

An Insight into Human Sufferings:

on Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*

INTERPRETATION DES SOUFFRANCES HUMAINES :

DANS EN ATTENTE DE GODOT DE BECKETT

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Abstract: This paper is focused on the sufferings brought about to the two tramps by their aimless waiting for Godot, an unknown person who promises to come but fails to show up again and again. By the analysis of such elements as physical and mental pain, meaninglessness of waiting, the flow of time, human relations, life and death that the two tramps experience in their waiting that reflect human pain in the paper, the author tries to reveal the fact that existence seems to be something imposed upon us by an unknown force and we suffer as a result of it as there seems no apparent meaning. Thus, the conclusion is reached that, man's tragedy comes from a double source—an internal one arising from his finite nature and an external one in which that nature collides with the world.

Key Words: human condition human suffering tragic fate meaninglessness

Résumé: L'article présent se concentre sur les souffrances de deux clochards entraînés par leur attente sans but de Godot, un inconnu qui, promettant de venir, n'apparaît pas toujours. A travers l'analyse des éléments, tels que les douleurs physique et mentale, l'attente insignifiante, l'écoulement du temps, les relations humaines, la vie et la mort que les deux chochards connaissent durant leur attente, qui reflètent les souffrances humaines, l'auteur tente de révéler le fait que l'existence semble quelque chose imposée par une force inconnue et que nous en souffrons dans la mesure où il n'y a aucun sens apparent. Ainsi, on tire la conclusion : la tragédie de l'homme provient de deux sources – l'une, interne, naît de sa nature limitée et l'autre, externe, émane de la collision entre sa nature et le monde.

Mots-Clés: conditions humaines, souffrances humaines, destin tragique, insignifiance

1. INTRODUCTION

Irish playwright Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot* is primarily a play about human suffering involved in human existence. In this outstanding play of absurdity, two tamps Estragon and Vladimir are trapped in their commitment of waiting for a certain Mr. Godot, a person they believe will alleviate their boredom and save them from the chaos of life and restore the order of their social status. As Beckett often focused on the idea of "the suffering of being", he portrays human condition as a period of suffering which is an inevitable part of human existence. Human condition is characteristic of suffering from such misfortunes as meaningless waiting, disillusionment of hope, abnormal relationship between

themselves and with others, the meaninglessness and helplessness of their lives, their tragic fate before God, and their fear of death. It seems that Beckett tries to reveal all the evils, sins, unfairness, and disasters that exist and are happening all the time in this world and that human beings would not be able to avoid encountering them during their life time, from the beginning to the end.

2. PHYSICAL AND MENTAL PAIN

As the audience can see, everybody in the play is suffering from some kind of pain that life has brought them, both physically and mentally. At the very beginning of the play, one of the tramps, Estragon, is

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trying hard to take off his boot, which is pinching him and is obviously causing great pain to him, as he is panting and exhausted with such an effort. Though it seems that the boot act is nothing so important as compared with their endless waiting act, it is as a matter of fact a skillful way of Beckett's play to present to the audience right from the beginning with such implication that human beings are born to suffer from all kinds of miseries, and this suffering is accompanying us through every stage of our life until the day we die. As to Vladimir, another tramps, he enters "advancing with short, stiff strides, legs wide apart"(Beckett, 1965, p. 1), obviously unable to walk normally as he must also be suffering from some kind of pain that is unknown to the audience. As Birkett suggests, "Estragon's sore feet and Vladimir's bladder problems between them shape this opening visual image of action and movement which is difficult and painful and yet, with unwitting heroism, persevered with. Between them, they present the double nature of the human condition as Beckett sees it. In Estragon, it is the urge to get rid of the constraints and pinches of culture and to move back to silence; in Vladimir, the urge to continue within and despite the constraints, perpetually producing speech." (Birkett, 1987, p. 16) Frustrated by the difficulty of pulling off his boot, Estragon has to give up on his boot, remarking "Nothing to be done", which is a revelation of human beings' helplessness in face of the sufferings imposed on them by the unfavourable human condition, with which Vladimir almost agrees, though in the past he has always "resumed the struggle". But in the end, he also agrees that "Nothing to be done." It suggests the hopelessness of human beings in face of difficulty and pain and the blindness of Beckett's tramps to their real condition.

Estragon's pathetic condition undoubtedly causes great sympathy among the audience as he has spent his night in a ditch and was ill-treated. His cry of "Help me!" is no more than the manifestation of man's despair of life in the situation of dilemma. It seems that all the sufferings of the two tramps happen to them during the process of their waiting for Godot, but as I see it, it is the unbearable situation of their shabby life that causes them to wait for Godot, a being they believe can save them from the miserable condition they are thrown into. As is obvious to them, if they just hang on to the situation like this, they would be "nothing more than a little heap of bones at the present moment, no doubt about it." (Beckett, 1965, p. 2) That's why Estragon makes the sensible suggestion that they leave this unprepossessing spot. However, according to Vladimir, they can't, because they're waiting for Godot. It is Beckett's implication that human beings struggle to get out of the sorry situation but as they are tied to it by some force they have to stay where they are.

Meanwhile, Pozzo and Lucky, the rich man and his slave, have no appointment, no objective, and are shown inferior to Estragon and Vladimir in their perception of the life. Pozzo is naively over-confident and

self-centred. He boasts, "Do I look like a man that can be made to suffer?" (Beckett, 1965, p.27) He is obviously not clear about the toughness of the world he lives in as he is wealthy and stays in a dominant position. However misfortune also falls on him: he becomes blind when night falls and constantly cries out for help to the two tramps. Lucky, the embodiment of all the sufferings of the world, is leading a tragic life as a dog. He doesn't seem to care about his present sorry situation as a slave to his master, but he is in constant fear that he will be sold on the market by his master and finally becomes dumb.

Who is responsible for the suffering of the characters in the play? Though it is no easy job to give a definite answer to such a question, it is still obvious that human beings can never hope to understand why they are here. As Estragon asks, "[anxious] And we?... Where do we come in?...?" (Beckett, 1965, p. 11) Vladimir mocks him by saying that they came in on their hands and knees. Estragon is troubled by the question which is left unanswered by Vladimir. Beckett conveys a universal message that ponders the impossible questions, that arises from waiting, causes pain, anxiety, and inactivity, destroying people from within. It's necessary to note that both Vladimir and Estragon ponder suicide, by hanging themselves from the tree, but are unable to act owing to anxiety, as Estragon states, "Don't let's do anything. It's safer." (Beckett, 1965, p. 10) Also, as one proof, we can say that the tramps' repetitive inspection of their empty boots and hats perhaps symbolizes mankind's vain search for answers within the vacuum of a universe.

3. MEANINGLESSNESS OF WAITING

Though Godot embodies something that human beings are striving to attain, the subject of the play is not Godot, but waiting, the act of which is the essential and characteristic aspect of the human condition—hope of salvation. "Throughout our lives we always wait for something, and Godot simply represents the objective of our waiting – an event, a thing, a person, and death" (Boxal, 2000, p.24). Moreover, life is occupied by waiting. In *Waiting for Godot*, the two protagonists Vladimir and Estragon symbolize the human condition as a period of waiting, waiting for a mysterious being called Godot, someone who never shows up, in an open empty road surrounded by the natural world with only one bare tree. They are indifferent to this world as it is indifferent to them. Their time passes in a very different way from the world around them. The only sensible thing that is relevant to them is that they have been told by Mr. Godot to stay there and wait for him until he comes. Godot can be understood as one of the many things in life that people wait for and is supposed to save them from the misery they are suffering from. No one in the play ever really sees him, or ever will. His appearance is not as important as a belief in him. The

audience finds out about him only through the conversations in the play. Although Godot is never physically present on stage, his presence is everywhere. The whole play, including all the actions and the theme itself, is affected by the promise of Godot. Estragon and Vladimir spend their lives waiting for this one person to show up, this one miracle to happen. But it never does. It might appear surprising that the lives of two people can be based on the life of a third one, whom they never actually met. However, in reality, they do not need him as a person. All they need is something to believe in, something to wait for. That is hope this certain Mr. Godot has promised to bring to them. At various times during the play, hope is constructed as a form of salvation, in the personages of Pozzo and Lucky. According to Beckett, human beings require a rational basis for their lives but are unable to achieve one, and thus human life is a futile passion. Here human contradiction between their life's anticipation and the result of searching for the answer to it is fully displayed. Beckett endeavours to present the contradiction through the disappointment of life's expectations to indicate that, despite all human endeavour, mankind achieves nothing, and that all life will finish as it began in nothingness and reduce achievement to nothing, making the waiting of the two tramps completely meaningless.

While waiting, they are cold and hungry, and are so bored they do anything to pass their time. Thus they engage themselves in talking about everything, though seemingly meaningless. They talk about their life, about suicide and trying to commit it, too. We can see Vladimir playing with his hat while Estragon playing with his boots. Their acts are employed as something that describes the hopelessness of their lives. The subject of the play quickly becomes an example of how to pass the time in a situation that offers no hope. Their act of passing time can be seen as an escape from the pain brought about by waiting and a way possibly to stop themselves from thinking or contemplating too deeply. Vladimir expresses this idea at the end of the play, "Habit is a great deadener" (Beckett, 1965, p. 83), suggesting that habit is like an analgesic - numbing the individual. "We pass the time, Beckett tells us, waiting for a meaning that will save us—save us from the pain, ugliness, emptiness of existence" (Clurman, 1998, p. 93) Passing the time has become their mutual obsession:

Vladimir: That passed the time.

Estragon: It would have passed in any case.

Vladimir: Yes, but not so rapidly. (Beckett, 1965, p.41)

At the end of Act One, a boy, the messenger from Mr. Godot, comes and tells them that Mr. Godot cannot come tonight, but surely tomorrow. At this moment, they seem to have lost their heart and feel frustrated. Thus they decide to commit suicide, but they fail. Then they decide to leave:

Estragon: Well, shall we go?

Vladimir: Yes, let's go.

[They do not move.] (Beckett, 1965, p.47)

Here human dilemma is fully displayed, in that human is aware of the things that are impossible to attain and still linger on it.

The same situation goes on in Act Two, though there are only little changes. The two tramps go to the same spot to wait for Godot again. While Estragon has lost his hope, Vladimir tries to calm him and makes it easier for him to wait and forget all his miseries. Again they try to pass the time in any way, but they fail. Again the two passengers arrive. But Lucky and Pozzo have fallen upon hard times. Pozzo has become blind and pathetic, and Lucky has become dumb. This change in events is a direct point of life being terrific one moment, and worthless the next. Again, a messenger from Godot arrives and states simply that Godot will arrive tomorrow, same place, same time. Now it's dark and they are absolutely helpless and hopeless and try to commit suicide again but they also fail again. Again, they consider leaving, but could not move:

Vladimir: Well? Shall we go?

Estragon: Yes, let's go.

[They do not move.] (Beckett, 1965, p.87)

This time, there is a change of character in asking to leave. Here, human suffering is shown through a tormenting cycle of the drudgery of human life that repeats itself again and again. Mercier points out, "Its author has achieved a theoretical impossibility—a play in which nothing happens, that yet keeps audiences glued to their seats. What's more, since the second act is a subtly different reprise of the first, he has written a play in which nothing happens, twice." (Mercier, 1998, p. 95)

It can be inferred from the end of the two acts of the play that, though they are physically free in the open country, Vladimir and Estragon are mentally tied up by some unseen force, which tortures them and confines them to such condition of dilemma. Even when they both agree to go, the two men do not move. Their resolution to go is not strong enough to produce action. This inability to act renders Vladimir and Estragon unable to determine their own fates. They are tied up by the false hopes and belief in the coming of Godot, who is believed to be able to solve this deadlock. Facing the situation, they have no choice of their own, but they can only wait for someone or something to act upon them. "By tying themselves to a pattern of dependence, they have lost all their rights, including the right to freedom." (Birkett, 1987, p.19) Estragon asks, "We've lost our rights?" while Vladimir replies, "We got rid of them." (Beckett, 1965, p.11) Perhaps they are pondering the idea that they have no choice in their future and, as they cannot perceive the future, they therefore would be unable to know if their future is doomed. The tramps are deprived of their rights to freedom because they are devoted to the task of waiting.

It seems that Beckett's characters are aware of nothing but the will they have inside, the will to live. The core of the will is something fundamentally woeful, never-ending struggle for something, need, desire. Their world of will can be nothing but the world of pain. Estragon and Vladimir are suffering, persisting in their existence. They long for an end, a death, but cannot kill themselves, being driven by their nature - the will to life. Their suffering also consists of their desires, in the confrontation of their will as longing for contact with Godot. This is a clash of body (represented by Estragon) and soul (represented by Vladimir), the will propelling them to live through never-ending desires and needs. However, their physical body cannot keep pace with it. As Cormier asserts, "They are creatures who are wilfully avoiding the basic issues of despair and death, and it is not unreasonable to think that Beckett views them as non-tragic because they do not suffer to any significant degree" (Cormier, 1998, p.100).

Beckett displays the sheer randomness of life through the events of the play. Life is portrayed as unfair, risky and arbitrary. This is the concept of the basic human situation in the world. All his life man is waiting for something that cannot bring any definite satisfaction to him, any definite peace. He is waiting for happiness, not realising that the greatest suffering consists in it. His nature is rooted in desire and trying, a thirst that can not be easily extinguished. As Esslin sums up, "the hope of salvation may be merely an evasion of the suffering and anguish that spring from facing the reality of the human condition" (Esslin, 1966, p. 46). As is displayed in the play, humans' capacity is limited and people will have to rely on outside force for relief from their sufferings. This commitment seems the only thing that can keep life going. Thus, in the play, Godot is symbolic of such an outside force, which infuses the two desperate tramps with a purpose to their absurd and meaningless waiting. As Clurman points out, "Our life is thus a constant waiting, always essentially the same, till time itself ceases to have significance or substance" (Clurman, 1998, p.93).

4. THE FLOW OF TIME

Beckett wrote in his essay about Proust that time is the "poisonous" condition we are born to, constantly changing us without our knowing, finally killing us without our assent. As Esslin points out in his book *The Theatre of the Absurd*, "It is in the act of waiting that we experience the flow of time in its purest, most evident form. If we are active, we tend to forget the passage of time, we pass the time, but if we are merely passively waiting, we are confronted with the action of time itself" (Esslin, 1966, p.37). The flow of time confronts us with the basic problem of being—the problem of the nature of the self, which, being subject to constant change in time, is in constant flux and therefore ever

outside our grasp. Beckett expresses in the play that time is an illusion or a "cancer" that feeds the individual the lie that they progress, while destroying them.

From the beginning to the end of the play, Estragon and Vladimir are revolving around a circular pattern of time without making any progression. The few leaves that have grown on the tree by the second act may symbolize hope but more feasibly represent the illusive passage of time. "Still Vladimir and Estragon live in hope: they wait for Godot, whose coming will bring the flow of time to a stop. They are hoping to be saved from the evanescence and instability of the illusion of time, and to find peace and permanence outside of it. They will no longer be tramps, homeless wanderers, but will have arrived home" (Boxall, 2000, p. 26). The characters in the play cannot escape their fate of being the victims of time. Estragon and Vladimir constantly "pass the time" throughout the play to escape the pain of waiting and to possibly stop themselves from thinking or contemplating too deeply. Since passing the time is their mutual occupation, Estragon struggles to find games to help them accomplish their goal. Thus they engage in insulting one another and in asking each other questions. Meanwhile, they are confused with time and keep forgetting things. Estragon cannot remember things that happen in the past or things that were said before. Although Vladimir has a better memory, he is still doubtful about things that happen in the past. It's obvious that he too exists in a state of forgetfulness. On the other hand, tedious waiting that has made it hard for them to pass time has caused such pain to their organs and numbed their senses. As to the two passers-by, Pozzo and Lucky, they can not escape the torture of time either. Time has made Pozzo a blind man and reduced the previous master into an almost worthless figure that only induces pity and sympathy. Lucky also becomes dumb. Beckett's bitterness towards time is illustrated by Pozzo's bleak speech: "(suddenly furious). Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time! ... one day I went blind ... one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you? (Calmer.) They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more." (Beckett, 1965, p. 82) Here we can see that Pozzo is also complaining about the anguish of life and expecting salvation for himself. When Vladimir asked when he came blind, Pozzo responds, "I woke up one fine day as blind as Fortune" (Beckett, 1965, p.79). When pressed for details, Pozzo responds violently, "Don't question me! The blind have no notion of time. The things of time are hidden from them too" (Beckett, 1965, p.79). Pozzo's situation symbolizes the ill effects of time on humans. The inherent meaninglessness of a world based on chance degenerates human life into something that is worthless and can be toyed with by Fortune. Beckett uses this change in the situation of Pozzo and Lucky to show that human life is meaningless because time is meaningless.

The pattern of time of the play appears to be circular

or cyclic, as opposed to linear. Linear time seems to have broken down, as events do not develop with inevitable climaxes historically. The boy returns with the same message, Godot never comes and tomorrow never seems to arrive. Vladimir mentions that "time has stopped".

5. HUMAN RELATIONSHIP

Collectively the four characters represent universal man with the identification of the general human situation as well as of the particular situation in which each character finds himself. We identify with their exceptional and uncompromising nature. We recognize in these four men another side of ourselves, that side which is all too willing to compromise. However, this compromise can be viewed as a pattern of the four characters to ease their own pain and make themselves more adaptable to the horrible situation they are in for their final purpose of getting out of it. The characters in *Waiting for Godot* compromise not only with each other but also with their situation. Each is driven to form some kind of relationship with others, by need, desire, and sometimes by compassion. Basically, their relationship with each other is for dependency. As Williams puts it, "It is in fact a double pattern of this kind: the opposition of two contrasting pairs of characters, with a further contrast and opposition within each pair. The nature of the action depends on this set of contrasts" (Williams, 1969, p. 303).

The relationship between the two tramps is somewhat that of body and soul, with Vladimir representing the soul and Estragon the body, both of whom cannot exist without the other. Their relationship seems to be based on genuine mutual need and relative equality. They make use of each other to fight off the fear of loneliness or the unknown. But they also share each other's fears. They huddle together in fear when they hear the sound of Pozzo's approaching cry, standing back to back like in the good old days to protect their space against imagined terrors. They play all kinds of games to pass time together in their waiting for Godot. However, despite the situation they are tied in, we can easily find that Vladimir is in a position of more responsibility and sense. This kind of relationship is established and displayed at the very beginning of the play. Vladimir clearly realizes that Estragon is dependent on him when he tells Estragon that he would be "nothing more than a little heap of bones" (Beckett, 1965, p.2) without him. Their informal relationship makes them want to break away yet still anxiously returning to each other. Vladimir also insists that Estragon would not go far if they parted. Estragon's dependence on Vladimir is shown from the very beginning to the end of the play, as Estragon cannot even take off his boot without help from Vladimir. Vladimir and Estragon seem interchangeable. For example, one of the characters often repeats a line that

the other has previously said. This happens in the very beginning when the two characters switch lines in the dialogue, with each asking the other, "It hurts?" and responding, "Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts!" (Beckett, 1965, p.2) In addition to demonstrating the way that the two characters can be seen as interchangeable, this textual repetition will be found throughout the play as an indicator of the repetitiveness of life in general for Vladimir and Estragon. They talk about yesterday, while Estragon has almost forgotten everything. Since Estragon cannot remember anything, he needs Vladimir to tell him his history. It is as if Vladimir is establishing Estragon's identity by remembering for him. Vice versa, Estragon also serves as a reminder for Vladimir of all the things they have done together. Thus both men serve to remind the other man of his very existence.

The relationship between Pozzo and Lucky is more formal and forms a sharp contrast with the two tramps. It's a relationship of dominating and being dominated. They are joined together artificially and by force. There is no co-operation. Lucky is the paid entertainer who does all the work, while Pozzo takes all the credit. Lucky as the dominated and oppressed does not in any way show signs of resentment over the physical abuse Pozzo heaped on him, he experiences anguish on another level when Pozzo threatens to sell him in the market. From Pozzo's point of view, Lucky's sorrow is somewhat short-lived, as all states of suffering are momentary, and life is perpetually tossed between the tragic and comic. In the second act Pozzo is blind to what is happening around him and Lucky is mute to protest his treatment.

Since most of the play is spent trying to find things to do to pass the time, Lucky is lucky because his actions are determined absolutely by Pozzo. Pozzo, on the other hand, is unlucky because he not only needs to pass his own time but must find things for Lucky to do. Pozzo declares himself owner of all the land about, conceding others may pass through on the road but it's "a disgrace". He isn't self-possessed, for he depends on Lucky for his place in the world, but he proclaims to have power over others.

No matter what kind of relationship the four characters are involved, certain kinds of suffering accompany them from the very beginning to the end, namely, poverty, meaninglessness, fear, and anguish. As things are getting worse in Act Two, there has been some change in the relationship of the characters as well as their psychology. We see here that Vladimir comes to help Estragon after Estragon is kicked by Lucky: when he cries that he cannot walk, Vladimir offers to carry him, if necessary. This illustrates Vladimir's attempt to protect and take care of Estragon. However, Vladimir is often very quick to change his mind. When he learns of Lucky's long term of service to Pozzo, he becomes angry with Pozzo for mistreating his servant. When Pozzo gets upset and says that he cannot bear it any longer, Vladimir quickly transfers his anger to Lucky,

whom he reproaches for mistreating his master after so many years. This illustrates how Vladimir's opinion can be easily swayed by a change in circumstances.

In Act Two, we see again Vladimir's desire to protect Estragon. He believes that the primary reason Estragon returns to him every day, despite his declarations that he is happier alone, is that he needs Vladimir to help him defend himself. Whether or not Vladimir actually does protect Estragon, Vladimir clearly feels that this duty and responsibility defines their relationship.

Vladimir's need of Estragon's help in order to get up is somewhat of a role reversal. For a brief exchange, Estragon holds the power in the relationship as Vladimir calls to him for help. However, when Estragon does finally stretch out his hand to help Vladimir up, he only falls himself. This seems to indicate that Estragon does not belong in this position of power and responsibility and cannot act to fulfill it.

Estragon and Vladimir talk to each other and share ideas, but it is clear that both characters are self-absorbed and incapable of truly comprehending each other. Estragon and Vladimir regularly interrupt one another with their own thoughts, showing their individual self-absorption. Estragon admits, "I can't have been listening" (Beckett, 1965, p.10), and Vladimir says, "I don't understand" (Beckett, 1965, p.11), displaying the failures of language as a means of communication.

6. LIFE AND DEATH

In some interpretation, Godot is viewed as death. While Vladimir is waiting for Godot, Estragon is waiting for death. After waiting for Godot for quite a long time, everyday, in the same spot, they can hardly bear the pain brought about by endless waiting. To the two tramps, it seems the only way to escape from suffering is death through suicide. "We should have thought of it a million years ago, in the nineties...Hand in hand from the top of the Eiffel Tower, among the first. We were respectable in those days. Now it's too late. They wouldn't even let us up" (Beckett, 1965, p.2). Suicide remains their favourite solution, unattainable owing to their own incompetence and their lack of the practical tools to achieve it. It is precisely their disappointment at their failure to succeed in their attempts at suicide that Vladimir and Estragon rationalize by waiting, or pretending to wait, for Godot. "I'm curious to hear what he has to offer. Then we'll take it or leave it." (Beckett, 1965, p. 10) Estragon, far less convinced of Godot's promises than Vladimir, is anxious to reassure himself that they are not tied to Godot.

Estragon: Let's hang ourselves immediately!

Vladimir: From a bough? (They go towards the tree.)
I wouldn't trust it. (Beckett, 1965, p. 9)

It seems that Estragon is more realistic and sensitive about the perspective of the waiting than Vladimir, who obviously lives in an illusion of waiting for Godot. Perhaps Vladimir is more obsessed in his belief than Estragon that Godot will keep his promise and will appear in due time. Then everything will be different. Whether or not Godot exists does not make any difference. The belief in him keeps two people from killing themselves. It keeps them away from the places where they want to go and at the same time, it keeps them together. This belief serves the most important function: it gives purpose to their lives. Still, death is considered to be a change and that's what Vladimir and Estragon want. And Godot, no matter what/who he is, is the one who can give them this change that they so desperately need. Their failure of committing suicide confirms Beckett's idea that suicide is not a solution to a distressful human world, and also none of Beckett's characters dies or commits suicide. Suicide means to destroy the body but never the will itself. In this way - through suicide - the will finds another realisation in a stronger individual, which becomes its stronger "self-realisation".

Thus, Beckett's characters are persisting between life and death, driven by a will to life, though physically they are dying. Their existence is absurd, through the conflict of body and mind; body, which, as a part of mechanical nature, refuses to obey, and mind, which undetainably keeps on working. Their suffering consists of permanent waiting, and they used to "wait for happiness, fulfilment"; now they are waiting for death, occupying themselves with memories of a previous life, when they had, a chance of happiness. Now, they have only one wish - to die, and so to shed the ceaseless will to life.

7. CONCLUSION

As the embodiment of mankind, Estragon and Vladimir show every aspect of human emotions. Estragon and Vladimir do suffer but equally show glimpses of happiness and excitement. This can be seen as either positive or negative. They cannot escape waiting for Godot, from each other or from their situation in general. The play portrays man as a victim of himself, a victim of his own finite nature, the limitations of reason as well as of imagination. It also shows that the will is limited and yet capable of putting man in a position of willful false optimism if not a willful lack of preoccupation with the tragic elements of his existence. Man's tragedy as seen here has a double source—an internal one arising from his finite nature and an external one in which that nature collides with the world. Our reaction to the scene that unfolds before us is one of horror and despair. We sympathize, whether right or wrongly, with the characters, who may also have a feeling of horror and despair, although with them it must be considered

largely subconscious. Be that as it may, by the close of the play we feel the despair and horror of existence.

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