

Idiocy and Forlorn Features in Samuel Beckett's Play “*Waiting for Godot*”

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to express the idiocy and forlorn elements in Samuel Beckett's play '*Waiting for Godot*'. To achieve the goals of the research, it is necessary to investigate deeply a blend of comic and pathos involved in the play. These elements are: first, the idiocy which basically depends on the special language of the play, the pitiful and deplorable elements and the use of irony and satire. The play was written in 1949, translated into many languages and it is still performed in many countries all around the world. *Waiting for Godot* is hailed as one of the masterpieces of the theatre of absurd. With the manifestation of this play on the horizon there came a revolution in the theatre of the twentieth century that was to continue for a long time to come and influence many writers thereafter. Beckett shades light on the sociological and moralistic perspective with the tinge of humour and pathos. His excellent imagination and literary skill create an unforgettable imprint in the minds of his readers.

Keywords: Waiting for Godot, Absurd Drama, Forlorn, Idiocy, Comic and pathetic

1. Introduction

'The Theatre of the Absurd' is a term introduced by a very famous playwright, dramatist, journalist, and critic Martin Julius Esslin for the work of a number of playwrights, mostly written in the 1950s and 1960s. The term is derived from an essay by the French philosopher Albert Camus. In his *'Myth of Sisyphus'*, written in 1942, he first defined the human situation as basically preposterous, meaningless and absurd. The 'absurd' plays by Samuel Beckett, Arthur Adamov, Eugene Ionesco, Jean Genet, Harold Pinter and others all allocate the observation that man inhabits a universe with which he is out of key. Its meaning is indecipherable and his place within it is without purpose. He is confused, distressed and vaguely threatened.

Prior to evaluating the aim of the present study, I am going to discuss briefly the Modern Drama. The foundation of realistic drama was laid by a Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen. Realistic drama concerns itself with the people living in the period of technology; an era in which interactions are multifaceted and, theoretically better than at any time in history. This is an epoch of unexpected stress and possibility. Modern playwrights often struggle with these forces to give an image of life to the modern world. Ibsen has written many plays which deals with psychological exploration of emotionally and sexually driven individuals who become knotted in self destructive relationships. His most famous plays are called classics: *A Doll's House* (1879), *Ghosts* (1881), *The Wild Duck* (1884), *Hedda Gabler* (1890), and *The Master Builder* (1892).

By writing this play Beckett broke away with many rules of the traditional drama, and gave the world a chance as well as courage to think beyond the conventions that were being followed for such a long time. He gave the theatre wings to fly and explore other dimensions that were thought of unfeasible before. *Waiting for Godot* changed the way theatre was looked at. For the first time people realized that the hilarious and stupid looking routines and dialogues could have hidden within them profound grief and endless sufferings of humankind. The Godot has come to stay, even though he never comes throughout the play, now and then he keeps appearing on one stage or another in some part of the world and leaving the audience as amazed and puzzled as when the play was staged for the first time and has kept the people guessing who he is. Much has been said and written about this play and it commands the same attention up to date. The recognition that it commands several years after it was written is well summarized in the words of Handzelalts:

If theatre in the second half of the 20th century earned the designation "theatre of the absurd," this is to a considerable extent due to the unique experience of Beckett's two tramps. But the wonderful thing about them, which has kept them alive long after their creator died, is that they are so human - innocent, hurting, in need of each other, knowing deep inside that there is no point in waiting, because Godot will not come, and if he comes, it is not certain that it will be him. Yet they continue to wait, because that's life. (**Handzelalts, M. 2009**).

1.1 *Waiting for Godot*

The play opens with the two tramps waiting on a desolate road, standing under a leafless tree, while rest of the landscape depicted on the stage is totally barren. The characters are named as Vladimir and Estragon. Through their conversation we come to know that they are waiting for a man name Godot. Beckett has introduced an element of uncertainty in the play for the characters are not sure whether Godot will come or not. Meanwhile they pass the time by indulging into stupid and funny activities and conversing with each other sometimes on such trivial matters as carrot while sometimes on serious issues like suicide and the Bible. Then they are joined by two strangers, Lucky, the slave and Pozzo, the master. They kill time by listening to Lucky's babble and watching him dance. A messenger boy visits them and informs that Godot has postponed the meeting for the next day. The second act is a repetition of the first one only for the fact that Pozzo becomes blind and Lucky mute. The characters never remember things from the past for their memory fails them. The boy again visits them to deliver the message that Godot has further postponed the meeting as such the tramps are again left waiting endlessly to meet Godot, whose existence and arrival is doubtful. The playwright Jean Anouilh summarises the action of the play as:

‘Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it’s awful.’ This line spoken by one of the characters in the play, provides its best summary. *Godot* is a masterpiece that will cause despair for men in general and for playwrights in particular. I think that the opening night at the Theatre de Babylone is as important as the opening of Pirandello [*Six Characters in Search of an Author*] in Paris in 1923, presented by Pitoeff.

One can only raise one’s hat – a bowler to be sure, as in the play – and pray to heaven for a little talent. The greatness, the artful playing, a style – we are ‘somewhere’ in the theatre. The music-hall sketch of Pascal’s *Pensées* as played by the Fratellini clowns. (Jean, A. 1999).

Samuel Beckett originally wrote this play in French by the name *En attendant Godot* between the years 1948 and 1949. He himself translated it into English, his native language as *Waiting for Godot* with the sub-title *A tragicomedy in two acts*. The play was performed for the first time on January 5th 1953 at the Theatre De Baby lone, Paris. His work transformed the way theatre was and since then became a remarkable success with the audience whose response was mixed for some were bewildered by the performance, while others appreciated the comic spirit of the play which exhibits deep sufferings and trauma of human existence. The play kept on enjoying popularity of production from the different corners of the world. Bradby very aptly describes the extent of the play’s recognition:

In the course of early 1950’s, productions of the play took place in most European countries and in the USA. Godot became a kind of litmus test for the state of the theatre in each new place where was performed. It was understood (misunderstood) differently in different theatrical cultures. In countries as different as Spain and Yugoslavia it was banned as being subversive. In Florida it was advertised as ‘the laugh sensation of two continents’ but flopped,

whereas in California it made an astonishing impact on the prisoners of the San Quentin penitentiary. In Sarajevo under siege it had an important morale-boosting effect. (Bradby, D. 2001).

The work is famous as a play where ‘nothing happens twice’. It is one of the most celebrated works of the theatre of Absurd, a genre which believed that the world was deprived of religion or any ethical values, a world without God and divest of any meaning. As clear from the label given to the play as ‘absurd’ it is tumultuous, daffy and nonsensical, nowhere throughout the play the conformist unities of a traditional play have been followed. There is no proper construction of plot, comic characters whose dialogues are non-sequitur, farcical remarks. Its theme is inexplicable, and Beckett himself never made explicit what his play was about and left it to the onlookers and readers to interpret it. Beckett once asserted:

‘I produce an object. What people make of it is not my concern [...] I’d be quite incapable of writing a critical introduction to my own works.’ Furthermore, whenever directors and critics asked for explanations of *Godot*, he both side-stepped their questions and revealed his distrust of any kind of exegesis. Two examples will suffice here. To Alan Schneider’s question ‘Who or what does Godot mean?’, he replied, ‘If I knew, I would have said so in the play’; when Colin Duckworth suggested that the characters existed in a modern version of Dante’s Purgatory, he responded to the ‘proofs’ offered to him with a dismissive, if generous ‘Quite alien to me, but you’re welcome.’ As is now clearly established, allusions to Dante are present throughout his novels and plays, but Beckett’s position remained resolute; he wanted no part in the decoding process that haunts critical work, preferring to cling to his belief that: ‘The key word in my plays is “perhaps”’ (Worton, M. 1994).

When Beckett wrote the play in English he gave it a sub-title ‘*A Tragi-comedy in two acts*’. *Godot* undoubtedly consists of both the idiocy and forlorn elements suffused in a wonderful way that shows human affliction, the trauma of waiting in a world for a small ray of hope that never seems to be there. To this gray world of the two tramps Beckett gives a comic appearance through the foolish routines and dialogues of Didi and Gogo. Beneath these humorous situations lies deep emotional agony that makes this play absurd. This experience of absurdity in the words of Martin Esslin is truly what brings out the real colour of the play:

. . . it is not the content of the work, not *what* is said, that matters in a writer of Beckett’s stamp, but the *quality of the experience* that is communicated. To be in communication with a mind of such merciless integrity, of such uncompromising determination to face the stark reality of the human situation and to confront the worst without even being in danger of yielding to any of the superficial consolations that have clouded man’s self-awareness in the past; to be in contact with a human being utterly free from self-pity, utterly oblivious to the pitfalls of vanity or self-glorification, even that most venial complacency of all, the illusion of being able to lighten one’s anguish by sharing it with others ; to see a long figure, without hope of comfort, facing the great emptiness of

space and time without the possibility of miraculous rescue or salvation, in dignity, resolved to fulfil its obligation to express its own predicament—to partake of such courage and noble stoicism, however remotely, cannot but evoke a feeling of emotional excitement, exhilaration. (Martin, E. 2001).

2. A Blend of Idiocy and Forlorn Features

Waiting for Godot is a tale about the miserable condition of humankind, a world where people try to find the purpose of living and the meaning of life itself. The quest for finding answers to the innumerable questions about existence never ends and for most of the time the struggle to seek explanation to these unexplainable wringers of life ends up in frustration and helplessness. This futility of human endeavours is captured in this play which makes our existence so pathetic. This vulnerability of being is present right from the beginning of the play in Act I in the thwarting situation to the two main characters that are bound to spend their time in pointless activities and find it difficult to pass their time on earth.

Estragon, sitting on a low mound, is trying to take off his boot. He pulls at it with both hands, panting.

He gives up, exhausted, rests, tries again.

As before.

Enter Vladimir.

ESTRAGON:

(giving up again). Nothing to be done.

VLADIMIR:

(advancing with short, stiff strides, legs wide apart). I'm beginning to come round to that opinion. All my life I've tried to put it from me, saying Vladimir, be reasonable, you haven't yet tried everything. And I resumed the struggle. *(He broods, musing on the struggle. Turning to Estragon.)* So there you are again. (Cluman, H. 1962).

The tragic situation of the two tramps is explained by Lawrence Graver who finds the very beginning of the play as full of pathos and strangeness:

The increasing incongruity that marks this yoking of the physical and the spiritual, the low and the high, the comic and the serious intensifies the strangeness and in turn is intensified by everything else that occurs in the opening minutes of the play. When Vladimir acknowledges his friend's presence ('So there you are again'), Estragon answers 'Am I?', an amusing yet oddly ontological response that subverts the solidity of presence and further feeds our doubt about the 'reality' of this dramatic situation. (Graver, L. 2004)

Beckett's characters are trapped in a void; the torment of passing the day is unbearable and has to be filled with talks and routines to pass the time that seems to have stopped. They keep themselves engaged in verbal games abusing each other. To exist in the world in itself is a profound strain for the tramps. We can see how much suffering this dragging sense of time

causes to the characters, from Vladimir's joyous reaction to Lucky and Pozzo's arrival in act.2:

“We are no longer alone, waiting for the night, waiting for Godot, waiting for ... waiting. All evening we have struggled, unassisted. Now it's over. It's already to-morrow”. His happiness turns out to be premature, but Vladimir's words make clear how painful the duty of bondage of waiting for Godot (or night, or death, whichever comes first) really is. **(Gibbs, J.L.K. 1999).**

The existential musing of the writer has its reflection throughout the work. To the author everything has lost its significance whether be it time or survival, they have lost their worth. This sense of bereavement makes the life of the tramps gray and doleful. They are scared of being left alone without anyone to converse with; they frantically need each other's company. Silence is frightening for them as in the stillness of the atmosphere they can hear voices that are upsetting for them.

Both Vladimir and Estragon represent a piece of humanity spending their time waiting as waiting forms one of the cruxes of human life. Everyman everywhere is waiting for something or the other, some wish to come true, some dream to be materialized, some work to be done, some passion to be realised. Purpose may be different but waiting is the same. Most of our lives is spent in this manner with the realization that it is bringing us closer to death everyday as every hour gone is an hour more closer to end. Sylvain Zegel finds the two tramps indulged in meaningless activities keeping the metaphor of time lag alive throughout the play:

These two tramps, who represent all humanity, utter remarks that any one of us might utter. These two men are feeble and energetic, cowardly and courageous; they bicker, amuse themselves, are bored, speak to each other without understanding. They do all this to keep busy. To pass time. To live or to give themselves the illusion that they are living. They are certain of only one thing: they are waiting for Godot. Who is Godot? They don't know. And in any case, this myth hasn't the same form the same qualities, for each of them. It might be happiness, eternal life, the ideal and unattainable quest of all men-which they wait for and which gives them the strength to live on... **(Graver, L. & Federman, R. 2005).**

In the opinion of Sanford V. Sternlicht companionship can be really helpful in reducing the pain of survival to some extent as both Vladimir and Estragon need each other to keep suffering and still going on:

Waiting for Godot is simultaneously about the need for identity and the loss of it. Existing in a blighted landscape, Vladimir and Estragon seem like survivors of a catastrophic tragedy: a nuclear war, genocide, a world-jarring volcanic eruption, a meteor strike. They are humanity reduced to basics. That is the human condition. Beckett wants us to contemplate the smallness of our lives.

Perhaps only some human companionship can assuage the pain of existence.
(Sanford, V. S. 2005)

Although according to Beckett existence is tragic and human beings are suffering as they are tangled in the indestructible web woven by time Beckett gives his characters a comic colouring. He was inspired by the famous comic characters like Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. Though his works are regarded as bleak and full of pathos, he gives us a glint of comedy that is so essential a part of his plays. The play begins with the clownish behaviour of Estragon who is trying to take out his boots but could not succeed; he takes rest and then resumes his struggle with the boots. This seems to be one of the very common antics of the circus clowns:

A country road. A tree.

Evening.

Estragon, sitting on a low mound, is trying to take off his boot. He pulls at it with both hands, panting.

He gives up, exhausted, rests, tries again.

As before. (Cluman, H. 1962)

Estragon and Vladimir are two different aspects of humanity. Estragon represents the physical aspect and Vladimir typifies the mental aspect. While reading or watching the play it is decipherable that Vladimir is a philosophic character through whom the author articulates serious issues of salvation and the Bible etc. On the other hand Estragon is most of the time worried about the physical issues such as the problem with his foot. Another reason for the tramps to stay together is that they have lost their sense of time and memory which is quite a big tragedy of a human life. Estragon suffers with a faulty memory and is always depending on Vladimir to remind him about his past. There is nobody else who know them, in a way they define each other. Both of them make each other realize that they are alive, even though it is not a very celebrated existence.

Talking about sufferings, the characters in most of the plays of Samuel Beckett have one or other kind of physical paroxysm. Like all human beings they too languish with some kind of ailment which makes them more human to commiserate with them. Samuel Beckett himself throughout his life struggled with different bodily diseases till the end of his life, his whole family died in his lifetime fighting with afflictions that brought extreme tribulation to him. This sad truth of being, of physical torment is there. Estragon suffered with smelly swollen foot and Vladimir had problem of weak bladder. In the words of Kathryn W, this physical decay of the characters on Beckett's play makes the onlooker comprehend the inescapable failure of our existence:

For Beckett, to have physical being at all is to be in a sense handicapped, as one is trapped in the physical machine that is the body. Hence, the Cartesian dualism is highlighted, as the body is in fact a degenerating vehicle that houses the, all too often, imperfect mind. It is evident that Estragon suffers from sore feet, and when we first see him he is endeavouring to remove his boot, in an attempt to provide

relief from the pain and misery that he endures everyday from this affliction.[.....] Similarly Vladimir is also plagued with an irritating condition; the exact nature of his ailment is never actually specified, but we are certain that his problems are bladder related. Perhaps he suffers from some prostate problem. Therefore, due to his affliction, he experiences pain when passing urine; as a result he must refrain from laughing in an attempt to limit the number of times that he must run off to relieve himself. Beckett's description of the play as a tragi-comedy is clearly illustrated here, due to the fact that if Vladimir experiences pleasure and proceeds to laugh, his pleasure will ultimately lead to an encounter with pain. Vladimir, therefore, essentially must refrain from feelings of happiness or joy in an attempt to cope with his urinary problem. This urinary problem consequently has the same effect on Vladimir's life, as Estragon's problem has on his, in that it essentially dominates his life and shapes his entire existence physically, mentally and indeed emotionally. (White, K. 2009).

During their incessant wait for the arrival of Godot the tramps ponder on suicide twice. Through their dialogues we come to know the fact that suicide is not something unfamiliar to them. In the past Estragon tried to commit suicide by drowning himself but was saved by Vladimir. Beckett does not even allow his tramps the privilege to commit suicide and end their boredom and languish by embracing death. Death, the end of life and all its meaningless hassles is not to be granted to them so easily. They have to go through the torment of an endless wait. Gogo and Didi think of committing suicide but are afraid that if one of them is left alone, the situation would be more atrocious than death as death is the end of all kind of struggles but being left alone, without anyone to relate to, is like living in an emptiness which is excruciating. They want to make sure that both die so that none is left to bear the pain alone. Since there is no one else except these two in this barren landscape, if one helps the other to hang himself the other would be left alone with no one to help him out in ending his life.

ESTRAGON: Let's hang ourselves immediately!

VLADIMIR: From a bough? (*They go towards the tree.*)

I wouldn't trust it.

ESTRAGON: We can always try.

VLADIMIR: Go ahead.

ESTRAGON: After you.

VLADIMIR: No no, you first.

ESTRAGON: Why me?

VLADIMIR: You're lighter than I am.

ESTRAGON: Just so!

VLADIMIR: I don't understand.

ESTRAGON: Use your intelligence, can't you?

Vladimir uses his intelligence.

VLADIMIR: (*finally*). I remain in the dark.

ESTRAGON: This is how it is. (*He reflects.*) The bough . . .

the bough . . . (*Angrily.*) Use yourhead, can't you?

VLADIMIR: You're my only hope.

ESTRAGON: (*with effort*). Gogo light—bough not break—

Gogo dead. Didi heavy—bough break—Didi alone.

Whereas— (**Cluman, H. 1962**).

Besides Estragon and Vladimir there are two other characters in the play named Pozzo and Lucky. The relationship they share is that of a master and servant. Beckett here shows another dimension of human correlation, both of them are completely different from each other but still tied to each other. Lawrence Graver finds them completely different from Gogo and Didi having a totally diverse meaning in them:

From the moment they appear, the bellowing master and his shackled slave stand as contrasts to the impoverished other couple and seem to embody much that is absent in their personalities and situation. If Vladimir and Estragon are defined by their tenuousness – by what they and we don't know of their histories and purpose, by the nervous questions they ask and the answers denied to them—Pozzo and Lucky announce themselves immediately as substantial creatures of context and direction. The flamboyant master exudes force and authority; the encumbered servant fittingly displays a cowed submissiveness. 'I present myself: Pozzo . . . Made in God's image!' the whip-wielding figure says and then acts with an overbearing mix of callousness and civility that appears to reflect a thousand years of inherited rule. [.] The slave at the end of his rope fetches and carries on order, nearly swoons, but unlike Didi and Gogo never doubts his place. (**Graver, L. 2004**).

Both of them are tied to each other with a piece of rope, with one end tied around Lucky's neck and the other in Pozzo's hand to control him. The scene dispels pathos with Pozzo as a cruel tyrant treating his servant mercilessly. We are informed that Pozzo is going to sell Lucky at the Fair as he is no longer of any use to him. All the time when Pozzo is on the stage he keeps on abusing Lucky who never reacts to the mistreatment. The reason for submissive nature of Lucky can be summarized in the words of Pozzo who says that the only reason for Lucky's existence is to titillate his master.

POZZO: Ah! Why couldn't you say so before? Why he doesn't make himself comfortable? Let's try and get this clear. Has he not the right to? Certainly he has. It follows that he doesn't want to. There's reasoning for you. And why doesn't he want to? (*Pause.*) Gentlemen, the reason is this.

VLADIMIR: (*to Estragon*). Make a note of this.

POZZO: He wants to impress me, so that I'll keep him. (**Cluman, H. 1962**).

Just as Vladimir and Estragon need each other to journey through the miseries of life, Pozzo and Lucky also need each other. Pozzo needs Lucky to think for him, dance for him and to entertain him. Lucky in spite of his wretched condition never seems to complain. He also relies on Pozzo for his own existence. Like all human beings they too need companions, whether they like each other or not. Tormented at the hands of his cruel master Lucky still cannot imagine to get separated from him, and is seen crying at its possibility when Pozzo tells about his plan to sell him and get rid of him:

VLADIMIR: You want to get rid of him?

POZZO: I do. But instead of driving him away as I might have done, I mean instead of simply kicking him out on his arse, in the goodness of my heart I am bringing him to the fair, where I hope to get a good price for him. The truth is you can't drive such creatures away. The best thing would be to kill them.
Lucky weeps. (Cluman, H. 1962).

3. Loss of Significance of Time

Lucky and Pozzo are also symbolic of the loss of significance of time. In the first act Lucky is capable of speech and Pozzo in the best of his health. However, when they enter the stage in the second act, Lucky has turned dumb and Pozzo blind. The flow of time is lost somewhere for the arrogant master is now dependent on his slave to show him the direction. In Beckett's universe of World War II, time had absolutely lost its significance, hours and days were spent in waiting to receive some promising news. *Waiting for Godot* too echoes with this theme of meaninglessness of time:

POZZO: I woke up one fine day as blind as Fortune. (*Pause.*)
Sometimes I wonder if I'm not still asleep.

VLADIMIR: And when was that?

POZZO: I don't know.

VLADIMIR: But no later than yesterday—

POZZO: (*violently*). Don't question me! The blind
have no notion of time. The things of time are hidden from
them too. (Cluman, H. 1962).

Gurnow pens down in short a view of this lost sequence of time that brings a complete changeover in the situations of the master and the servant:

Beginning in the middle of the play, as the play begins in medias res, the image of the elderly Lucky symbolizes the euphoric mental plight that a lifetime of experience and learning may render and how exponentially quick physical human decline can consume that same individual. In the first act, Lucky is able to espouse words of wisdom upon most every topic with only the burden of repetition that is debatably due to loss of short-term memory.[.....] In the second act Lucky, as well Pozzo, have undergone drastic declines in their physical, and possibly mental, health. Lucky, though plausibly still capable of

heightened thought, is no longer able to speak while the once seemingly omnipotent, but now blind Pozzo -- whom Estragon and Vladimir at one time mistook for Godot -- has become yet another piece of baggage in which Lucky must transport in the pair's wonderings. (Gurnow, M. 2015).

Pozzo who used to be a brutal master is humanised after he suffers a poor fate and becomes blind. He realizes that however powerful a person thinks of himself to be, ultimately he is fiddled by an unknown power and that the time is the most powerful. The ultimate end of all human endeavours goes waste and is lost with death. Time loses its importance as we keep on hoping for change and when the change occurs the past seems to be much better. The element of time has an uncertainty in it. Pozzo's final and one of the most important speeches of the play brings out the briefness of the wheel of time and meaninglessness of life. Beckett, through his characters tells us that life is so short that it seems the gap between birth and death is just like a flash of light that blinks for a moment and then is lost forever. Time has wings and it flees so swiftly that we are unable to keep track of it. Day turns into night and night into day that death seems to be there at a small distance for us. Thus, life ends without hopes being fulfilled, without dreams being realised, without changes that we wait for to come and transform our lives.

POZZO: *(suddenly furious.)* Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time! It's abominable! When! When! One day, is that not enough for you, one day he went dumb, one day I went blind, one day we'll go deaf, one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you? *(Calmer.)* They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then its night once more. *(He jerks the rope.)* On!

Exeunt Pozzo and Lucky. Vladimir follows them to the edge of the stage, looks after them. The noise of falling, reinforced by mimic of Vladimir, announces that they are down again.

Silence. Vladimir goes towards Estragon, contemplates him a moment, then shakes him awake. (Cluman, H. 1962)

The tramps are dressed in baggy pants, indulge in cross-talks. They perform tricks of the circus clowns when they exchange their hats, struggle with the boots, and peer inside their hat and boot, as in Act I when Estragon asked Vladimir for help and he is busy with his hat:

VLADIMIR: Sometimes I feel it coming all the same. Then I go all queer. *(He takes off his hat, peers inside it, feels about inside it, shakes it, puts it on again.)* How shall I say? Relieved and at the same time . . . *(he searches for the word)* . . . appalled. *(With emphasis.)* AP-PALLED. *(He takes off his hat again, peers inside it.)* Funny. *(He knocks on the crown as though to dislodge a foreign body, peers into it again, puts it on again.)* Nothing to be done. *(Estragon with a supreme effort succeeds*

in pulling off his boot. He peers inside it, feels about inside it, turns it upside down, shakes it, looks on the ground to see if anything has fallen out, finds nothing, feels inside it again, staring sightlessly before him.) Well?

ESTRAGON: Nothing.

VLADIMIR: Show me.

ESTRAGON: There's nothing to show.

VLADIMIR: Try and put it on again. **(Cluman, H. 1962)**

As the sub-title of the play runs “*A Tragi-comedy*” Beckett has surely infused in the play both the elements of tragedy and comedy. It might be absurd to look for pure joy in tragic-comedy as each play tends to be a complete and unique experience in itself. Beckett provides his tramps and not to mention the master and servant duo of Pozzo and Lucky a shade of comedy even in the most desperate conditions as they are in, and in doing so he gives us some hope out in the most woebegone ambiance. The characters in the midst of this desolation keep their conversations going, even though if it is about feckless things of life. It brings to surface their courage and strength to keep going on. They find time to play games, at one point in the play Vladimir asks Estragon to play a game “We could play at Pozzo and Lucky” which is quite funny. When Pozzo and Lucky arrive for the first time and Pozzo orders him to think, when all three are fed up with his broken philosophical speech they try to snatch Lucky’s hat that is so humorous:

POZZO: His hat!

*Vladimir seizes Lucky's hat. Silence of Lucky.
He falls. Silence. Panting of the victors.*

ESTRAGON: Avenged!

Vladimir examines the hat, peers inside it.

POZZO: Give me that! *(He snatches the hat from Vladimir, throws it on the ground, tramples on it.)*

There's an end to his thinking! **(Cluman, H. 1962)**

Another whimsical scene in Act II portrays all the characters falling down on each other when Vladimir and Estragon are trying to help Pozzo in getting up. But the most momentous capricious scene takes place at the end of the play when jaded by life the two tramps again attempt suicide for the second time. In the absence of a strong rope to hang them Estragon takes out his belt and his trousers fall down to his ankles, they both try the strength of the belt and it breaks and they almost fall:

ESTRAGON: Wait, there's my belt.

VLADIMIR: It's too short.

ESTRAGON: You could hang onto my legs.

VLADIMIR: And who'd hang onto mine?

ESTRAGON: True.

VLADIMIR: Show me all the same. *(Estragon loosens the cord that holds up his trousers which, much too big for him, fall about his*

ankles. They look at the cord.) It might do in a pinch. But is it strong enough?

ESTRAGON: We'll soon see. Here.

They each take an end of the cord and pull. It breaks. They almost fall.

VLADIMIR: Not worth a curse. (Cluman, H. 1962)

4. Conclusion

To conclude, Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot* is full of idiocy and forlorn elements in a real sense. We find in his play the dark and distressing world of tragedy with streaks of vaudeville Charlie Chaplin humour. Through this play Beckett implies that even in the grimmest situations of our life we are subjects of amusement for others. Though the play has intermingling of the comic and the pathos, the bend is more towards the pathetic implications. While his comedy acts as a source of laughter for his spectators, it does not last for a long time. The world of his play is the world of human suffering and waiting. A wait that does not have any ending. Waiting for aspirations to be satisfied, for help to come, and most important of all for death to come and mesmerize them with sweet lullaby that sends them to take rest in eternal sleep that takes away from them all the anxieties and hassles of a painful and disagreeable existence.

The forlorn elements in his play are unlimited and cannot be tied to any one aspect of life. Sufferings have no bound; they rule the life and are inseparable part of human life on this earth. Going through the life history of Beckett, one observes that his life was full of pains and irrecoverable losses. He lost all those he adored. He himself was constantly suffering from one ailment or other, the source of physical agony that his characters go through. The world that he saw as a young man was a world torn down by a war. There was darkness all around with people killing each other for no reasons and waiting somewhere far away in some desolated land uncertain about their future, about the next coming moment, spending every hour of their life in anguish and despair. All these aspects of that world are abundantly present in his play: gloom, uncertainty, fear, poignancy, an unending inventory of fatalities and pain.

Beckett reaches out to the uttermost end of misery. His clowns are desperate to end their lives as this is the best way to put end to all the miseries of existence. Beckett denies this option to his characters, they do not have the ease to get rid of this pain, they will have to wait, to be tormented, and death will definitely come to them but slowly making their life miserable. To Beckett existence itself is an utmost torment, as we are denied what we want and bestowed with things that we would never like to have. Our fate is decided by an unknown entity that is most of the time indifferent towards our feeling and our pains. We suffer for no fault of our own, we wait and during the process of this waiting we degenerate mentally and physically.

Beckett was living in a sceptic time where it was difficult to give any meaning or purpose to life. Life had lost all its charms and temptations and had become unbearable with slight difference that make all the days identical. Beckett himself insisted that *Waiting for Godot* is designed to give artistic colour to 'the irrational state of unknowingness wherein we exist,

this mental weightlessness which is beyond reason'. Life does not provide us with any enticement to continue. He is inspired by the ideas of Arthur Schopenhauer who expressed his views of life as the most distrustful one:

...universal need, ceaseless cares, constant pressure, endless strife, compulsory activity, with extreme exertion of all the powers of body and mind...the tumult is indescribable. But the ultimate aim of it all, what is it? To sustain ephemeral and tormented individuals through a short span of time in the most fortunate case with endurable want and comparative freedom from pain, which however, is at once attended with ennui; then the reproduction of this race and its striving? In this evident disproportion between the trouble and the reward, the will to live appears to us from this point of view, if taken objectively, as a fool, or subjectively, as a delusion, seized by which everything living works with the utmost exertion of its strength for something that is of no value. But when we consider it more closely we shall find here also that it is rather a blind pressure, a tendency entirely without ground or motive.

Among these forlorn elements, Samuel Beckett brings out comicality and idiocy that is far more ironic and less joyful. Beckett can be funny in the midst of his chaotic world. He gave comedy a complete new approach. Through his humour we come face to face with absurdity of human situation. *Waiting for Godot* is surely a play which shows insanity and comic elements with tragedy of human life and black comedy that brings out the most humane part of us. Although his play seems to be pessimistic and difficult to interpret, yet it cannot be said to be completely devoid of hope and provide strength to keep going on and on.

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