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Symbols And Themes In Samuel Beckett's Endgame And Waiting For Godot

Semboller Ve Temalar Samuel Beckett'in Waiting For Godot Ve Endgame

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ABSTRACT

Symbolism is a literary technique in which an author utilizes one thing—commonly a tangible object, word, or phenomenon—to signify something further abstract or cognitive. Samuel Beckett's drama offers a wide variety of allusions and symbols that suggest religious, historical, existential beliefs; thus, voices, silences, gestures, chopped information, repetition, minimalism, omission, and reduplication work together in a harmony; opening up avenues for interpretations. This study attempts to explore how Samuel Beckett's representations, techniques, setting, and use of language in his two plays, Endgame and Waiting for Godot, are utilized to reveal his interest in symbolic concepts that deal with imprisonment, sterility, slavery, time, and religious perspectives by adopting a comparative approach between these plays. The findings in this study suggest that the Beckettian stage presents a dystopian world with anti-heroes. The form and the content of the Beckettian drama, names, dialogues, bodies, are all chopped, missing a part. This imperfection connects the fictional characters and events to non-fictional ones. Criticism and warnings are delivered to the audience in sugar-coated pills, to evoke them contributing to the interpretation.

Keywords: Symbolism, Theatre of Absurd, Endgame, Waiting for Godot, Samuel Beckett.

ÖZET

Simgecilik, yazarın daha soyut veya bilişsel bir şeyi ifade etmek için genellikle somut bir nesneyi, kelimeyi veya olayı kullandığı edebi bir tekniktir. Beckett'in tiyatro eserleri, dini, tarihi, varoluşsal inançları gösteren çok çeşitli göndermeler ve semboller sunmaktadır; böylece sesler, sessizlikler, mimikler, yarım kalmış bilgi, tekrar, minimalizm, silme ve tekrerrürler bir uyum içinde birlikte çalışmaktadırlar; yorumlamalar için yollar açmaktadırlar. Bu araştırma, Endgame ve Waiting for Godot adlı oyunlardaki Samuel Beckett'in hapis, verimsizlik, kölelik, zaman ve dini bakış açıları ile ilgili sembolik kavramlara olan ilgisini göstermek için, Beckett'in tasvirlerinin, tekniklerinin, sunduğu yer ve zaman kurgusunun ve dil kullanımının nasıl sunulduğunu oyunlar arasında karşılaştırmalı bir yaklaşım benimseyerek keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu araştırmada bulgular, Beckett sahnesinin normal kahramanlarla distopik bir dünya sunduğunu göstermektedir. Beckett'in oyunlarının biçimi ve içeriği, isimler, diyaloglar, bedenler hepsi parçalanmış, bir parçası eksik kalmıştır. Bu eksiklik, kurgusal karakterleri ve olayları kurgusal olmayanlara bağlamaktadır. Yorum yapmaya davet etmek için, eleştiriler ve uyarılar, izleyicilere şeker kaplı haplar içinde sunulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Simgecilik, Abzürd Tiyatro, Endgame, Waiting for Godot, Samuel Beckett.

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores similarities and differences between Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953) and *Endgame* (1957). Some symbols are compared and discussed in a thematic manner that classifies Beckett's ideology and philosophy under specified arguments. This chapter aims to find answers to how gerontology, time, allegory, sterility, and materialism are presented in *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*. Correspondingly, a significant variation between these two plays is shown in desperate waiting for nothing in the *Endgame* but a commonality is found in certain death theme. Furthermore, time, waiting, authority, death, sterility, and family-bonds are investigated socially, religiously, and psychologically in this chapter.

2. RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES: TIME, PURGATORY AND UNFINISHED STORIES

Many references are found in both Beckett's plays: *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*, which deal with religious matters, where most of these allusions are associated with topics such as promise, punishment, and repentance. Beckett's unspoken and unfinished stories in *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* are investigated. First, the concept of Sabbath is mentioned in both Beckett's plays. Saturday is defined as the seventh day of the week. And it is associated with the notion of Sabbath which is defined as "the seventh day of the week observed from Friday to Saturday evening as a day of rest and worship by Jews and some Christians" (Sabbath, 2020, p. 1). The religious connotation of Saturday in the Bible is linked to humanity's day of creation and Jesus's death, when his crucifixion is held on Friday and his death happened on the day that followed. Jews worship God on Saturday, and Christians worship God on Sunday since they believe that Jesus revival is on Sunday (Wang, 2011, p. 198). This day from each week is regarded as a holy day, when worship must be done to fulfill their promise for their savior.

The theme of promise together with the notion of Sabbath is tackled by Beckett, which is considered a day for worshipping. Beckett warns people who break their promises, and criticizes those who spend the whole day

reforming religious rituals with no actual belief. For example, the Christians gather every Sunday to pray for Jesus. Jews do the thirty-nine activities every Saturday and entitle them as Sabbath. Beckett alludes indirectly to the broken promises of Jews towards God and the aftermath of these promises. Story of Ashaab As-Sabt or the people of Saturday promise to devote the Saturday of every week to God worshipping. However, they do not keep the promise and indirectly manipulate the situation. They prepare their nets for fishing the day before and decide to collect the fish the following day, meaning they set the traps on Friday and gather the fish on Sunday morning. As a consequence, the Jews are divided into two groups. The first group violates the God's orders and the second group refuses to follow them and tries to stop them for a reason: to be the God's true followers (Al-Shareef, 2011, Para. 2).

Likewise, the theme of creation and repentance is mentioned in both Beckett's plays. First, it is stated in *Waiting for Godot* by Vladimir, who assures Estragon that Mr. Godot promises them a meeting. "He said Saturday. [Pause.] I think" (Beckett, 2010, WFG, Act. I, p. 11). Second, it is stated in *Endgame* through the story of the tailor, who ironically compares his work to the work of God, and he says that his work is better than that of God. This reflects an existentialist understanding of God's powerlessness and the futility of life. The conversation goes on as follows:

(Customer's voice.)

"God damn you to hell, Sir, no, it's indecent, there are limits! In six days, do you hear me, six days, God made the world. Yes Sir, no less Sir, the WORLD! And you are not bloody well capable of making me a pair of trousers in three months!"

(Tailor's voice, scandalized.)

"But my dear Sir, my dear Sir, look – (disdainful gesture, disgustedly) – at the world- (pause) and look – loving gesture, proudly) – at my TROUSERS! (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, pp. 22-23)

In these lines, Beckett capitalizes the 'WORLD' and the 'TROUSERS' as if these words possess the same rank of importance. Beckett reflects the fallen values, lack of faith and the broken promises that are also recognized in *Waiting for Godot*. In Act Two, Vladimir and Estragon talk about the importance of keeping promises, and during this modern age promises seem to be a great burden to be fulfilled, where Estragon and Vladimir put it as follows:

Vladimir: Or for night to fall. [Pause.] we have kept our appointment, and that's an end to that. We are not saints, but we have kept our appointment. How many people can boast as much?

Estragon: Billions

Vladimir: You think so?. (Beckett, 2010, WFG, Act. II, p. 76)

These lines assert the futile waiting of the tramps in *Waiting for Godot*. Beckett wants to reflect that waiting aimlessly is not fruitful. Beckett does not criticize people's religious preferences; however, he wants to deliver a message that a ridiculous promise may turn into glimpses of hope. Samuel Beckett wants to educate people to keep their words and promises, and broken promises represent people's indifference and lack of sympathy for others' feelings. Nevertheless, from an existentialist's standpoint, this line ironically refers to God's indifference towards his loyal subjects since he is not willing to save them from their misery. Another point of view that can be detected in this line that people's waiting for liberation from the Nazi system seems to be overly prolonged, and people start losing the hope of liberation.

Beckett not only comments on the broken promises but also on the duality of life. Duality is employed in Beckett's plays. Life's contradiction is explained by the philosophy of Yin and Yang, which defines the world as directed by an intergalactic duality; two contrasting doctrines or cosmic forces that can be detected in nature (Shan, 2020, p. 1). Yin and Yang consist of two curved half-circles with dots in the center which form a complete circle. The dark color of the Yin represents mystery, moon, death, male, and evil. On the contrary, the Yang symbolizes clarity, sun, life, female, and goodness. The white spot in the black zone and the dark dot in the white area suggest cohabitation and harmony of inverses that shape a unity. The curved stripe indicates that there are no complete divisions between the two inverses. Beckett is personally asked in an interview to comment on the pessimism in his plays and what he thinks about the story of the two thieves demonstrated in *Waiting for Godot*. The answer is presented as follows:

I [Driver T.] asked about the battle between life and death in his plays. Didi and Gogo hover on the edge of suicide; Hamm's world is death and Clov may or may not get out of it to join the living child outside. Is this life-death question a part of the chaos? [Beckett S.] "Yes. If life and death did not both present themselves to us, there would be no inscrutability. If there were only darkness, all would be clear. It is because there is not only darkness but also light that our situation becomes inexplicable. Take Augustine's doctrine of grace given and grace withheld: have you pondered the dramatic qualities in this theology? Two thieves are crucified with Christ, one saved and the other damned. How can we make sense of this division? In classical drama, such

problems do not arise. The destiny of Racine's *Phèdre* is sealed from the beginning: she will proceed into the dark. As she goes, she herself will be illuminated. At the beginning of the play she has partial illumination and at the end she has complete illumination, but there has been no question but that she moves toward the dark. That is the play. Within this notion clarity is possible, but for us who are neither Greek nor Jansenist there is not such clarity. The question would also be removed if we believed in the contrary—total salvation. But where we have both dark and light we have also the inexplicable. The key word in my plays is 'perhaps.'" (Driver, 2018, p. 605)

The lines above tell the story of two thieves who are crucified with Jesus; however, only one of them repents and asks Jesus to make his father forgive him. Jesus promises the thief that he will dwell with Jesus in heaven. Therefore, repentance is an important issue for salvation. The right of giving birth is considered an act of sin since human beings are destined to suffer because of ancestral sin. Death and repentance are thought to be the only way for salvation. For this reason, the story of thieves is mentioned in the First Act in *Waiting for Godot* by Vladimir. Beckett thinks that life is contradictory.

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

Estragon: Who believes him?

Vladimir: Everybody. It's the only version they know.

Estragon: People are bloody ignorant apes.

[He rises painfully, goes limping to extreme left, halts, gazes into distance off with his hand screening his eyes, turns, goes to extreme right, gazes into distance. Vladimir watches him,

then goes and picks up the boot, peers into it, drops it hastily.] (Beckett, 2010, WFG, Act. I, p. 9)

This conversation between Vladimir and Estragon resembles the conversation between Hamm and Clov, since both of them have a sense of skepticism, in reality, science, world, or even religion. As if they indicate nothing should be taken for granted, investigations and researches must be practiced to find the truth. Also, this conversation reflects the contradiction of the duality of death, life, punishment, and salvation in Beckett's drama, which represents the wholeness of existence. Consequently, humanity along with art and literature are governed by this duality. The artist can detect beauty, where he/she reflects his/her influence through his/her art, but the madman's pessimism in *Endgame* stops him/her from seeing the beauty of life. His/her pessimism is driven by his/her knowledge that is utilized in the play as a prediction. This futuristic status comes from the realization that life is composed of a series of endings that starts with birth and ends with death. An existential point of view presents the death of God in a perishing world, then expresses the purpose of existence since death exterminates every trace of human beings as if they have never existed. Lack of belief during the twentieth century leads people to adopt such existential doctrines.

Presumably, the repetition distorts the boundaries between reality and fantasy, between the past and the present, and between the first and last instants of the play. For example, when Hamm says, "Yesterday! What does that mean? Yesterday!" this utterance represents Hamm's massive mental confusion, where he cannot even recognize the natural passage of time (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, p. 43). Boredom, monotony, and agony would have a great impact on an individual's mental health, thereby increasing the level of despair. As a result, everything would seem to be ambiguous and futile. The ashes Clov sees outside may be a mere reflection of Hamm's story about a mad man who is "a painter-and engraver." Hamm says:

I'd take him by the hand and drag him to the window. Look! There! All that rising corn. And there! The sails of the herring fleet! All that loveliness! (pause) He'd snatch away his hands and go back into [the] corner. Appalled. All he had seen was as ashes. (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, p. 44)

In these lines, the madman's pessimism is compared with that of Clov since both of them report only nothingness and death. Hamm shows skepticism towards Clov's reports of the world's condition outside, therefore he ironically compares Clov's word with the image of hollow bricks. Both Hamm and Clov are "bond[ed] by [a] basic ontological obligation to their hated cell, which is once a structure of hollow bricks and a game of hollow words" (Lawley, 1979, p. 56). When Hamm orders Clov to drive him to the wall, he thinks the wall is very frail and as unreliable as Clov's words, Hamm says:

(Hamm withdraws his hand. Clov rams chair against wall.)

There!

(Hamm leans towards wall, applies his ear to it.)

Hamm: Do you hear?

(He strikes the wall with his knuckles.)
Do you hear? Hollow Bricks!
(He strikes again.)
All that's hollow!
(Pause. He strengthens up. Violently.)
That's enough. Back! (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, p. 26)

Similarly, the potential procreator (the boy outside) who is seen by Clov is merely another echo or version of Hamm's story about the child and the gardener. It seems impossible to draw a line between the suggestive images both on and off-stage because neither Hamm nor the audience can comprehend off-stage images. For instance, the boy outside may be fake. Clov says, "you don't believe me? You [*sic*] think I am inventing? (Pause.) (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, p. 79). Nevertheless, many critics assume that the existence of the boy is intended by Beckett to portray a visual effect of reproduction and resurrection, a sign of hope and life. Besides, the boy's existence suggests that the outside world may not be as bleak and lifeless as it is reported by Clov.

Hamm thinks that Clov's pessimism prevents him from seeing the beauty of life. Therefore, Hamm comments on the psychological and social danger of living without any beliefs in any religion. Thus, he makes a comparison between believers and non-believers. Believers of God think that life is worthy of living, and suffering is considered as a punishment for one's mischievous behavior. Conversely, atheists think that life is meaningless because of the purposeless of living and death. For this reason, Hamm's agony and sadness are seen as a sign of self-realization. He thinks that his doom is assured due to his blasphemy. First, if there is God, then after death he will be punished because of his blasphemy and disobedience. Secondly, if he considers himself an atheist person, then his life will be doomed with nothingness, and his suffering will be futile and unjust, where most of his life perishes in continuous pain and suffering while others are safe and sound. Life and existence are regarded as worthless and meaningless for existentialists and atheists since they define life as a mere series of endings. Consequently, Nell says, "nothing is funnier than unhappiness, I grant you that" (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, p. 18). Happy times fly. It can be felt more accurately when it is accompanied by pain and misery.

Time is a measurable dimension where actions process in chronological order from past, present, and future. Besides, time is a sign of natural changes; organisms are born, grow, then die. Therefore, the time has an inverse relationship with age. When the duration of time increases, the duration of life decreases. Time consists of series of endings that are represented through the cycle of life. Additionally, literature develops a great relationship with time, where death and life are associated with seasons. In mythology, spring correlates with the Greek God of fertility and joyful spirit, Dionysus, for whom many celebrations are held to celebrate the new life every year. Moreover, themes such as death, life, and life-cycle are considered as some of the major issues that are consumed by modernists during the late 19th and the beginning of the 20th century in Europe.

Modernist and postmodernist Beckett is detected developing a special concept of time that deals with the objective time that differs from the normal process of time, where natural changes and duration of time are associated differently with characters depending on their situations. For example, time goes slower with the tramps (Estragon and Vladimir) in *Waiting for Godot* than with Pozzo and Lucky, where noticeable natural changes appear on them but they never do on the tramps. In Act I, Lucky and Pozzo appear healthy, confident, and active. Though in Act II, Pozzo loses his eyesight, Lucky becomes mute, and a tree in the setting grows a few leaves. However, the tramps seem to be not included in this natural order. Time for the tramps is lingering when it is linked to waiting, and it seems to be rejecting to surpass if the awareness cannot be diverted or entertained by some fresh involvements of any kind (Shams, 2012, p. 178). Silence and boredom may affect life to be more intolerable, and as a result, activities or even silly conversations must be created to overcome this monotony.

The conversation between Estragon and Vladimir confirms this situation. Estragon says, "Very likely. They all change. Only we can't," and Vladimir says, "Time has stopped" (Beckett, 2010, WFG, Act. I, pp. 33, 45). As a consequence, time becomes a costumed habit—which is represented through unconscious repeated actions and conversations—for Estragon and Vladimir where they develop games with repetitive actions to entertain themselves and break the monotony of their lives. Prolonged waiting is a torment, where no escape is found as if they are imprisoned in a void. The prolonged waiting is linked to the chance to be saved or to be doomed. The theme of the play is not Godot but waiting: the performance of waiting as a crucial and distinctive feature of the human state. Correspondingly, Beckett, the audience, the actors of the play, and the characters are all waiting for something. Everyone has a share of waiting in this life; waiting for a chance, an appointment, a rescue, or a miracle. For example, the audience waits for the end of the play when they are eager to know whether Godot will appear or not, or whether Clov will be able to depart Hamm's world or not, or whether Hamm will actually die at the end or not? Actors wait

for their roles to end so that they could go back to their normal lives and families. Maybe Beckett waits for a miracle that may save the world from the atrocities of life. Estragon and Vladimir are eager to know whether they will be saved or not? Life consists of a series of waitings and endings.

Time in *Endgame* is described as slow and prolonged which is filled with stories and memories that reflect a sense of nostalgia. Characters in the *Endgame* keep comparing the present time with the past which is described as joyful and prosperous, where luxuries such as Turkish delight, bicycle-wheels, pap, sugar-plum, rugs, pain-killer, old jokes, and health are no more available to reflect the degraded situation of the world. Every day is worse than the day before. For example, Hamm says that “I love old questions. (With Fervour. [*sic*]) Ah the old questions, the old answers, there’s nothing like them!” (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, p. 38). This situation is presented in *Waiting for Godot*, too, when Pozzo, in the Second Act, compares the taste of his cigarette with old times and says, “the second is never so sweet [He takes the pipe out of his mouth, contemplates it] . . . as the first, I mean. [He puts the pipe back in his mouth.] But it’s sweet just the same” (Beckett, 2010, WFG, Act. I, p. 25). People tend to favor their old times rather than their present. Accordingly, time in both plays is regarded as intolerable, and games and stories are considered as the only salvation from this unjustified waiting. Hamm’s need for communication is observed as a pain-killer for his suffering as well as the tramps of *Waiting for Godot*. The passiveness of time in Beckettian plays is suggested to be in a controversial relationship with age. He compares time to a disease that feeds on patients’ health and youth. The more time there is, the less life they have. Cancer is described as a malicious disease since it attacks people with no warning. When the realization of ultimate danger is assured, a patient has no chance of survival, and waiting with pain becomes a costume of life.

Waiting, in Beckett's plays, is connected with the original sin or the ancestral sin. This theme is reflected in both Beckett's *Endgame* and *Waiting for Godot*. Sins are forgiven by repenting. According to the catholic belief, God creates the purgatory for those who have sinned and in need of forgiveness. The notion of purgatory is defined as follows:

Purgatory, the condition, process, or place of purification or temporary punishment in which, according to medieval Christian and Roman Catholic belief, the souls of those who die in a state of grace are made ready for heaven. Purgatory (Latin: *purgatorium*; from *purgare*, “to purge”) has come to refer as well to a wide range of historical and modern conceptions of postmortem suffering short of everlasting damnation. (Zaleski, 2019, Para. 1)

Original sin and forgiveness are highly discussed in most of the Beckettian works. This means that people with sins wait in purgatory until they are forgiven and ready to be sent to heaven. The concept of waiting in both *Endgame* and *Waiting for Godot* can be linked to the waiting in purgatory since Beckett’s characters are also imprisoned in an unexplained waiting for the anonymous. The purgatory in Beckett’s world is described as “a hell, or perhaps a purgatory without [a] promise of issue. No, not a purgatory; a purgatory without issue is a protestant hell” (Kenner, 1996, p. 134). Furthermore, the original sin is linked to Adam and Eve’s disobedience to God’s orders after they get deceived by the serpent to eat the forbidden fruit to gain the ultimate knowledge that would enable them to differentiate good and evil. As a consequence, God’s punishment is descended over them. God [Jesus Christ] says “Unto the woman he [the LORD GOD] said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (The King James Study Bible, 2013, Genesis 3:15). To be born is to be a sinner is tackled in the conversation between Estragon and Vladimir as follows:

Vladimir: Suppose we repented.

Estragon: Repented what?

Vladimir: Oh . . . [*He reflects.*] We wouldn’t have to go into details.

Estragon: Our being born?

[Vladimir breaks into a hearty laugh which he immediately stifles, his hand pressed to his pubis, his face contorted.] (Beckett, 2010, WFG, Act. I, p. 7)

Beckett ironically mocks the absurdity of life. People are being punished because of someone else’s sins. Accordingly, Beckett’s logic presents “the absurdity of existence in a world without certainties”, that is the mere futility of life and the absurdity of man in a meaningless world (Suvin, 1976, p. 34). The Beckettian world presents the real condition of a man’s suffering in a void. The purgatory is more obvious in the *Endgame*, where the title discloses the dominant theme in the play of undesired waiting. At the beginning of the *Endgame*, Clov illustrates this fact. He declares that “finished, it’s finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished. (Pause) grain upon grain, one by one, and one day, suddenly there’s a heap, a little heap, the impossible heap” (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, p. 1). *Waiting for Godot* consists of series of waitings in the same way that *Endgame* contains series of endings. The

structural shape of the plays reveals the amount of time that is still available in the play. Accordingly, *Waiting for Godot* displays Estragon and Vladimir's attempts to pass the time in a sequence of random and unfinished games. However, *Endgame* suggests the last movement is the play of death. For example, *Waiting for Godot* consists of two acts with repetitive actions, which means there is still a chance for a change, and the end has not come yet. However, *Endgame* is shorter and consists of only one act, where there is no time for another chance, hope, or repentance.

Waiting in boredom, Beckett indirectly tries to transfer the boredom in the play towards his audience through the recurrence of dialogue and actions. Didi and Gogo in *Waiting for Godot* along with *Endgame's* Hamm tell unfinished stories or unanswered questions. These questions are contagious since the audience is obsessed with them. It is stated that individuals naturally never apprehend the reason for their existence (Heidegger as cited in Zia'ee & Shamsa'ee, 2005, p. 351). The quest to find the sense of life is ironically compared with Gogo and Didi's search. Therefore, Vladimir and Estragon's investigations inside their empty hats are considered as an attempt to find some meaning in this meaningless life, a reason for their existence. This action is a reference to mankind and existence as a whole. People need a logical basis for their lives; however, they are not capable of accomplishing one, and thus life is described as futile.

3. STERILITY AND GERONTOLOGY IN MODERN SOCIETY

The loss of identity and gender is presented as a reaction to the disintegration in European society. For this reason, Beckett's male characters are given feminine or childish features. The Beckettian anti-hero is suggested to be a reflection of isolation in the modern age, and their hesitation and lack of power to end their miserable life make them hold on to their destinies and continue their life aimlessly (Rustam, 1985, p. 128). Nevertheless, lack of excitement in the tramps' lives reflects the sterility of life since they are old and powerless. Aged people who are not sexually active were not also active during their youth. This sterility is a common theme in Beckett's works, he thinks that productivity is dispensable since the world is on the edge of ending. They do not have any friendships, families or even children. Beckettian creatures' rags and their misery signify the collapsed state of humanity. For instance, Vladimir and Estragon are described as follows:

Two men on stage. They are without age, or profession, or for [the] background. They have no home to go to. Tramps, in short. Physically they seem to be comparatively unscathed. One takes off his boots, the other talks of the Gospels. They eat a carrot. They have nothing to each other. They address each other by two diminutives, Gogo, Didi, which do not suggest any identifiable names. (Robbe-Girlet, 1956, p. 109)

The previous lines assert that Vladimir and Estragon in their childish behavior are like children for whom gender is absent and meaningless. Hence, the sterility in the *Endgame* is more notable than that of *Waiting for Godot*, and the visual effect of light is presented differently in both plays. In *Waiting for Godot*, it is presented as a transition from twilight to darkness, and in *Endgame* the room is lightened by the grey vague light that is thought to be more illuminated than external light according to Clov's reports. Furthermore, the bleak horrid country road of *Waiting for Godot* is replaced by a bare, claustrophobic room with two windows in *Endgame*. Clov, with a telescope, climbs on a ladder to look through the two windows and reports what he sees outside to Hamm. One window scans a wasteland while the other previews the sea. There are two windows, but Clov only reports zero, nothingness, and death outside. Where there is "nothing on the horizon..., the waves [are] lead, the sun [is]... zero," there is [no] "rain" and "all is... corpse" (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, pp. 4, 25-26). Whereas a barren tree can be represented as a sign of survival in *Waiting for Godot*; Clov's seeds are no longer sprout in *Endgame*:

Hamm: Did your seeds come up?

Clov: No.

Hamm: Did you scratch round them to see if they had sprouted?

Clov: They haven't sprouted.

Hamm: Perhaps it's still too early.

Clov: if they were going to sprout

they would have sprouted. They'll never sprout. (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, p. 13)

The dialogue above represents a wasteland-like world, where no hope can be recognized and only death is spotted; however, hope is glanced in *Waiting for Godot*, where the tree sprouts some lives. Additionally, the atmosphere inside the room is stated to be not better than the outside. Nell informs Clov to desert the room. Clov understands this and soon connects the verb desert with the noun desert because for him to desert the room would be to go into the desert outside. Beckett tries to present the real image of modern life and the condition of a modern man during the twentieth century. According to Worth, sensual life alongside the Beckettian world suggests death and sterility, where the notion of desert describes everything, where the physical elements of fertility are absent or maladjusted

(1975, p. 196). As a result, the female figure is represented in Beckett's plays as suggestive of sterility and emotionlessness. This sterility is a reaction to people's efforts to identify themselves in these hardships as restrained in an empty universe and unable to escape from it. According to Coe, Unaccomplished death and uselessness are presented as an everlasting agony (1964, p. 99). Thus, love and compassion are superfluous in such a bleak world, where people seek relief from this absurdity. Femininity is linked to mother nature whose main function is production. Beckett tends to minimize, deform the role of women in his plays, and convey the sense of death. Therefore, whenever there is a sign of life in the play, Hamm and Clove rush up to eliminate it because it represents danger towards the protagonists. These signs are noticed through the images of a little boy and a flea which are considered as regenerators. There is another symbol used: a black hummer, and it may be linked to Darwinian's Theory of Evolution and other theories of existence. Beckett ironically compares the boy to a fly just like the Theory of Evolution that links the origin of humans to apes.

The absence of women in *Waiting for Godot* is replaced by the occurrence of an old crippled female in *Endgame*. The image of a handicapped lady has a greater impact on the general atmosphere of the play; she cannot fulfill her role properly, for instance. Nell is emotional, who deprives Hamm of the motherly love as a consequence. He grows up as a cruel person, and her mother does not respond to Nagg's tenderness. She refuses to accept Nagg's biscuits or scratch his back. She rejects every emotional and sensual contact.

Nagg: Do you want your biscuit? (Pause.)

I'll keep it for you. (Pause.)

I thought you were going to leave me.

Nell: I am going to leave you.

Nagg: Could you give me a scratch before you go?

Nell: No. (Pause.) Where?

Nagg: In the back

Nell: No. (Pause.)

Rub yourself against the rim. (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, p. 19)

In these lines, Nag and Nell's physical disability symbolically refers to their emotional and spiritual paralyze; their love is malformed. This mobility is detected in Nagg and Nell's inability to reach each other to the degree that "their heads strain towards each other, fail to meet, and fall apart again" (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, p. 14). Their sterile relationship comes from Nagg's superficiality and Nell's depression and her wish to disappear from this world. She is shown to be a weak character who cannot fulfil her role as a mother nor as a wife. As a result, this family represents the dysfunctional and deformed Western families during the twentieth century. The death of Nell, the only female character in the play, symbolizes the sterility of an unproductive dead world since the modern world rejects any sense of life and productivity. The purposeless of life is elaborated on as follows:

Like them [Beckett's characters] our minds [readers and spectators] wish to create meaning that will maintain itself in the desolation of nothing, but as preceptors, we are compelled to acknowledge the essential comedy of construction of words over what is not there. (Robinson, 1969, p. 245)

In these lines, the absurdity of life is expressed. People try to grasp a reason or hope that will enable them to live despite their suffering. Silly or funny actions and conversations are both practised by actors on the stage and the audiences in life when they sarcastically mock and criticize certain events or mock their inability to rescue themselves in the real world. To stress visually the futility of the characters and their environment, Beckett makes the whole stage overwhelmed with a grey light that is stranded between light and darkness, suggesting the hesitation of taking a final and definite decision. Grey light stresses Clov's difficult position between staying or leaving. Above and beyond, it reflects the characters' bizarre situation towards life, which is an extremely confusing one: they desire to dispose of it but their efforts go in vain, thus, the characters are seen grounded by the past and the future death. Even the environment around them is reduced to the state of standing in between desert and sea. Such a state may emphasize the character's eternal misery of being stuck in the wheel of the sameness of repetition.

The additional woman character revealed in the play is mother Pegg. We do not know whose mother she is! She is anonymous like the rest of the offstage world which is described by Clov as being dead. Her death might be a symbol that refers to the death of the traditional concepts of motherhood. Therefore, the only mother on the stage is Nell who is cold and indifferent. Therefore, the image of the women in Beckett's plays stands for sterility, unproductivity, and death. The Beckettian creatures are noticed to be the victims of mysterious power: the power of destiny.

Most of [Beckett's] creatures are disabled to a greater or lesser extent: firstly, because Beckett is a Cartesian for whom the mind-body split is total and simply the more obvious in handicapped people; secondly, because

mutilation is for him a symbol of mankind's serious metaphysical handicap in the game of chance we are all forced to play and lose with our fates. (Fletcher et al., 1978, pp. 92-93)

In these lines, death and hopelessness are represented as the main themes that dominate the general atmosphere in Beckett's *Endgame*. Hamm, Clov, and Nagg's spiritual isolation from God are considered as the main reason for their agony that even their prayers are not accepted. As a result, they have developed an antagonistic attitude towards life. The image of the child in both plays (*Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*) symbolizes purity, hope, and productivity that is mistreated and abused. Mr Godot's messenger is mistreated alongside his brother by their merciless master. Nevertheless, the child in the *Endgame* is doomed, too. As soon as Clov witnesses the child outside, he decides to kill him. Hope and hopelessness are major leitmotifs that are tackled in most of Beckett's works with his gaff. Clov and Hamm want to extinguish any light of hope that may shine into their room. Therefore, Clov wants to destroy the "potential procreator" (the child) just like the flea and the rat (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, p. 88). According to Hamm, who thinks that from these insignificant creatures, humanity might evolve all over again. At the same time, the boy is regarded as neither a threat nor a promise. Furthermore, the child's character is too fragile to make any significant changes in the decaying world of the play. Moreover, the decaying setting in the *Endgame* suffers from rot and deterioration inwardly and outwardly. Moreover, according to Dorothy, it is stated that the child cannot breed without a suitable partner, who is missing in the play (1971, p. 99). If the child is raised by Hamm, then he will be another copy of Clov, whose hostility and gloominess are a result of Hamm's preaching and his negative view of life. This is revealed by Clov's antagonistic attitude towards the child. Families traditionally are used to raising and educating their offspring morally; however, this moral quality starts to decrease with the development of the world. Traditions, religions, and ethics are regarded as old-fashioned features. For this reason, a new kind of phenomenon emerges called fractured and broken homes.

The concept of gerontology and parenthood is highly stressed in the *Endgame* as a reaction to the fallen values of Western society during the 20th century. Beckett reveals the clash between the past and the present by highlighting the crucial behaviour among his characters. Especially in the *Endgame*, we can see an example of the modern family, where the issue of disobedience to ancestors is discussed. Religiously, the issue of parents' obedience is stated in Moses' Ten Commandments that states who "And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death" (The King James Study Bible, 2013, Exodus 21:17). Correspondingly, Judaism and Christianity consider disobedience to parents as a sin to be punished with stoning since a child's obedience to his parents is regarded equal to God's obedience. Hence disobedience to parents is recognized in the *Endgame* through the cruel behaviour that is practised by Hamm towards his parents and by Clov towards Hamm. Accordingly, social structure and the general atmosphere in the *Endgame* are described as electricity and can be turned into an angry fury at any minor irritation. Hamm, Clov, Nagg, and Nell's handicap do not make them more tender. This kind of behaviour must have psychological and social dimensions.

The world during the twentieth century is a period of forfeiture, economic disasters, and wars. As a consequence, Nietzsche says that modern men are addressed to be the children of a fragmented, pluralistic, sick weird period (Bradbury, 1988, p. 7). Hence, the war has been as destructive as never witnessed before, and chaos and destruction are everywhere. Inner confusion and corruption are widely spread economically, socially, politically, and even religiously, where traditions, rationality, and moral values seem implicitly contradicted by the slaughters and killings initiated by Europe's civilized nations. Valery states that the side effect of war mentally is presented through the intensive injury of the mind that is reflected in the writings of intellectual men (Kohn, 1957, p. 64). The agony of humanity is usually expressed in a literary style since literature is considered as the mirror of society. It presents fictional stories and characters for nonfictional events and personalities.

Hamm's family suffers from dysfunctional relationships since they treat each other harshly. This loss of connection indicates little tenderness in this rotting world. Hamm's fear of death or the end is noticeable, and because of this, he mistreats his parents. This indication is premeditatedly tackled by Beckett referring to the fallen values and the lack of faith during the first half of the 20th century in Western societies. However, Hamm's cruelty is investigated as a response to the neglect that he suffers as a child. Thus, Nagg confesses this, and shows an understanding of Hamm's misbehaviour and aggression towards them. The conversation goes as follows:

Hamm: The old folks at home! No decency left! Guzzle, guzzle, that's all they think of.

Hamm: Clear away this muck! Chuck it in the sea!

Nagg: [...] We let you cry. Then we moved you out of earshot, so that we might sleep in peace. (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, pp. 9, 23, 56)

For example, these lines are considered as evidence that reveals neglect and violence in raising their child. When Clov was a child, Hamm refused to grant him a bicycle. Jawad suggests that the bicycle might be a symbol of the

childish joy of which Clov is deprived (2004, p. 40). It is stated that this symbol may signify Clov's childhood in Hamm's home and show the lack of parental care and kindness that are essential in any child's raising.

Materiality is another theme covered in the play (*Endgame*), and is regarded as a key idea to dominate others. Hamm's materialist nature is seen as he uses materialistic treats (food) to compel others to fulfill his orders. For example, he offers his father (Nagg) a sugar-plum to listen to his stories. He also supplies a minimum amount of food to Clov to prevent his death. Accordingly, Webb explains that hunger is a policy that is used by Hamm to support his control over others (1972, pp. 55-56). When Nagg feels hungry, Hamm offers him a hard biscuit to chew, but Nagg is toothless, so Hamm's offer is regarded as an act of typical sadism. Hamm does not save any possible means to torture his parents. He considers them as the cause of his suffering because they brought him to this malicious life. He wonders "can there be misery – (he yawns) – loftier than mine?" (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, p. 2). Hamm's depression and cruelty are justified; his cynicism might be a desperate attempt to associate the brutality of a life which is indifferent to his needs, and his utterances of suffering might be indications of genuine agony (Easthope, 1969, p. 63). Hamm's agony is suggested to represent the general agony of the entire humanity.

Beckett's characters are destined to suffer because they are born to sin. Thus, people who produce children to this harsh life deserve to be punished harshly for their dreadful sin (procreation). Hamm entitles his father as the "accursed progenitor" (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, p. 9). He even demands Clov to dispose of his muck, his parents, and chuck them in the sea. Besides, he does not even mourn his mother's (Nell) death, and is filled with disdain and hatred toward his parents. Accordingly, the bad treatment of aged people is considered symptomatic of the materialistic spirit of the age. The elderly are treated like trash because they are no longer able to perform socially useful work.

It is a profound visual and emotional shock to see two old people, Nell and Nagg, confined in dustbins where they are discarded like household rubbish, and spend most of their time sleeping like animals in a hole. Suggestively, the two ashbins "may represent the gonads, in which the past of the human race lies waiting to become its future" (Mercier, 1998, p. 116). In other words, these two ashbins represent the containers that hold the features of the ancestors of the human race that wait to prefigure themselves in the future. Accordingly, Nell and Nagg's position has the effect of providing a visual image of Hamm's future moral position. Moreover, those legless figures in their dustbins, according to Hayman, represent the remnant that refers to Proust's vases-containing useless memories of the past (1968, p. 26). Hamm frequently feels the need to wash them away from his memory, but they cling to him out of his will since they pop up every time from their ashbins to remind him of their existence. This precisely reflects the eclipse of moral and ethical principles that invade Western society after two world wars. Ultimately, Hamm, Clov, and Nagg – the three generations – are considered as three visual images of three generations that have physically decayed in various ways, i.e., man's gradual decline, and deterioration. The image of this decomposition and the damage inside the refuge setting is in parallel to the image of the progressive chaos and deterioration of the off-stage world, which is described but never visually presented on stage.

In *Endgame*, Beckett creates profound theatrical images that present immobility and lack of communication by referring to "the death of the stock props of Western civilization, family cohesion...parental and connubial love, faith in God...and artistic creation" (Cohn, 1969, p. 42). The characters' inability to achieve a meaningful connection with each other and the lack of any emotional relationships are visually depicted in the ways that the characters do not ever touch each other. Nagg and Nell are seen eagerly trying to touch and kiss each other, but they fail for their ashbins are not close to one another. However, the only affectionate touch is given to the three-legged toy dog of Hamm. It may provide a visual hint to the repressed desire to embrace someone as it compensates Hamm for the lack of human relationships as well as providing an affirmation of Hamm's emotional emptiness. Though Hamm and Clov are physically capable of touching each other, yet Clov refuses to kiss and hold Hamm's hands when he is asked to do so:

Hamm: kiss me.

(Pause).

Will you not kiss me?

Clov: No.

Hamm: On the forehead.

Clov: I won't kiss you anywhere.

(Pause.)

Hamm: (holding out his hand):

Give me your hand at least.

(Pause.)

Will you not give me your hand?

Clov: I won't touch you. (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, p. 44)

In these lines, Beckett indirectly highlights the side effects of modernity in Europe during the twentieth century. He elaborates on the collapsed structure of the family-bonds when the family man loses his power and shows his inability to support the family financially. He loses the respect of the family members because he seems to accept his failure as a father figure mostly. This situation is noticed through three generations in Beckett's *Endgame*; Hamm always mistreats his parents because they are no more in an authoritative position as a result. They are regarded as trash to be bottled in the dustbins. Towards the end of the play, Hamm recognizes this fact through Clov's harsh treatment towards him. Clov's behaviour is natural and can be considered as a reflection of Hamm's preaching and attitude towards his parents, Clov, and other characters in the play.

4. THE KING OF THE GAME

Leaders and politics are described as players and a game. Every player has a special technique to control the game, as well as the rulers. Thus, games can reveal too much about the players' personalities and their strategies. Pozzo and Hamm are good examples of rulers that Beckett wants to reflect on his stage. Accordingly, the setting in the *Endgame* is devised as a chessboard because Beckett is a chess fan. His theatrical gaze enables him to reflect the tyranny of some rulers over their subjects. He is manifested as someone who lives his last moments just like a chess player does in the game. The symbolic death in a game of chess represents an actual death. In the *Endgame* the imagery of chess is staged in the play through Clov and Hamm in red and Nagg and Nell in white colour. Hamm in the *Endgame* is described as powerless as the king in chess: the most dominant piece whom all others serve but who is also the frailest. Therefore, he feels threatened to go beyond his armchair and far away from the centre. Therefore, Hamm's armchair symbolizes power and self-control. He loses control over others and himself when he moves far away from the centre, so he quickly withdraws to his throne (the armchair). When Hamm approaches the wall, he tells Clov, "beyond is the... other hell" (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, p. 26). Therefore, Hamm thinks everything far from the centre symbolizes loneliness, boredom, ruthlessness, and nothingness. Adorno says that Hamm's subjectivity as the central character in the play is represented through his insistence to be always placed in the middle of the stage (1969, p. 111). The armchair symbolizes Hamm's physical and spiritual paralysis because of his fear of the anonymous desolate world. Hence Pozzo is regarded as representative of Hamm in *Waiting for Godot*, both of them are described as merciless masters with thrones or chairs. The lines below suggest the nature of the game created by Beckett:

Hamm soliloquizes in terms of the last moves in chess, a king evading checkmate as long as possible with stern asides, in religion, "Get out here and love one another! Lick your neighbor as yourself!" He echoes Pozzo's gravedigger aphorism in *Waiting for Godot* when he says, "The end is in the beginning and yet you go on." Clov prepares to leave, hating Hamm for past wrongs, yet now without pity for Hamm. (Zia'ee & Shamsa'ee, 2005, p. 106)

The lines above refer to a life-like game that is not interesting and prosperous since it is described as the last empty moves that are practised by a mature player to avoid losing the game. This image has its reflection in reality that represents empty people who are looking for approval from others. The boredom in the *Endgame* represents the boredom in real life when individuals are obliged to play their roles unwillingly. The characters in the *Endgame* vainly prolong their role in life and on the stage to escape boredom and death, through making extra moves in an already finished game.

Given such a predicament makes *Endgame* converges upon the idea that the play conveys a theatrical image of a chessboard. In this game, the characters are both players and chess pieces. The characters do not only play the game but also they are played with. Like pieces on a chessboard, the characters in *Endgame* are severely restricted in their movements, each obeying a different rule of motion and a certain order. Therefore, Hamm is described as the king for dominating the game, and he is guarded by other pieces, the red piece, Clov, and the white pieces, Nagg and Nell. Moreover, Beckett employs many phrases to support this image and its effect. Hamm's first words "Me – (he yawns) – to play" are repeated in his final speech, after which he refers to the "Me to play. (Pause. Warily.) Old endgame lost [*sic*] of old play and lose and have done with losing," and says "since that's the way we're playing it... (he unfolds handkerchief)... let's play it that way" (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, pp. 2, 82, 84). However, the importance of a chess game as a theme and technique in *Endgame* is used to impose order or structure upon what might otherwise seem a formless series of events as stated below:

In a world no longer rendered purposeful by Christian conceptions of eschatology, time is experienced not as a linear development towards a goal, but as a ...vacuum, a black hole without structure. [The] structure has to be imposed from without through routine and for Beckett's characters, through the playing of games. The games Hamm and Clov play are futile, but they are all there is. (Hammond, 1979, p. 13)

The quotation above may underline some of the deeper preoccupations of *Endgame* that are suggested through visual theatrical effects. The very suggestive references to Christian conceptions concerning the resurrection and the divine authority are portrayed in Hamm's dramatic image as the king of the world and the central character in the play as well as in the image of the boy. Moreover, the problem of time and space as indefinable and perceivable is visually portrayed in the character's futile reliance on memory to patch the eternal vacuum of their lives, where this situation is recognized in *Waiting for Godot*, too.

At the beginning and at the end of the *Endgame*, Hamm's face is covered by a bloodstained handkerchief. As a technique, this bloodstained handkerchief aims to shock the audience. And, being a visual effect, it portrays Hamm's cruelty as he appears to be a murdered man. It may also show Beckett's fascination with crucifixion imagery as it calls to mind the legend of Saint Veronica, whose handkerchief, according to Molinari, is reported to retain the imprint of Christ's face (2014, p. 12). The visual effect presents Hamm to be submissive to death that has already overtaken the remaining world. In other words, this bloody handkerchief is a reminder of "that bloody awful day, long ago, before this bloody awful day" (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, pp. 43-44). Maybe, Beckett is mocking the story of Saint Veronica and suspects its originality since it is impossible for a face imprint to be exactly printed on a piece of cloth with one sweep. Also, Beckett, as a modernist, prefers to educate his audience implicitly through allegorical references in biblical, mythological, and canonical fashion.

Having the status of a game of chess that is manifested with fixed roles, Beckett's *Endgame* is constructed with Beckett's roles of playing. He attempts to use the body language and the auditory effects as much as he could to involve his audience in this creation. He uses visual and sound effects to attract his audience's attention to deliver his messages deliberately. Sound and sight have a significant impact on an individual's perception in which Beckett is highly interested. Beckett uses sound effects as a profound medium of expression and points out that his work is a substance of important sounds that are made as much as possible. For instance, laughter in *Endgame* and *Waiting for Godot* is not a sign of happiness or amusement, rather they are a mark of alienation, pain, and despair. This situation creates a sense of duality because there is a contradiction between what one hears and sees. Therefore, this laughter is described as "performed like a mock-ritual" (Cohn, 1969, p. 50). During the show, the audience hears Clov's brief laugh which intensifies the mechanicality of emotions. Hamm says, "(Clov bursts out laughing.) What is there so funny about that?" (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, p. 60). In this conversation, Beckett speaks the mind of the audience by implicitly addressing some words for them; it is as if Hamm is asking the audience about Clov's laughter. This technique breaks the boundaries between the on-stage and off-stage.

Other auditory techniques are the footsteps and the whistle employed in Beckett's work. Clov's footsteps back and forth from the kitchen to Hamm's chair are of consistent numbers and patterns. They are also always rhythmically timed as Beckett says during the production of *Endgame* that "it's almost like a dance, equal number of steps, rhythm kept equal" (Haynes & Knowlson, 2003, p. 116). Thus, Hamm uses the sound of a whistle as an expression of power for controlling and summoning Clov to fulfil his material needs. Clov says "Nice dimensions, nice portions, I'll lean on the table, and look at the wall, and wait for him to whistle me" (Beckett, 1985, EG, Act. I, p. 2). Hamm's whistle is linked to Pozzo's rope, where a similar matter of slavery is detected through Pozzo's attitude towards Lucky, Pozzo "[jerks the rope.] Up hog! Back! stop! Turn!" and these orders are full of insolence and cruelty (Beckett, 2010, WFG, Act. I, p. 20). Therefore, the whistle as an auditory effect is considered as dehumanizing and a sign of slavery. In this regard, Hamm and Clov reflect the bond of the master-slave. Nevertheless, the sound of the whistle, perhaps, reflects the deep need to communicate with someone. It substitutes the function of language as a means of direct communication.

The sound of knocking is another sound effect that stands for words that no longer express human desires. However, Nagg knocks twice. The first time is in the middle of the play and the second time is almost at the end of the play. As an effect, the knocking of the first time, perhaps, has two functions. First, it stirs the audience's imagination and expectation as they want to see and know who there is in the ashbin. Second, it suggests a sort of resurrection as Nell emerges from a sleep-death state. The second shrilling and the louder knock reflect Nagg's horror and shock for being alone without a companion since Nell, perhaps, is alone to escape this absurd situation.

Such a kind of relationship that bonds the master to the slave has a negative connotation since a corrupted master is threatened to lose his authority at any time. Clov's revelation against Hamm is a reaction to the bad treatment that he receives most of his life from Hamm. The hard-hearted master is either to be revolted against just like in Clov's case or to be led by an ignorant slave just like where Pozzo is led by Lucky. Beckett wants to present the danger of losing authority by presenting a blind master who is followed by muted subjects, where the catastrophe is certain because neither the master is capable of making the right decision nor his mind-absent subjects can search for their rights, therefore, such nations are doomed with destruction. For instance, a conversation between Pozzo and Estragon

reflects Lucky's passive submissiveness to his master (Pozzo) despite the dreadful treatment that he receives, the dialogue goes as follows:

Estragon: Why doesn't he put down his bags?

Pozzo: He wants to impress me, do that I'll keep him.

Vladimir: You want to get rid of him?

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

[Lucky weeps.]

Estragon: He's crying!

Pozzo: Old dogs have more dignity. (Beckett, 2010, WFG, Act. I, pp. 26, 28-29)

In these lines, Beckett's attempt to describe the young generation's state during the twentieth century. He creates the image of Lucky who carries the master's luggage all the time, thus, Lucky resembles the young people, and Luggage resembles the responsibilities of survival. A long time ago, the young generations are always described as joyful and hopeful people since they possess youth and future. However, this picture is turned upside down, the young generations during the twentieth century are tired, weak, and hopeless; their higher aspiration is to ensure the minimal amount of survival sources for the next morning. Poverty and low wages shape the overall atmosphere of western society after the two world wars. A good example is driven by Pozzo who compares the elderly to old hunting dogs, which are sentenced to death as a rewarding gift for their hard efforts. When people get old and they are unable to perform as they used to be, according to Pozzo death will be the fair judgment for such cases out of mercy. Another example of corrupted rulers is when Beckett alludes to the allusion of the feast of Belshazzar. The conversation goes Between Hamm and Clov.

Hamm: In your kitchen?

Clov: Yes.

Hamm: What, I'd like to know.

Clov: I look at the wall.

Hamm: The wall! And what do you see on your wall? Mene, mene?

Naked bodies?

Clov: I see my light dying. (Beckett, 1958, EG, Act. I, p. 12)

According to Seow, these lines present the words mene, mene that tells the story of Belshazzar: the Babylonian King and the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar¹. The story goes, when King Belshazzar was celebrating a great festival for his thousand lords, he orders that vessels of the temple from Jerusalem be used for drinking, yet formless fingers appear and write on the wall while the Babylonians are consumed with celebration. Belshazzar asks his magicians and seers to translate the writing, but they are not even able to decipher it. Belshazzar is advised to send for Daniel who is known for his intelligence. Then, in case Daniel deciphers the writing, the king offers to make him third in line to the throne. Daniel rejects the award but accepts the appeal. He reminds Belshazzar that the glory of his father is God's gift and that God dethrones him as a punishment for his arrogance towards God's bestowal. Belshazzar drinks of the vessels of the temple of heaven and blesses his deities, but does not present gratitude to God. As a consequence, Seow elaborates on the following words: 'MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN' that appear on the wall of Belshazzar. Seow comments on the story, where Daniel reads the words and says that MENE means that God decides the time of his death and TEKEL means that he is not qualified as a good king anymore, and PERES means that he will be dethroned by the Persians. As a reward for the successful interpretation, Daniel retains the third in line to the kingdom. On the same night, the oracle is fulfilled; Belshazzar is dethroned and killed by the Persians. (Seow, 2003, pp. 80-84).

Seow elaborates more and says, the Chaldean monks are not even able to interpret nor even translate the writing on the stone; however, Daniel simply involves offering vowels in two separate ways and the words are viewed as nouns and verbs. These words have a materialistic meaning. The word MENE is associated with a Jewish word that means sixty shekels (mina). TEKEL means numbered or divided. PERES means to divide into two and it is a word that is both used in Persian and Hebrew, suggesting that Belshazzar's kingdom will be divided between two nations of Persians and Medes. To sum the whole numbers together, each mina sixty shekels and; plus two equals sixty-two and it is supposed to be the age of Darius the Mede at the time (Seow, 2003, pp. 80-84). Therefore, the term *Writing on the Wall* becomes a common idiomatic phrase that refers to the expectation of any inevitable harm, misfortunes, or ending. One who doesn't see the written words on the walls or refuses to do so is identified as unaware of the signs of a cataclysmic occurrence that is likely to take place shortly. Accordingly, Beckett comments on this idiom in the

Endgame, referring to the arrogant rulers of the twentieth century who practice arrogance towards God's signs. Beckett through this reference wants to warn these rulers to evaluate their behaviours and to prevent them from spreading evil everywhere.

Furthermore, Beckett alludes to this warning in his *Endgame* to awaken people, especially the rulers, and remind them to be careful of God's wrath. Also, *Mene Mene* indicates the reason for considering the kingdom of Hamm in smythereens. But if Hamm is perceived as Belshazzar; the last ruler of Babylon, then Clov is the prophet Daniel; this comparison reflects an ironic sense. The dark world of Hamm's kingdom leaves no light to be used; it distinguishes the insight and the eyesight altogether. Hamm suggests that these words are associated with death, and it is stated at the beginning of the play that only those who lack the insight would not see it. The death in the Beckettian world has its reflection on the real world off the stage. This phrase alludes to death that wraps up the whole themes and concepts in the play together to achieve the unity of the work and give it a sense of wholeness. The play obviously reflects an apocalyptic situation in a dystopian world, where death and despair are the masters of the game.

The corruption and injustice of Churches and rulers of the western world during the twentieth century are compared with that of Belshazzar. Beckett mocks the church by inserting the phrase naked bodies with the holy phrase of *Mene Mene*. Nevertheless, Beckett alludes to Eliot's "Wasteland," where the terms of naked bodies and the image of the rat are recognized as the dead world. Furthermore, the image of the blind intellectual figure, Tiresias², is utilized in Eliot's poem and Beckett's drama through the character of Pozzo and Hamm. Both settings suggest death, where desert and the corpses world are observed. Inability to sit or lie is a common characteristic that Eliot's and Beckett's characters possess and Clov is the best example. Furthermore, the paralyzed force is represented through Hamm's character and Eliot's poem. Game of Chess is a section of Eliot's "WasteLand" and Beckett's *Endgame* that focuses more on the dysfunctional relationships among its characters rather than presenting a well-performed game. Besides, the cruelty of the month of April is detected in both works; in "WasteLand" it is presented as a deformed joyful time where people enjoy it; however, in the poem, it is accompanied by despair and sadness. The same situation is reflected in the *Endgame*, where the couples, Nagg and Nell, enjoy their happy time together in the nice weather of April when an unfortunate accident takes place to deprive them of the lower parts of their bodies.

Beckett and Elliot are modernists, the setting and characters in the Beckettian stage suggest a common modernist feature, where isolation, darkness, and coldness overwhelm the stage. Thus, when a human being finds themselves isolated, helpless, and lost with no concrete base to stand upon, they start to revolt at every belief in their society. The non-believers cannot stand the hardships of life and that is why they revolt to declare that there is no superior authority to save them. They say that their salvation is bound tightly with the death of God, but they only admit their doom with no other life after death. The existentialists establish new beliefs to give sense to this vanishing of mortal life. They think that, since there is no God, then human beings are responsible for their actions that determine their destiny on this ground. However, the absurdist playwrights and certain existentialists reject this fact and state that their life is aimless, and one day they will perish as if they have never been cast into this life.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of this study is to explore the symbolic representations in *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*, and to discover what the themes in Beckett's drama reveal about twentieth-century Western culture. In other words, how Beckett's dramas depict people's torment throughout the twentieth century is studied. In this paper, themes and symbols are considered characteristics in Beckett's drama. Therefore, this article analyzes symbolic conceptions that involve themes such as imprisonment, sterility, slavery, time, and religious perceptions.

Samuel Beckett is regarded as a forerunner in dramatic art during the twentieth century. He is labelled as an absurdist because his writings are considered part of the modern age. He represents the modern man and the most obvious difficulties and problems that face him. So, his literary productions portray the modern man and his surroundings in a novel way. Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* are observed as an encounter or image for decaying humanity. His characters are presented as old, shapeless, and lost in a mess. They are lonely figures waiting for relief, but they are unaware of where or when they find it, and they belong to no place and no time. They possess nothing more than distorted memories from the past which adds nothing to their present except despair, helplessness, and sterility. Thus, human beings are viewed as lost within time, which could be anytime, before birth or after death where they are presented as genderless as fetuses. At this point, we have lonely male figures or half-shaped females without any sense of love or healthy family ties, where life and humanity are overwhelmed by an immense sense of sterility. Beckett's characters are sexless to symbolize the absurdity of existence, viciousness, the loss of identity, lack of faith, and other problems in a chaotic world. Beckett's creatures belong to a disordered environment where desolation and pessimism loom largely. Beckett provides an entrance to the anguished world in Western society after two world wars.

A good number of Beckett's literary works are all-male plays in which no females appear in physical shape or form. If found, they are in a deformed shape such as Nell. Yet, most of Beckett's male characters are described as males in appearance. Those who mostly reflect femininity or childish features are Estragon, Vladimir, Nagg, and Hamm. Moreover, these male-like characters are not created to represent maleness or any specific sex; they are generally supposed to act as universal emblems of humanity. Thus, these characters alongside their world lose all their traditional values including gender and identity, thus any reference to topics of gender would be worthless since the loss of identity is one of the main themes.

The absurdist stage is chiefly influenced by imagery and symbols Samuel Beckett prefers to construct his dramas with. Various methods and techniques are also employed by Beckett to deliver his drama appealingly and evoke the audience's senses and imagination. He invents a masterpiece through visual and auditory effects that have a massive impact on the perception of the audience. In Beckett's theatre, sounds and silence, movements and inactivity are used to produce dynamic and resonant theatrical images. Most of Beckett's plays are dominated by the images of figures who are confined in containers, sand or off-stage, and who are imprisoned in silence, immobility, and existence in the void. Beckett presents concrete examples of human existence. His characters are portrayed as crippled aged figures who are dehumanized and staged as ghostly and indefinite shapes waiting for salvation or even death.

Many allusions and unfinished stories are stated in both plays that denote existential and religious perspectives. These stories frequently express either agony about the author's closest friends who are mostly Jewish or suggest the theme of punishment and salvation. The story of the two thieves exemplifies repentance and salvation themes, where only one of them is saved. Also, this story is connected to the concept of the original sin mentioned in the conversation between Estragon and Vladimir in *Waiting for Godot* when they talk about the meaning of existence in such meaningless life full of suffering. Their intention of repentance is also detected in their conversation. Furthermore, this topic is also handled in Hamm's story of the madman whose pessimism is ironically linked to Clov's. They both report nothingness and desolation of the outer world despite the lively scenes located outside the window of the madman. Clov's condition of dishonesty is expressed through the image of the hollow bricks that are considered as a sign of scepticism in his reports. Broken promises are seen through the story of Ashab Al-Sabt, whose greed leads to their doom. The inner-blindness, disrespectfulness, and rulers' arrogance towards God's authority are the main reasons for empires' destruction and Belshazzar is the best example.

Time in *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* is viewed as slow and lingering. The characters barely notice the passage of time because of their monotonous life. Thus, Beckett's characters are imprisoned in a state of waiting and suffering. This state is compared to purgatory where sinners are found pleading for forgiveness. The characters are stuck in a continuous state of suffering. People are not immortals and their life-time decreases with ageing. Existentialists refer to this situation as a meaningless life since death is the certain end of humanity that would erase every human being on the earth. However, life is multidimensional and controversial at the same time; it consists of believers and non-believers. Life is considered meaningless for the existentialists, on the other hand, it is an earthly purgatory for God's loyal followers who believe that they are born as a sinner and need forgiveness to wash their sins away. Hence, God's faithful followers are destined to settle with Him in His heavens while the non-believers are doomed in hell.

The story of the madman in the *Endgame* represents a man's inner-conflict between faith and disbelief. The madman's awareness of his doom prevents him from enjoying life. He realizes that nothing is permanent, so he thinks humanity should not suffer for their ancestors' sins because life is futile and unjust. Another story in the *Endgame* suggests existential beliefs through the story of a tailor. The tailor ironically mocks God's authority over his subjects and complains that if God is very powerful, then why does he enjoy human beings' suffering! Thus, man's suffering is regarded as a sign of God's powerlessness. The story is also viewed as an example of broken promises; the tailor keeps postponing his customers' deliveries. The broken promises are the main causes of Gogo and Didi's suffering in *Waiting for Godot*, for example. They keep waiting for Godot who does not arrive till the end of the play.

The people of Sabt who are punished severely sets the best example for broken promises. This story is explained through the symbolic mention of Saturday in *Waiting for Godot*. Similarly, the tailor in the *Endgame* mentions the story of creation in six days and Friday is considered as the first day of creation finalized on Saturday and as a day for resting accompanied by the Jews' worship. Religious crimes are detected taking place on Sunday. Jewish disobedience to God is practised on Saturday. God tells them not to fish on Saturday but they place their nets on Friday night and collect the harvest on Sunday morning, as a result, they deserve the punishment. In Christianity, for example, Sunday is considered as Jesus Christ's resurrection, and also as a day of rest and worship in both Christianity and Judaism. The purpose of alluding to allusions in any literary work is regarded as one of the techniques of modernism. Modernists have an effective technique to irritate the mind of spectators to search for new information. Their symbols are used as a puzzle to be solved, and this technique adds intensity and mystery to their literary work.

Furthermore, this technique breaks the monotony of the theatrical stage by creating a sphere of communication between the text and the reader or the observer. Beckett used this method carefully when expressing his topics symbolically.

Beckett invites people to revolt against the submissive obedience of political and religious authority. People are blessed with a mind and they learn and acquire knowledge through experience, not through previously perceived knowledge. Henceforth, Beckett mentions the story of the thieves³ who are crucified with Jesus in *Waiting for Godot*, and criticizes its various interpretations in the Gospels. It is stated that four explanations are provided by the four major Gospels. First, it is stated in Luke that only one thief is saved while Mark and John mention no thief is crucified with Jesus. However, Matthew says both thieves abuse Jesus. Beckett wants to clarify why we should believe Luke's explanation and discard the other three, inviting people to be sceptical in their investigations. This is an invitation to evoke people's sense of questioning, Beckett invites his spectators and readers to suspect everything they are already learned. If the story of the thieves is true, then what is the purpose of having four different versions of the same story. Even if there are different interpretations, the original information of the story must be similar in every version. Accordingly, Beckett thinks that even religion must be suspected. Suspicion and investigation are seen in the *Endgame*, Beckett makes Hamm in the *Endgame* be sceptical of Clov's reports. Although we should not even believe Hamm's chronicle since it is told from a personal point of view with no witnesses, it might be all Hamm's fascinations of his past, too.

In these findings, Beckett's dramas *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* are examined under close scrutiny. New religious interpretations of themes and symbols are discussed. Although Beckett is Christian, yet his religious tendencies are thought to be Jewish for some reasons. First, he is like most modernist writers who reject western tradition and criticize the churches' superficiality and irresponsibility. Also, most of his close friends are Jews who got killed because of their religion.

ENDNOTES

¹Nebuchadnezzar, for more information:

See Nelson, R. (2020, August 7). *Who Was King Nebuchadnezzar? The Beginner's Guide*. OverviewBible. <https://overviewbible.com/nebuchadnezzar/>

²Tiresias is a blind figure who is characterized with wisdom that regenerates from his insight. This character is founded first in Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, then it is realized in Eliot's Wasteland, for more information:

See *Tiresias-Greek Blind Prophet of Apollo in Thebes | Mythology.net*. (2016). Mythology.net. <https://mythology.net/greek/mortals/tiresias/>

³The story of the thieves, for more information:

See *The thief on the cross, the comma & Christ | Bibleinfo.com*. (2021). Bibleinfo.Com. <https://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/thief-on-cross>

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