

**THE PERCEPTION OF LIFE AND BEING IN SAMUEL BECKETT'S THREE
PLAYS: *WAITING FOR GODOT*, *ENDGAME* AND *HAPPY DAYS* IN THE LIGHT
OF EXISTENTIALISM**

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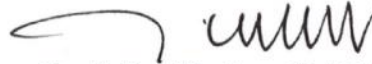


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ÖZET**YANILMA VE VAR OLMAK ALGISI SAMUEL BECKETT'İN ÜÇ OYUNU:*****GODOT'YU BEKLERKEN, OYUN SONU VE MUTLU GÜNLER*****VAROLUSÇULUK İNİN İNİNDAN**

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Bu tez Samuel Beckett'in *Godot'yu Beklerken, Oyun Sonu* ve *Mutlu Günler* oyunlarının bir analizini yapmaktadır. Yazarın varoluşçu kimliğinin üç oyunda da baskın olduğu görülmektedir. Beckett'in sahne ve dil kullanımı, karakter analizi ve çizimi onun varoluşçu felsefe ile arasında yakın benzerlikler olduğunu göstermektedir. İnsanın bu dünya üstündeki varlığının anlamsızlığı Beckett'in temel konusu olmuştur ve *Godot'yu Beklerken, Oyun Sonu* ve *Mutlu Günler* oyunlarında karakter, sahne ve kullanılan dil ile umutsuzluk, korku, fırlatıp atılma gibi varoluşçu kavramları kullanarak insan hayatının saçmalığını ve anlamsızlığını gözler önüne bastığı bir şekilde sermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Varoluşçuluk, Samuel Beckett, *Godot'yu Beklerken, Oyun Sonu, Mutlu Günler*.

ABSTRACT**THE PERCEPTION OF LIFE AND BEING IN SAMUEL BECKETT'S THREE
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This thesis tries to analyze and find traces of existentialism in three plays of Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame* and *Happy Days* in which, man is full of anxiety and despair with no meaning in life. Through a large number of oeuvre, an outstanding 20th century literary figure, Samuel Beckett devoted his life in delving deeply into the meaning of life and existence. It is observed that Beckett's existentialist identity is dominant mostly in these plays. His character analysis, stage and use of language clarify that Beckett had uncanny resemblances with Existentialist Philosophy. The meaninglessness of human being, anxiety, horror, liberty, the harbinger of death and finally consciousness of existing became Beckett's main theme. He brought out successfully the absurdity and meaninglessness of human life by using absurd concepts with characters, setting and his use of language in *Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame* and *Happy Days*.

Keywords: Existentialism, Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame*, *Happy Days*.

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LIST OF ABBRIVIATIONS

WFG	<i>Waiting For Godot</i>
E	<i>Endgame</i>
HD	<i>Happy Days</i>

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation attempts to analyse existential struggles of human being in perception of life and being in Samuel Beckett's three plays; *Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame* and *Happy Days*. An outstanding 20th century literary figure, Samuel Beckett contributed significantly to mentioning and discussing the existential problems of man through a large number of works. Being familiar with philosophical schools of thought and especially a proponent of existential philosophical movement, he was aware of this school of thought, characteristics and its underlying themes, such as liberty, anxiety, horror, consciousness of existing, and finally the harbinger of death. Beckett tries to demonstrate man's attempt in his query for his alienated self. Samuel Beckett's characterization, setting and use of language illustrate his tendency to the Existentialist Trend. Existential concepts such as hopelessness, loneliness of human being, anxiety and death are dominant themes in his plays. These concepts that Beckett use in his plays gained priority in Europe after the Second World War in the 20th century. Naturally, Beckett and the other leading names of Existentialism, portray man in despair and in struggle with life itself. It is also possible to mention the loss of faith in God. This makes man search and question his own being. That is, man needs his existence in order to constitute his being in the Existentialist world.

As a result of two important world wars and other serious events, human being has been led to investigate his inner world, self and moreover his own being. Under the negative life conditions, human notices the importance of himself and makes his own self as a guide in order to survive. Everything seems to turn into nothingness and in the presence of this danger, human being sees his inner self as a branch to hug in order to continue his life and also his being. While absurdity is covering up the whole life, human being must do something in order to be able to exist. The Existentialist writers like Sartre and Camus are interested in existence itself rather than contemplating the reason of being therefore the existentialist writers prize human values. Absurd and the Existentialist Trends are the results of a wide depression of European society. Beckett never interprets and explains his Works and also has no essay about the Theatre of the Absurd. To Beckett, art has no aim such as teaching anything or interpreting its real purpose. That is why Beckett has never interpreted his own Works. He wrote his plays with the same understanding. For Beckett, life is a theatre itself and human being has to

act it and, this great play has its own rules. Human must know them and should take part in accordance with them. On Beckett's stage, play is life and life is play.

Collapse of the values on which human being fell into a wide despair and hopelessness, cast a gloom on human being's happiness and peace. All these events inevitably affected the art. As a result, the Theatre of the Absurd emerged. When the First World War broke out, Beckett was about ten years old and he experienced the depressions of these years with the sensitivity of his youth. That is, he grew up under these negative conditions. Due to these disappointing distortions his life and point of view on life changed dramatically. His feelings and beliefs concerning religion and God, underwent a big change. Whereas people hoped the depression would end up with the end of the World War II, humanity plunged into a new depression, and human being's destiny, fate, coming into being, life, death, freedom became the main themes of the existentialist writers. According to them, the source of human being's unhappiness is the disharmony between human and his environment or nature. To them, human being has not willingly come to this world or with his own conscious, but he himself is responsible for all his changes and his life after coming to the world. Like his birth, his death is also beyond his control and it is an inevitable end.

Samuel Beckett's above-mentioned three plays are chosen for this research because of their affinities with man's banality of life and emptiness of his existence. These three plays are going to be discussed under the light of existentialism. Based on available resources the researcher is going to analyse techniques and elements of absurd theatre and existentialism school in these three plays of Beckett. The main hypothesis of this study tries to elaborate to what extent has Beckett succeeded in representing his existential philosophy. In order to achieve this goal the first chapter will address the political and historical events that prepared Absurd and Existential Trends. And, then the pioneering names of the Existentialist philosophy and their leading Works are given. The similarities between Samuel Beckett and important existentialists like J. P. Sartre, Camus, Kirkegaard and Nitzche are also analysed. In Chapter two, the techniques of the Absurd Theatre and absurd concepts regarding time, place, character, theme, decor, stage, costume and light are analysed. In Chapter three, *Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame* and *Happy Days*, are analysed in terms of setting, stage, concept of time, characterization and language. It is seen that in all three plays, Beckett portrays the situation of human being in the World, in which man is depicted as comfortless and unable to apprehend the universe. The characters in these plays are lonely men and left

alone with their inner worlds. In fact, their psychologies are broken and poor in health because they are in contact with the nature in which they live in. As a result of negative features of the world, they always meet problems during their lives. In conclusion it is hoped to lay the groundwork for further studying of Samuel Beckett.

CHAPTER ONE

EXISTENTIALISM AS A PHILOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT AND THEATRE OF ABSURD

1.1. Existentialism

Existentialism is a philosophical movement which focuses on the existence of human being by rejecting the absolute reasons. Surely, there are some important reasons that give way to the appearance of existentialism. Among these reasons, some of them are especially remarkable; the first one is that rational sciences cannot prove the absolute truth, and there is no absolute truth. The second one is objectivity and subjectivity, during the 18th century, nature and reason were given much more importance, objectivity was emphasized in a great deal. Due to industrial and technological developments, science was given extreme prominence. From the scientific viewpoint, man was also viewed as an object. Man converted to a slave and a machine in developing industrial society. Against this situation existentialism emerged as a protest against the society and emphasized the supremacy of individuality of man. The third and the most important one is losing of faith or belief in God, because of the world wars. At the end of the wars, especially World War II, human being witnessed the hard cruelty of people against each other. People lost all their values. In conclusion, there appeared a loss in belief in God because God is responsible for that cruelty; he did not help human on the earth. Consequently, human being began to question himself by searching his existence. Individualism is at the centre of Existential philosophy, man creates his own values and essence after coming to the world. That is, he firstly exists and then creates his own essence. In that process, man guides himself and finds his way on his own. The reason of his depression is the responsibility that he has against the different choices in the process of creating his own essence and values.

Existentialism has tried to answer some philosophical questions such as humanity's destiny, value of humanity and position of man on the Earth. The 20th century was a period full of uncertainties about identity. It was a period that human being was not aware of his position on earth. In that period, philosophers began to realize that life itself was not sufficient for existence. Human being was alienated from the society because of lack of communication. Man did not share anything with others. As a result, he became lonely and felt isolated from the society and even from himself.

He needed a new existence, which was full of peace. From the very beginning of creation philosophers tried to focus on man's problems not himself, but what has become a new obsession for new philosophers, is human being himself. In Existentialism, man is at the centre. According to this philosophy, man should battle with the doubt in his existence and with the personal traumas. He also should cope with the society, dogmas, the rules of general moral and order. Its main aim is man's finding himself. Existentialism claims that man, being under the pressure of the primitive tendencies and instincts comprehends the complexity of the world and realizes the absurdity of his existence.

1.2. Theatre of Absurd

The dictionary definition of 'absurd' is 'something that is completely stupid and unreasonable'. In a musical context it means out of harmony. However, the definition 'absurd' derives into the literature from the mid-twentieth-century-essay *Myth of Sisyphus* by the French philosopher and author Albert Camus. In 1962 Martin Esslin wrote his book on the topic, entitled *The Theatre of the Absurd*. In this book, Esslin mentions, the Romanian and French playwrights used Eugène Ionesco's definition for the 'absurd': "Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose. Cut off from his religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless" (Esslin, 1961: 23). In this book, Esslin sets out a reframing in light of misconceptions and confusions connected with the new type of theatre:

A public conditioned to an accepted convention tends to receive the impact of artistic experience through a filter of critical standards, of predetermined expectations and terms of reference, which is the natural result of the schooling of its taste and faculty of perception. This framework of values, admirably efficient in itself, produces only bewildering results when it is faced with a completely new and revolutionary convention – a tug of war ensues between impressions that have undoubtedly been received and critical preconceptions that clearly exclude the possibility that any such impressions could have been felt. Hence, the storms of frustration and indignation always caused by works in a new convention. (Esslin, 1961: 28).

The purpose of his book as he puts it is "to provide a framework of reference that will show the works of the Theatre of the Absurd within their own convention" (Ibid). To give a framework of reference, Esslin first explains what the difference between traditional theatre and the theatre of the absurd is:

If a good play must have a cleverly constructed story, these have no story or plot to speak of; if a good play is judged by subtlety of characterization and motivation, these are often without recognizable characters and present the audience with almost mechanical puppets; if a good play has to have a fully explained theme, which is neatly exposed and finally solved, these often have neither a beginning nor an end; if a good play is to hold the mirror up to nature and portray the manners and mannerism of the age in finely observed sketches, these seem often to be reflections of dreams and nightmares; if a good play relies on witty repartee and pointed dialogue, these often consist of incoherent babblings. (Esslin, 1961: 21, 22).

The Absurd Theatre impersonates the absurdity of human existence. Because of the failure of communication, man is insistently reminded that his existence in general is essentially absurd. Among the basic themes are loneliness in a Godless world, inability to communicate owing to the corruption of language, dehumanisation due to mass media, and devaluation of relations. Although the plays of the Absurd Theatre are serious due to the themes, they might contain extravagantly comic scenes to be able to depict a reality that is illogical, senseless and absurd. A world of futility, meaningless acts and the ruthless situation of human beings are also observed in absurd plays.

Somehow Existentialism resembles to the thought of absurd. Their world views are nearly the same. But Existentialism, unlike absurd, offers a solution for the problems of man in the world. Man is alone, hopeless, surrounded by the relentless time and has also no communication with the world. He is in an absurd world. In such a case, it is impossible to say that man exists. In order to exist, man has to solve all these problems. Thus, he has to face the fact that he is nothing. After accepting his nothingness, he begins to exist. In Existentialism, there is an effort or an action but, for absurd thought the same status is not valid. In absurd thought, man is totally hopeless and helpless. Each effort on behalf of existing is useless. Whatever man does, it is not enough to any harmony between himself and the world.

Modern people are within big depression and emotional upset which has not taken place in any period of human history. While this status composes the dramatic essence of the Absurd Theatre, man's alienation from himself and his environment, breaking off his relations with his inner world, family and society, loss of his personality; and as a result depending on these traumas, his loneliness, fear, anxious and confusion are reflected on the stage as primary features of the absurd plays. People are in a passive and insensitive mood because of their psychological decay. Contrast to the

heroes of the Traditional Theatre, the Absurd Theatre plays do not apply to a motion and search a solution for their situation in the society. The decay and the ignorance of modern people are presented on the stage.

At the centre of the Absurd Theatre, the audience watches motionless or immobile individual. The characters abstracted from social relations are dominant. The contrast or disharmony that individual composes with the world in a universal sense is the basic aim of the Absurd Theatre. According to this approach, especially the era in which we live vanishes the individual. Whereas the Absurd Theatre brings out the decay of man, it is stressed that the discontinuity between man and the world. The Absurd Theatre playwrights try to reflect the disharmony between man and the world in a universal sense like Beckett. For instance, Beckett's characters are not only the prototypes of poor being in modern age, but also the prototypes of the whole periods. In his plays, the characters are surrounded by the cruel world, but they do not apply to any solution in order to escape from that cruelty.

One of the most important demonstrations of the presence of characters in an absurd sense is the language used by characters in the absurd plays. The absurd plays fall outside the traditional structure with their dialogue order and speaking manner. The logical or sensible dialogues and speaking manner in the Traditional Theatre are different in the Absurd Theatre. They left their place to the divided and meaningless structures rather than producing meaning. The language is full of uncompleted sentences, trivial expressions and disconnected syntax. In addition, silence and the quietness mood created on the stage are the most important features of dialogue order and speaking mood in the absurd plays. According to the absurd playwrights, speaking of human with each other is not a communicative tool. It is just a gossip. Utterance and meaning do not match up each other in dialogues. On the contrary, it only helps hiding the meaning rather than expressing it therefore the dialogues point to a fake and hollow reality with the feature of inability of expressing the real meaning. On the other hand, silence and quietness are the results of human's lack of communication, alienation and meaninglessness. According to the structure of the Absurd Theatre, voice and appearance are placed first in reflecting meaninglessness and disharmony on the stage whereas utterance is second. In the Absurd Theatre, playwrights use images that do not have an identical answer just like in the nature in order to reflect the disharmony on the stage. Images do not resemble to the apparent reality, but they are coherent within themselves. Multi-faceted stage, simultaneous use of light, voice, motion, language and

other techniques are used in a totally different way compared to traditional plays. For instance, in Beckett's *Endgame*, the lives of two disabled or half people depicted with their outer world consisting of dustbins; in *Waiting for Godot*, the barren area with only a tree and in *Happy Days*, the woman buried up to her chest in a mound of earth.

Modern people must face difficult realities that are inexplicable. The disharmony and the conflict between human and the world, which is contrary to human nature have made the Absurd Theatre choose grotesque and black humour as a dramatic kind. Grotesque does not match up reality and logic. It is a style that creates humour out of ordinary by using strange, confusing and aggravated situations. On the other hand, black humour uses grotesque as a tool and it is a dramatic kind because of its reflection of a world filled with conflicts. Black humour is the ideal language of the Absurd Theatre. Tragic and comic are intermingled. This kind serves to the reflection of humorous side of man and tragic disharmony between man and the outer world at the same time. In absurd plays, the tragi-comedy is presented by the help of grotesque, kidding, satirizing, scorning techniques, confusion, foolishness, fearfulness and lack of trustworthiness of man. Black humour reflects man's comic and tragic life at the same time and shows the audience the meaningless, chaotic, inharmonious and hard sides of life with absurd plays. This status serves the aim and the function of the Absurd Theatre, and on the other side, it responds to the expectation of modern people from art.

In the Absurd Theatre, the audience always sees the characters abstracted from social relations, time, place and are prisoned in their own inner world. However, the psychologies of these men are not considered a problem. By means of human being's alienation, basic behaviours, fear, loneliness, lack of communication, monotonous and repeated lives, it is referred to the stable side of human existence. The Absurd Theatre playwrights, unlike epic and didactic playwrights aiming to get the audience to accept the certain thoughts, stay out of the dialogue between the audience and the stage. The problems, existing in man's inner world are the common problems waiting for an individual solution. The formal structure of absurd plays is based on the effect of nothingness or no action and on a big and deep ambiguity. Almost all these plays are empty or alienated. The feeling of curiosity of the audience gives its place to the understanding the whole play and a struggling with his personal reality and his own basic attitude resulting from the situation in this meaningless world. An absolute condemning is at issue because of the fact that a form of relation or situation that is known directly by the audience is not presented. Within the absurd plays, there is a life

or situation separated from reality. In such a case, words and language exist as a thing reflecting and coding the feeling of being in trouble and the repeating of stereotyped thoughts. It has lost its ability to express its functionality. The Absurd Theatre abstracts itself totally from the effects of the Traditional Theatre that based on the power of language. Language, the essence of writing and an indispensable expressing tool, has lost its relations with reality according to absurd approach and it is a product of a thought swimming in literary forms. Language, for the Absurd Theatre, means only a subject of parody and it cannot be used as an indirect explanation. While images and symbols gain meaning and value, language loses its function by turning into some meaningless forms. Certain human kinds appear on the stages such as a puppet whose ropes are not hidden; they are visible.



1-Theatre of the Absurd, 2007 by Jerry Staton.

In the Absurd Theatre, there is no image of wall between the audience and the stage. Moreover, stage is open to the audience. What is interesting is that the audience does not wait impatiently for the end of the play. On the contrary, the audience encounters the basic inevitable situation that does not change. Thus, the audience does not stay out of the play unlike the Traditional Theatre. A relation is constructed between the audience and the stage, depending on that, a mutual dialogue begins between them. The relation of the audience and the stage means the audience's turning into a

playwright in the Absurd Theatre. In increase rate of ambiguity, the power of meaning and comprehensiveness of the work will increase at the same rate as well. In absurd plays, ambiguity seems as a journey to the source of fact. Undoubtedly, the abstraction of individual in absurd plays does not make the audience create a meaning. The structure of plays, above all, is constructed according to human being's understanding of himself, life, world, order, ideas, conventional values, human relations and existence by developing a critical view heading to wholeness from individual point.

Is human sentenced to loneliness? Is that a loneliness or a destiny? Is there not any alternative solution? All these questions exist within the absurd plays. The responses to these questions are visible not only through fictional, alone, exaggerated and passive characters or themes without an action, but also in text's structure. In other words, the form or style of expression overlaps with the content of play. Absurd plays try to create a new theatre language that tries to find itself in its inner side by turning the audience into a playwright unlike the language in the Traditional Theatre. In the Traditional Theatre, the expression style is based on totally language. The Absurd theatre breaks all chains restricting human life. In the Absurd Theatre, the audience is a witness to a different struggling with the realities in human life in this world.

1.3. The Leading Existentialists and their Works

1.3.1. Jean Paul Sartre

Jean Paul Sartre is generally regarded as the father of Existentialist Philosophy. Both in his literary works such as novels and plays, and also in his non-literary works in philosophy, he had begun to question "being" and sought the place of human on the earth. Human values had been degenerated. As a result of this, language had become a non-functional tool. Man's opinions had been affected greatly. It was too difficult for human to communicate with each other through such a tool. Thus, people become alone day by day unconsciously. However, they did not want this loneliness, they were plunged into their loneliness. Therefore, absurd had taken its place at the bottom of human life and Sartre had already thought that human must accept life has no absolute meaning.

According to Sartre, human conscious is nothing. It is a space in being and always renews itself. Man is on the way that he recreates himself according to his own choices willingly or unwillingly. A man has no simple or fix essence. He is not like a stone and unchangeable. Man is obliged to search his own individualism until the end because he is never going to be sure of what he knows. There is no absolute meaning in

life and man is necessarily expected to create his own meaning and values. Man is absolutely alone while attributing his own meaning to life and shaping his values. Therefore, man is thrown into the world. “We are left alone, without excuse” (Sartre, 1957: 34). Furthermore, man has no control over this.

In contrast to the Aristotelian hypothesis that essence precedes existence and in the world man exists to accomplish a purpose, the Sartrean existentialism argues that man has no scheduled purpose or meaning. Rather, humans define themselves because their individual lives come into being as a response to the challenges proposed by their existence in the world. As Sartre states, “life has no meaning *a priori*, before you come alive, life is nothing” (Sartre, 1957: 49). Thus, life has no deep-seated meaning or purpose unless man creates it himself.

Subjectivity over objectivity is another basic theme of Sartre’s existentialism philosophy. The basic point is that one makes himself what he is through his free choices, rather than by being what he is. Sartre explains what subjectivity means according to existentialists and states, “Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. Such is the first principle of existentialism. It is also what is called subjectivity” (Sartre, 1956: 15). There is nothing objective about what a human being is therefore everything starts from the inside, from the side of the man or subject. As Sartre points out in *Existentialism And Humanism*, “subjectivity must be the starting point”. “In any case existentialism, in our sense of the world, is a doctrine that does render human life possible; a doctrine, also, which affirms that every truth and every action imply both an environment and a human subjectivity” (Sartre, 1948: 24). On the other hand, an argument against subjectivity comes to the surface when the subjectivity of the foundation of an action is thought to preclude objectivity and universality. In response, Sartre claims that subjectivity does not degrade human beings; on the contrary, it gives man dignity for two reasons. One is that subjectivity is uniquely owned by humans. The other is that, if man makes himself what he thinks he ought to be, and then he is making himself in accordance with what he thinks a human being ought to be. In other words, in making choices, human beings are also choosing what is good for all. For example, if one chooses a monogamous type of marriage, then he chooses monogamy as the type which ought to be good for all humans. For Sartre, then, a choice made is a choice that involves all humanity when one assumes responsibility for that particular choice. Consequently, subjectivity is the part of human nature which

provides each human being with the ability to understand another man's individual experience as if he himself possessed the same.

1.3.2. Albert Camus

Albert Camus, a French writer from Algeria, was famous for his concise, yet deep, literary pieces. In addition to his novels, essays and plays, Camus was a journalist as well. His philosophy, which is described in his essay, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, centers around the absurdity of the human condition. Camus was labeled as an existentialist, but rejected the title. To understand Camus' obsession that life is absurd and meaningless and yet still worth living, one must read his philosophical writings, particularly *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1941). Sisyphus, King of Corinth, put death in chains for which deed the gods punished him by forcing him to roll a massive boulder to the top of a mountain, from where the boulder rolled down and compelling Sisyphus to begin the task all over again. Such work of Camus represented the futility and meaninglessness of human being.

In Camus', *The Myth of Sisyphus*, man is represented as having a "wild longing for clarity." (Camus, 1942: 445) That which seemed clear has turned out to highlight one's ignorance and gives one "nostalgia" for meaning, understanding, and clarity. This "nostalgia" for meaning consumes one's existence and the disappointment when no meaning is found, leads one to ask the question of suicide. As suicide can be thought of the ultimate conclusion to a meaningless life, Camus would respond by claiming that suicide is an attempt to escape from the consciousness of absurdity. It is similar to his concept of philosophical suicide, in that one attempts to find meaning in life, while disregarding or suppressing its obvious meaninglessness. In this lies a contradiction that can be seen also with "plain suicide." One claims to have found meaning (death) after asserting life's meaninglessness. If the search for meaning leads one to discover the meaninglessness of existence, no kind of meaning can be found. The only "solution" to this kind of discovery is maintaining consciousness of it. "Living is keeping the absurd alive. Keeping it alive is, above all, contemplating it." (Camus, 1942: 479).

Nothing else makes any sense, therefore why not devote oneself to something that could make it all worth while. To Camus, when one realizes that the world does not match up to one's conceptions and ideas about it, the problem of absurdity arises. With the death of God and one's realization of one's unavoidable ignorance of the world makes the "feeling of the absurd become clear and definite." (Camus, 1942: 455). As already mentioned, Camus' response to philosophical suicide is that it is an "escape"

from the absurd and that the “struggle is eluded.” The basic question is “Is it worth living?”. According to Camus, man must be aware of the absurdity and meaninglessness of his existence and must give a meaning to his life. This means that Camus portrays an image of life as a Sisyphean struggle. He thus, argues that given life’s absurdity, the universe is devoid of purpose and meaning, including all human endeavours or struggles so long as human beings expend all energy pushing or struggling against futility or frustration. The germane question now is: what precisely makes up the futility or frustration that renders human life and existence purposeless and absurd? According to Camus, it is the depressing existential problems of man, namely anguish, suffering, sickness, disease, death, anxiety, fear, uncertainty; all of which conspire to render human existence meaningless and opaque. From his rendering, living the absurd means a total lack of hope, a permanent rejection and a conscious dissatisfaction. (Camus, 1942: 23).

In effect, therefore, a general understanding of Camus’ philosophy is that which identifies its emphasis on absurdity and meaninglessness of the universe with an advocacy of despair. Yet, Camus’ rationalization in this regard is in the contrary. According to him, living the absurd is not a license for despair, neither is it a justifiable reason for suicide. In other words, to say that life is absurd and meaningless in Camus’ lexicon is not an expressive permission to hold or conclude that life is not worth living: Hitherto, and it has not been wasted effort, people have played on words and pretended to believe that refusing to grant a meaning to life necessarily lead to declaring that it is not worth living. (Camus, 1942: 7)

By this Camus meant to say that “whether life has to have a meaning to be lived is not the basic question, but that it will be lived the better if it has no meaning. The consequence is that human life or existence consists in keeping the absurd alive and to keep it alive is above all contemplating it.” (Camus, 1942: 39-40) In fact, Camus identified and examined some possible responses or options to the predicament of the absurd, hence life is meaninglessness.



2- Sisyphus, 1996 by Von Stuck.

1.3.3. Soren Aabye Kierkegaard

Soren Aabye Kierkegaard was a profound and prolific writer in the Danish "golden age" of intellectual and artistic activity. He is known as the founder of modern existentialism. His works cross the boundaries of philosophy, theology, psychology, literary criticism, devotional literature and fiction. His oeuvre range from "fictional writings to philosophical studies to religious rhapsodies to bitter satirical diatribes" (Popkin and Stroll, 1993: 303). Kierkegaard was hardly known outside his home-land in Copenhagen. However, upon the translation of his works in French, German, and English, Kierkegaard's ideas became significant and prevalent nearly a century after his death. Subsequent existentialist writers had been influenced greatly by Kierkegaard's concepts and terms.

Kierkegaard's writings reflect his philosophical argument for his view of human existence. He established a distinction between existence and "real existence". Along with many of his basic concepts, this resulted from his view of Christian tradition. He related this distinction to the difference between admiring Christianity from a distance, talking and acting like a Christian, to really being or existing as a Christian.

Kierkegaard felt that to exist is to struggle and act in the world of men. His basic idea is that personal existence cannot be comprehended in a system. His concept is based upon pure assumption, as no one is aware of what the world in its completed form will be. Kierkegaard follows that no one can know his place or his purpose, but that each person must choose, irrationally, the direction of his own existence.

Kierkegaard declares "Truth is subjectivity" and that "All essential knowledge relates to existence or only such knowledge as has an essential relationship to existence is essential knowledge." (Wiener, 1973: 189) in other words, subjective illusions are true, but that truth is only meaningful as it appears to a personal subject. Kierkegaard's meaning of the word "existence" results from his use of it in his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. He establishes the fundamental idea that each person exists and has a limited amount of time to choose and to make the decisions which matter to so much to him. In this short time, each person has urgent decisions to make and has the freedom to make them. However, this freedom may be the source of a person's anguish, as there can be found no certainty upon which these choices are made. His concepts on truth and subjectivity and personal freedom are the basis for his religious outlook. A very religious man, Kierkegaard found himself having to make choices before God with no possibility of knowing whether the outcome of those choices would be his salvation or damnation. Since there was no way of proving God's existence as an object, one can only accept a belief, irrationally and blindly that there is some agent called "God" who will affect one's illumination. Thus, religion can only be determined for each individual by a "leap" of faith. In his diary, Kierkegaard wrote, "When a concrete individual lacks faith, then neither does God exist, nor is God present, albeit God, eternally understood, is eternal." (Wiener, 1973: 192) therefore, each person has the freedom to choose a faith, and the freedom to choose the determining factors for this option.

In the sense of Kierkegaardian thought, "Existentialism is a rejection of all purely abstract thinking, of a purely logical or scientific philosophy; in short, a rejection of the absolute reason" (Roubiczek, 1967: 10). Instead, Existentialism, in its fundamental and original meaning, requires connecting philosophy with the individual's own life and experience. It attempts to be able to be lived by individuals rather than being mere accumulations of speculations. That is to say, for Kierkegaard, the personal experience turns out to be real. For example, what an individual knows is not regarded as of the external world, but it is accepted as the inner knowledge of his or her own experience.

2.3.1. Sartre, Camus, and Beckett

Absurd Theatre deals with the absurdity of man in the world, not arguing of man's absurdity. It merely displays his situation and there is no comment about it. What differs Absurd Theatre from the Existentialist Theatre is its effort in forming a coherence between its content and shape. Absurd theatre playwrights and Beckett have significant resemblances about their themes. Beckett's interest shifts to the conscious of individual. On the other hand, for Sartre, individual is a center, but he is not free to control himself and he is dependent. Individual always dreams about communicating with people, but that never happens. Beckett wishes to believe in an excess being, which is God. When he failed, he gave importance to the closed worlds of people. *Waiting for Godot* dramatizes effectively two basic human relations; the relation between friend and comrade and the relation of gentleman and slave. Beckett shows indirectly that the simple satisfactory relation is the relation of friend and comrade. Human cannot put up with life on his own, but if he shares his suffering from others, he can endure it.

On the other hand, Sartre sees the personal faithfulness among people as a kind of war. In fact, this relation is only a weak balance even in the best occasion. In his works, there is a sense of deficient closeness. Beckett's themes are simple and the themes are followed by other existential writers as well. God is dominant. Although he notices the negative feelings in God, he was always interested in God. On the contrary Beckett derides with religion and theology because it has been formed by people therefore it is absurd and comic. He also likens God to a tyrant God which tyrannizes people secretly. Godot, in *Waiting for Godot* was drawn according to this image and he tyrannized Beckett's heroes. To him, God is cruel and arbitrary. In *Waiting for Godot*, Vladimir thinks that one of the thieves is saved. On the other hand, Christ is the only saver for people. He also does not know why he has deserved, what he has lived. He is on the side of people, but he has been deceived and has suffered. What we only know is we are sentenced to death. This is the only fact. Everything said to temper it or every effort is artificial. Beckett is pessimistic about life, but he has not lost his belief and hope completely for human. In spite of all efforts of subordination, his heroes continue to struggle with tyrants. Beckett's reviews also give many hints what he thinks about his own art and art of other artists. According to Beckett, the aim of art should not be clarifying any suspect. The aim of art is not to solve the problems but to think about the problems. The same is valid for criticism therefore he does not explain anything for the benefit of reader. Beckett is the first writer abolishing the hero of the novel and

highlighting the ordinary man. Moreover, Sartre abolishes plot and the technique of novel depends on the flow of life not having a definite beginning and an end. To Sartre, there is no character anyway. They feel into a trap like us. He tries to tell how characters deceive themselves. For this, he uses “inner monologue”. Beckett also prefers the same techniques in his novels. In Beckett’s heroes, the first notable thing is their limitless in ordering. The mental power of his characters are weak. This does not mean that they are irrational or they are deprived of the ability to understand. Mostly they are profound men but their profundity is primitive or is not developed. First of all, they are interested in being and existence. They deal with the question of “whether I am or not?”. Beckett’s hero longs for existing. The concept of being surprises and frightens him because he is not sure whether he exists or not.

Although Beckett’s characters believe that life is not worth living, the structure of individualism, the world, God and existence are their primary interests. Existentialist philosophy has two concepts. The first one is being and the other one is freedom. Beckett’s heroes are in a brave, but null search because at the end, they cannot be free and moreover they become scrappy. His characters, unlike Sartre and Camus’ characters, rarely take important decisions. They speak in the form of monologues being full of existentialist approaches. Existentialist thought is never out of their mind. They analyze the results which are illogical. Characters emerge without any reason and effect; place, time and season are portrayed in the gaps or intervals which are irrelevant to point. Monologues get more anxious distressing form gradually. They are partly complex. Even though characters in Beckett’s works insist on their disabilities and illiteracy, they never give up searching the supernatural meaning of thoughts such as individualism, the world and God. In fact, this is a hopeless survey. An existentialist choice is not pointed at issue. There could be a meeting with other one by an accident. At the end, the only thing wanted to attain is silence.

In *Waiting for Godot*, there is an escapism from the hopeless situation of human when characters encounter with the hope of salvation. Man is obliged to encounter with his doomed situation on the earth and at the end of this process he is obliged to recreate himself by means of nothingness, freedom and consequent choices. To sum up, Sartre and Camus by their oeuvre deeply affected Beckett to a great deal.

CHAPTER TWO

ELEMENTS AND TECHNIQUES IN ABSURD THEATRE

2.1. Time

The Absurd Theatre, being averse to the Traditional Theatre from any aspect, continues this contrary in respect of time. It has lost its meaning in Absurd Theatre Time changes its main function. A certain time is never given to the audience.

While the play with a linear plot describes a development in time, in a dramatic form that presents a concretized poetic image the play's extension in time is purely incidental. Expressing an *intuition in depth*, it should ideally be apprehended in *a single moment*, and only because it is physically impossible to present so complex an image in an instant does it have to be spread over a period of time. The formal structure of such a play is, therefore, merely a device to express a complex total image by unfolding it in a sequence of interacting elements. (Esslin, 1961: 394).

The Absurd Theatre has no certain rules like other kinds of theatre. For the concept of time, in the Absurd Theatre, the same ambiguity is current. The Absurd Theatre's audience does not perceive a certain time during an absurd play. One of the remarkable features of the Absurd Theatre characters is their deprivation of the concept of time. The concept of time is foggy in the Absurd Theatre. An incoherence about time is extremely dominant and it is not possible to discuss about a certain time. It only gives harm to human and changes everything in his life. What is strange is that human being does not notice that harm. At the end, it gives an end to human's life.

In absurd plays, past is remembered hard; future, on the other hand, is full of obscurity. In fact, the absurd characters have no past and no future; they are always out of time. Past, present and future in Absurd Theatre are intermingled. The present does not seem to have a fixed beginning or end and the Absurd Theatre seems to hold its audience in a kind of limbo. It would seem that we cannot control time, and the senselessness of time suggests that it is pointless to attempt to stop its passage, past and present are the same. Human being repeats his routines every day. Since meaninglessness lies at the base of the Absurd Theatre, the characters have no anxiety in order to give a meaning to each day. Briefly, past and present have no difference. Man tries to cope with time every day. He does not spend his energy in order to make it meaningful. He spends his time talking or stop talking and by doing that, he waits for

the end. Time passes, we age, become sick, and one day we eventually die; the truth is that time stops us. Therefore, no matter how hard we try to succeed in our lives, all our achievements are buried with us as time survives unchanged “In an instant all will vanish and we’ll be alone once more, in the midst of nothingness” (WFG 52).

In absurd plays, time is so slow that it consists of only a night and a day like *Waiting for Godot*, time that is commented as a single day may be too many long years. But the audience cannot observe a clear evidence of this fact. As Vladimir says “Tomorrow everything will be better” (WFG 34), because the boy said to them “Godot was sure to come to-morrow” (Ibid). Time could be identified as another major character in the play, since the tramps have nothing else to do in their lives, but wait for Godot. In fact, the idea behind the waiting is that letting time pass on its own, instead of using it, is harmless. Indeed, if we do not like the present moment, the only thing we have to do is waiting. For example, if we do not like the winter time, then we only have to wait for summer, and as we are waiting, we can look forward to it by fantasizing what a wonderful summer it will be. In another play by Beckett, *Happy Days*, Winnie spends her time by dreaming happy days will come soon. In spite of all her hopeless conditions, she never gives up dreaming.

2.2. Place

In Absurd plays, the stage is nearly empty. This situation results from the emptiness of the world itself. The world itself is an empty and meaningless place to survive. The stage in the absurd plays must reflect the same emptiness. In absurd plays, the place may be a country road, like in *Waiting For Godot*, or just a room filled with only an armchair, like in *Endgame*. The stage is too simple and symmetric in the Absurd Theatre. What is important is the psychology of characters, not the stage itself. The attention of the audience is attracted by the characters’ inner worlds. Absurd Theatre playwrights avoid concentrating on the details such as stage or decor. They do not want to disturb the attention of the audience. In other words, in Absurd Theatre, the place of the play is like a reflection of characters’ inner worlds.

2.3. Character

In Absurd Theatre, man and his psychology are at the centre. The inner world of the characters are emphasized. Their thoughts have lived a big change because of the wars and other important events such as Industrial Revolution in the 19th and 20th centuries. Results of these important events have affected human’s attitude. Human being’s thought has changed negatively. The audience sees pessimistic, anxious and

fearful characters on the stage. Psychologies of the characters are emphasized rather than their outer world. Characters are very strong or too weak and dependable to each other. They try to prove their existence to themselves. Some of them do this by speaking or by only waiting. Man, in the 20th century, is in a big depression and the feeling of emptiness covers him. The Absurd Theatre playwrights reflect the psychology of the 20th century's man by the use of characters therefore, because of the results and effects of experienced world wars, human being has become alone, anxious and hopeless. There is no relation between him and the society. Moreover, he has begun to alienate from himself and his environment and at the end he has lost his all identity. All these are features of the Absurd Theatre characters. They are both passive and insensitive because of their psychological decay. Another remarkable feature of characters in Absurd Theatre is that they do not try to find a solution to their problems. The modern people's decadence is reflected on the stage.

There is a passive man at the centre of the Absurd Theatre. They abstract themselves from the society. The main aim of this kind of theatre is the contrast between human being and the world in a universal meaning. According to this approach, especially the era in which we live, abolishes the individual and this process is represented on the stage. In fact, nearly all characters in Absurd Theatre are like a part of man's universal appearance. Man is a toy of the world and he does not depend on time and place. In Absurd plays, the characters are the prototypes of poor man in all ages.

All in all, The characters are only exercising particular acts and words repeatedly, like Sisyphus rolling a rock up and down. Therefore, the characters are there on the stage to mirror the futility of man's existence.

2.4. Theme

In Absurd Theatre, the main theme is the meaningless and absurdity of human situation. Its essence is the contrast between human and earth. Man's mortality, the meaninglessness of life, alienation, lack of communication, ignorance, the distrust world filled with fear and anxious are among the main themes of the Absurd Theatre. Man is at the centre of the Absurd Theatre plays. All themes taken in hand serve only the dramatic essence. The main purpose of the Absurd Theatre is a strong reflection of human situation. For instance, within a play whose theme is lack of communication a solution is not searched for that problem. It is human's fate. This means that Absurd Theatre plays reflect a human situation. They do not aim to find any solution or an

action against this situation. Almost in every absurd play, it is stressed that human being is mortal and life is absurd in any way. In such a case, living and trying to get something meaningful in that life is meaningless. Death approaches man step by step in absurd plays like in Beckett's *Happy Days*. The main character, Winnie, is buried into the mound of earth day by day. Life is like a prison between birth and death. The meaninglessness of life is another pioneering theme commonly stressed. According to the Absurd Theatre, life is meaningless and absurd. Moreover, the burden of this life is also meaningless and rather heavy. In order to carry this burden of life, man must console himself. In other words, absurd plays are full of characters who are pressed between life and death.

Alienation and lack of communication can be shown among the themes of the Absurd Theatre. These two concepts depend on each other directly and there is a cause and effect relation between them. If one exists, the other one also exists. If there is not one of them, the other one cannot be mentioned. It can be concluded that alienation consists of three parts. Firstly, man's alienation from himself, and then from other people and the last one is his alienation from the world. Human being is alone within the mass of problems related to individual, social and natural relations. These mentioned problems are without a solution. The relationships of human being with each other and with outer world are only illusions, artificial and deceitful. A communication in a real sense cannot be mentioned because everyone has a different identity and these different identities are never identified with each other neither at a specific time nor at a specific place. Being different means being foreign to others. Briefly, man's non-reflection to other causes his alienation from himself. In the Absurd Theatre, alienation and the lack of communication are at the centre. They exist nearly in all absurd plays.

Another theme of the Absurd Theatre is the distrustfulness of the world. The world is full of unexpressed and unknown chaos. Man, thrown into this world, does not know what to do at the centre of this chaos. He has the conscious of being face to face with a threat and at the same time being alone. The world always threatens man. Living in this world means cuddling up with danger. Man desires to escape from the world filled with the feelings of fear, anxious and distrustfulness. But this is not a thing that he can decide on his own. Finally, the themes of the Absurd Theatre are very rich and colourful. All conditions causing disharmony between human and the world take place in the absurd plays. The monotony of life, the mortality of man, his fears and anxious,

lack of communication, alienation, religious, ethic, political and cultural differences in the absurd plays affect each other.

Consequently, it can be commented that in the plays of the Absurd Theatre the relationships among the characters have lost their values and meanings. Themes of alienation and lack of communication make people become ignorance to each other. On the other hand, it also causes that man cannot understand other people. As a result of this situation, exhausting relations have emerged and language has become a tool serving to the shadowing of the lack of communication. It has lost its function which provides the communication among people.

2.5. Stage

A theatre play is expressed partly by some parts of stage. One of these parts is the decor. In Traditional Theatre, decor gives an idea to its audience about the play. It is explicit where the play's place is and what its time is. Play is perceived through what is given on the stage and this states the importance of decor, composing the first impression on the audience, in terms of Traditional Theatre. In Absurd Theatre, decor perceived in a concrete way, has an important place. It is predicated on expressing the place where man lives and the reality by means of decor. Although this importance, decor is poor and simple in the Absurd Theatre. Life is itself poor and simple for human being, who is perishing, there is no place or time. Decor should reflect this absence according to the approach of the Absurd Theatre. Contrast to Traditional Theatre, decor no longer belongs to the character and the era in the Absurd Theatre. What is more, no proof exists, reflecting social status in the decor of Absurd Theatre. Stage is generally known with its emptiness in the Absurd Theatre because of the understanding of world in absurd approach. Life and world are empty for absurd dramatists. Stage and decor should reflect directly this emptiness. The best way of displaying of its emptiness is an empty stage like an empty world. Finally, the audience watches a bare minimum of decor. Nearly there is nothing on the stage in the name of decor. This extreme simplicity and bareness prepare the audience's mind appropriate to the theme of the play he is about to see.

2.6. Costume and Light

For Traditional Theatre, costume is a fundamental element. It gives specific clues about the era and the situation of human being. It is not important what the characters put on and the Absurd Theatre does not imitate the costumes which are in the real life. When absurd plays are analysed, it is understood that costumes are not

mentioned. What is important is, man's situation not costume for Absurd Theatre. It does not pay attention to details such as costume or accessories. Costume has no importance to the character in absurd plays. Extreme simplicity and deliberate bareness provoke in the audience a state of mind appropriate to the theme of the play he is about to see. The costume, in Traditional Theatre, tries to recreate the actual world in accordance with its essence. But it is only used as a parody in the Absurd Theatre. In the absurd plays, the rest of the stage, apart from the characters, is in the darkness. The audience imagines them in his mind. Generally, there is no boundary between the costume and the audience in the Absurd Theatre. For instance, in *Waiting for Godot*, Estragon comes to the audience on the stage and looks at them with torn and plain clothes. This is a way of undermining the existence of the costume which has lost its all meaning as a tradition.

Consequently, a typical player in an absurd play is a person with little or no costume in an empty scene. This empty scene is both a poetic image and a cruel parody of Traditional Theatre. The Absurd Theatre sabotages all costume aspects of traditional one.

CAPTER THREE
ESISTENTIALISM AND ABSURD CONCEPTS IN SAMUEL BECKETT'S
WAITING FOR GODOT, ENDGAME, AND HAPPY DAYS

3.1. *Waiting For Godot*

Samuel Beckett's major work *Waiting for Godot*, can be commented as a perfect presentation of the Theatre of the Absurd. A play consists of two acts and written in 1953. In *Waiting for Godot*, man's desire for a meaningful life is depicted. As the play opens, Vladimir and Estragon, two tramps, are on a lonely country road. They call each other Didi and Gogo. They are waiting for the arrival of someone, which is called Godot. While they wait, they argue, banter and sometimes there are silent scenes. On the stage, there is only a leafless tree. The meaningless of existence, the absurdity of life, and the emptiness are the themes of this play. Human nature is what it is; the world is a waste land, meaningless, dreadful and human being is waiting for the end.

Since they have been together for fifty years, they are quite old and have some difficulties. They cannot leave each other mainly because they know that they cannot live alone. They totally depend on each other. They meet on the stage at the beginning of two acts while sunset. The two men wait for the arrival of someone named Godot. They hope that Godot will come and save them, but Godot deceives them each night. A boy brings a letter saying Godot will surely come tomorrow. The boy says he is sent by Godot. But Godot never comes. Vladimir and Estragon wait for him diligently with a great expectation. They bump into two men in each act, Pozzo and Lucky. Pozzo is a gentleman. Once upon a time, he was a big star of stages and now he still believes in the same deception. He has been with Lucky for sixty years. Pozzo has gained lots of money by exploiting Lucky's abilities. Vladimir and Estragon have lost everything. On the contrary, Pozzo and Lucky are still wealthy and keep power in their hands. On the other hand, Beckett handles relationship between master and slave. Lucky is beaten by Pozzo while Estragon is wounded emotionally by Vladimir. Pozzo knows that Lucky depends on him for surviving. Vladimir says, " But for me... where would you be... You'd be nothing more than a little heap of bones at the present minute" (WFG 7).

While Estragon always talks about his physical needs, Vladimir thinks more rationally. Estragon falls asleep while he is praying for his bodily needs. However, Vladimir has a spiritual kind of sleep.

Was I sleeping, while the others suffered? Am I sleeping
 now? To-morrow, when I wake, or think I do, what shall I

say of to-day? (...) At me too someone is looking, of me too someone is saying, He is sleeping, he knows nothing, let him sleep on. I can't go on! What have I said?
(WFG 58).

Estragon's first words at the beginning of the play "Nothing to be done" summarizes the action of the whole play. Lucky depends on Pozzo for surviving, because he is a slave. The same is valid for Vladimir and Estragon. They depend on Godot. Infact, they are the slaves of Godot. As Lucky is attached to his master by a rope, therefore Estragon wonders whether Vladimir and he are tied to Godot.

At the end of each act, a boy comes and claims to be sent by Godot. He finds Vladimir cleverer and informs him Godot will not come today, but he will surely come tomorrow and then the boy disappears. Godot never arrives, but two tramps go on waiting for Godot with a great expectation. Vladimir and Estragon depend on Godot because of the meaning of their lives. When Godot arrives, they'll attain the meaning. On the other hand, by waiting for an unknown man, they get a meaning. In human life, waiting is a hard task, and the two men constantly ask "what'll we do?" (WFG 44). In addition to this, not knowing what to do while the process of waiting is also difficult. Without Godot or the hope of his coming, their days have no purpose and meaning. The image of the whole play is "waiting". Waiting gives these two tramps a task to do. It is the only action that they do in the whole play. In fact, Vladimir and Estragon are struggling with Nihilism. They are in the dilemma; existing or non-existing.

One desperately wants to find meaning but does not want to believe in deceiving by religion, faith and truth. In *Waiting for Godot*, Vladimir and Estragon wait desperately for Godot who is never going to come. Throughout the play, those two central characters struggle with becoming conscious of the nihilistic reality of life and the absurdity of existence. At the beginning of the play, the characters are not aware of the absurdity of existence. In *Waiting for Godot*, two tramps contemplate hanging themselves on the tree that they wait by it. Committing suicide can be thought as an escape from the meaningless life and an ultimate conclusion to a meaningless life. In the play, Vladimir complains:

... But that is not the question. What are we doing here, that is the question. And we are blessed in this, that we happen to know the answer. Yes, in this immense confusion one thing alone is clear. We are waiting for Godot to come. (WFG 51 - 52).

They only wait because there is nothing else to do in fact they are very dependent on each other. In the play, Vladimir and Estragon's desire to be saved from the emptiness and meaningless of the world does not overlap with Godot's arrival because he never comes. Thus, their desires and ideas go unanswered. They wait for the meaning for their lives. Godot symbolizes this meaning. When Godot does not come and meaning is not found, one is surrounded by illusions of meaning and one's thought or hope for meaning. Man wants to understand the world, being, his existence and aim of the existence. When he is not answered, he begins to doubt his existence and with the awareness of the absurdity of existence, life becomes more difficult to accept.

In fact, the play mirrors the state of the Europe after the Second World War. Vladimir and Estragon are in a world that the war has uprooted everything. They have no past and no future. They have no chance of shaping their future. Their confidence in God has been shaken because God is indifferent to all these massacres. He always promises, but never comes.

ESTRAGON:

Let's Go

VLADIMIR:

We can't

ESTRAGON:

Why not?

VLADIMIR:

We are waiting for Godot. (WFG 31).

This dialogue shows their desperation in this world. They can only wait for an unknown being for their salvation. Here, Beckett indicates the hopeless situation of human being on earth. In fact, Godot can be interpreted as an order that does not exist in the society, a social order. The dual nature of the play is observable in the ambiguity surrounding the figure of Godot. It is talked as a powerful being and sometimes it is talked just as only a being. In act one, Vladimir and Estragon wonder if Pozzo is Godot. When Pozzo says his name, they learn he is not the man they wait for. Throughout the play, especially by Vladimir, it is always considered whether human being will be rescued or not. At that point, Beckett uses religious references. Vladimir is interested in Jesus' crucifixion. There are also two thieves with Jesus. One of them, having good tempered, does not go to the hell, but the other one is damned because of his negative attitudes. In such a case, the chance of salvation is half. The boy, coming at the end of two scenes, says that it cannot be known before whether Godot behaves well or not

therefore two men are afraid of Godot. Nevertheless, they wait for him near a tree for salvation during the play.

Consequently, man is so helpless in this world that he has to wait for an unknown thing. His all hopes depend on an unknown existing. Moreover, he waits for an unknown with a great expectation without considering if it exists or not. He is prisoned in his own existence and he is hopeless for it. Man can access salvation in this meaningless world only by suffering and waiting patiently.

3.1.1. Setting and Stage in *Waiting for Godot*

Beckett took a giant step about abstracting and purifying man by means of his remarkable play *Waiting for Godot* in theatre. He abstracts theatre from social and individual details. At the same time, Beckett separates conscious from individualism. When characters appear on the stage, the conflict and dependent relation between being and absence emerge in a concrete way. Beckett does not let two circus clowns, with no identity, have a special individualism in the process of existence. Human being has been thrown into the earth to continue an absurd existence. Man is unimportant. Beckett supports this by excluding plot and characterization. Vladimir and Estragon just as human have been thrown into the earth in order to compose and play their own roles. Their main action in the play is to play out. Even though Godot was abstracted from social and individual qualities, it is a being because of its concrete appearance. During the play, it is explored whether there is an actual self in the form of being or not. The question of "Is there a real or actual self?" is never replied.

The setting of the play is a lonely and uninhabited country road. There is no man apart from the characters and no action, except waiting for Godot. There is barely nothing on the stage just a leafless tree in the middle of the stage. It is an empty and lonely atmosphere just as in the Absurd Theatre. Vladimir and Estragon have been living together for several years. The setting is simple and desolate and can be seen as a man's struggle to find a place or existence filled with meaning and sense. On the other hand, stage is also appropriate for the approach of the setting in the Absurd Theatre. There is a leafless tree in the middle of the scene. The stage is empty like the meaningless world to live without a purpose. The two central characters of the play are together for many long years. Another two characters, gentleman Pozzo and his poor servant or slave Lucky appear on the stage, and they attract all attention of the audience. The relation between Pozzo and Lucky helps Beckett in portraying the relation between powerful and poor in the world. In modern world, people are alone filled with several

absurdities. In fact, man needs another one or others in order to survive and exist. In the play, Vladimir and Estragon do not listen to each other but constantly speak with each other because of the anxiety of existence. What they say is not important. They do not deal with the meaning of their utterances. They speak only in order to exist. Stage and setting are empty and absurd like the world itself.

In the play, stage represents an infertile, waste and absurd world. Characters have broken their relations with society. The only things they have are their au and old clothes. They are two beggars. They have been thrown upon their own consciousness. They are also away from the details of daily life. They always speak, argue, reconcile, leave and then meet to avoid their conscious. If they stop talking, they can doubt their beings. They share their loneliness. But while they are speaking they do not listen to each other because they focus on their own thoughts and opinions. But also there are silent minutes all the time. These silent moments and repeated words show that life is too monotonous, boring and distressing. The frequent appearances of Pozzo and Lucky on the stage distract the attention both of the spectator and the couple of Vladimir - Estragon. They mostly influenced by Lucky. They ask Pozzo what is in the baggage and why Lucky does not put down it when he stops. The response of the first question is "sand" which emphasizes how aimless of human work. For the second question, Pozzo replies that Lucky does not put down it because he aims to receive Pozzo's plaudits. Vladimir and Estragon ask repeatedly these questions until Lucky puts down it at the end of the play. Vladimir says " since he has put down his bags it is impossible we should have asked why he does not to do so." (WFG 27). It is as though the only thing that mattered was the present situation, made ever more weighty by the endless wait for Godot. Consequently, The stage of *Waiting for Godot* is absolutely appropriate to the stage concept of the Absurd Theatre with its maximum simplicity.

3.1.2. Concept of Time in *Waiting for Godot*

In *Waiting for Godot*, Beckett depicts that time kills and destroys human. Throughout the play, time passes slowly and it is represented as sunrising and sunsetting. There is no change on the stage, except blooming of the tree in Act II. It may symbolize hope, but it actually indicates that time passes. Coming into leaf of the tree is an existentialist motif referring to the repetition of life with a simple change.

Human desires to find meaning in life and at the same time he tries to be recognized as an individual. All human beings want to have meaning. The characters in *Waiting for Godot* seem to lose all abilities to distinguish the differences between men.

For example, the worlds of Vladimir and Estragon are full of indefinite recollections of culture and the past. Estragon remembers the Bible with uncertainty: “I remember the mops with of the Holy Land colored they were.” (WFG 12). In fact, their lack of knowledge about culture and past symbolizes the confusion of culture and tradition in the 20th century. After the World Wars, the tradition and the culture of Europe have been greatly changed. These changes have occurred especially in some fields such as political sight, society, social life and economy. Estragon is not sure about their location and timing. “You’re sure it was here? . . . You’re sure it was this evening?” (WFG 15). Another character Pozzo, in Act II does not remember two tramps he saw in Act I. There is a loss of memory in the characters. Estragon has also a weak memory, because Vladimir reminds constantly him something. Beckett’s aim here is to show that when one is conscious of the absurdity of life, reasons, making man significant and meaningful, seem to become minor. This consciousness makes one indistinguishable from any other meaningless individual. Pozzo’s misnaming of Godot symbolizes Godot’s versatility in what he actually symbolizes. Moreover, when Pozzo does not answer his name, Estragon claims that Pozzo represents all humanity because he has no specific name. Name is unimportant in an absurd plays and also in Beckett’s world. In *Waiting for Godot*, the process of dying mentally and physically is valid for four characters. Their memories, especially Estrogon’s memory, are weak.

VLADIMIR:

What was it you wanted to know?

ESTRAGON:

I’ve forgotten. (*Chews.*) That’s what annoys me.

(WFG 20).



3- The Broadway production of *Waiting for Godot*, 2012 by Dan Lehman.

As the time passes, Estragon has difficulties in remembering his past. Time consumes their energies and eagerness throughout the play. Doubt is dominant in the 20th century as it is in the whole play itself. According to Beckett, time changes everything in life without our knowing and finally it kills us. Estragon's nightmares make him feel troubled. His complaints and fears become more serious towards the end. By the situation of Estragon, Beckett displays the decay of human being. Time also destroys other two characters, Pozzo and Lucky. In Act II, Pozzo becomes blind and Beckett's thoughts about time take place in Pozzo's speech:

POZZO:

(suddenly furious) Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time! one day I was blind, one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second, is that enough for you? *(Calmer)* They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more (WFG 89).

Past is barely recognizable and the future is unknown. In some sense, they have no past and no future. Existentialist philosophy is based on the concept of the individual's freedom of choice and for time they choose present. What is important is present in the play, and the situation in which they are. The concept of time in the play is circular. The boy returns with the same message, Godot never comes and tomorrow never seems to arrive. Vladimir thinks that "time has stopped." (WFG 36), Throughout the play there is only one action. They are waiting for an unknown being. However, they are not sure about Godot's existence. As the play progresses, it becomes clearer that Godot will not come. The characters are aware of the fact that they waste their time. They begin to question the little boy seen as Godot's messenger. They question him about Godot's existence. They ask him what does Godot do and the little boy replies "Nothing" (WFG 58). Godot will never come and there are two options for Vladimir and Estragon: going on waiting or committing suicide. "I can't go on like this" (WFG 61). "We always find something, eh Didi, to give us the impression we exist" (WFG 45).

The two characters go on waiting anxiously. According to them, if Godot comes, their lives will be saved and filled with meaning. Godot will bring purpose and meaning to Vladimir and Estragon's life. At the end of the play, they decide to leave, but they do not move. In the play, time that passes is impossible to notice. Pozzo claims that he has no concept of time and the only concept of time is valid for Vladimir and

Estragon because they wait for the arrival of Godot. It seems Godot will answer all their questions or make their lives more bearable and clearer. In some sense, they exist by waiting. Without God or Godot, life appears to become meaningless. According to the ones leading the Existentialist Philosophy such as Camus, the world is absurd and thus, man is doomed to live an absurd and meaningless existence and man suffers in this absurd world. The desire of knowing what is the truth consumes and torments Vladimir and Estragon's lives both physically and spiritually. Godot is the only explanation for them.

Consequently, the two central characters, Vladimir and Estragon, wait for Godot. He will come and save them from this absurd world. He is the only hope for them unfortunately, this hope never dies because Godot never comes. Thus, they will wait until they die. In other words, their main action in the play is to wait for an unknown being. There is not a certain time in this process. Past, present and future are intermingled and they wait with an endless hope.

3.1.3. Characterization and Religious Aspects in *Waiting for Godot*

The two main characters carry quite different qualities. While Vladimir is emotional, Estragon is logical. Vladimir values human and honour also, hope is important for him. He always tries to remember the past and thinks about being. Contrary to Vladimir, Estragon ignores the past and is not interested in humanistic values. Physical comfort is more important for him. He always complains about his boots. He does not feel himself comfortable in his boots. Estragon never dares to leave Vladimir. Most of the time two characters consider committing suicide but there is no guarantee of death. What if, one dies and the other one survives? They cannot live alone. Although they have contrary features, they are unable to leave each other. What they keep in their hands are old age, illness and immobility. Briefly, there is a spiritual and physical collapse. In this process, time is rather slow. There is no death in Beckett's theatre but there is pain and a painful life. The story of Vladimir and Estragon is a human life covering all his time between birth and death. Life has no meaning for them. Day and night are always the same. Moreover, there is no yesterday and tomorrow. There is only moment and what is important is now. On the contrary, for Pozzo and Lucky time is important and this situation takes them to a place. As Pozzo exploit Lucky, we see a reality, which is power. Power has not changed throughout the centuries and it will not change in the future. One who is powerful, has always been dominant. Pozzo represents rulers that exploit. On the other hand, Lucky symbolizes

physical and intellectual labor that is exploited. For those like Vladimir and Estragon who ignore the artificial details of life, time passes slowly. The relation of Pozzo and Lucky comes to the exhaustion point in Act II. Their period in which there is gentleman and slave relation is about to be closed. Blind Pozzo and dumb Lucky find themselves in a big meaningless situation like Vladimir and Estragon at the end. Pozzo utters "They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more." (WFG 89), Beckett hints that the way between womb and grave is only a short instant and stresses the concern of being. In other words, Beckett divides human into four; Vladimir, Estragon, Pozzo and Lucky. Their all features come together in a single body. Man embodies the features of these characters.

There are two remarkable points in the process of Vladimir's waiting for Godot. The first one is whether the existence of being has a meaning or not; in other words, whether human being has an essence or not. The second point is that if human being has a chance of salvation or not. In the play the past is always rejected. In Act I, Pozzo and Lucky meet Vladimir and Estragon and have some time together but in Act II, they do not know Vladimir and Estragon. The boy comes at the end of the both acts and says Godot will come tomorrow, and he adds the one coming last night is not himself but his brother. Moreover, when Vladimir wants to share past memories, Estragon remembers nothing. Consequently, Vladimir doubts his being and existence during the play. He looks for something that can demonstrate his existence until the end of the play. In fact, Vladimir and Estragon compose one person. By means of their intellectual and physical qualities, they are divided into the appearance and voice of two separated men. Vladimir cares about his cap and his mouth stinks. Estragon complains about his boots, Estragon's feet have bad smell. In each silent moment, they hear the screams of human from centuries ago. They represent humankind. Their task is an endless expectancy. In the meantime, months, seasons and years do not change. All of them are the same. In Act I, the tree is leafless, but in the other act, it buds. Not only one day passes between two acts but also days, months, seasons and years pass, but Vladimir and Estragon are not aware of it. Both of them go to nowhere because they know that moving place to place is not a solution for salvation. What is more, they have nowhere to go. They are old and experienced. They have lost their individual qualities. No one knows and remembers them.

Finally, it can be commented that they tell human being's adventure and journey between birth and death. They play and end two acts in the same way. That is, Beckett

presents a segment to his audience from the angle of human's existence that is meaningless.

3.1.4. The role of Language in *Waiting for Godot*

Beckett's use of language is totally peculiar to himself. There is a resemblance between his own life and his language. The gloomy atmosphere of his life affects his use of language. His language is full of darkness, ambiguity and uncertainty. As in his own life, there is a loneliness in his language. As a result of this, all these features make communication absurd. In the play, Vladimir and Estragon talk to each other and share their ideas, but it is clear that both of the characters do not comprehend each other because they are self-absorbed and one regularly interrupts the other one with his own thoughts. Estragon admits "I can't have been listening" (WFG 16), and Vladimir says "I don't understand" (WFG 17). These utterances show that language fails in communication. Characters do not use language as a means of communication.

In *Waiting for Godot*, characters pass the time by waiting. At the time of waiting, they play with the words, which are word games. Thanks to this, they exist and attain a social identity. Vladimir and Estragon play with words and their meanings are not important for them. What matters for them is social existence. What is more, they do not listen to each other. In fact, their whole play indicates a single play, which is waiting for Godot. In fact, they live in a communicational society but they are not aware of this because they only focus on waiting for Godot which is repeated several times throughout the play. After a long pause, it is broken down with a language game and they begin to refer constantly to Godot again.

POZZO:

Adieu

Long silence.

VLADIMIR:

That passed the time.

ESTRAGON:

It would have passed in any case.

VLADIMIR:

Yes, but not so rapidly.

Pause.

ESTRAGON:

What do we do now?

VLADIMIR:

I Don't Know.

ESTRAGON:

Let's go.

VLADIMIR:

We can't.
 ESTRAGON:
 Why not?
 VLADIMIR:
 We're waiting for Godot. (WFG 31).

In language games, there is an efficient restraining of Godot upon Vladimir and Estragon. At that point, Beckett uses the location. Since they do not know when Godot is going to arrive, they have to wait at the same place without leaving. This state restrains them in moving and leaving. For Beckett, the role of language is very important. It is his own style. Beckett's language reflects human behavior and contains a sardonic bitter humour; the acceptance of every day's disaster and cruelty. Moreover, the simplicity is obvious in his work. He uses language as a vehicle in order to reflect his thoughts. Thus, it is inevitable to smell a gloomy atmosphere in his works because his life is also full of gloomy aspects. In fact, his writing can be commented as a deep meaning of sources or of his hidden thoughts. Meaning is not so important for him, what is important is the function and the role of language. Beckett's plays contain music and rhetoric. By doing so, Beckett tries to cut down the significance of poetic truth. His language is very symbolic. He compares his work to music and it is the reason why people admire his works. On the other hand, timing is also important for him. He gives value to pauses, rhythms and word stresses. Therefore, it is preferable to see Beckett plays many times, the pleasure grows and the audience has a new insight each time. In *Waiting for Godot*, there are many dialogues which are apart from each other and have no specific meaning or unity of meaning. Language is no longer a medium for communication. It is evacuated and consists of meaningless words. It is impossible to see a unity among the dialogues.

ESTRAGON:
 Until he comes
 VLADIMIR:
 You're merciless.
 ESTRAGON:
 We came here yesterday.
 VLADIMIR:
 Ah no, there you're mistaken (WFG 38).

As it is in the dialogue above, language is partial and does not constitute a unity of meaning. This structure of the language leads the audience to search any logical relationship between dialogues, which does not exist. Repetition is another unique style for Beckett in language. In fact, it is a classical and common literary technique in

literature. In prose, drama and poetry, it is used for emphasis, but in modern literature, especially in the 20th century, it began to change, and it meant both emphasis and absurdity. The world has witnessed significant events; intellectual, economical and political views of societies have taken a totally different notion. The frequent use of the repetition technique causes the confusion of the meaning. As a result of this, there may appear lots of points of view about the content of the play. One of these contents is religion. Many biblical allusions made by Beckett throughout the play. The most remarkable one is the biblical story of the two thieves. It is mentioned so many times throughout the play. By doing so, Beckett attracts the attention of the audience to the story. The audience sees the biblical reference at the beginning of the play.

VLADIMIR:

Ah yes, the two thieves, Do you remember the story?

ESTRAGON:

No.

VLADIMIR:

It'll pass the time. (*Pause*) Two thieves, crucified at the same time as our survivor. One-

ESTRAGON:

Our what?

ESTRAGON:

Who believes him?

VLADIMIR:

Everybody. It's the only version they know.

ESTRAGON:

People are bloody ignorant apes. (WFG 7).

This allusion continues throughout the play. The story of the two thieves reflects the human suffering and his arbitrariness. By the help of these allusions, the audience believes these two characters are waiting for God, for their salavation. In this respect, Godot means a saver, which is God. Thus, because of religious beliefs the two tramps are able to bear the burden of waiting in spite of some doubts about the location and time.

In *Waiting for Godot*, the language is full of word games by the help of the frequent use of repetitions and allusions. The meaninglessness and the absurdity of life are demonstrated by the use of such a language. Samuel Beckett demonstrates the complexity of life by using such a language filled with allusions, pauses and repetition of dialogues. The frequent use of repetition causes the confusion of the meaning. In fact, repetition in Beckett's work results from the structure of his works. They contain

nothing but dualities. A play can be seen both comic and tragic or religious and secular. Beckett indicates the hopeless situation of human being on earth. In Act I, these two tramps are able to tolerate the burden of waiting. But in Act II, they begin to complain of this endless waiting. In Act II, the dialogues seem to be shorter because of their exhausting the possibilities of speech and action. As a result, long silences emerge.

VLADIMIR:
Say something!
ESTRAGON:
I'm trying. (*Long Silence*)
VLADIMIR:
Oh, pardon!
ESTRAGON:
Carry on.
VLADIMIR:
No no, after you.
ESTRAGON:
No no, you first.
VLADIMIR:
I interrupted you.
ESTRAGON:
On the contrary.
VLADIMIR:
Ceremonious ape!
ESTRAGON:
Punctilious pig!
VLADIMIR:
Finish your phrase, I tell you!
ESTRAGON:
Finish your own!
Silence. They draw closer, halt.
VLADIMIR:
Moron! (WFG 48).

Two characters speak to each other in extremely short phrases because they know each other's thoughts. As a result of this, short dialogues appear. On the other hand, quietness plays another significant role in Beckett's language. In his theatre, characters never give direct expressions. In fact, Beckett does not use language in order to communicate and does not see language as a communication tool. Consequently, he avoids direct communication. As a result of this, his audience must build a bridge among various words. The audience must conclude the intentions, feelings and emotions of the characters. In the play, especially in Act II, Vladimir and Estragon have long silence in parallel with the decline of their actions. That mentioned silence refers to the unstated meaning and the lack of response. The other characters, Pozzo and his slave Lucky also share the same quietness. In Act I, Pozzo is so cruel and he is full of an

intense self-doubt and self-pity. Lucky is a decaying slave but he is still capable of action. He kicks Estragon and dances when ordered by Pozzo. In Act II, Pozzo is blind, and Lucky is dumb. Moreover, the tree has a change; it has sprouted some leaves in Act II. Something has happened, but Godot has not come yet. There is no indication of Godot's arrival. In the play, Vladimir's long monologue indicates the Godot's central dilemma:

VLADIMIR:

Was I sleeping, while the others suffered? Am I sleeping now? When tomorrow comes, or I think it does, what shall I say of today? That with my friend, Estragon, at this place until the fall of night, I waited for Godot? That Pozzo passed, with his career, and that he spoke to us? Probably. But in all that what truth will there be? (*Estragon having struggled with his boots in vain, is dozing off again. Vladimir stares at him.*) He'll know nothing. He'll tell me about the blows he's received and I'll give him a carrot. (*Pause.*) Astride of a grave and a difficult birth, down in the hole, lingeringly, the gravedigger puts on the forceps. We have time to grow old. The air is full of our cries. (*He listens.*) But Habit is a great deadener. (*He looks again at Estragon.*) at me to Someone is saying, he is sleeping, he knows nothing, let him sleep on... (WFG 38).

In general, Beckett's characters have difficulty in deriving a meaning from the words or quietness. They also fail in remembering their past. They have a problem of memory. In the first act of the play, the characters chat with each other.

ESTRAGON:

(*chewing*) I asked you a question.

VLADIMIR:

Ah.

ESTRAGON:

Did you reply?

VLADIMIR:

How's the carrot?

ESTRAGON:

It is a carrot.

VLADIMIR:

So much the better, so much the better.

(*pause*)

What was it you wanted to know?

ESTRAGON:

I have forgotten (*chews*) that's what annoys me.

(he looks at the carrot appreciatively, dangles it between finger and thumb.) I'll never forget this carrot. (he sucks the end of it meditatively.)

Ah, yes now I remember. (WFG 18).

Vladimir's answer to Estragon's first question indicates that Vladimir replies it by just saying "Ah". By saying "Ah!", he avoids from taking the question into account. Then, Estragon's second question, "Did you reply?" is also without any answer. Vladimir says "How is the carrot?". Instead of his reply, he can say "What was your question?" or "The answer to your question is" but at the end of the conversation, Vladimir is willing to reply Estragon's question and asks "What was it you wanted to know?" He answers, "I have forgotten." As it can be seen, each character's thought has an inner rhythm and is not changed by the other character's words. A silence is inevitable at the end of the each word of the characters. They fail to communicate and there is a lack of fluency because they speak one after the other rather than simultaneously. Vladimir and Estragon do not pass easily from pause to word or from word to pause. Thus there is a sharp difference between silence and words. During the play, there are some evidences related to boredom. For example, by Estragon's taking off shoes and putting on the partner's hat, he tries to avoid boredom and fill the emptiness in their lives. They struggle to cover up silence by their meaningless words and they also entertain each other. When one is speaking, the other listens to him in silence. With the appearance of Pozzo and Lucky, Vladimir and Estragon turn into the audience. They begin to watch the gentleman Pozzo and his servant Lucky. Lucky's speech makes the other characters listen to him in silence. But in Act II, when Pozzo and Lucky return, Lucky no longer speaks because he becomes mute and Pozzo is blind in this act. Pozzo's blindness and Lucky's muteness show the degenerating process of man's abilities. This situation is valid for all Beckett's characters. Vladimir and Estragon have been together nearly for fifty years and they know each other's all thoughts. Their words are short and uncompleted. There are short and rapid dialogues. Each man is unable to complete a sentence on his own. There is an important difference between them. Vladimir starts answering the question because he knows more. He must remind Estragon many times, why they are not leaving the place. "We are waiting for Godot" Vladimir says repeatedly, because Estragon tends to forget such things.

ESTRAGON:
and what didi he reply?
VLADIMIR:

That he'd see
 ESTRAGON:
 That he couldn't promise anything
 VALDIMIR:
 That he'd have to think it over
 ESTRAGON:
 In the quiet of his home
 VLADIMIR:
 Consult his family
 ESTRAGON:
 His friends
 VLADIMIR:
 His agents
 ESTRAGON:
 His correspondents
 VLADIMIR:
 His books
 ESTRAGON:
 His bank account
 VLADIMIR:
 Before talking a decision. (WFG 13).

Consequently, language in *Waiting for Godot* is so simple like Beckett's other works. As he minimalizes all concepts, including language, language is also artificial in this play. In Beckett's play, characters do not communicate with each other, and also do not understand each other. Moreover, they do not concern it, because speaking is just a verbal game. That is, characters have been speaking for a long time. All questions and answers are also known by all characters. They always tell the same story. As a result of this, speaking is no longer for communication.

3.2. *Endgame*

Endgame was written between 1955 and 1956. It is one of Beckett's most remarkable and discussed plays. It is the story of a man looking after three old people. In this play, there are references to Beckett's own life. Beckett looked after his mother and father in their deathbeds therefore he knows well how a sick man and the man looking after him become very tired and hate each other. *Endgame* is a play depicting the relation of master and slave and the theme of lovelessness. James Acheson argues, "that the play is deliberately designed to resist even the most ingenious of explications" (Murphy, 1995: 49).

In *Waiting for Godot*, the action of waiting stands in the forefront whereas in *Endgame*, "ending" refers to some connotations such as a game at chess, a story ending of a relationship, ending of a life and ending of the world. The play does not contain any

didactic purpose. The concept of nothingness is dominant in the play. Beckett tries to display to the audience “the ending is an endless process” (Kennedy, 1989: 48). In the play, the picture, hanging on the wall, has an important role. Throughout the play, Clov replaces the picture with the alarm clock. Thus, the mechanical takes the place of artistic in some sense. Clov says: “Something is taking its course” (E 17). This utterance emphasizes that human being’s life is a series of passive and routine repetitions and human being is only a cog in the machine and this machine slowly runs down. What is meant by ‘machine’ is world itself. Human being is defenseless and useless in the world and the world runs down slowly. Finally, Clov places the alarm clock on the lid of Nagg’s bin. In Beckett’s works, a gloomy and grey mode is generally dominant. This situation stems from the results of the World Wars. As a result of these wars which affected the whole world, the sense of hopelessness has emerged as a big trouble in the world. This hopelessness has covered every field of human life. Art has been surely affected by it. Like *Waiting for Godot* in this play, the same hopelessness is also common. When Hamm asks about the outer world second time, Clov reports that there is precisely ‘nothing’:

CLOV:
 I warn you. I’m going to look at this filth
 since it’s an order.
 But it’s the last time.
(He turns the telescope on the without.)
 Let’s see.
(He moves the telescope.)
 Nothing... nothing... good... good...
 nothing. (E 78).

There is again a master slave relation in the play. Hamm is Clov’s blind master. They complete each other like Vladimir and Estragon in *Waiting for Godot*. Hamm cannot stand and Clov cannot sit. They depend on each other. At the beginning of the play, no word is uttered. After a while Clov speaks the opening line : “Finished, it’s finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished”(E1). These words are problematic. The first words of the play direct the spectator to the end of the play at the beginning. When the first sentence is uttered, it is the end of the play. In fact, in this play there are few dialogues which are almost speechless.

In *Endgame*, Beckett shows us a day in the lives of the last survivors of a giant catastrophe, presumably a nuclear war, in which all forms of life have been wiped out. Clov says : ‘‘ There’s no more nature,’’ (E 11) Hamm says: “The whole place stinks of

corpses,” and Clov replies, “The whole universe.” (E 46). Life, in this world, is full of pain. Hamm repeatedly asks Clov for a pain killer, and Clov always answers that the time for it has not yet come. At the end, he informs him: “There’s no more pain-killer” (E 71). Beckett shows that we cannot escape from the fact that existence is painful and our world is full of destruction.

This play is also remarkable for its classical Greek theatre aspects such as ritual of sacrifice. Sacrifice is the most dramatic of rituals and it is an important part of *Endgame*. All of human being is sacrificed to a God. Hamm says, “The bastard! He doesn’t exist” (E 55). There is a denial of God and lack of faith. In the play names of the characters carry special meanings. Hamm can be interpreted as a hammer; he is merciless against all humanity bearing down on several nails: his slave Clov, his father Nagg and his mother Nell. Here, there is also another important figure of sacrificing, which is nailing. It is a messaging for Crucifixion. Thus, Clov’s opening of *Endgame*, “Finished, it’s finished” (E 1), can be likened to Jesus Christ’s words on the cross: “It’s finished”. Clov goes on his words saying “nearly finished”, and this “nearly” means a space in which the play can occur. These characters wait for an imminent end like in *Waiting for Godot* but there is a difference. There is an element of suspense in *Waiting for Godot*. Even though Godot never comes, it is possible to imagine that he could come. Many lives spent by waiting for a salvation that never occurs. In *Endgame*, the audience wait whether Clov will actually leave Hamm as he says or not. Beckett indicates that it is an empty threat in such a barren world.

In the play, it is mentioned that life could exist in the outer world. Clov looks through the window and believes he sees a boy. He plans to kill that boy because he is a threat. He evaluates him as a danger for human being because it represents the continuity of humankind. Hamm urges him “If he exists he’ll die there or he’ll come here and if he doesn’t...” (E 78). In *Waiting for Godot*, boy offers a hope by saying “Godot will surely come tomorrow” but in *Endgame*, the boy not only offers a hope, but constitutes a danger. The characters show no positive change. In *Waiting for Godot*, there is a suspense but in *Endgame* there is no suspense. The only thing they wait for, will definitely come one day and it is death. Indeed, death is something that never comes. When it arrives, we will die and will not know it’s arrival. The characters of *Endgame* are painfully aware of it. According to an ancient Greek belief, a man nearing a certain point first goes half distance there. Then, he goes half the remaining distance and he is three-quarters of the way there. That is, the end can never be reached. Death

never comes. Clov says in his second sentence: “ Grain upon grain, one by one, and one day, suddenly, there’s a heap, a little heap, the impossible heap” (E 69). In Beckett’s universe, time has stopped forever. Hamm says towards the end of the play: “Moment upon moment, pattering down, like the millet grains of... that old Greek, and all life long you wait for that to mount up to a life” (E 70). It can be said that Hamm’s awareness of this situation leads him to doubt whether anything has an end or not.

HAMM:

No more pain-killer!

CLOV:

No more pain-killer. You’ll never get any more pain-killer.

HAMM:

But the little round box. It was full!

CLOV:

Yes. But now it’s empty. (E 71).

In *Endgame*, an end for anything is impossible. There is no end. Alan Astro, in *Understanding Samuel Beckett*, says:

In order that there be an end, a subjectivity is required to notice the ending; ends do not exist in themselves. That is why a world, even an imagined one, without God, without humans, is impossible. (Astro, 1990: 136-137).

Thus, a world without God and human cannot be thought. Hamm imagines what would happen if a rational man comes to the earth and observes us. There is no an end for human. On the other hand, there is a kingship motif in the play. Hamm sees himself as a king. His blindness and cruelty make him like a king. He says “ My kingdom for a night-man” and “ Our revels now are ended.” (E 23, 56). Hamm is the master and his desire is to control everyone in the play although he has absolutely no control over himself, over the process of waiting for an end and over his own pain. He wants to be sure that he is in the centre of his universe. He always orders Clov to do whatever he wants. Moreover, he also has a control over his parents, Nell and Nagg. For instance, while his parents are laughing about the story of a tailor told by Nagg, Hamm shouts: “Silence!” (E 23). Through these attitudes, Hamm tries to constitute his being. Therefore, he resembles to a king in a chess game. Title of *Endgame* is a term from chess, where it designates the final stage of a game, when few pieces are left on the board. The mightiest piece served by all others, but which is also the most unshielded.

The dialogue between Hamm and Clov shows how Hamm is afraid of being alone, loneliness and lovelessness. "CLOV: I'll leave you. HAMM: No!" (E 58).

Despite the fact that he is a master, he is dependent on his servant, Clov. Clov lets Hamm exploit and manipulate him. He does whatever Hamm wants. For instance, whenever he is ordered to look out of the window, he does it in the way Hamm wishes. Throughout the play, Clov questions himself why he obeys Hamm's orders and in spite of this questioning, he does not refuse to obey his orders.

CLOV:
Do this, do that, and I do it. I never refuse. Why?
HAMM:
You're not able to. (E43).
He always asks Hamm
CLOV:
Why do you keep me?
HAMM:
There's no one else.
CLOV:
There's nowhere else.(E 6).

Clov knows there is nowhere to go in this dreadful world. In fact, they both depend on each other. Beckett also draws a father and son relationship between the characters.

HAMM:
I was a father to you.
CLOV:
Yes.
(*He looks at Hamm fixedly*)
You were that to me.
HAMM:
My house a home for you.
CLOV:
Yes.
(*He look about him.*)
This was that for me. (E38).

Throughout the play, the relation between living and not-living is stressed. Finally, Clov questions the reason for his obedience and Hamm responds: "Perhaps it's compassion." While Clov hits Hamm with his toy dog, he announces he is living. Before leaving, Hamm wants Clov to make a speech, like Pozzo's order to Lucky, but Clov's speech is more articulating "I open the door of the cell and go. I'm so bowed I only see my feet, if I open my eyes, and between my legs a little trail of black dust. This

is what we call making an exist” (E 37). Another phrase belonging to Hamm frequently repeated is concerned with his pain-killer. He constantly questions “Is it not yet time for my pain-killer?”(E 35). Throughout the play the audience hears this question so many times. Clov always responds it with a negative attitude. In fact, Hamm knows exactly the response of his question nevertheless he gives up because by constant questioning Hamm convinces himself that he is there and exists. It is a typical feature of Beckett’s characters to speak non-stop because they need to prove their existence. Another reason of this repetition is that there is always pain, that is the pain of existence, but man has to live till the end. In *Endgame*, the expected end never comes. That is, there is no cure for loneliness and absurdity of life.

3.2.1. Structure in *Endgame*

Endgame has only one act and focuses on two major themes; playing and ending. The play emphasizes that the characters live in a stagnant and invariable circumstance. The actions and reactions of the previous day are repeated every day. Thus, each event turns into a ritual. Nearly all Beckett’s plays are purified gradually from movement and word. They have only image and tone. In this play, all of the characters are silent and almost speechless. They are immobile except Clov. He moves on the stage forming “L” shape. His circular tours form the shape of “L” are like the movements of the horse in the play of chess. The structure of *Endgame* is far from a traditional drama. It is less dramatic, this case is resulted from “highly play conscious nature of Beckett’s art”(Kennedy, 1989: 62). Theatrical conventions are parodied in the play. The themes of “playing” and “ending” are fully embodied in the cyclic structure of the play. “The stage and its conditions are “advertised” along with broad role-playing (Hamm) and play-within-the-play devices. Visual and sound effects are woven into the verbal text in every scene” (Kennedy, 1989: 63).

It can be said that in *Endgame*, stage symbolizes all world and characters wait for an end from the beginning to the end of the play. In fact, the world itself approaches to an end. On the stage, the audience sees the disastrous and awful situation of human being. Two central characters, the king or master and his fool or slave are at the centre, Hamm and Clov. In respect of structure, *Endgame* is not a tragedy in the full sense. It does not resemble to Greek or Shakesperian tragedies. It is absolutely different. It is different because of lack of timing and placing. In the play, there is no certain time. “HAMM: It’s the end, Clov; we’ve come to the end. I don’t need you anymore” (E 50).

Hamm's utterances point to a tragic ending and he gives up Clov who is the only one he has in his life. In fact, *Endgame* can be assumed as an absurd play because of its structure. From the beginning to the end, a pessimistic mode in terms of characters, their feelings, their spiritual and physical situations is dominant in the play. These all match up with the aspects of the Theatre of the Absurd. They have no meaning in their lives. What makes their lives and existence meaningful is the action of waiting for an end, which is an endless end. Life is full of depressing details and depending on this fact, time is rather slow. It passes slowly for human being in the world and the expected end never comes. Due to the unhappiness of human being in the world, time seems to pass rather slowly. If they had been happy and satisfied with their lives, they would have been glad for surviving but there is no current reason in order to live for Beckett's characters. In John Pilling's *The Cambridge Companion to Beckett: Beckett's answers to some questions*:

‘I produce an object. What people make it of it is not my concern [...] I'd be quite incapable of writing a critical introduction to my own works.’ Beckett always refrains from the question related to his play. 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 plays, but Beckett's position remained resolute; he wanted no part in the process of decoding that haunts critical work, preferring to cling to his belief that: the key word in my plays is “perhaps” (Pilling, 1994: 67).

In *Waiting for Godot*, Vladimir and Estragon do not leave because there is the possibility of arrival of Godot. Perhaps, Godot will come the next day. “Perhaps” is dominant in *Waiting for Godot*. It makes them wait. He also says “you must realize that Hamm and Clov are Vladimir and Estragon at the later date, at the end of their lives [...] actually they are Suzanne and me.” (Pilling, 1994: 67). Suzanne is his wife. He wants to say that they find difficult to live together but it is impossible to leave each other. He establishes the relations of his characters on this truth. His characters have also difficulty in leaving each other, like Vladimir and Estragon in *Waiting for Godot* or Hamm and Clov in *Endgame*.

In *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*, Beckett brings new different features to the known traditional drama. He questions the formal structure of theatre. He says:

What am I saying does not mean that there will henceforth be no form in act. It only means that there will be new form, and that this form will be of such a type that it admits the chaos, and does not try to say that the chaos is really something else. The form and the chaos remain separate. The latter is not reduced to the former. That is why the form itself becomes a preoccupation, because it exists as a problem separate from the material it accommodates. To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist. (Pilling, 1994: 74).

3.2.2. Setting and Stage in *Endgame*

In *Endgame*, Samuel Beckett chooses the image of cell room, which is a Beckettian classic. Butler implies that “his plays are produced in out-of-the way places” (Butler, 1993: 67). Hamm is in his wheelchair and covered with a sheet when the curtain opens. On the stage, there exist two ashbins on the left side. These ashbins turn into the containers of Hamm’s paralyzed parents, Nagg and Nell, having no leg. In addition to all these features of setting, there are also two high and tiny windows. The windows help Clov look out of it to the outer world with his telescope. By means of windows, they can know what happens in the outer world. Rest of the items on the stage are a picture, whose face is to the wall, hanging near the door, a toy dog, having only one leg, a telescope, the flea on Clov’s trousers and an alarm clock. From beginning to end, nothing else appears on the stage.

The position of the picture hanging near the door, its face to the wall refers the rejection of the past in the play, gains another meaning through Hamm’s utterance.

I once know a mad man who though the end of the world had come. He was a painter and engraver. I had a great fondness for him. I used to go and see him, in the asylum; I’d take him by hand and drag him by the hand to the window. Look! There! All that rising corn! And there! Look! The sails of the herring fleet! (...) All that loveliness! (*Pause*). He’d snatch away his hand and go back into his corner. Appalled. All he had seen was ashes. (*Pause*) He alone had been spared. (*Pause.*) Forgotten, (*pause*) It appears the case is...was not go...so unusual. (E 32).

The setting and its location in *Endgame* have different comments. One of the most outstanding one is the representation of a skull located in the middle of a destroyed environment, which is collapsed external space. On the other hand, there is another

important comment about its place. It is not open to any interpretation. Hugh Kenner asks “where is this place?” and he himself answers his own question: “it is here, that is all we can say, here before us, on stage. The set does not represent the set is itself.” (Kenner, 1973: 121).

In *Endgame*, there is another note worthy of mention, which is “grey light” (E 1). It indicates that the room remains the same. The colour of grey symbolizes the gloomy atmosphere. Yesterday, today and tomorrow are grey. All are the same, there is no difference. In other words, its continuity without any change underlines the stabilization of time and place. Conversely, Clov discusses about the increasing loss of light in the outer world behind the windows. The scene beyond the windows draws attention as well as room itself. While Hamm sits in his chair in a motionless way, he wonders about what happens in the world behind the windows. He asks about it to Clov and when Clov begins to tell, it is understood that outer world is as bare as inside.

CLOV:

(after reflection):

Nor I.

(He gets up on ladder, turns the telescope on the without.)

Let's see.

(He looks, moving the telescope.)

Zero. . .

(he looks)

zero...

(he looks)

and zero.

HAMM:

Nothing stirs. All is -

CLOV:

Zer -

HAMM:

(violently):

wait till you're spoken to!

(Normal voice)

All is ... all is ... all is what?

(Violently.)

All is what?

CLOV:

What all is? In a word? Is that what you want to know?

Just a moment

(He turns the telescope, turns the telescope, turns towards Hamm) Corpsed. (E 29-30).

In *Trying to understand Endgame*, Adorno says:

After the second World War, everything including a resurrected culture, has been destroyed without realizing it; human kind continues to vegetate, creeping along after events that events that even the survivors cannot really survive, on a rubbish heap that has made even reflection on one's own damaged state useless. (Adorno, 2002: 43).

For him, there is nothing worth seeing in the outer world. There is an irony at that point. In the play, Hamm is blind therefore he cannot see. On the other hand, Clov is not blind and has the ability to see. However, Clov can see nothing as nothing exists out. Hamm can see nothing as he is blind. There is no difference between two central characters' visions. As it is understood from the utterance of Clov, Beckett's setting is 'corpsed' which indicates the sense of nothingness. In Beckett's works, a gloomy and grey mode is generally dominant. This situation stems from the results of the world wars. As a result of these wars which affected the whole world, the sense of hopelessness has emerged as a big trouble in the world. This hopelessness has covered every field in life. Art has been surely affected by it. In Beckett works, this hopelessness is also common. When Hamm asks about the outer world second time, Clov reports that there is precisely 'nothing':

CLOV:

I warn you. I'm going to look at this filth
since it's an order.
But it's the last time.

(He turns the telescope on the without.)

Let's see.

(He moves the telescope.)

Nothing nothing... good... good nothing
(E 78).

The use of objects, images and dreadful external scene out of the windows of the room are all suitable in order to reflect the meaningless of life and being. In Beckett's plays, the audience generally faces with an empty space. The setting of *Waiting for Godot* is a country road with a leafless tree. *Endgame* is acted in an empty cell containing only dustbins, Hamm's chair and the picture on the wall, it faces to the wall. The end of human being is represented on the stage by two garbage cans. Each can contains a disposed person. Their heads are seen out of the can. They are Nagg and Nell, Hamm's parents. They lost their legs at Sedan, in the Ardeness between France and Belgium. At the end of a bicycle accident, a tandem bicycle, they lost their legs. Beckett uses this vehicle so often in his works. For Nagg and Nell it means a

destruction. In other words, Beckett's plays have a maximum simplicity which is one of his main aims. All these aspects of the stage reflect the theme of the play. The picture, its face to the wall, the sheets covering the characters and the two small windows on the wall indicate the tone of *Endgame*. Moreover, there is also a kitchen mentioned by Clov but in reality it does not exist and is imaginary. Beckett parodies theatre. To him, light in the theatre is a thing such as the sun's heat for life on earth. Hamm says: "outside of here it is death..." and then he orders Clov to look out of the window:

CLOV:
 Never seen anything like that!
 HAMM:
 (*anxious*): what? A sail? A fin? Smoke?
 CLOV:
 (*looking*): The lights sunk.
 HAMM:
 (*relieved*): Pooh! We all knew that.
 CLOV
 (*looking*): There was a bit left.
 HAMM:
 The base
 CLOVE:
 (*looking*): Yes.
 HAMM:
 And now?
 CLOV
 (*looking*): All gone.
 HAMM:
 No gulls?
 CLOV
 (*looking*): Gulls!
 HAMM:
 And the horizon? Nothing on the horizon?
 CLOV:
 (*exasperated*): What in God's name could there be on the horizon?
 HAMM:
 The waves, how are the waves?
 CLOV:
 The waves? Lead.
 HAMM:
 And the sun?
 CLOV:
 Zero. (E 25-26).

In fact, the audience does not believe in this sea and this dead plain surrounding Hamm's cell as Beckett hopes from his audience in his place, it is impossible to come across the aspects of traditional theatre such as, plot and climax. Consequently, the

audience sees a simple decor, strong lighting and a naked, empty stage. These are the general features of Beckett plays. Stage has high windows through which we are not able to see. Clov mounts his ladder and informs spectator that there is nothing to be seen. He tells what he sees, he tells the simple truth, for what can be seen. The spectator is supposed to imagine that it is an outdoor place and Clov gazes through the windows and he says he sees nothing. As if outdoor had been consumed by some unimaginable catastrophe and the room is presented as the "shelter". It can be concluded that outside world is full of death and inside the room is secure. Characters of the play are in security. When this play was published, the bomb explosion in Europe in 1957 was on the mind of people. Thus, it can be the last hours of man in that room. Stage is all the world.

In this play Hamm is a blind man who tells stories. He can be resembled a dying God. He suffers and is always in pain. According to Hamm, they are kept here by the dialogue and they cannot deal with their own affairs. The performance begins with Clov's words. He says:

CLOV:
 Finished, it's finished, nearly finished.
 (Pause)
 Grain upon grain, one by one, and one day, suddenly,
 there's a
 heap, a little heap, the impossible heap.
 (Pause)
 I can't be punished any more. (E 1).

When the grains come a heap, he will be let off. Beckett has been affected by Dante in his early life. Dante's friend Belacqua was condemned because of his late regret. He lived so many years without doing anything. He was too lazy. Hence he was punished. This situation caught Beckett's attention in his early life. In his first book, *More Pricks Than Kicks*, the name of his protagonist is Belacqua Shuah. In *Endgame*, Hamm sits in his chair and he is immobile, sightless and tormented like Murphy. Clov is required to re-enact. He can be resembled Belacqua. On the other hand, Hamm has the actor's satisfactions, like Pozzo. Pozzo is another master having his enslaved servant, Lucky. In his opening soliloquy he says: "Can there be misery loftier than mine?" (E1). Here, we see the tragic hero's self-deprecation. The spectator gathers some clues about world's deprivations. There are no more bicycle wheels, for instance. There are not even any bicycles. Clov says "When there were still bicycles, I wept to have one. I

crawled at your feet. You told me to go to hell. Now there are none.” Hamm concludes that nature has forgotten them. Clov says “ There’s no more nature.”

HAMM:
This isn’t much fun.
(*Pause.*)
But that’s always the way at the end of the day, isn’t it,
Clov?
CLOV:
Always.
HAMM:
It’s the end of the daylike any other day, isn’t it, Clov?
CLOV:
Looks like it
(*Pause.*)
HAMM:
(*anguished*)
What’s happening, what’s happening?
CLOV:
Something is taking its course. (E 13).

Endgame is a play which is greatly affected from the result of the wars. The stage is empty because the world itself is empty. In his one utterance, Clov says “Light! How could anyone’s light be on?” (E 41). This utterance helps the audience to make such a comment that he is speaking as if a dreadful event had happened and life had extinguished in the world. In addition, Hamm says “A rat! Are there still rats?” (E 54), also supports this comment. There is a catastrophe in the World therefore it can be said that Beckett tries to wipe out all external materials because he attempts to exhibit the pure existence of human being in the absence of material externality. In other words, the naked and unaccommodated images on the stage reflect Beckett’s philosophy of existence. It is focused on being itself. Throughout the play, Beckett parodies both philosophy and forms. “Existentialism itself is parodied; nothing remains of its invariant categories but bare existence” (Adorno, 2002: 42 – 43).

3.2.3. Concept of Family in *Endgame*

The dialogues between Hamm and Clov indicate a father-son relationship in the play. There are aspects of sharp hostility in this relationship. The same situation is also valid for the relationship between Hamm and his father, Nagg. It is as if a paternal curse among three generations. Here, the focus is not on the continuity and change but on mistake of begetting, having been born. Nagg begets Hamm and Hamm begets Clov. He is not his real son, Clov is adopted, but Clov will beget no one, so long as the nature

dies. Hamm accuses his father increasingly by saying “accursed progenitor” and “accursed fornicator!”. It is more explicit in the dialogue below.

HAMM:
Scoundrel! Why did you engender me?
NAGA:
I didn't know.
HAMM:
What? What didn't you know?
NAGA:
That it'd be you. (E 35).

In fact, this wish to be unborn belongs to the traditional tragedy but Hamm's wish seems to be constant wish. He desires the end of “the game”. As a father, Nagg says paternal love speeches. He depends on his son for food and favors:

I hope the day will come when you'll really need to have me listen to you, and need to hear my voice, any voice (*pause*) yes, I hope I'll live till then, to hear you calling me like when you were a tiny boy, and were frightened, in the dark and I was your only hope. (E 38).

when it is compared to the relation between Hamm-father and Hamm-Clov, Hamm is more relentless to Clov than his father is to himself. The image of frightened, helpless child is also valid in the dialogue between Hamm and Clov.

HAMM:
Do you remember when you come here?
CLOV:
No. Too small, you told me.
HAMM:
Do you remember your father?
HAMM:
It was I was a father to you.
CLOV:
Yes. (*He looks at Hamm fixedly.*) You were that to me.
HAMM:
(*Proudly.*) But for me (*gesture towards himself*) no father.
But for
HAMM
(*Gesture towards surroundings*) no home. (E 29).

These expressions all indicate to an adaption situation. Clov is an adopted child in Hamm's house. That is, there is not a real father and son relation of father-son games. They play with each other. This relation is also reflected to the audience by the mediation of Hamm's story. There is a father who comes crawling to beg for bread and a refuge for his son. The narrator of the story, like Hamm, is relentless and refuses this

wish. The end of the little boy is uncertain. Hamm and Clov think about the child and come to the conclusion that the little boy is condemned to death by the conditions in the outer world. In *Samuel Beckett*, Andrew K. Kennedy says:

We need not think of the returning child as some kind of divine child who might bring partial redemption to a dying world: Rather the child seems to embody the innocent sufferer who brings more suffering into the world – as a potential procreator, perpetuator of the endless cycle. (Kennedy, 1989: 60).

At the end of the play, Hamm begins to accept his situation of solitude, and wants to reconcile with his own situation. He feels himself separated from his father and son because his father is at the brink of death and Clov always talks about living.

HAMM:

I'll have called my father and I'll have called my ... (*he hesitates*) ... my son

[...] Then babble, babble, words, like the solitary child who turns himself into children, two, three, so as to be together, and whisper together, in the dark. (E 45).

In his last monologue, Hamm twice calls out “Father”. Andrew Kennedy comments on this call like this:

A call that in our culture carries echoes of the Crucifixion. At the same time it is a call that seems to point back to the significant variations of the father-son relationship across the whole play. What was dramatized as a kind of “necessary suffering”, a created state condemned to issue in life-long bickering and endless efforts of separation, is finally given the dignity of a suffering person's cry. (Kennedy, 1989: 61).

3.2.4. The role of Language in *Endgame*

The language of *Endgame* plays a complementary role in order to achieve and reveal the existentialist features in the play. Like the characters of the play, it's language is peculiar. The reason of its peculiarity is that it's immobile, purposeless and filled with repetitions. It's filled with repetitions like *Waiting for Godot* because of its absurdity. This state indicates the meaningfulness of existence once again in a Beckett play. In the play, language does not have any aim such as communication and this causes the difficulty in interpretation. Moreover, the lack of action in *Endgame* is quite dominant. When these two remarkable features combine, it's inevitable that the focus is fixed on the dialogues between the characters. Raymond T. Riva, in *Beckett and Freud*

emphasizes that: “Beckett seems to be communicating in an essentially symbolic language, one which is quite capable of communication while seeming to say nothing and of going nowhere” (Riva, 1993: 160).

Beckett’s language is full of ambiguity. It tells something in nothingness. The leading features of Beckett’s language are repetitions, abrupt exchanges of trivial talkings, quick shift of subjects, lack of purpose and meaning, short sentences, and frequent use of pauses. In the play, language does not carry the purpose of communication. Language sometimes determines what is real for characters. Moreover, it takes a role in proving of the characters’ existence because they use language in order to prove they are alive. When it is read, it’s clearly seen that there are lengthy and detailed stage directions which are about the actions of the characters. At the beginning of the play, a long stage direction of Clov’s actions is presented to the reader. It is clear what he does, how he does it and how long these actions take one after the other. As it can be seen, it is detailed.

The relationship founded on actions and dialogues is the starting point of the quarrels among the characters. From the beginning of the play, there is a love - hate relation between Hamm and Clov. This relation is always hinted throughout the dialogues between the characters and all these are extremely personal hints. Moreover, physical and spiritual acts are also included to them. Their challenging and preparing can be shown as an instance. In the play, Clov abandons Hamm. In fact, the sincerity in their relations arises against the parody of love and tender in the dialogues. Despite all the uncertainties and half - clues, their relation is coherent.

Since Hamm is not able to stand up and Clov is not able to sit down, they complete their deficiencies. In appearance, there are two separated bodies. While one can do something, the other one cannot. They are complementary for each other. In fact, two separate body compose an entire man. Clov always tries to do the errands that Hamm orders on the stage for his master. At the very beginning of the play, their dialogues reflect the characteristic of their relation. Clov is represented as Hamm’s slave or servant. In this respect, Clov resembles Lucky but his state is more warming than Lucky because Lucky is luckier than Clov. Moreover, Clov can fully express himself in comparison to Lucky.

HAMM:

Did you ever see my eyes?

CLOV:

Pulling back the lids? (*Pause*) No.

HAMM:
 One of these days I will show them you.
(Pause) it seems they have gone all white
 And then ...
 CLOV:
 Why do you keep me?
 HAMM:
 There is no one else.
 CLOV:
 There is nowhere else.
(Pause)
 HAMM:
 You are leaving me all the same.
 CLOV:
 I'm trying.
 HAMM:
 You don't love me.
 CLOV:
 No.
 HAMM:
 You loved me once.
 CLOV:
 Once!
 HAMM:
 I have made you suffer too much.
(pause)
 Haven't I?
 CLOV:
 It's not that.
 HAMM:
(shocked) I haven't made you suffer too much?
 CLOV:
 Yes!
 HAMM:
(Relieved). Ah you gave me a fright! (E 13).

Love and suffering belonging to their past cause the emergence of an endless relation between them but in this dialogue, mentioned love and suffering turn into sour, static and changeable situation. Their constant drive about arriving at an end fails. In fact, there is a lack of love in the play. Despite the fact that two central characters cannot leave each other, they depend on each other forever because of their loneliness and the absurdity of their existence. From beginning to end, past is emphasized constantly.

Beckett ridicules paradoxical pairs of mutually exclusive issues such as movements without motions and togetherness of dependence and independence in human being's relationships.

CLOV:
 So you all want me to leave you.
 HAMM:
 Naturally.
 CLOV:
 That I'll leave you.
 HAMM:
 You can't leave us.
 CLOV:
 Then I shan't leave you.
 (*Pause*)
 HAMM:
 Why don't you finish us? (*Pause*) I'll tell you the
 combination of the ladder if you promise to finish me.
 (E 29).

In his utterance above, by saying 'us', Hamm emphasizes his own reality. Although Clov talks about leaving Hamm, he cannot go.

HAMM:
 I can't leave you.
 CLOV:
 I know. And you can't follow me
 (*Pause.*)
 HAMM:
 If you leave me how shall I know?
 CLOV:
 (*briskly*). Well you simply whistle me and if I don't come
 running it means I've left you. (E 33).

The language used in *Endgame* displays that there are sudden exchanges of trivial talking and quick shifts from one subject to the other. As a result of this, it is certainly said that language is used only to affirm that the characters exist, not for a real communication. Listening to each other in order to understand themselves is not the real aim. The ultimate aim is to prove that they are alive. They say what they want without waiting for a reply thus, independent utterances emerge.

NAGG:
 You were in such fits that we capsized.
 By rights we should have been drawn.
 NELL:
 It was because I felt happy.
 NAGG:
 (*indignant*):
 It was not, it was not, it was my STORY and nothing else.
 Happy! Don't you laugh as it still? Every time I tell it,
 Happy!
 NELL:

It was deep, deep. And you could see down to the bottom.
So white. So clean. (E 21).

In the dialogue above, each character mentions about the same experience that is their going rowing on Lake Como but both of them talk by ignoring each other. Hamm and Clov, jump from one subject to another one and they pass time with trivial details. They use language just to pass time therefore " the swift sequence of subjects appears as a shrinking of reality, not to the characters but to the spectators " and " this impression is intensified by the fact that the characters do not react to one another's words, and this is presented as perfectly normal behavior" (Butler, 1993: 148). In this play, language lacks purpose and meaning thus, it does not have the function of communication. To show this purposeless of the language, the dialogue below among Hamm, Nagg and Nell can be helpful:

HAMM:
Perhaps it is a little vein.
(*Pause.*)
NAGG:
What was that he said?
NELL:
Perhaps it is a little vein.
NAGG:
What does that mean?
(*Pause*)
That means nothing. (E 20).

In *Endgame*, language is used in order to affirm the existence of the characters. Among the characters, Nell is the only one questioning the existence and need of language. When Nagg asks her whether he will tell her the story of the tailor, she abruptly refuses it and asks:" what for?" (E 20). Beckett uses Nell for his questioning. The question "what for language should be used" shows the powerless of language.

Moreover, Clov mocks the inability of language to communicate while talking to Hamm.

HAMM:
We're not beginning to to mean something?
CLOV:
Mean something! You and I mean something?
(*Brief laugh*)
And that a good one. (E 32-33).

To mean something is just a joke for Clov and he laughs therefore for the characters it is impossible to mean something. That is why the functionlessness of

language is inevitable and also funny. To Nell: " nothing is funnier than unhappiness" (E 18). On the other hand, other remarkable features of language in *Endgame* are the use of short sentences and frequent use of pauses. In this play, there is scarcity of language. The reason of it is that there is a lack of purpose for existing. Meaning is restricted by single-word explanations. In the play, Clov looks out of the window and reports on what he sees. What Hamm tries to find a suitable word in order to depict of the external space, Clov says "What all is? In a word?" and then he answers "Corpsed" (E 30). In Beckett's works an intense simplicity is dominant. It is valid for *Endgame*. Language in this play is full of short sentences and the play is also packed with pauses, which is a typical of Beckett's plays. In his plays, there are less words and more silences. As a result of this feature, the pauses are crucial in his plays. His characters pause because they cannot break the taboos of the society and lastly they pause because they wait for a response from the other which will give them a temporary sense of existence. In fact, pauses fragment the play and it represents discrete speeches and episodes rather than a seamless presentation of a theme. Beckett says:

I take no sides. I am interested in the shape of ideas even if I do not believe them. There is a wonderful sentence in Augustine. I wish I could remember the Latin. It is even finer in Latin than in English. "Don't despair; one of the thieves was saved. Don't despair; one of the thieves was damned." (Pilling, 1994: 75).

As a playwright, he emphasizes the importance of structure. Structure is more important than any communicative message of a play. Pauses result from "the painfulness of waiting the emptiness of the existence, the expectancy of collapse, of a manifestation of total despair" (Fowlie, 1960: 214). Also, numerous pauses indicate the anguish in each of four characters. By the help of pauses, Beckett gets the chance of exhibiting:

Silence of inadequacy, when characters cannot find the word they need: silences of repression. When they are struck dumb by the attitude of their interlocutor or by their sense that they might be breaking a social taboo; and silences on anticipation, when they await the response of the other which will give them a temporary sense of existence. (Pilling, 1994: 75).

In *Endgame*, language controls the characters' minds and it tells and decides what is real for the characters. Language rules the reality. Clov's response "if you like" (E 41) affirms the power of language therefore what is possible according to language becomes

real. Consequently, the language in *Endgame* achieves “those familiar problems” which Walter Kerr cited in *Herald Tribune*:

An aura of smugness that always hovers around a private language, the defiant treadmill of directionless conversation, the knowledge that the author is deliberately playing blind man’s buff, the emotional aridity of a word without a face. (Butler, 1993: 64).

In *Waiting for Godot*, Beckett has already used language terribly in Vladimir’s and Estragon’s exchange of short responses, but in *Endgame* there is an unrelated relation between characters. Vladimir and Estragon use language a bit more thoughtfully, less automatically because they have a purpose; they are waiting for Godot. In contrast, Hamm and Clov know that they have no reason to live or to go on. There is a difference in the terms of dialogue in two plays, *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* in technique. Whereas Vladimir and Lucky’s monologues present thought, Hamm wishes to provide entertainment. Like Pozzo spraying his throat before speaking in *Godot*, Hamm marks a distinction between his conversation and utterance tone:

The man came crawling towards me, on his belly. Pale, wonderfully pale and thin, he seemed on the point of—
(Pause. Normal tone.)
No, I’ve done that bit.
(Pause. Narrative tone.)
I calmly filled my pipe—the meerschaumi lit it with... let us say a vesta, drew a few puffs. Aah!
(Pause.)
Well, what is it you want? (E 50-51).

Here, Hamm turns story into a conversation, the dialogic form makes it into playlet within the play. There are also refrains throughout the play.

It was an extra-ordinarily bitter day, I remember, zero by the thermometer (E 51).
It was a howling wild day, I remember, a howling wild day, I remember, a hundred by the anenometer (E 52).
It was an exceeding dry day, I remember, zero by the hygrometer (E53).

By means of refrains Beckett represents his belief that the shape of an idea is more important than its sense. Beckett distracts spectator’s attention to the notion of time. Like absurdity of characters, language of the play is a clue in order to achieve and reveal the existentialist tendencies of Samuel Beckett. Life characters, language of the play is purposeless and it is filled with repetition and refrains therefore, because of the

lack of action in *Endgame* it makes stronger to apprehend and force concentration upon the dialogues between the characters. Raymond T. Riva, in his essay *Beckett and Freud* states “Beckett seems to be communicating in an essentially symbolical language, one which is quite capable of communication while seeming to say nothing and of going nowhere” (Riva, 1993: 160). In fact, this sums up exactly Beckett’s language. He tells something in nothingness.

The play, *Endgame*, has a detailed stage directions about the actions of characters. At the beginning of the play, actions of Clov are represented in detail which contains only what he does. The reason of this can be the lack of communication in the play. The attention of the spectator can be drawn to the stage. Another factor of language in the play is repetitions and refrains. Throughout the play the majority of repetitions are noted. Repetitions represent a zero point or a progression toward nowhere and nothingness. Change is avoided by the characters therefore, repetition becomes unavoidable. Throughout the play, Clov repeats his plan to leave Hamm: “I’ll leave you, I have things to do” (E12), “I’ll leave you” (41), “I’ll leave you” (48), “Then I’ll leave you” (68), etc. Another frequently repeated phrase belongs to Hamm. It is about his pain-killer. He always asks “Is it not yet time for my pain-killer?” (E 35). Indeed, he knows the answer but by repeating it, he tries to convince himself that he exists. This repetition also implies that there is always pain, which is an endless pain. There is no cure and these repetitions represent the monotonous of their life in the play as well.

Consequently, Beckett’s use of language has some features such as the extensiveness of stage directions, repetitions, refrains, sudden changes in dialogues, lack of purpose and meaning, short sentences and frequent use of pauses. In addition to all these features, there are two basic effects of them. The first one is that language sometimes decides what is real for the characters. What they say can determine the reality in which they live. The other effect is that language has a role of showing the existence of the characters because they speak and this supports that they are alive. We have the sensation of being in conversations of characters.

3.2.5. Characters and Time in *Endgame*

Beckett controls his characters on the stage and does not want his actors to act. He wants them to do only what he tells them. Human being is in a world which approaches to the end but Beckett’s characters try to secure themselves by the help of constant repetitions. They repeat their actions and words in the same way each day. The

previous day is the same as the next day. They do the same things as a ritual repeatedly. In Beckett's plays, the main theme is how human being copes with being and time and how he can prove his existence and being. Moreover, death and dying are also among the valid themes. Characters desire death and it is the only reality but it is never applied in the plays. Characters live a meaningless, immobile and aimless life between birth and death. That is, they spend their whole lives by waiting for an end. Man must go on waiting for whom, will never come and make them helpless and dependent. Consequently, his characters are engaged in a constant act of waiting. Waiting for an unknown being or thing. In fact, Beckett leaves the comment to the audience. What the audience thinks about it, is the reality. In *Waiting for Godot*, Godot can be God, absence or death. As it can be seen, it has no meaning but has function. He symbolizes a hope in a hopeless era such as the 20th century. He is whatever the audience wants him to be. He makes human being wait in an endless mood. The title of *Endgame* refers to the game of chess. Last phase of the game is named endgame. It symbolizes infinity. Beckett says:

Hamm is a king in this chess game lost from the start. From the start he knows he is making loud senseless move. That he will make no progress at all with the gaff. Now at the last he makes a few senseless moves as only a bad player would. A good one would have given up long ago. He is only trying to delay the inevitable and Each of his gestures is one of the best useless moves which put off the end. He is a bad player. (Pilling, 1994: 71).

In *Endgame*, as mentioned above, Hamm is considered a king. In a chess game, when two kings are left on the board, the game never ends and they engage in an infinite series of movements around the chess board. This situation happens only while bad players are playing. This comment leads the audience to the master and slave relationship again. Although the master, Hamm, has social superiority, the servant is more powerful because he is more necessary to the master. Thus, this makes Clov stronger than Hamm because he makes his existence possible. By the help of Clov and his telescope, Hamm knows what is happening outside, in *Waiting for Godot*, Lucky is stronger than Pozzo because Pozzo exists by the help of Lucky. In Beckett plays, each character depends on the other one. They really exist by responding and replying to each other. Beckett's characters crave to be noticed: "VLADIMIR: ... (*Joyous*) There you are again." (WFG 59). "HAMM: You loved me once." (E 14).

Time does not pass in this world. The characters feel they have to find ways of passing time. Beckett's characters choose mechanical repetition and re-enacting

situations. By doing so, they defend their existence against a world they do not comprehend and accept. In other words, time actually exists as a force which the characters are aware of that they become older but they have nothing to do against its continuity. Each day is like all the others therefore they cannot notice that time is really passing. There is not a discriminative factor among the days. In *Waiting for Godot*, Godot promises to come but it never happens. In *Endgame*, there is a promise of departure which never happens, too. Characters look forward to the future in *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*. Characters invent a past for themselves by inventing stories. In both plays, past is reflected by nostalgia.

VLADIMIR:

Must have been a very fine hat. (WFG 71).

NELL:

(*elegiac*) Ah yesterday! (E 18 – 20).

HAMM:

She was bonny once, like a flower of the field.

(*With reminiscent leer.*) And a great one for the men!

CLOV:

We too were bonny –once. It's a rare thing not to have been bonny –once. (E 31).

These stories are not finished. They are half and they are told not only to give a belief to the teller that he or she has a past but to convince the listener that a past exists but the result of this effort is failure. They do not try to remember their past but aim to construct their past. In fact, Beckett believes that full communication is ultimately impossible:

HAMM:

Yesterday! What does that mean?

Yesterday!

CLOV:

[Violently]. That means that bloody awful day, long ago, before this bloody awful day. I use the words you taught me. If they don't mean anything any more, teach me others. Or let me be silent. (E 38).

On the other hand, in the play, the audience watches the decay of a strong master, Hamm. One of the key phrases in the play is “No more”: No more bicycle wheels, no more pop, no more sugar – plums, no more Turkish delight, no more rugs, and no more pain-killer. Towards the end no more coffins is mentioned. As it can be seen, at first, there is a gradual ending but at the end, there is a total exhaustion of all sources and this indicates the last state of man, the last state of Hamm. In Beckett's

theatre, characters have particular symptoms of physical decay. Hamm is disabled, paralyzed. Nell dies in her dustbin and Nagg is in a big silence. Moreover, there is a lack of loveness in the play. Nagg and Nell cannot kiss each other because they are in different dustbins and also they are immobile. Their physical impotence causes the loss of feelings. There is a loss of feeling and loss of love as well in the relation between Clov and Hamm.

HAMM:
 You don't love me.
 CLOV:
 No.
 HAMM:
 You loved me once
 CLOV:
 Once! (E38)



4- Endgame and Bomb Shelters Wednesday, 2007.

In the later dialogues, love is explicitly mocked: “Get out of here and love one another. Lick your neighbor as yourself (E 44), also in Clov’s last sentences: “They said to me, that’s love, yes, yes, not a doubt, now you see how ” (E 50). In the play, Hamm accuses his father for being “accursed progenitor” and “accursed fornicator” (E 15-16). Life is full of problems. The possibility of any form of new life is suppressed by a flea, or a rat. All troubles must be vanished. Being near the end at the beginning of life brings

the fear of no end. In addition to human ending, there is also a nature ending. Ending of space, time, and the universe.

HAMM:
Nature has forgotten us.
CLOV:
There's no more nature.
HAMM:
No more nature! You exaggerate.
CLOV:
In the vicinity. (E 116).

Except the room in which they are, the external world is only zero:

There is no earth, no sea, no light, the light is grey. In the play, Hamm wants Clov to control the outer world by looking out of the window. Clov sums up as "corpse" the outer world. (E 25).

The physical and natural decay create an unbearable meaningless in human being and as a result of this, man denies God. God loses his meaning. As a result, the audience watches again lonely characters in a Beckett's play. Within a deep loneliness, they try to attain a meaning.

3.3. *Happy Days*

Happy Days, one of Beckett's popular works and his third and last long play, is a play telling about man's desperation, helplessness and loneliness between sky and earth. Man is caught in between the sky and the earth. Beckett draws man's circumstances in the picture of Winnie burning up to her breast in a mound of earth. In the Theatre of Absurd, the main themes are death, mortality and the meaningless or absurdity of life. Almost in each play, it is directly or indirectly stressed that men are mortal and the life is full of meaningless details. This is the inevitable result of existence. In such a case, it is futile to live and to try to get something in life.

Through his plays, Beckett gained a new sense of theatre. In his plays, the audience has been used to see certain characters doing nothing on the stage, living nothing and soliloquizing during the play. Moreover, they do not reach an agreement even if they speak to each other. They are the characters who do not remember their past and have no future and also disabled characters are seen. Generally, there is a pessimistic atmosphere in Beckett's plays. Alone and unhappy people are generally dominant in Beckett's works. *Happy Days* is a play consisting of two acts. It portrays the struggle of human being who cannot find a solution way, has no humanistic values,

no hope for his future and also has conflicts with life itself. Beckett reflects strikingly the dense hopelessness of being in a meaningless world and his lack of communication is also portrayed in a perfect way. The protagonist is an ornate and charming woman in her fifties buried up to her waist in a mound of earth. Beckett places a poor being who is sentenced to live in a ruin of body and consciousness on the centre of his play because human being is a witness of the 20th century and he is the subject of uncertainties, wars, defeats, disappointments in this century therefore it is not surprising that human being expresses himself by means of decay of language and body. Throughout the play, the female character, Winnie tries to prove her existence and to invent herself. For that aim, she uses language and the presence of the other character, Willie. Most probably her husband, Willie is behind that mound and rarely speaks and responds Winnie. The audience can see his back in Act I, but in the following act he comes near Winnie by crawling at the end of the play. During the play, Willie rarely speaks but that does not matter. Willie's breath helps Winnie to forget her biggest fear; that is loneliness. Thanks to her continuously speaking, she does not doubt her existence because there is someone else hearing her endless sentences. To be listened or be understood does not constitute an importance for Winnie because there is someone, apart from herself, hearing of her.

Her affirmation of her existence can be better understood with her situation. She is buried in a mound of earth without any mobility and also suffers. These adverse circumstances make her question herself. In fact, she avoids from questioning her inner world. In spite of the fact that Winnie is aware of the whole reality, she tries to deceive herself. Winnie knows that happy days, she dreams about, will never come, but she never gives up believing in happy days. In Act II, Winnie is buried up to her neck in a mound of earth. Everything is getting worse and worse towards the end of the play. Now, she cannot remove her head. In another word, this play is an example showing the physical movements have been totally vanished in Beckett's plays. In the play, there is a barren and immense desert. Ground and sky combine at the horizon. Man wants to access sky but fails. He is created by chunk and his feet are on the earth. He depends on the land. In fact, Winnie is aware of the fact that she is getting buried up day by day, but she denies this fact in her inner world. Beckett tries to show the audience that human can endure the difficulties of life only by deceiving himself. In *Happy Days*, Winnie is buried up in a mound of earth day by day and she is indifferent to her burying into the earth. Death approaches to man slowly, step by step. Man is buried up more, day by

day. As a result, he becomes more depended on the earth and at a certain point in time, earth is going to absorb him totally.

In addition to the message of gradually approach of death, the absurdity of life is constantly emphasized. There are two old people on the stage. They do nothing and all their effort is to waste time. They need something that can help them console themselves. Here, Beckett wants to show that, man can endure his life only by deceiving himself and by ignoring the facts of his life. Life is full of meaningless details and the burden of this meaningless life is also heavy. In order to carry this absurdity, human needs to constantly deceive and console himself. In *Happy Days*, as in his nearly all plays, Beckett searches the meaning of life on earth. During the play, Winnie's situation gets worse and worse. In Act II, she is buried up to her neck and she appears to be losing her partner nevertheless, her non-stop monologues affirm continuity and an acceptable existence. The audience sees the torture and hear the words of praise. The audience is not given the cause and the duration of torment. In this way, the play creates a mythical dimension for Winnie. She tries to get through her daily routine as much grace as possible and can only copy with her possessions, words and memories in a barren desert. From the beginning of the play, Winnie consoles herself with toothbrush and the writing on it. The mirror and lipstick also attract her attention. By the help of the mirror, she proves her existence, her being. It is vital for her. Certainly, her daily ritual is a way of keeping up appearances. Her attention is given to her fineries. Her ornate hat helps to structure Winnie's empty hours. They are all tools for wasting time. On the other hand, burning heat is another consolation for Winnie: "the happy day to come when flesh melts at so many degrees." (HD 16), Winnie always engages with something in order to spend her time. She gives her attention to her belongings, existing in her bag and also she constantly speaks without breathing. By doing so, she aims to prove her existing. If she stops speaking to her husband and telling stories and memories from the past having no definite time, she is going to be ceased to exist. In fact, she is unable to ignore time; therefore she is obliged to cope with it and she copes with time by constantly speaking. Through her speaking, she exists. Winnie's all effort is to invent her being.

Consequently, the characters in this play know that they must pass their time and fill it with some meaningless and aimless routines in order to save themselves from painful existence. The characters are in the middle of an endless meaninglessness and are left or abandoned in an aimless and absurd world in order to invent their being.

3.3.1. Setting and Stage in *Happy Days*

In *Happy Days* there is a barren outdoor setting, in which the audience sees only two characters; a woman around fifty and her partner a man around sixty. In fact, it can be said that this play is the simplest play. There are only two characters on an empty stage. The emptiness of the stage is again symbolizes the absurdity of life. The real world is as empty as the stage. Both of the characters are unable to move. They are deprived of physical movement. In Act II, Winnie cannot even move her head and Willie no longer offers even minimal conversation. At the end of the play, Willie crawls toward Winnie and Winnie sings a song. This balances impressions of change and decay with those of continuity. In each act, Winnie tells her memories from the past, prays and thinks about Willie and declares her faith that the day will have been another happy day. Each act opens with a ringing bell which makes Winnie open her eyes. The setting supports the symmetry of the dramatic structure. Beckett's direction is for maximum of simplicity and symmetry and Winnie is in the centre of the mound. It is a natural looking mound and it represents the way Winnie sees life and herself.

Another important aspect of setting is light. It is resembled to the hell. By the help of this light, it never turns into dark. Winnie aims to protect herself from the hot sun, but she has difficulty in holding her parasol and she never gets rid of being under the hot sun. Here, Beckett emphasizes that man is unprotected against cruelty and harshness of life. After a while her parasol burns up. Moreover, there are lots of objects belonging to Winnie on the stage. Winnie looks into her big black bag. She turns it into a ritual. Her reading the writing on the toothbrush has a figurative meaning. It says it is guaranteed. She reads it three or four times. Here, what is wanted to be stressed is that, there is nothing guaranteed or certain in human's life, but this toothbrush is guaranteed. It is confusing. Apart from toothbrush, there are a running out toothpaste, a mirror, a lipstick, a music box, a hat, spectacles, a medicine bottle and a revolver. She busies herself with these objects in order to pass the time. The mirror has a big meaning for Winnie. By looking at mirror, she proves her existence and revolver is another remarkable belonging. She never uses it, just keeps it. She begins with praying every new day. She brushes her teeth first and then combs her hair and looks in the mirror and then, she puts the parasol up and wears her spectacle in order to read what is written on the toothbrush or medicine bottle. It can be concluded that Winnie engages herself with all these objects in order not to confront the silence and emptiness of the existence.

On the other hand, Winnie has no control over her belongings. They are independent because they are running out day by day. It is stressed that one day everything will be exhausted. It cannot be said there is a coherence context in *Happy Days* unlike *Endgame*. In *Happy Days*, there are no windows to look out of them and clues for the audience in order to comment on. During the play, Winnie always speaks about the past, telling memories, but she cannot give a certain, definite date and there is no order among her utterances. As a result, like other plays, there is again a Beckettian classic for the setting and the stage in *Happy Days*. Moreover, her each memory or speech ends with a pause and subsequently an irritating question comes: ‘What day?’

WINNIE:

Golden you called it, the day, when the last guest was gone *-(hand up in gesture of raising of a glass)-* to your golden...may it never..*(Voice breaks)*... may it never... *(Hand down. Head down. Pause. Low.)* That day *(Pause.)* What day? (HD 20).

3.3.2. Concept of Time in *Happy Days*

In *Happy Days* like *Waiting for Godot*, time passes between day and night by forming a circle. In adventure of Vladimir and Estragon, perhaps there are so many long years between two acts but there is not any radical change in their circumstance whereas Winnie is getting worse and worse like Pozzo and Lucky. In addition, Winnie is dependent on the bell like Pozzo who is dependent on the clock. In spite of her hopeless situation, she continues to believe in the importance of vital details or details of life. She regulates her life according to her sleeping and awaking hours. In Act I, Winnie sleeps and wakes up many times by the help of the ringing bell. Thus, the audience bear witnessing the passage of days, months and years.

In the play, a certain date is never given by Winnie. During the play, she tells something such as her memories or stories but its date is never revealed. She ends up her memories or stories by saying ‘What day?’ Moreover, the audience cannot trust her memory because there is not a coherent order.

The sunshade you gave me that day. *(pause)*.that day...
The lake... the reeds...*(Eyes front. Pause)* What day?
(Pause) What reeds? (HD 39).

She is not sure of her own memories as mentioned above. Winnie’s happy days start with her awakening when the bell rings. There are so many hours waiting for her that will pass well or exciting. She persuades herself like that. In fact, Winnie deceives

herself in order to endure mentioned waste and meaningless hours. Firstly, she prays and then for her daily ritual, she gets her handbag. Her all needs in her bag and it is next to her. Winnie thinks about her husband beyond her mounds and he never approaches to her. On the other hand, she starts to look into her bag in order to continue her daily ritual or daily life. Firstly, Winnie begins by praying: ‘Another heavenly day ‘and she calls her unseen partner or husband introduced as ‘poor Willie’ and then, in order to continue her daily ritual she gets her handbag filled with her toothpaste, toothbrush, lipstick, mirror and revolver. Mirror is an important symbol of her existence. By looking herself at the mirror, she proves her existence, being. Revolver is also another significant tool. It symbolizes death or suicide. Like Vladimir and Estragon, Winnie also thinks suicide but she only considers, she does not commit suicide. It remains just a thought.

In *Happy Days*, there is not a time marker and there exists only a bell. It rings arbitrarily and time, in the play, is divided into days and nights. In fact, it is never dark in the play but the audience find out it is night because of Winnie’s closing of her eyes. According to the bell, Winnie organizes her daily routines. This can be understood by her repeated saying: ‘in old style.’ To her, time is hostile and irritating and she says:

The bell. (*Pause.*) It hurts like a knife. (*Pause.*) A gauge.
 (*Pause.*) One cannot ignore it. (*Pause.*)
 How often... (*Pause.*)... I say how often I have said,
 ignore it, Winnie, ignore the bell, pay no heed, just sleep
 and wake, sleep and wake, as you please, or in the way
 you find most helpful (*Pause.*) (HD 40).

Winnie is also aware of the deteriorating power of time. It has both physical and psychological damages on Winnie. First of all, in Act I, she is buried up to her waist. As time progresses, she is embedded in the mound of earth up to her neck. Once again the relentless of time is obvious and she is afraid of her physical appearance, Winnie says; “My arms. (*Pause.*) My breasts. (*Pause.*) What arms? (*Pause.*) What breasts? (*Pause.*)” (HD 38).

Here, decaying day by day is mentioned. Her body decays slowly, and she is the victim of the relentless time. In Act II, she articulates this change.

Then...now...what difficulties here, for the mind. (*Pause.*)
 To have been always what I am- and so changed from
 what I was. (*Pause.*) I am the one, I say the one, then the
 other. (*Pause.*) There is so little one can say, one says it
 all. (*Pause.*) All one can (*Pause.*) And no truth in it
 anywhere. (HD 38).

As she says, time defeats her and her imaginary happiness fails because she perceives that she cannot keep the past, she can only speak about it. There is no another chance for her. Consequently, time, like birth and death, is out of man's control. She has no control upon her own time.

Beckett presents the audience a world with a confined central woman character. The world created by Winnie from the fragments of a previous existence. She is sinking into the earth day by day. In Act I, she is buried up to her waist and she passes the time between the bell that wakes her up and the bell that ends the day. She always speaks to her husband, poor Willie. In her conversations, she always talks about her memories from the past, but she can never give a definite time. That is, there is no time marker in the play. Moreover, she always ends up her words with a pause. This makes audience not to believe and trust her. There is no order in her utterances. She always speaks because she needs a listener to confirm her existence in the past. Willie rarely replies Winnie, but she continues to speak a non-stop conversation. In Act II, everything is getting worse and worse. She is buried up to her neck and is unable to move her head and arms and to do the routines. Willie is now out of her sight. It is clear that she is anyhow aware of losing touch with objects and memories.

The only possession that she can see is her revolver. It reminds death. Life is meaningless therefore it isn't necessary to survive. By committing suicide she can get rid of all her pains and agonies. Like in *Waiting for Godot*, characters always speak about committing suicide but they never actualize it. It remains only as a thought, a thought of escapism. The same thought is valid in this play. In *Happy Days*, Winnie escapes the reality of time or life through non-stop utterances. Time is a necessary concept for questioning the meaning of life in this play. However, Winnie is afraid of facing time and she avoids confronting with her real existence. Man escapes from himself just like Winnie does. Her objects help her not to confront the silence and emptiness of existence.

3.3.3. Language and Rhythm in *Happy Days*

In *Happy Days*, rhythm is composed by two elements; the speaking voice and small, insignificant bodily movements. There are some instructions in Winnie's opening prayer.

Another heavenly day. (*Pause. Head back level, eyes front, pause. She clops hands to breast, closes eyes. Lips move in inaudible prayer, say ten seconds. Lips still.*)

Hands remain clasped. Low.) For Jesus Christ sake Amen. (Eyes open, hands unclasp, return to mound. Pause. She clops hands to breast again in inaudible addendum, say five seconds. Low.) World without end Amen. (HD 9-10).

The instructions such as ‘say ten seconds’, ‘say five seconds’ prove that rhythm is controlled as if it were a piece of music. Four pages of text (HD 9-13) are full of Winnie’s rhythm such as a solo performer. Winnie is controlled by a rhythm. It is the bell; a jarring bell controls her days and life. The language used in *Happy Days* is very important in demonstrating Beckett’s composition. It also takes a vital role in questioning existence. In theatre, Samuel Beckett turns the rules of traditional theatre upside down. He does not take on board the classical rules. The use of repetitions, abrupt shifting of subjects, meaningless and aimless speeches and short sentences ending with a pause indicate that Beckett’s language is totally against conventional understanding of drama. What dominates the play is Winnie’s feelings and emotions. She never uses the language in its actual sense. That is, she never accepts it as a communicating medium. Her main concern is proving her existence and continuing her being thanks to speaking. She must speak in order to survive and only uses the language for her purposeless utterances. *Happy Days* is full of short, incommunicable and incomprehensible monologues uttered by Winnie, which indicates a classical Beckettian feature, that is simplicity. A female character’s monologues are quotations referring to the past, her memories, stories, repetitions, sudden shifts from one subject to another one, absurdity of speech, short and half sentences ending with pause. Language is not used for communication, but is sacrificed to the effort of proving of existence.

When the reader reads the stage directions in the play of *Happy Days*, it is possible that he cannot totally and appropriately understand the order and importance of actions because watching and reading are quite different. In other words, watching is more advantageous than reading. By reading stage directions, thinking of a mental picture is quite difficult. It is possible of reader’s missing the details and having difficulties in mental picture. Briefly, audience is luckier than reader. By reading, it does not give the same taste of spectating. For example here is the most important stage direction:

(WINNIE embedded up to neck, hand on head, eyes closed. Her head which can no longer turn, nor nod, nor raise, faces front motionless through act. Movements of eyes as indicated.)
(HD 37).

Here, Winnie's exchange is portrayed clearly. Thus, spectator has more chance in understanding what is exactly given. However, imagining a woman buried up to her neck in a mound of earth only by reading the same stage directions does not help reader. Moreover, *Happy Days* is full of detailed and long stage directions. What Beckett aims is a true reflection of the characters' acts to the audience. There is a constant order in Beckett's stage directions. The characters' short sentences are interrupted by a stage direction. In the first act, Winnie's solo performance after praying is an example:

Poor Willie – (*examines tube, smile off*)- running out- (*Looks for cap*)- ah well- (*finds cap*) – just one of those old things – (*lays down tube*) – another of those things – (*turns towards bag*) – just can't be cured – (*brings out small mirror, turns back front*) – ah yes – (*inspects teeth in mirror*) – poor dear Willie –(*testing upper front teeth with thumb, indistinctly*) – Good Lord! – (*pulling back upper lip to inspect gums, do.*) – ah well – (*other corner, do.*) – no worse – (*abandons inspection, normal speech*) – no better, no worse – (*lays down mirror*) –no change- (*wipes fingers on grass*) – no pain – (*looks for tooth brush*) hardly any (HD 10).

On the other hand, a 'female solo' is the case in *Happy Days*. The audience watches a chattering woman character with herself from beginning of the play to the end. Despite her husband's unawareness, she speaks to Willie. She is aware of the fact that there will be no reply from Willien nevertheless; she must continue her non-stop speaking on the behalf of carrying on her existence. In order to maintain her speaking, she quotes referring to the classics from the past, but these quotations are mostly misquoted and incomplete. The merely aim of her purposeless speaking is to pass the time. Otherwise, the time does not pass fluently. Her existence gains a meaning by constantly uttering. She speaks because she exists. In fact, her all effort, at first, is proving her existence to herself. Moreover, little or no dialogue emerges between Winnie and Willie. Therefore, language does not seem as a communicating media. It has only one vital function, which is Winnie's effort of proving her existence by soliloquizing. Her subsequent target is to get a response from her husband, Willie. In a speech, she begs Willie to talk to her. She gets only a word with two letters 'it' when she asks Willie.

WINNIE:

What would you say speaking of the hair on your head,
them or it

WILLIE:

It. (HD 19)

Another short dialogue between them.

WINNIE:

Don't you ever have that feeling Willie, of being sucked
up?

WILLIE:

Sucked up? (HD 26).

Although Winnie knows her husband is going to keep his silence, she carries on speaking.

WINNIE: Not that I flatter myself your hear much, no Willie, God forbid. (*Pause.*) Days perhaps when you hear nothing. (*Pause.*) But days too when you answer. (*Pause.*) So that I may say at all times, even when you do not answer and perhaps hear nothing, something of this is being heard, I am not merely talking to myself, that is in the wilderness, a thing I could never bear to do – for any length of time. (*Pause.*) That is what enables me to go on, go on talking that is. (HD 18).

This utterance illustrates that she is aware of the fact that her husband will never answer her but this fact does not mean that Willie does not listen to her. Winnie thinks that he listens to her and this makes her happy. When she fails in getting a reply from her mute husband, she starts to tell the stories of unknown people. Her aim is again the same as previous one, which is to make the day more bearable and to accelerate the flow of the day. One of these stories is the story of Mildred and the mouse. In this story, the mouse rushes up Mildred's nightgown and Winnie enacts Mildred's nightgown and Winnie enacts Mildred's scream. The audience sees a sense of horror here due to Winnie's scream. Apart from the story itself what dominants in audience and on the stage are the effect of scream and the image of frightened person at that moment.

In the play, spectators confront with short words, sentences formed by one or two words such as "it", "sucked up?" or a definition of 'hog' as "castrated male swine." In fact, all these illustrate that there is a sign of decay in the language. In other words, there appear a consistency and parallelism in terms of decay between the characters and the language of the play. Namely both of them are barren or immobile. On the other hand, during the play the soliloquy never ends. Many times, Winnie speaks to herself. As long as the character goes on soliloquizing, she catches more chance of knowing

herself. She proclaims her inner world. As a result, she begins to question more and more about her own existence.

Winnie's last quotation is from Shakespeare's Hamlet. But it is of course misquoted

What are those wonderful lines, (*wipes one eye*) – woe is me – (*wipes the other*)- to see what I see – (*looks for spectacles*) – ah yes – (*takes up spectacles*) – wouldn't miss it – (*starts polishing spectacles, breathing on lenses*) or would I? – (*Polishes*) – holy light – (*polishes*) – bob up out of dark – (*polishes*)- blaze of hellish light. (HD11).

All quotations, soliloquies and efforts of attracting all attention help her in order to pass the time. By doing so, Winnie both passes her time in an endless emptiness and consoles herself. By the help of Winnie, Beckett represents the audience the depression, dilemma and fear of modern person. While having many problems, man busies his mind by speaking. Thus, by suspending and ignoring his real difficulties he consoles himself like Winnie. She consoles herself by believing in happy days. However, her physical and psychological circumstances conflict with the belief of happy days. Although she is aware of this undeniable truth, she leaves herself in the attractiveness of an endless consolation by dreaming and putting into words the coming happy days.

Well I don't blame you, no, it would ill became me, who cannot move, to blame my Willie because he cannot speak. (*Pause.*) Fortunately I am in tongue again. (*Pause.*) That is what I find so wonderful. (HD 28).

In spite of its meaningless, language is a medium of an existence. Thanks to language, she continues her life. When she gives up speaking, she dies. Another point stressed by Beckett is that human being applies more speaking like Winnie as he gets older and older. Winnie tries to fill the emptiness resulted from the physical weakness and the routines of days only by speaking. By speaking she feels happy and good. Winnie repeats her utterances over and over again. In fact, repetition results from the inadequacy of language. When language does not role its play, communication becomes impossible. Winnie repeats her utterances again and again during the play, such as "Another heavenly day", "Another happy day", "great mercies", "No better, no worse, no change" "old style" " And now, Willie?", "That is what I find so wonderful." In addition to repetitions, the sudden shifts from one subject to another one are also intense and observable. Also this circumstance indicates that there is a lack of coherence and a meaningful communication. Certainly in all shifts from one subject to the other, Winnie

plays a remarkable role. She reflects a pattern of inconsistency in her speech. She changes the matter many times.

WINNIE:

Yes love, up into the blue, like gossamer. (*Pause.*)No?
(*Pause.*)

You don't? (*Pause.*) Ah well, natural laws, natural laws, I suppose it's like everything else, it all depends on the creature you happen to be. All I can say for My part is that for me they are not what they were when I was young ... foolish and(*faltering, head down*) ... beautiful ... possibly ... lovely ... in a way ... to look at. (*Pause. Head up.*) Forgive me, Willie, sorrow keeps breaking in. (*Normal voice.*)Ah well what a joy in any case to know you are there, as usual, and perhaps awake, and perhaps taking all this in, some of all this, what a happy day for me ... it will Have been. (*Pause.*) So far. (*Pause.*) What a blessing nothing grows, imagine if all this stuff were to start growing. (*Pause.*) Imagine. (*Pause.*) Ah yes, great mercies.

(*Long pause.*) I can say no more. (*Pause.*) For the moment. (*Pause. Turns to look at bag. Back front. Smile.*) No no. (*Smile off. Looks at parasol.*) I suppose I might- (*takes up parasol*) – yes, I suppose I might ... hoist this thing now. (*Begins to Unfurl it. Following punctuated by mechanical difficulties overcome.*) One keeps Putting off – putting up – for fear of putting up too soon – and the day goes by – Quite by – without one's giving put up – at all. (HD 26-27).

Since her mind is too complex or full of ambiguities, she shifts from one subject to the other one. While she is talking about one subject, she thinks another else at the sametime and starts to talk about another thing without completing her sentence. In fact, this is the reason that lies under the short sentences or words. She hurries up in order to mention about another subject. Thus, she frames short sentences.

(*Raising parasol.*) That is the danger. (*Turning front.*) To be guarded against. (*She gazes front, holding up parasol with the right hand. Maximum pause.*) I used to perspire freely. (*Pause.*) Now hardly at all. (*Pause.*) The heat is much greater. (*Pause.*) The perspiration much less. (*Pause.*) That is what I find so wonderful. (*Pause.*) The way man adapts himself. (HD 27-28).

Another significant factor in using of language in the play is pauses. Almost all Winnie's speeches end up with an endless pause, which means a silent mood. In fact, her biggest fear is silence and this fear explains why she constantly speaks till the end.

I say I used to say, Winnie, you are changeless; there is never any difference between one fraction of a second and the next. (Pause.) Why bring that up again?(Pause.) There is so little one can bring up, one brings up all.(Pause.) All one Can.(Pause.) My neck is hurting me.(Pause. With sudden violence.) My neck is Hurting me!(Pause.) Ah that's better.(With mild irritation.) Everything within Reason.(Long pause.) I can do no more. (Pause.) Say no more.(Pause.) But I Must say more. (Pause.) Problem here.(Pause.) No, something must move, in the World, I can't any more.(Pause.) A zephyr.(Pause.) A breath.(Pause.) What are those immortal lines? (Pause.) It might be the eternal dark. (Pause.) Black night Without end.(Pause.) Just chance, I take it, happy chance.(Pause.) Oh yes, Abounding mercies.(Long pause.) And now?(Pause.) The pink fizz.(Pause.)The flute glasses. (Pause.) (HD 44-45).

As can be seen in the above monologue, the use of the pause is so extensive. In fact, her use of plenty of pauses indicates the inconsistency in her inner world. She has difficulty in reflecting her opinions therefore she uses short sentences. On the other hand, she gains more and more time thanks to the long pauses in order to think what she is going to talk about. At first, pauses are short but they become longer and longer and the last longest pause is death. The one reality in human life is death. In addition, the plenty use of pauses also indicate the mood of anxiety and tenderness. It is the anxiety of death and at the same time main concern in Beckett's works.

Consequently, human being frames short sentences like Winnie or he mostly keeps quiet because of the inadequacy of language in order to express this anxiety. In this play, little by little the number of pauses increases. Whereas only pause exists at the beginning of the play, they turn into 'long pause', 'maximum pause' and 'longer pause' towards the end. At the end, Willie crawls and comes near Winnie. They look at each other with an endless pause and the play ends up again in an endless pause.

3.3.4. Characterization in *Happy Days*

The characters in Samuel Beckett's work are generally suffering ones. They cannot endure the relentless of this meaningless life. They try to cope with the insufferable burden of their existence. The audience finds a group of people trying to look for a meaning in order to make this life liveable. All they need is an effective reason to survive. Beckett always suggests more simplicity in his each work. In *Happy Days*, simplicity in his characters is also valid. Contrast to his other plays, the central character in this play is a woman named Winnie maybe because; women are stronger

than men in suffering. She is about in her fifties and she is the dominant character despite her immobility. The second character is her disabled husband, Willie. As Beckett's other plays, like Vladimir and Estragon – Pozzo and Lucky in *Waiting For Godot*, Clov and Hamm in *Endgame*, Willie and Winnie complete each other in *Happy Days*.

Winnie is a female character and for the first time; the whole attention is focused on a single woman heroine in *Happy Days*. In the opening stage directions, Winnie's physical appearance is stressed: "about fifty, well-preserved, blonde for preference, plump, arms and shoulders bare, low bodice, big bosom, pearl necklace" (HD 9). Despite her advanced age, she is still an attractive woman because she is interested in a life full of "heavenly" days; she starts the day with the ringing bell. Firstly, she brushes her teeth, combs her hair, makes up using her lipstick and puts on an ornate hat which seems to belong to "old style". The main aim is to be protected from the fierce light of the day. She is a well groomed woman. Apart from her physical appearance, her circumstance is also noteworthy. On the stage, she is buried up to her waist and is immobile. This situation gets worse and worse towards the end of the play. The opening section of the play presents the persistent fears and consolations of Winnie. She begins each day with praising words by hoping happy days will come soon. She says "Another heavenly day." During the play, she constantly speaks to her husband, Willie. Her insistence on non-stop speaking results from her fear of being alone. Her only reason of being is speaking. In this way, she is able to press her fears; fear of being alone, fear of death and suffering days. While she continues her endless speech, she also looks into her big black bag. In order to protect herself from the relentless of her existence, she uses simple words. Blathering, dealing with ordinary and daily routine objects and thinking of somebody, which is Willie, listening to her, make Winnie feel better.

This is a common way of Beckett's characters in order to escape from the heavy burden of existing. Winnie is exposed to an extreme deprivation and her conditions deteriorate during the play. As Act I progresses, objects in her black bag get more and more attention and her trying to read the writing, "fully guaranteed... genuine pure..." on the objects, such as toothbrush and medicine bottle becomes such a discovery. In such an absurd world, is it possible to discuss about any guarantee? This makes Winnie think and shock. On the other hand, she tries to control Willie during the day. In Act II, Winnie is kept away from her belongings because she is buried up to her neck. In some

sense, she is without a body and in this act; the bell constantly rings that does not let Winnie sleep. She continuously sings and mentions about her youth memories. Beckett emphasizes that human becomes more talkative as he gets older. As man gets older, he loses his physical power and his place in the life or society as a result, big emptiness or meaningless occurs in his life. In order to cope with this gap, he decides to speak constantly.



5- Mary Elizabeth Scallen as Winnie in Lantern Theater Company's production of *Happy Days*, 2009 by Jeffrey Stockbridge.

At first, *Happy Days*, seems to be an optimistic play because of its title. As it progresses, ironies become more apparent. Winnie is a character of irony. Her attitudes are ironic because a repressed anxiety and fear lie under her fake happiness. She cries on her anxiety by saying: “No something must happen in the world, some change” (HD 28). In fact, she is aware of everything. She knows that happy days will not come one day. She deceives herself by dealing with objects and by speaking. If she confesses the reality to herself, she cannot bear and cope with this life. She likes listening to music. Her music box plays “The Merry Widow” waltz and she herself sings it at the end of the play. Her husband Willie crawls and they look each other in a silence. Here, the song helps Winnie avoid suffering the pain of existence.

In Beckett’s plays, audience sees disabled characters like Hamm in *Endgame*, a blind man, but the mentioned disability in *Happy Days* is different from others. Winnie cannot walk and there is immobility. Towards the end, she cannot move even her head.

The audience can only observe her mimics on her face. In *Happy Days*, Winnie is in an endless space. Despite the immense desert, she is again imprisoned. She is prisoner of her existence. Beckett aims to display that places are not important in human's freedom. Man can never be totally free because of his existence. There is no escape. But Winnie continues dreaming about happy days:

Yes, the feeling more and more and more that if I were not held- (*gesture*)- in this way, I would simply float up into the blue. (*Pause.*) And that perhaps someday the earth will yield and let me go, the pull is so great, yes crack all round me and let me out. (HD 26).

Contrast to her utterance, she decays day by day and life goes on in a routine way. Nothing changes in the real world. Actually, she knows what waits for her at the end. At the beginning of the play, she says that one day she will not be able to put on and take off her ornate hat:

To think there are times one cannot take off one's hat, not if one's life were at the stake. Times one cannot put it on, times one cannot take it off. (*Pause.*) (HD 20).

In the end, she realizes that her all efforts against life end her painful existence are purposeless. Since the beginning of the play, she escapes from confronting the reality of life, the harsh facts of life, but at the end, she fails. Unlike Winnie, the other character Willie talks less and he lives in a hole behind Winnie's mound and it cannot be seen by audience. In the play, he reads a yellowish newspaper and rarely emerges. During Act II, he only speaks once and his utterances are too short and he speaks silently therefore the audience have difficulty in hearing Willie. He generally prefers to be out of Winnie's sight and rarely comes out from his hole. His main interest is to sleep at the underground. Contrast to Winnie, Willie gives no value to his physical appearance. He is ordinary unlike Winnie. He is not innocent, but he has a childish mood. In the play, it can be commented that Winnie does not speak to an adult but to a child picking his nose. Willie is luckier than Winnie because of his mobility. He can crawl whereas Winnie cannot move her head. Willie and Winnie are a couple completing themselves. Winnie proves her existence by speaking to Willie. Whether he listens to her or not is not also important for Winnie, what is important is her talking. Thanks to this, she can continue her existence.

WINNIE:

(Now in her normal voice, still turned towards him.) Can you hear me? *(Pause.)* I beseech you, Willie, just yes or no, can you hear me, just yes or no or nothing.

WILLIE:

Yes.

WINNIE:

(Turning front, same voice.) And now?

WILLIE:

(irritated) Yes.

WINNIE:

(less loud.) And now?

WILLIE:

(more irritated.) Yes.

WINNIE:

(still less loud.) And now? *(A little louder.)* And now?

WILLIE:

(violently.) Yes!

WINNIE:

(same voice) Fear no more the heat on the sun. *(Pause)*

Did you hear that?

WILLIE:

(irritated) Yes.

WINNIE:

(same voice) What? *(Pause)* What?

WILLIE:

(more irritated.) Fear no more. *(Pause)*

WINNIE:

(same voice) No more what? *(Pause.)* Fear no more what?

WILLIE:

(violently.) Fear no more!

WINNIE:

(normal voice, gabbled.) Bless you Willie I do appreciate your goodness I know what an effort it costs you, now you may relax I shall not trouble you again unless I am obliged to, by that I mean unless I come to the end of my own resources which is most unlikely, just to know that in theory you can hear me even though in fact you don't is all I need.

(HD 21-22).

This is the longest dialogue between Willie and Winnie. It clearly demonstrates that what is important for Winnie is Willie's listening to her, not understanding her. Finally, in *Happy Days*, the audience sees a Beckettian classic and complement couple. In fact, they do not deal with and give importance to each other but they need each other in order to exist. This is the main theme in Beckett's works.

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to analyse Samuel Beckett's perception of life and being through his three plays: *Waiting For Godot*, *Endgame* and *Happy Days*. These plays depict the meaninglessness of life with its repetitive plot, where nothing much happens. They emphasize ceaseless waiting, repetition, meaninglessness, absurdity of waiting, feeling and being suspended in time instead of moving forward in a meaningful direction, waiting for waiting and finally being imprisoned in one's mind.

As a result of the World Wars and the chaotic state of the world itself, the Theatre of the Absurd has emerged in the 20th century. Samuel Beckett's chosen works in this thesis, analysez as a perfect presentation of that era. Human nature is what it is; the world is a waste land, meaningless, dreadful and human being is waiting for the end. The meaningless of existence, the absurdity of life, and the emptiness themes of these plays depicted through these selected plays.

Beckett's employment of the elements of the theatre of the Absurd in three plays show the playwright's tendency towards ideas of Existentialist figures like Sartre, Camus and Kierkegaard. "Life is cruel and painful; failure is no worse than success because neither matters" (Chambers, 1987: 78) for Beckett's characters. Beckett and the Existentialists put man in a world of ruthless situation, vain and meaningless activities. To illustrate, in selected plays all the characters are in a weird context, which is quite extraordinary to the men watching the plays. In *Waiting For Godot*, Vladimir and Estragon wait desperately for Godot who is never going to come. Throughout the play, those two central characters struggle with becoming conscious of the absurdity of existence. When Godot does not come and meaning is not found, one is surrounded by illusions of meaning and one's thought or hope for meaning. In *Endgame* which takes place in a small room, Hamm is paralyzed and blind while Clov is unable to sit. Nagg and Nell are in two separate ashbins. Similarly, in *Happy Days* Winnie is buried in a mound of earth and cannot move, while Willie is reduced to a man who makes sounds instead of using words and has difficulty in movement. Thus, they are all sharing this common but absurd situation of being a Beckettian character that is obliged to bear the traces of the existentialist viewpoint. That is to say, the only thing they have in common is "to share misfortune" (Chambers, 1987: 78).

Furthermore by discussing Samuel Beckett's existentialist beliefs through his selected plays it is depicted that there are close affinities between his existentialist point

of view and Existentialist movement. Both Samuel Beckett and the leading figures of Existentialism portray man in struggle and despair because of the fact that he is undergoing a number of losses, in a world devoid of meaning. This leads man to search for his own being. In other words, man is longing for his existence to constitute his being in both the Beckettian Universe and the Existentialist world. Samuel Beckett's existential perception of life is depicted through *Waiting For Godot*, *Endgame* and *Happy Days*. Beckett's understanding is filled with absurd and tragic emptiness of human condition. At the centre of his approach, there is an absence of meaning. In this meaninglessness, human being or his characters desperately struggle for finding a meaning in order to survive. They have been thrown into an absurd world and have been fluttered in the emptiness of life. Their births and deaths are out of their control; they must cope with an endless waiting for the end.

Beckett's characters interpret the death as an ultimate end because their suffer, pain and anxiety are going to come to an end. In *Waiting For Godot*, the audience witnesses the effort of being of Valdimir and Estragon. They wait for the arrival of Godot, but this is too absurd because of the obscurity about Godot. It is evident at the beginning of the play that Godot will never arrive. Nevertheless, the two tramps have nothing else to do; waiting is the main and single action throughout the play. Maybe, they think that they will get out of their pain of existence when Godot arrives. On the other hand, they wait because of having nothing else. In the play, being is totally absurd. That absurdity stems from the anxiety of existence and as a result of this they know that Godot will not come, but continue to wait. In *Endgame*, through master Hamm and his servant Clov, Beckett tries to display a dead world. Life in this world is at the end and it is about to run out. The characters on the stage are the last and saved men, such as, Hamm, Clov, Nagg and Neil. According to Beckett not only the whole humanity, but also everything on earth has died or is dying. What is important is the action of ending does not happen quickly. In the play, we witness an endless end. In *Happy Days*, the audience watches a female character, Winnie, on the stage. She is again, like the other Beckett's characters, tries to prove her being and chooses endless speeches. During the play, she speaks without giving importance to not to be answered. Her all effort is to speak, not to be understood by the other character, Willie. As she continues meaningless speaking, she proves her being. In Beckett's world, words do not have special meanings and are not aimed to be understood. The single action of the language is to express characters' being. In these plays, the effort is the same; it is expressing of being.

One desperately wants to find meaning, but does not want to believe in deceiving by religion, faith and truth. Man wants to understand the world, being, his existence and aim of the existence. When he is not answered, he begins to doubt his existence and with the awareness of the absurdity of existence, life becomes more difficult to accept. In the play, we see an absence of mind or forgetfulness. This absence of mind causes the indolence of the characters and as a result, man is so helpless in this world that he has to wait for an unknown thing. His all hopes depend on an unknown existing. Moreover, he waits for an unknown with a great expectation without considering if it exists or not. He is prisoned in his own existence and he is hopeless for it.

As discussed through dialogues between characters, Beckett in his three plays, reduces everything like setting, characters and language. All these characters are limited in those plays. Beckett's main aim is to simplify everything in his art. He considers them as useless details and as the danger that can attract the attention of the audience. To Beckett, the situation of human being on earth must be at the centre of the play; every detail which has the possibility of casting shadow on the main aim must be eliminated. Therefore, Beckett prefers a theatre which has no detail in setting, time, character analysis and place. The setting in *Waiting For Godot*, *Endgame*, and *Happy Days* do not busy the audience's mind with useless descriptions of place. Their attention is focused on the inner worlds of the characters and the meaninglessness of the world because the characters' inner sides are full of pessimistic and gloomy features because of the negative events and effects of the world itself.

The characters, in this play, know that they must pass their time and fill it with some meaningless and aimless routines in order to save themselves from painful existence. The characters are in the middle of an endless meaninglessness and are left or abandoned in an aimless and absurd world in order to invent their beings. Winnie's all effort is to invent her being in *Happy Days*.

Another important issue discussed in the plays is the concept of time. All characters in the plays live in a timeless world; Beckett does not give a certain time because in an absurd world time has no significance. It only divides day and night. That day and night may consist of so many years or just a single day. Suffering of human being cannot be explained by only a single day. In other words, man's anxiety, fear, pain and suffering are beyond a specific time. Beckett never confines his characters in time. They are independent of time. The characters are timeless because time never

changes. That is, every instant of time in life is the same; a change is not observed. For this reason, time is comprehended as a unit, not divided into days, months and years. In the Theatre of the Absurd, there is no certainty in time and place. The audience watches the characters lost in an unknown time and place. This situation does not create a problem for the Absurd Theatre because what is important is the situation itself. The feelings of the character, his situation in this absurd world and the meaning of life are basic and fundamental for the Absurd Theatre. Like the absurdity in time, place and characters, their costumes and the setting of an absurd play are absolutely absurd.

Finally, the audience meet uncertainties, pain and suffering, cruelty, hopelessness, frustration and repetitive themes such as birth, death and human feelings like anxiety, despair and physical immobility in these three plays. Man's needs and desires are all reduced. That is, for Beckett, there is no meaning in human life; there is only nothingness, which makes him closer to existentialists.

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