namely as a religious play, even though it was written in a period where religious beliefs were in doubt. Samuel Beckett also denied this claim.

The play is full of religious symbols, as there are a lot of references and allusions into the Bible, so this chapter seeks to point the religious allegory in *Waiting for Godot*, hinting Beckett’s religious background as it might affect his writings.

Lastly, it will shed the light on atheism in “*Waiting for Godot*”, in relation to Beckett’s existentialist and absurdist thoughts.

3.2 Beckett Religious Upbringing:

Samuel Barclay Beckett was born on May, 13th 1906 in Dublin, Ireland (according to his certification). Though, he claimed that he was born in Good Friday (April, 13th) this may due to the Irish custom that allow four weeks for the registration of the new born. (New York Times: 2005)

Anthony Cronin in his book “Samuel Beckett: the Last Modernist”, wrote: “Samuel Beckett [claimed] to have been born on Good Friday, 13 April 1906... The idea that he had been born on Good Friday, the day of the Saviour's crucifixion, pleased him, more especially since Good Friday happened in 1906 to have been Friday the thirteenth” (New York Times: 2005).

Beckett was raised in a Protestant family, whose belong to the Anglican Church of Ireland; his mother wanted him to become a typical Christian, since she was highly religious. It has been said that his mother used to read the Bible for him every night, so “the nature of his religious recognition was that of well-to-do with the protestant” (Nezhad, Ashrafy: 3070).

However, these religious beliefs were reflected in his works, as it contained prayers, stories, and Bible references. His work *“All that Fall”* is considered as the most Irish religious play “In the character of Miss Fitt, Beckett draws a highly critical portrait of a hypocritical Dublin Protestant. When she is in the church, as she puts it, she is “alone with [her] Maker” and she does not notice anyone, not “even the sexton himself” (Uchman: 94). His essay *“Proust”* is also full of religion as Cronin noted:

There is certainly a general impression of an attitude to art which partakes of a sort of religious fervor, or of an attempt to make a sort of surrogate religion of art. This attempt is not uncommon among hitherto religious young people who discover art at the same time as they are in process of abandoning religion. Beckett would deny in later life that he had ever been a believer or that religious belief had ever made much appeal to him. The religious vocabulary of his Proust makes an opposite impression (147).

Beckett in *“Waiting for Godot”* used direct references from the Bible like the stories of the two thieves, and several other quotes will be mentioned later.

However; Beckett declared that he is none believer. When he was interviewed if he is “a Christian, Jew or Atheist,” he replied: “None of the three” (Uchman: 85). Driver in his book *“Beckett by the Madelaine”* referred to his break with the protestant to the death of his mother and brother, as Beckett indicated that: “my mother and brother got no value from their religion when they died. At the moment of crisis it has no more depth than an old school tie” (Uchman: 86).

Several critics liked Beckett broke from religion to the WWII, as he saw people dying, suffering and expecting death and no one could save them; so where is this God? who cares about his creatures? why he didn’t save them?. These questions were carried by people and several philosophers during that era, and they got no answer; so they declared the death of God. (Nazhad, Asharfy: 3080)

Beckett also clarified that the use of Biblical allusions are for merely dramatic intentions, not spiritual ones, as Thomas Cousineau in his book *Waiting for Godot: Form*

in Movement stated that he “touches on the unreliability of the documentary evidence on which the Christian faith is based” (Banister:2014).

3.3 Religious Allegory in “*Waiting for Godot*”:

Samuel Beckett master piece “*Waiting for Godot*” has been interpreted as a religious literary work, due to the numerous Biblical images, direct and indirect reference, and religious stories were found in. The story of the Christ scarification, the story of the tow thieves, the mention of gospels, holy lands, the savior; all these are present in this play, which makes it religious, despite the fact that Beckett denied this claim.

3.3.1 The identity of Godot:

Tow trumps were waiting beside a tree for Godot to save them from their misery, boredom, and to end their long waiting that no one knows how much it lasted, and how much will last. Godot is the center of the play without him the characters lives are meaningless and purposeless together with their conversation and actions, the critic Ernest Gans claims that “God or not, Godot plays a transcendental role with respect to” (Kelsch: 62).

He has been referred to as God due to several similarities; Needless the parallel in the pronunciation between the two, Godot can save and punish just like God. In conversation between Estragon and Vladimir, Vladimir says that if Godot come they will be saved:

Vladimir: we'll hang ourselves tomorrow. (Pause) unless Godot comes.

Estragon: and if he comes?

Vladimir: we'll be saved.

In another conversation Vladimir asks Godot boy if he punishes him, the boy answer: “no but he beat my brother”

Vladimir: he doesn't beat you?

Boy: no Sir, not me.

Vladimir: whom does he beat?

Boy: he beats my brother, Sir. (Beckett: 42)

The question that has been raised almost by the majority of the critics, what the trumps want from Godot? Estragon answer was: “a kind of prayer” (Beckett: 11), and the much known fact if the one wants to ask God for something, he prays.

The identity of Godot differs among scholar and critics; some considers him as God, like Stephani Pofahl Smith in her book *Between Pozzo and Godot: Existence as Dilemma*, where she stated that: “Godot is clearly related to God by his ‘divine’ attributes. He resembles God more significantly, however, in that all that is known about him comes from secondary sources, is uncertain and contradictory, while he himself remains absent and silent” (Kelsch: 63). Vmanimozhi in his article “*optimism in Samuel Beckett Waiting for Godot*” treating the same idea, he points out that: “as god is invisible, Godot is not seen on the stage” (5468). Simon Weil in his book “*Attente de Dieu*” refers to Godot as God as well (Martínez: 19), while the French critics assert that Pierre taken as Pierrot and Charlie as Charlot, so God is Godot (19).

Other critics considered Godot as Jesus, the son of God or son of man. Vladimir while narrating the story of the two thieves who were killed together with Jesus he said: “Two thieves, crucified at the same time as our Saviour” (Beckett: 05), he referred to Jesus as our savior; in another discussion he says that if Godot came they will be saved, so there is defiantly a link between the two and they might be one person.

The description of Godot in the play is similar to the one mentioned in the Bible:

Vladimir: (*softly*) Has he a beard, Mr. Godot?

Boy: Yes Sir.

Vladimir: Fair or . . . (he hesitates) . . . or black?

Boy: I think, it is white, Sir. (Beckett: 86)

In the Holy Bible John⁹ recorded, that he had seen the revival of the Savior. He wrote: “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.” (christainity.com).

Godot boy minds the goats, while his brother raises the sheep; in the Matthew of the Bible, there are words like this, “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him. He will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left (christainity.com).

However, other argue that the name Godot has religious meaning, like: “the literary critic Eric Bentley who sheds the light on the character of Balzac Godeau, whom never appeared throughout the play, he adds that Beckett had a lecture about this play at Trinity College” (Martinez: 19). While, other authors represent Godot as: ““happiness, eternal life, the unattainable quest of all men... God, a diminutive god, Love, Death, Silence, Hope, De Gaulle, Pozzo, a Balzac character, a bicycle racer, Time, Future, a Paris street for call girls” (45). Martin Esslin believes that: “throughout our lives we always wait for something, and Godot simply represents the objective of our waiting – an event, a thing, a person, death” (Esslin: 31); though the writer of *“Waiting for Godot”* himself told Roger Blin that the name Godot derived from French slang words for “boot” (Cohn: 45). But when Alan Schneider, the direct the first American production of *Waiting for Godot*, asked Beckett who or what was meant by Godot, he received the answer, “If I knew, I would have said so in the play” (Esslin 26).

God can be God, death, love, hope, or anything else; his identity is related to the person, each one is waiting for something or someone to save him/her and change his/her life, this thing Beckett named it Godot.

3.3.2 The duality in *“Waiting for Godot”*:

⁹ John the Baptist (known as the prophet Yahya in the Quran), Christians commonly refer to John as the precursor or forerunner of Jesus, since John announces Jesus' coming (Wayne: 1998)

Estragon and Vladimir, Pozzo and lucky, the boy and his brother, Cain and Abel, two thieves, and two acts, these pair are mainly looking for the fifty-fifty chance of salvation (Martinez: 21).

At the beginning of the first act, Vladimir narrates the story of the two thief, who were supposed to be sacrificed together with Jesus; though one of them was saved and the other was punished for an unknown reason, even though they were guilty for the same crime. Vladimir mentions four persons where the time the thieves were supposed to be sacrificed with Jesus:

Vladimir: ... how is it that of the four Evangelists only one speaks of a thief being saved. The four of them were there –or thereabouts– and only one speaks of a thief being saved. But one of the four says that one of the two was saved.

Estragon: Well? They don't agree and that's all there is to it.

Vladimir: But all four were there. And only one speaks of a thief being saved. Why believe him rather than the others? (Beckett:06)

Vladimir might be referring to the four gospel accounts that: “only John was at the site of the crucifixion while Matthew was most likely “thereabouts,” as Vladimir says, after having deserted him. The other two “Evangelists” to which he refers, Mark and Luke, however, wrote their accounts based on the testimony of Peter and other eyewitnesses. Luke explains this in the second verse of his gospel and the same conclusion can be made about Mark, considering he is first referenced as becoming part of the Christian faith in the book of Acts, which takes place approximately two months after the crucifixion” (Kelsch: 72).

Vladimir: Our Savior. Two thieves. One is supposed to have been saved and the other... dammed.

Estragon: Saved from what?

Vladimir: Hell. (Beckett: 05)

It is recorded in the Holy Bible that together with Jesus two prisoners were crucified. One of them said, “You’re Christ, aren’t you? You can save us and yourself!” But the other answered, and rebuking him said, “Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he was saying, “Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!” Jesus said to him, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.” (cheristainity.com).

VLADIMIR: One of the thieves was saved (pause). It's a reasonable percentage (Beckett: 04).

Vladimir talks about a percentage like if there is fifty-fifty chance of being saved; there is no chance for both of them, yet it has been said that the one who has been saved had faith “the thief was saved because of his belief. On the cross, he knew what he had done was wrong and he believed Jesus would come again” (Wang: 199).

Vladimir and Estragon could stand for the two thieves, Vladimir the one who has faith in Godot, and has knowledge of the Bible; while Estragon is there just to fill his time, he keeps asking Didi to go; also he seems to have no information about the Bible

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. Colored 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. (Beckett: 04)

In the first act the tramps want to hang themselves in the tree. Estragon refuses saying that: “Gogo light—bough not break—Gogo dead. Didi heavy—bough break—Didi alone.” (Beckett: 11). This is also can be linked to the story of the thieves during the crucifixion of Jesus.

In the second act; Vladimir shouts: “It's Godot! At last! Gogo! It's Godot! We're saved! Let's go and meet him!” Estragon says: “am in hell” (Beckett: 65). Like if Didi will be saved, while Gogo will be damned same as the tow thieves; so there only chance for one of them to be saved, while the other will be in hell.

In act one; Pozzo is taking Lucky to sell him, although he is good with him; maybe to get rid of the fifty-fifty chance, Pozzo might think that Lucky will be saved as he talks about a personal God who saves the ones he loves, and punish whom he hates.

Lastly the story of the two brothers who work for Godot, the messenger minds the goats, while the other raises the sheep; yet the latter is punished for unknown reason while the other is loved and also giving the mission of delivering a message to the trumps. This story is similar to the sons of Adam Cain and Able whowere mentioned by Estragon in second act when he calls Pozzo and Lucky as Able and Cain (76-77); Abel was a shepherd, Cain farmed the land. They both made a crucifixion of animals to God, but as it reads in Genesis 4:4-5: “And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering. But unto Cain and to his offering he had no respect” (Bible Hub.net: 2004).

To sum up, one can notice that throughout stories within the bible there always this fifty-fifty chance of salvation; one thief was saved and the other damned, Abel offer was respected, but Cain refuse. This is also paralleled in Godot's servants one is superior and loved then the other. So it might be a chance of salvation for one of the trumps together with the master or his servant, it might depend on the one who has faith in Godot.

3.3.3 The tree:

The tree is the only sitting of the play, where Godot asks the trumps to wait for him:

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?

According to the Biblical religious context the tree was considered as the tree Jesus was crucified on, although some deny this claim saying that Jesus was killed on cross; but according to Apostle Peter Acts 5:30 “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree”, Acts 13:29 “And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre” (christianity.stackexchange.com: 2017).

The trumps can't be recognize ad Jesus, but as the two thieves crucified together with Christ, Estragon suggests hanging themselves on the tree as a reference to the crucifixion , then he refuses saying that: “(with effort). Gogo light-bough not break-Gogo dead. Didi heavy-bough break-Didi alone.” (Beckett: 10).

Brown in his book “*the Theater of Knowledge*” refers to the tree as the tree of life or to a willow and the figure of Judas¹⁰ (Liljeström: 11). Graver Lawrence suggests that: “the tree represents the so-called Judas Tree - the tree from which Judas Iscariot hung himself” (Lövgren: 09).

The tree may symbolize numerous potential outcomes, for example survival, change, life and death. In the first act it is barren without leaves that may represent death; while in the second act few leaves appeared, which may be a sign of life and hope and the end of the long waiting of the trumps.

3.3.4 Lucky's Monologue:

Lucky is chained with a rope, some compared this to Jesus when he was a prisoner in Roman, when “Judas turned in” (123HelpMe.com: 2007). The way the Roman treated Jesus after catching him and set him for crucifixion, is similar to how Estragon treats Lucky as he spited, cursed, and beat him.

Estragon wondered about Lucky's situation, he asks Pozzo: “Why he doesn't make himself comfortable” (Beckett: 24); Pozzo replays: “Perhaps I haven't got it quite

¹⁰ Judas Iscariot: one of the twelve original disciples of Jesus Christ, and son of Simon Iscariot. He is known for the betrayal of Jesus to the Sanhedrin for thirty silver coins (dictionary.com: 2017)

right. He wants to mollify me, so that I'll give up the idea of parting with him. No, that's not exactly it either" (24). One of the thieves when the crucifixion of Jesus asked him: "save yourself, why don't you? Come down off the cross if you are God's son" (Matthew: 26-40). But Jesus believes that he will die to awake people faith in God as it is mentioned in the Bible: "make disciples of all... teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you. And always know that I am with you" (Matthew: 28:18-20)

Though, the absurdity in *Waiting for Godot* gets its highest, when Pozzo asks his slave Lucky to think; and he starts throwing verbal chaos and nonsense words, C. Chadwick comments that this speech is "senseless torrent of words", "meaningless jumble of words" (Chadwick, 257).

Justin Keel in her article "*Waiting for Godot*" asserts that Lucky "was once an educated, capable person, considering his vocabulary and intimations of education" (69).

"Given the existence as uttered forth in the public works of Puncher and Wattmann..." (Beckett: 34)

First Lucky refers to the Academic Scholars: 'Puncher' and 'Wattmann', thus "The names Puncher and Wattman in reality suggest motormen -- Wattman being the streetcar conductor, Puncher the man who punches tickets" (Levitt: 54)

"...a personal God quaquaquaqua¹¹ with white beard quaquaquaqua outside time without extension who from the heights of divine apathia¹² divine athambia¹³ divine aphasia¹⁴ loves us dearly with some exceptions for reasons unknown but time will tell..." (Beckett: 34).

Lucky describes God as a personal, adding that he has a white bread (like Godot messenger described Godot); who has no feeling or concerns to his creators, and lost the

¹¹ qua: Latin for "in the function or capacity of," an expression often used in scholarly or legal works. The string of of "quas" create the onomatopoeic effect. What do they sound like?

¹² apathia: from Gk. a- ("without") + pathos ("emotion; feeling; suffering; passion"). Apathy; a lack of enthusiasm, interest, or concern.

¹³ Imperturbability, calm and unruffled self-assurance.

¹⁴ loss of ability to understand or express speech.

ability to communicate with this creators, but he loves them dearly yet he hates some for unknown reasons, and all this will be relieved with time.

“...Acacacademy of Anthropopometry of Essy-in-Possy of Testew and Cunard...” (Beckett: 34).

Then he uses the absurd words: Acacacademy of Anthropopometry of Essy-in-Possy is both excremental and sterile (esse = 'to be'; group = 'to be able'; i.e. in this setting, 'not to have the capacity to measure man' (Baziz: 26). Then he mentions and Testew, Cunard; Testew in French Testu, may mean Stubborn, while conard is merely a derivative of the vulgar term con, the female sex organ, and means “a stupid person” (Levitt:54).

The speech is about the relationship between God and man, the God Lucky speaks about gives no clear answers nor how he will acts, much like the Godot character of the play. He also point on different kind of progress, he may refer to salvation to be one of them. Beckett may also refers to the absurdity and complicity of language, as he used a mixture of language origins, he asserts words from Latin, French and others; which it is not understood by audience and students.

The monologue is long with rambling word salad, and does not have any apparent end; it is only stopped when Vladimir takes the hat back. Even though, the speech seems silly, but between its lines it carries significant value.

3.3.5 Hope in “*Waiting for Godot*”:

The characters of the play represent the modern man or the human being, as Vladimir refers when he said: “all mankind is us, whether we like it or not. Let us make the most of it, before it is too late! Let us represent worthily for once the foul brood to which a cruel fate consigned us! What do you say?” (Beckett: 72) Pozzo also speaks about generation: “Let us not then speak ill of our generation, it is not any unhappier than its predecessors” (Beckett: 25), he talks about unhappy generation; it might refer to the generation of the wars. When Vladimir says that the tree “must be dead”, Estragon answer: “no more weeping” like if they have cried allot before. (Beckett: 07)

The play starts with the physical suffer which may also refer to conditions of the WWII, where most people lost faith in God due to their suffer and misery; then Vladimir asserts a reference from the Bible about hope and faith, he says: “he last moment . . . (*He meditates.*) Hope deferred maketh the something sick, who said that?” (Beckett: 03), the proverb is “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life” (Christianity.com).

Hope is present in the play though several critics recognize it as pessimist one, hope is to expect better future. Though for Estragon there is no yesterday nor tomorrow, he lives and forget; he lives each day by itself, having no knowledge about time and no hope.

Vladimir on the other hand seems to be full of hope, he also gives hope to Estragon “Tomorrow everything will be better” (Beckett: 45). Although the friends lived together for more than fifty years in same conditions, they have different views and opinions; Samuel Johnson wrote: “hope is necessary in every condition... the miseries of poverty, sickness and captivity world without this comfort be insupportable” (Wayne: 67).

Gogo and Didi wait for Godot two days but he didn't come, but this waiting gives their life a purpose, something meaningful to do ‘waiting for Godot’; which makes them superior then the other character Pozzo and Lucky, whom have nothing to do, they live hopeless (Martinez: 23). Pozzo in the second act he confesses: “I don't remember having met anyone yesterday. But tomorrow I won't remember having met anyone today. So don't count on me to enlighten you.” (Beckett: 82), he is like Estragon has no notion of time; while Lucky according to his name he seems to be lucky, Colin Duckworth asked Beckett: "is Lucky so named because he has found his Godot? 11 Beckett replied: "I suppose he is lucky to have no more expectations. . ." (Levitt: 06)

There are several symbols that carry hope throughout the play; the appearance of the few leaves in the second act may significant hope and life for the trumps, the coming of Godot messenger in both acts means that Godot exist.

3.4 Atheism in “*Waiting for Godot*”:

During the ninetieth century people believed in constructing a real utopia, where they live together in love and peace; but the horror of the WWI, WWII, and the cold war destroyed this dream. After these events they found themselves in dark; they lost hope and their beliefs in existence of God, the most repeated question they carried where is God? if he exists why he forsakes us? (Shobeiri: 290).

Atheist Existential philosophers and absurdists like Fredrick Nietzsche, Jean-Paul Sarter, and Albert Camus carried these ideas claiming that there is no God, while religious philosophers declared that the existence of God is absurd, as it is pointed in the second chapter.

Beckett was regarded as an atheist during his last years, namely the years when he wrote "*Waiting for Godot*", as it was a consequence of the WWII suffering. In this play Beckett relieves the absurdity of human being and the conditions they lives in, where everything was uncertain. Unreliability became daily life task, people doubt everything even religion, or Christianity as Beckett point in.

Though; the use of Biblical allusions in this master piece is remarkable, some consider it as not a support to religion, but to mock it. "Beckett's usage of biblical allusions in his works, in fact, is a proof of absurdity of the humankind's beliefs in religion through the course of history on the one hand, which support the absurdity of existence on the other hand" (290).

Like when Estragon narrates the story of the two thieves just to pass the time; it may also refer to the Biblical stories Beckett's mother used to tell him when he was a child or he might read it as he used to keep the Bible near him.

In using religious allusions like the story of the two thieves together with Able and Cain, Beckett shows the graceless of God's judgments. Hence; one of the thieves was saved, while the other punished, although they were guilty for the same crime; Able and Cain submit the same offer, God accepted Able's and not Cain's. This can be an evidence on the graceless of Godot as well as he punishes to boy's brother.

At the end of each act Beckett leaves the audience in precariousness, he may come and he may not, all is left to chance; which is totally absurd leaving life of two persons to chance.

The scholar Günther Anders suggests that to say that the tramps are nihilists is not only incorrect, but the exact reverse of” what Beckett wants to show: “Vladimir and Estragon conclude from the fact of their existence that there must be something for which they are waiting; they are champions of the doctrine that life must have meaning even in a manifestly meaningless situation...What Beckett presents is not nihilism, but the inability of man to be a nihilist even in a situation of utter hopelessness. (Valentine: 137)

For Nietzsche “a nihilist is not one who believes in nothing, but one who abandons belief in this world in favor of another world that is idealized, fictitious, and the product of the mechanisms” (138), the trumps seems to leave the real world the live in, and stick in nowhere waiting for Godot to make their lives better then it is.

The tragic finale of the play, says Fiddes, comes in Act 2 when Pozzo returns as blind and helpless, and Lucky returns as mute: “In Act 2 Pozzo appears again, sadly changed. He is a wreck of his former self, blind no longer omniscient (he used to have ‘wonderful, wonderful, sight’). Lucky is dumb. The God of traditional metaphysics is dead to the modern mind.” (140) so, where is the personal God Lucky speaks about? And why none of them was saved? As they were both victimized.

Though the play was entitled “*Waiting for Godot*”; for Beckett Godot is not God and he has no intention to linked it to religion, his interest was in notion waiting or time namely in the present time not past nor future, “His existential perspective is grounded in the present: to exist is to live in the now, for the past is “the no longer” and the future is “the not yet” (144).

3.5 Conclusion

Beckett was raised in religious society, to be a typical protestant; though after anticipating and exploring the world, his spiritual beliefs come up to an end, as he denied the belonging to any religion.

These thought were mirrored in his literary works; mainly his famous work *Waiting for Godot*, which is full of religious stories and Biblical references. Hope is also depicted within several points in the play. Thus; the presence of absurdism and atheism can't be neglected, it might dominated the whole work as several scholars stated.

Waiting for Godot presents paradoxical issues; there is a possibility that the play presents religion, due to the fact that Beckett was protestant. Where there is a chance that the play significant atheism, as it portrays absurdism together with existentialism.

General conclusion:

Although *Waiting for Godot* was written in the 1950s by Samuel Beckett; it still regarded as an ambiguous work, and the questions about its main themes together with the identity of its characters left without an answer.

Some critics consider that Beckett reflected the issue of existence and Absurdity as he was one of the pillars of the theater of the absurd, and he rejected the traditional concepts of religion; others claim that it is religious due to the religious imagery within the play, referring to his theology.

The purpose of this article is not to give a complete view on this topic. But, its main aim is to juxtapose these views showing the main point of each one, setting an examples and allusions from Beckett's biography.

Waiting for Godot is play in two acts, which are similar, the only difference is the few leaves in the only sitting of the play, which may indicate hope or loss of time. Vladimir and Estragon wait for Godot pointlessly, whom might or might not exist; these two characters represent humanity in general, Didi is tied to Godot to gives him what he want, he portrays the religious man who trusts religious beliefs too guide him. While; Estragon sees that they must stop wasting time in waiting, he stands for the ideal existential figure who decided to construct a meaning for his life far from religion.

Pozzo who is mistaken for Godot twice; in the first act he seems powerful and taking his servant to sell him in the first act, in the second he is blind and helpless while his slave gone dumb. These two characters are an example of some people relation toward their religion; Pozzo is the atheist or nihilist, who has no notion of time, he lives without purpose in life. Lucky presents the religious man, who trusts his personal God.

Several scholars associated the play as Existential work, as the era it was written in was preoccupied with the question of existence. This philosophy denies that religion can construct meaning of life, giving the individual the chance to explore his purpose and meaning of his own life. *Waiting for Godot* reflects this existential view like the freedom

of individual to create his own existence. Uncertainty has the lion share in the play, everything is put in question; nothingness on the other hand was the opening passage of the play, and continual to be founded throughout the play. The play is in nowhere, though some critics took it for Paris, time is also ambiguous notion.

Religion was also presented within the play; the story of Jesus salvation, the two thieves, Cain and Able, goats and sheep, and the four gospels are clearly presented in the play; in addition to some references from the bible. Godot is the main characters is mainly considered as God, Lucky is taken for Jesus, Estragon and Vladimir are parallel to the thieves, the messenger and his brother story is similar to the one of Cain and Able.

Indeed, it is crucial to discover what the play really about; from one side it can be taken as an example of existentialism and atheism which dominate the era the play was written, and from the other side it may refer to people's lost of religion, and the need to catch up with it to make a purpose and a meaning to their life.

The figure of Godot is still the key of the play; his identity could reveal the main problematic *Waiting for Godot* is about, which may refer to Beckett's identity; which can serve as a potential research that explore Beckett identity through this play.

Appendix

Lucky: Given the existence as uttered forth in the public works of Puncher and Wattmann of a personal God quaquaquaqu with white beard quaquaquaqu outside time without extension who from the heights of divine apathia divine athambia divine aphasia loves us dearly with some exceptions for reasons unknown but time will tell and suffers like the divine Miranda with those who for reasons unknown but time will tell are plunged in torment plunged in fire whose fire flames if that continues and who can doubt it will fire the firmament that is to say blast hell to heaven so blue still and calm so calm with a calm which even though intermittent is better than nothing but not so fast and considering what is more that as a result of the labors left unfinished crowned by the Acacacademy of Anthropopometry of Essy-in-Possy of Testew and Cunard it is established beyond all doubt all other doubt than that which clings to the labors of men that as a result of the labors unfinished of Testew and Cunnard it is established as hereinafter but not so fast for reasons unknown that as a result of the public works of Puncher and Wattmann it is established beyond all doubt that in view of the labors of Fartov and Belcher left unfinished for reasons unknown of Testew and Cunard left unfinished it is established what many deny that man in Possy of Testew and Cunard that man in Essy that man in short that man in brief in spite of the strides of alimentation and defecation wastes and pines wastes and pines and concurrently simultaneously what is more for reasons unknown in spite of the strides of physical culture the practice of sports such as tennis football running cycling swimming flying floating riding gliding conating camogie skating tennis of all kinds dying flying sports of all sorts autumn summer winter winter tennis of all kinds hockey of all sorts penicillin and succedanea in a word I resume flying gliding golf over nine and eighteen holes tennis of all sorts in a word for reasons unknown in Feckham Peckham Fulham Clapham namely concurrently simultaneously what is more for reasons unknown but time will tell fades away I resume Fulham Clapham in a word the dead loss per head since the death of Bishop Berkeley being to the tune of one inch four ounce per head approximately by and large more or less to the nearest decimal good measure round figures stark naked in the stockinged feet in Connemara in a word for reasons unknown no matter what matter the facts are there and

considering what is more much more grave that in the light of the labors lost of Steinweg and Peterman it appears what is more much more grave that in the light the light the light of the labors lost of Steinweg and Peterman that in the plains in the mountains by the seas by the rivers running water running fire the air is the same and then the earth namely the air and then the earth in the great cold the great dark the air and the earth abode of stones in the great cold alas alas in the year of their Lord six hundred and something the air the earth the sea the earth abode of stones in the great deeps the great cold on sea on land and in the air I resume for reasons unknown in spite of the tennis the facts are there but time will tell I resume alas alas on on in short in fine on on abode of stones who can doubt it I resume but not so fast I resume the skull fading fading fading and concurrently simultaneously what is more for reasons unknown in spite of the tennis on on the beard the flames the tears the stones so blue so calm alas alas on on the skull the skull the skull the skull in Connemara in spite of the tennis the labors abandoned left unfinished graver still abode of stones in a word I resume alas alas abandoned unfinished the skull the skull in Connemara in spite of the tennis the skull alas the stones Cunard (*mêlée, final vociferations*) (Beckett: 34)

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