

Waiting for Godot: A Deconstructive Study

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Abstract

Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) is the most eminent French philosopher and literary theorist of deconstruction. He challenges the logo-centric Western tradition of the metaphysics of presence, which has been dominant from Plato's "Phaedrus" until Edmund Husserl's "Origin of Geometry" in Western philosophy. His trend-breaking theory of deconstruction attacks the metaphysical presuppositions of Western philosophy, ethics, culture, politics and literature. It may give a new meaning and perspective to Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot", which has always been a focal point for the world's literary critics. They have applied various theories to it, but this paper tries to scrutinize the different facets of the play from Derridean deconstructive theory.

Applying Derridean deconstructive hermeneutics to the text of the play under discussion, the author of this paper introduces a new portrait of the personages of the play. The study will retrace the pathways of Western tradition of the metaphysics of presence and its compelling influences, which have proved to be the inhibiting and fossilizing deadlocks of aporia of meaning and authoritative structures of human thought to explore the new horizons. In its concluding mode, the study exposes preventive stumbling aporic blocks of centralized structure of the minds of characters in the given play.

Keywords: Jacques Derrida, deconstruction, metaphysics of presence and messianic, aporia, binary oppositions, delogocentrism

Introduction

Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) is the most eminent Irish based French playwright of the theatre of the Absurd, who tries to depict human absurdity and uncertainty in the late modernist bourgeois world of shattered beliefs and uncertainties through the medium of meta-theatre. Meta-theatre, Lionel Able asserts that, “marks those frames and boundaries that conventional dramatic realism would hide” (Able, Lionel, 2003, p. 133).

Samuel Beckett wrote “Waiting for Godot” in French in 1949 and then translated it into English in 1954. “Waiting for Godot” is the most popular play in every corner of the world. Therefore, this play has been performed as a drama of the absurd with astonishing success in Europe, America and the rest of the world in post second world war era. For this reason, Martin Esslin calls it, “One of the successes of the post-war theatre” (Esslin, Martin, 1980, p.3). The central theme of the play revolves around waiting. The two tramps, Vladimir and Estragon, are waiting expectantly to visit Godot near a stunted tree in the middle of nowhere. They do not even know his real name, whether he promises to visit them, or if, in fact, he actually exists. However, they are still waiting and waiting for him. Nevertheless, he did never appear.

The slave-owning Pozzo and his subservient slave, Lucky and the boy (the messenger of Godot) whose name was not mentioned in the play, interrupted their waiting. Godot has nothing significant to do with their lives. They do every possible thing; even prepare to commit suicide, just to keep the dreadful silence. The play begins with waiting for Godot and ends with waiting for Godot. Play does not end formally, when the boy, who is as well messenger of Godot, reveals the fact to the tramps that Godot is not expected to come this evening and he will come tomorrow. In fact, these characters are entrapped and entangled in the illusory trap of the slavery of the metaphysics of presence. Therefore, they represent all the human beings in the world, who are imprisoned in one way and the other in the blind alley of different illusions of the logos of language, philosophy and religion. Therefore, the present study tries to discuss the different facets of this famous play from Derridean deconstructive perspective.

Research Objectives

The research objectives of this study are as follow:

To push Samuel Beckett’s play “Waiting for Godot” within Derridean deconstructive perspective for investigating and scrutinizing the different facets of the text in terms of Derridean deconstruction.

To open up the techniques of meta-theatre, which enable Samuel Beckett to go beyond the boundaries of the traditional stereotypes and fossilized notions, values and traditions of language, theatre and the literary text, which revolve around messianic logocentrism or phonocentrism in the history of philosophy from Plato to the present times.

To scrutinize the text from Derrida's deconstructive hermeneutics for dismantling the fixity, singularity and unified meaning of the text of the thought raging play under discussion.

To retrace the zigzag and complicated philosophical pathways of West European tradition of the metaphysics of presence and its compelling influences and repercussions, which have proved to be the inhibiting and fossilizing deadlocks of aporia of meaning and authoritative centralized structures of human thought to explore the new horizons.

Research Questions

The study will concentrate on the following questions:

- How does Samuel Beckett disseminate the logos of life in "Waiting for Godot"?
- Which characteristics of his art do bring him close to deconstruction?

Research Methodology

The study is narrative research and follows descriptive-cum analytical method. The textual references are given as evidence to support the argument of this research. The key concepts of deconstruction, metaphysics of presence and messianic, aporia, logos, binary oppositions and delogocentrism are discussed in relation to the text in this research. Derridean deconstructive hermeneutics of studying and interpreting the text is an important ingredient of this research. Therefore, the different facets of the text of the play are studied and analysed on Derridean deconstructive bedrock. Relevant quotations, references and extracts have been taken in APA (American Psychological Association) style from the primary and secondary data on the subject of this research. The list of the cited sources is given in under the heading of References at the end of this paper

Literature Review

The complex structure of "Waiting for Godot" is based upon symbols and ideological content, in which the vertical repression and layering or sedimentation is dominant structure of the text of the play. For this reason, it has been always a focal target for world's researchers. Most of the researchers interpreted its different elements from different angles. Therefore, the complex and entangled structure of the play has drawn multifarious research attentions. There are so many books and dissertations composed on this play. Harold Bloom

edited a book entitled “Samuel Beckett: Modern Critical Views” (1985), which is an important criticism nearly on all the important works of Samuel Beckett, including “Waiting for Godot”. The book consists of various critical commentaries by different scholars on the author under analysis, from different angles. Ruby Cohn edited a book entitled “Beckett: Waiting for Godot” (1987), which also presents different critical commentaries by different critics on “Waiting for Godot”, from different angles.

Martin Esslin edited a book entitled “An Anatomy of Drama” (1976), which is a thought provoking book. He also edited another book, entitled “Samuel Beckett: Twentieth Century Views” (1980), which consists of various views on the author under discussion, relating him to the ‘Theatre of the Absurd’ and philosophy of existentialism. William S. Haney in his essay, “Beckett out of His Mind: The Theatre of the Absurd” states that Samuel Beckett crosses “the linguistic and cultural boundaries by dispensing with narrative sequence, character development and psychology in conventional sense” (Haney, William S. 2001, p.40). He further states that, Samuel Beckett goes beyond “the psychic structures that select, organize, interpret, and limit our knowledge about the world around us” (Haney, William S. 2001, p.42). Gabriele Schwab also believes that Samuel Beckett’s plays go beyond the “boundaries of our consciousness in two directions toward the unconscious and toward self-reflection” (Schwab, Gabriele, 1992, 97).

Abhinaba Chatterjee wrote a research paper entitled “Camus’ Absurdity in Beckett’s Plays: Waiting for Godot and Krapp’s Last Tape” (2013), which is very important analysis of the two dramatic texts of Samuel Beckett, from Albert Camus’ existentialist point of view. Darsha Jani wrote a research paper entitled “Futility, Hopelessness and Meaninglessness: Central Forces Leading towards Absurdity in Beckett’s Waiting for Godot” (2013), which is also an existentialist study of the play. Komal Rakwal wrote a research paper entitled “Today’s Fear of Being in Samuel Beckett’s Waiting for Godot” in which she explores existentialist themes in the text.

Noorbakhsh Hooti wrote a research paper entitled “Samuel Beckett’s Waiting for Godot: A Post-modernist study” (2011), which is a Post-modernist analysis of the text. He discussed it from postmodernist point of view in general. Elin Diamond wrote his research paper entitled “Re: Blau, Butter, Beckett and the Politics of Seeing” (2000), which is a political and ideological study of Samuel Beckett. Fereshteh Vaziri Nasab Kermany’s dissertation entitled “A Study of the Dramatic Works of Samuel Beckett, Tom Stoppard and Caryl Churchill” (2008) is a research based on a general deconstructive look at the play, discussing it along with the plays of Tom Stoppard and Caryl Churchill. This dissertation tried to prove the overall deconstructive mood of delogocentrism of the play.

These books and research papers are very interesting, informative and thought provoking on the subject in many respects, but no one applied Post-Structuralist Derridean deconstructive hermeneutics to it. The present study interprets the play on the bedrock of the ground breaking Derridean deconstructive hermeneutics. Therefore, the present study would be an analysis from a new and innovative perspective on “Waiting for Godot”; applying Derridean deconstructive hermeneutics to the text of this highly debate raging play.

Deconstruction

Jacques Derrida is the most eminent Algerian-born French philosopher, who originates the path breaking theory of deconstruction. He argues that the tradition of west European philosophy since Plato has been the metaphysics of presence or logocentrism. Its compelling influences and repercussions on human thought have proved to be the inhibiting and fossilizing deadlocks of aporia of meaning and authoritative fossilized logocentric structures of human thought to explore the new horizons, grounding it in the stable and pre-determined meaning of the logos of the metaphysics of presence. We cannot imagine the end of the metaphysics of presence, we can criticise it from within it by identifying and reversing the hierarchies it has established.

However, Jacques Derrida originated the term deconstruction but he did not define it anywhere in detail. However, defining the term deconstruction is by no means simple and easy task but very complex one and not defined explicitly by its initiator Jacques Derrida. Nevertheless, he gives some important signposts and clues about how to deconstruct a literary text, which can help us to define the term. M.A.R. Habib writes that deconstruction is “a way of reading, a mode of writing, and above all, a way of challenging interpretations of the texts based upon conventional notions of stability of human self, the external world, and of language and meaning” (Habib, M.A.R, 2005, p. 649). This theory revolutionised many disciplines from philosophy and history, from film studies to law, architecture, politics, anthropology and theory of aesthetics. Jacques Derrida writes about it:

“Deconstruction “is “destruction” and desedimentation of all the significations that have their source in that of the logos” (Derrida, Jacques, 1997, p. 10).It is an attempt to deconstruct this centre in “logos”. However, this does not mean to destroy as Derrida writes, “Rather than destroying, it was also necessary to understand how a “whole” was constituted and reconstruct it to the end” (Derrida, Jacques, 2007, p. 3). Therefore, deconstruction is an attempt to reconstruct and “to dismantle” logocentrism or phonocentrism.

In this sense “...deconstruction is firstly this destabilization on the move in, if one could speak thus, the things themselves”, but it is not negative destabilization is required for “progress” as well as. In addition, the “de-“of deconstruction signifies not the demolition of

what is constructing itself, but rather what remains to be thought beyond the constructive or deconstructionist scheme” (Derrida, Jacques, 1998, p. 147). When we deconstruct or destabilise the text and logocentrism, our perception leads to progress. Derrida says, “The movements of deconstruction do not destroy structures from the outside. They are not possible and effective, nor can they accurate aim...” Deconstruction should “necessary” operate “from the inside” (Derrida, Jacques, 1997, p. 24).

Deconstruction criticises the Western philosophical tradition of the metaphysics of presence, which takes place the form of what Jacques Derrida calls logocentrism or phonocentrism. The logo is a Greek word, which in a specific sense of pure meaning that precedes language. The domain of pure meaning is also the domain of logic, which derives from the logos. “In the beginning, was the logos, and the logos was with God, and the logos was God” (Good News Bible, 1981, p. 118). Jacques Derrida opines that both logic and logocentrism depend upon a covert linguistic operation that posits a realm of meaning prior to language, and in turn, privileges thought over utterance, speech over writing, and origin over copy. Derrida argues that Saussure’s theory of linguistics is both invested in and troubling the project of logocentrism or phonocentrism. He finds counter-logic already in Ferdinand de Saussure. Structuralist linguistics is just the supposedly whole first term –man, speech- but also logos (self-identical meaning, God) in general.

For Jacques Derrida writing is not secondary copy of a whole, prior meaning represented by speech. It is primary, in so much as meaning is itself afflicted by self-divisions and deferrals, the endless slippages of signifiers, which constitute writing. That is why Jacques Derrida says, “There is nothing outside the text” (Derrida, Jacques, 2003, 227). His deconstruction is associated to the study of complexities of literature: Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s “Confessions”, Stephane Mallarme’s “Mimique”, and James Joyce’s “Ulysses”. He concludes that literature with its slippery language demonstrated the deferral of the logos.

Deconstructive Analysis of Waiting for Godot

The researcher tries to interpret Samuel Beckett’s play “Waiting for Godot” from Derridean deconstructive perspective in terms of deconstruction. Therefore, the present study tends to interpret the different facets of the text. The following terms of Derridean deconstruction are simply relevant to the nature of this research.

Metaphysics of presence and Messianic

According to Jacques Derrida, the tradition of west European philosophy from Plato until Edmund Husserl has been the metaphysics of presence or logocentrism. Its compelling

influences and repercussions on human thought have proved to be the inhibiting and fossilizing deadlocks of aporia of meaning and authoritative fossilized logocentric structures of human thought to explore new horizons, grounding it in the stable and pre-determined meaning, origin or presence. We cannot imagine the end of the metaphysics of the presence, we can criticise it from within by identifying and reversing the hierarchies it has established.

Jacques Derrida calls all Western philosophic tradition logocentric because it places at the centre of our perception of the universe a concept (logos), which organises and explains the universe for us while remaining outside of the universe it organises and explains. Jacques Derrida says that it is Western philosophy's greatest illusion. Each grounding concept--- Plato's idea of perfect Forms, Rene Descartes' cogito, structuralism's notion of innate structures of human consciousness---is itself a human concept and therefore, a product of human language. In this way, he attacks the basic metaphysical assumptions of Western philosophical tradition since Plato. He also criticises that the notion of innate structures of human consciousness in structuralism has always presupposed a centre of meaning of something, which governs the structure, but is itself not subject to structural analysis (to find the structure of the centre would be to find another centre.)

For this reason, Jacques Derrida claims that Western philosophy has always had a desire "to search for a centre, a meaning, origin or a "transcendental signified" (Derrida, Jacques, 1997, p. 49). He calls this desire for centre "logocentrism or phonocentrism (Derrida, Jacques, 1997, p. 11). However, he opines that all Western philosophy since Plato has tried to ground its basis on meaning, "presence", or "existence" (Derrida, Jacques, 2005, p. 353).

This tradition revolves around a central set of supposedly universal principles and beliefs. He concludes that the different theories of philosophy since Plato are versions of a single or authoritative system, and, though we cannot hope to escape this system, we can at least identify the conditions of thought it imposes by attending to that which it seek to impress.

Therefore, the tradition of Western philosophy of the metaphysics of presence derives from and organised around one grounding principle from which we believe we can figure out the meaning of existence. For some philosophers the ground of being is some cosmic principle of order and harmony, as illustrated for example, by Plato's idea of perfect Forms that exist in an abstract, timeless dimension of thought. For others, the grounding principle is rational thought engaged in the act of self-reflection, as illustrated by Rene Descartes' famous philosophical proposition: "I think therefore, I am" (cogito ergo sum).

For some other philosophers still, the grounding principle is some innate quality in human beings as illustrated by structuralism's belief that human language and experience are generated by innate structures of human consciousness. For this reason, Jacques Derrida opines that structuralism is a form of philosophical totalitarianism, a totality of phenomenon by reduction of it to a formula that governs it totally. This Western tradition of philosophical thought revolves around a central set of supposedly universal principles and beliefs. While these grounding concepts produce our perception of the dynamic, evolving universe around us--and of our dynamic, evolving selves as well--the concepts themselves remain stable. Unlike everything, they explain they are not dynamic and evolving. They are "out of place" as Jacques Derrida calls logocentric because it places at the centre of its perception of the universe a concept (logos) that organise and explains the universe for us. Logocentrism would thus support the determination of the being of the entity as presence (Derrida, Jacques, 1997, p. 12).

When we study "Waiting for Godot", we come across the central theme of the play, which revolves around the waiting for Godot, who does not appear in the play. Nevertheless, the two characters of the play, Vladimir and Estragon, who are homeless vagabonds, seem to be entrapped in the trap of illusory world of the metaphysics of presence. They are tied up with messianic logocentrism or phonocentrism of the term Godot. Messianic is one of the forms of the metaphysics of presence, which is evident in the concepts of theocentrism and anthropocentrism. Any ideological, religious and political system, which claims to be authorised legitimacy, is messianic logocentrism or phonocentrism. This messianism is dominant in human thought. Jacques Derrida also calls this way of thinking messianicity, according to which Christian hope of a future to come.

Therefore, the word Godot in the play signifies both theocentric as well as anthropocentric messianic logocentrism, which may be noted is, the privilege given to it as Jehovah of "The Old Testament", his wrath frightens, and like Messiah (Jesus Christ) of "The New Testament", his Second Coming will redeem the humankind. He may stand for salvation, donation, rebirth and promise, which is able to be a link between these logi and the two waiting tramps. However, the tramps are fallen in the trap of illusory world of the metaphysics of presence and messianism. Therefore, they are mentally tied up with the logocentric messianic term Godot. Nevertheless, they have taken it for granted that it is a dominant source of redemption and salvation. They attempt to discover the meaning, origin and truth under the umbrella of the presupposed messianic logos Godot.

Therefore, Godot can punish them if the tramps leave, redeem, and reward them if they keep waiting for him. The tramps have strong desire to turn Godot's absence to presence. This desire is identical to the yearning of west European philosophy for centre or the stable

and fixed signified by the metaphysics of presence. This messianic logocentric metaphysical presence makes a concrete physical anthropocentric entity for the tramps. For instance, Vladimir's yearning to perceive an exact image of Godot's appearance in an anthropomorphic manner, bringing him on the level of human perception is an attempt of this kind:

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

Boy: Yes sir.

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

Boy: I think it's white, sir” (Beckett, Samuel, 1956, Act 2, p. 92).

In this manner, Vladimir cannot perceive the image of Godot without what west European philosophy's tradition of the metaphysics of presence and messianism has set for him as the foundation of messianic logocentrism of his beliefs and thoughts. An absent entity of Godot in the play refutes definition, and at this point, it becomes very close to Jacques Derrida's definition of differance than to the metaphysical notion of messianic theocentric or anthropocentric logos. Jacques Derrida explains that differance is “formation of form” (Derrida, Jacques, 1976, p. 63)” and the historical and epochal unfolding of Being” (Derrida, Jacques, 1982, p. 22), something that negates origin.

However, the absent Godot puts the idea of the origin of true meaning, into the radical question, because it cannot be easily defined, categorized or adjusted to an object outside the text. It can signify multiple meanings of more things simultaneously and non-existence or nothing at all. It is in fact, an aporic being, which resist interpretation. As a result, the two tramps are seeking for something to give meaning to their existence. For them Mr Godot is a source of solution of their miseries, the logos that may fill the meaning in their absurd existence. The identity of this absent entity remains unknown in the whole text of the play. As Worton writes:

“Much has been written about who or what Godot is. My own view is that he is simultaneously whatever we think he is and not what we think he is, he is an absence, who can be interpreted at moments as God, death, the Lord of the manor, a benefactor, even Pozzo. Nevertheless, Godot has a function rather than a meaning. He stands for what keeps us chained- to and in-existence. He is the unknowable that represents hope in an age when there is no hope; he is whatever fiction we want him to be- as long as he justifies our life-as-waiting” (Worton, Michael, 1995, p. 70-71).

The tramps' attempts to capture this non-entity or unknown being in terms of the known messianic logocentrism, by visiting him, are all in vain. Finally, Godot did not appear and tramps turned disappointed and frustrated. Therefore, the bond between language and reality is shattered and words lose their vocation of communicating feelings and thoughts:

“Vladimir: Say I am happy

Estragon: I am happy

Vladimir: So I am
Estragon: So I am.
Estragon: We are happy. (Silence). What do we do now, now that we're happy?"
(Beckett, Samuel, 1956, Act 2, p. 60).

Therefore, Godot's final absence, however, frustrates the hopes of the tramps and they have become nervous. The following dialogue of the tramps shows their hidden desire to set themselves free from the tiresome act of waiting for an unknown or non-existent messianic metaphysical being:

"Estragon: (His mouthful, vacuously.) We are not tied!
Vladimir: I don't hear a word you're saying.
Estragon: (chews, swallows.) I'm asking if we're tied.
Vladimir: tied?
Estragon: ti-ed.
Vladimir: How do you mean tied?
Estragon: Down
Vladimir: But to whom? By whom?
Estragon: To your man
Vladimir: To Godot? Tied to Godot? What an idea! No question of it. (Pause) For the moment"
(Beckett, Samuel, 1956, Act 1, pp.20-21).

Finally, the tramps are unable to act, even to commit suicide. For example, the following dialogue makes the point clear:

"Vladimir: We will hang ourselves tomorrow. (Pause.) Unless Godot comes.
Estragon: And if he comes?
Vladimir: We'll be saved" (Beckett, Samuel, 1956, Act Two, p. 94).

We can mostly notice their incapability and undecidability to do anything throughout the whole play:

"Estragon: "Why don't we hang ourselves?
Vladimir: With what?
Estragon: you haven't got a bit of rope?
Vladimir: No.
Estragon: Then we can't.
Vladimir: Let's go.
Estragon: Oh wait, there is my belt.
Vladimir: It's too short.
Estragon: You could hang on to my legs.
Vladimir: And who would hang onto mine?
Estragon: True" (Beckett, Samuel, 1956, Act Two, p.93).

Therefore, Samuel Beckett refutes the certainty and stability of the Holy Scripture by dismantling its authorised metaphysical meaning. He uses Christian mythology without having to believe in it. As he states, "Christianity is a mythology with which I am perfectly

familiar, and so I use it. But not in this case” (Bair, Deirdre, 1995, p.386). For this reason, he involves the tramps in serious religious debates between the four Evangelists about the saved thief. Vladimir, like the assiduous religious scholar seems to search for truth and certainty in the Holy text of “The New Testament”. However, he finds that there is no certainty in this text. In fact, his perplexity is the confusion of a layperson in perceiving the philosophy of the metaphysics of presence, presented to him as messianic logocentrism. The following dialogue between the tramps makes the point clear:

Vladimir: And yet... (pause)... How is it-this is not boring you I hope- how is it that of the four Evangelists only one speaks of a thief being saved. The four of them were there- or thereabouts-and only one speaks of a thief being saved. (Pause.)

Come on, Gogo, return the ball, can't you, one in a way?

Estragon: (with exaggerated enthusiasm). I find this most extraordinarily interesting.

Vladimir: One out of four. Of the other three, two don't mention any thieves at all and the third says that both of them abused him.

Estragon: Who?

Vladimir: What?

Estragon: What's all this about? Abused who?

Vladimir: The Saviour.

Estragon: Why?

Vladimir: Because he wouldn't save them.

Estragon: From Hell?

Vladimir: Imbecile! From death.

Estragon: I thought you said hell.

Vladimir: From death, from death.

Estragon: Well what of it?

Vladimir: Then the two of them must have been damned.

Estragon: And why not?” (Beckett, Samuel, 1956, Act 1, p.13-14).

We find the characters of the play entangled within an illusory web of logocentric illusions of thought that they want to grasp the ultimate truth of life and the universe in a way as logocentric Western tradition of the metaphysics of presence confines their mind to think about the authoritative universal truth, meaning and origin. Nevertheless, they are unable to find it and on the contrary, they confront uncertainty and absurdity as illustrated in the conversations between Estragon and Vladimir about the Holy Scripture, the memories of the past or identity of Godot. Suspecting all the messianic logocentric authorities of founding the texts of Western culture, Samuel Beckett studs Godot and Endgame with references to these very texts in order to make us “think and participate in his anxious oscillation between certainty about what is untrue and uncertainty about what may be true” (Worton, Michael, 1995, p. 85).

However, Vladimir wants to find a proof for existence. His desire for a centre, origin, or logos of Godot is fully illustrated when he says the boy:

“Words, words. (Pause.) Speak” (Beckett, Samuel, Act 1, p.50).

The tramps finally lose their hope for salvation and redemption. Vladimir expresses doubt in the following dialogue between Boy and Vladimir:

“Boy: What am I to say Mr Godot, sir?”

Vladimir: Tell him... (he hesitates)...tell him you saw us. (Pause.) You did see us, didn't you?” (Beckett, Samuel, Act 1, p.52).

In this way, Samuel Beckett deconstructs messianic theocentrism and anthropocentrism of the logocentric word of Godot and after disseminating Godot and the Holy Scripture, Samuel Beckett further goes in Lucky's speech to expand his deconstructive techniques to undo Western philosophical tradition of the metaphysics of presence. Describing the philosopher's mental and physical slavery to bourgeois power system of capitalism, he disseminates all philosophical inquiries for ultimate truth, origin or static signified as well as deconstructs all logocentric Western tradition of the metaphysics of presence.

Therefore, the rational philosopher is presented in the personage of Lucky as a mock figure of philosopher in the play. His slave-owning master Pozzo dictates him by the power of words and logi. His one-word commands dictate and handle Lucky. Therefore, like a puppet or remote controlled robot, he obeys the orders of his master Pozzo. “Back”, “stop”, “turn”, “stand”, “up”, “basket” are the one-word commands of his master, he obeys. In this way, he behaves and reacts in accordance with the command-methods of his master. Here Pozzo stands for the late modernist bourgeois power structure of capitalism and Lucky, the Lackey of it. Jaffey Nealon writes as follows:

“Beckett directs Lucky's long monologue against the popular notion that philosophy's job is to restore unity to man's learning, a job, which philosopher can only do by recuperating some meta-narratives, which link together all moments in human history within a single, continuous metaphysical system. Lucky's think, though, is a narrative that disrupts and deconstructs all notions of universal ahistorical meta-narrative- all Godots” (Nealon, Jaffey 1992.44).

However, Samuel Beckett puts the power of reason in question by demonstrating the dominance of non-rational bourgeois forces of capitalism, which contradict the traditional anthropocentric notions and values of humanism. In his speech, Lucky fails to defend human being as central subject of the anthropocentric Western philosophical thought. In this manner, Samuel Beckett satirises the Cartesian philosophical proposition: “cogito ergo sum” in Lucky's speech. However, he dements thought/ discourse, which violates the limits of logocentric Western European tradition of the metaphysics of presence. As Brewer states it:

“Drawn to the side of the signifier rather than the signified (though as immaterial meaning), the hybrid “thought-performance” breaks down the distinction between words and their meaning. The disjunction between characters’ actions and their speech is here, repeated in the disjunction between discourse as performance and his cognitive content” (Brewer, Maria Minich, 1994, pp. 152-153).

Finally, Samuel Beckett attacks the metaphysics of presence and messianic logocentrism. He does not only disseminate the theocentric text of Holy Scriptures, but also dismantles the anthropocentric lines of Western philosophical thought, delogocentrizing the theocentric authority of the Holy Scripture in the dialogue of the tramps cited above and the anthropocentric authority of philosopher in the delogocentrized figure of Lucky.

Aporia

Aporia means a logical impassable, contradiction, doubt and a moment of undecidability. It is the inherent contradiction in the import of the text or theory. Jacques Derrida, for example, cites in his book “Of Grammatology” the inherent contradictions at work in Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s use of the words culture and nature by stating that Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s sense of the self’s innocence (in nature) is already corrupted by the concept of culture and existence. Aporia is in fact, a logical deadlock of relationship, decision-making and interpretation, which makes one to undecidable to grasp logical reasoning and justification. It is precisely a situation, which reflects the impossibility of thought, language, meaning, ethics and justification.

Aporia also means *debitio*, which is an expression of real and feigned doubt or uncertainty, especially for rhetorical effect, by which the speaker appears uncertain as to what he/ she should do, think or say. The speaker already knows the answer, but he/she still asks himself/herself or his/her audience, what the appropriate manner, to grasp some matter is. The ambiguity of the text forms an *aporia*, because “it is impossible to decide by grammatical or other linguistic devices, which of the two meanings...prevails (De Man, Paul, 1979 p. 10).

Discussing Stephane Mallarme’s “Mimique”, Jacques Derrida refers to the symbiosis of grammar and rhetoric. Words like “hymen,” and “pharmakon”, he points out: “have a double, contradictory, undecidable value that always derives from their syntax, whether the latter is in a sense “internal,” articulating and combining under the same yoke, hup’ hen, two incompatible meanings, or “external,” dependent on the code in which the word is made to function (Derrida, Jacques, 2005, p. 221).

In this view, Samuel Beckett’s rejection of the fossilized signifying process of traditional theatre and adoption of the techniques of meta-theatre lead him to anti-narrative

structure of the text, which creates an aporic effects on the minds of the audience and readers that resist interpretation of the text. Therefore, the structural aporia of meaning happens in the text. The opposite poles of meaning are so evident that messianic logocentrism or phonocentrism cannot function anymore. There occurred in the text many “simultaneously eithers ors” in Derridean term (Derrida, Jacques, 1978, p. 59).

Therefore, the text of the play resists be defining, interpreting, and analysing in a closed system. In addition, the semantic aporia renders Samuel Beckett’s dramatic text into multi-dimensionality of meaning, and puts it in opposition with the traditional dramatic texts. The ontological impassivity or aporia of the text prevails the fragmentary form of the play that prevents the audience and readers from fixing a meaning or putting the text in a closed system. For this reason, one finds himself in an aporetic situation in which he/she cannot decide if Samuel Beckett is giving significance of absurdity or its superficiality in comparison to human predicament. In this sense, the open-endedness of the text of the play always invites the audience and readers to interpret it in a new and novel way. Therefore, the readers and audience are prevented from falling in the categorized perception or stereotyped interpretation of the text.

However, the stereotyped perception, categorized reception and traditional interpretation of the text fall the readers and audience in the straightforward recognition, which is situated by novelty, inaccessible by stale reception and stereotyped traditional interpretation of the text. That is why Samuel Beckett uses the symbol of Godot in the play, to portray uncertainty and absurdity of human situation in modern capitalist social formation, which makes the text of the play ambiguous, showing the limitations of language and aporetic effects of it on the minds of human beings.

The symbol Godot sometimes employs other verbal tricks when Vladimir and Estragon speak about him. Therefore, aporia or impasse of meaning is found when they are confronted with boy messenger’s message that Godot will not come today but he will come tomorrow. As a result, the tramps are fallen in aporetic situation in which they decide to move but they remain undecidable and inactive to do so:

“Estragon: Well? Shall we go?

Vladimir: Pull on your trousers.

Estragon: What?

Vladimir: Pull on your trousers.

Estragon: You want me to pull off my trousers?

Vladimir: Pull on your trousers.

Estragon: (realizing his trousers are down). True.

He pulls up his trousers.

Vladimir: Well? Shall we go?

Estragon: Yes, let’s go.

They do not move” (Beckett, Samuel, 1956, Act 2, p.94).

The word Godot in the play is put in a structure capable of more or multiple meanings and its immediate recognition are deferred or postponed by defamiliarization and ambiguity. The ambiguity and estrangement perturb the referentiality between Godot and its real entity, and its ideal or symbolic presentation in the text, which brings Samuel Beckett very close to Derridean rejection of the semantic singularity and fixity of meaning or hidden transcendental meaning. The aporetic effects on the minds of the tramps manifest themselves in their following dialogue, in which they are unable to express their pains and sufferings:

Vladimir: It hurts?
Estragon: Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts!
Vladimir: (angrily) No one ever suffers but you. I don't count. I'd like to hear what you'd say if you had what I have.
Estragon: It hurts?
Vladimir: Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts!" (Beckett, Samuel, 1956, Act 1, p.10).

Binary Oppositions

According to structuralism, the concept of binarism is fundamental and indispensable to human language, cognition and communication. Therefore, binary oppositions help us to shape the entire world-view and to mark differences in an otherwise unrecognized universe (Raman, Selden, 1989, 56). However, binarism underlies human thought and action. Cultures and languages often function through binary polarities. In philosophy and religion, paired oppositions (matter and idea, cause and effect, body and mind, virtue and evil, content and form, subject and object, beauty and ugliness) serve as very foundations of human thought. When we cast a glance at history of human thought, we find logocentric binarism in it.

Even in literary analysis, the discovery of thematic binary polarities within the literary texts is one of the central hermeneutic tools of interpretation of meaning of the literary text. Jonathan Culler suggests, "certain oppositions are pertinent to larger thematic structures, which encompass other antitheses presented in the text" (Culler, Jonathan, 2002, p. 226).

Therefore, deconstruction operates from the inside of the text in two ways. One is to point to neglected portions in the text and to put them in questioning and find their inconsistencies. The other way is to deal with the binary oppositions in the text. Jacques Derrida gives an analogy about the neglected portions of the text, telling how to deconstruct them. He compares the text to architectonic structures and writes that in some texts there are "neglected" or "defective" corner stones, which need to be levered in order to be deconstructed (Derrida, Jacques, 1989, p. 72).

Jacques Derrida claims that in Western tradition of philosophy, there has always been an opposition between the two concepts and in each pair of concepts always "governs

the other (axiologically, logically, etc.), or has the upper hand” (Derrida, Jacques, 1981, p. 41). These polarity opposites have a certain tension between them. For this reason, deconstruction is most simply defined as a critique of the hierarchical oppositions that have structured Western thought: inside -outside, mind-body, literal- metaphorical, speech – writing, presence –absence, nature- culture, form –meaning. Deconstructing an opposition means to show that it is not natural and inevitable but a construction, produced by discourses that rely on it, showing that it is a construction in a work of deconstruction that seeks to dismantle it and reinscribe it –that is, not destroy it but give it a different structure and functioning (Derrida, Jacques, 1981, p. 120).

That this reversal of the oppositions should not immediately pass to “neutralizing the binary oppositions of metaphysics and simply residing within the closed field of these oppositions” (Derrida, Jacques, 1998, p 41). Reversing the oppositions and giving superiority to the suppressed concept does not mean to deconstruct it because the suppressed concept would have the upper hand and thus it would mean to stay “within the closed field of these oppositions”. In order to get out of the closed fields of the binary oppositions, Derrida adds that “it must, through a double gesture, a double science, a double writing {reading} – put into practice a reversal of the classical opposition and a general displacement of the system. It is on that condition alone that deconstruction will provide the means of intervening in the field of oppositions it criticizes ...” (Derrida, Jacques, 1998, p. 21). This “displacement” and intervention creates a new text and context. That is why Derrida states that “deconstruction” is also a “reconceptualization” (Derrida, Jacques, 1998, p 136).

The reconceptualization produces new meanings and interpretations of the original text. It suggests the possibilities and alternatives inherent in the original text. Therefore, every text that repeats the original text in a new context produces a new text, which is a new production. This new production is different from the original text in some points and shows the iteration of the literary text. Derrida claims that iteration, the characteristic of repetition of a text, alters the original text so that “something new takes place” (Derrida, Jacques, 1998, p 40).

Deconstruction stands against all predetermined, prescribed and fossilized norms and values. The notions of binary opposites like white and black, light and darkness, smart and dull, virtue and evil, ideal and physical, and man and woman, beauty and ugliness may be noted in “Waiting for Godot” that highlight the lack of stability and coherence of the text. However, binary oppositions between Vladimir and Estragon and Pozzo and Lucky are also exist in their ways of thinking, feelings, appearances, social statuses and even their levels of intelligence. We come across the characters come in pairs: Didi/Gogo, Pozzo/Lucky, Ham/Clov, Nagg/Nell in “Waiting for Godot” and other plays of Samuel Beckett.

Therefore, we find in the play “Waiting for Godot”, the characters are entangled within the web of binary oppositions. These polar opposites are used in the text as highly applied line of condemnation to the one, which is depreciated. The characters of the play resort to contrast and comparison, whenever they confront an aporetic and manically offensive mode. This is the most pertinent method to convince their addresses about the justification of their claims. In this sense, Samuel Beckett’s text is based on individual inferences and linguistic experiences of the reader/ audience and decentering logocentric binaries. In this manner, the logocentric binaries lose their validity and determination in the text, fulfilling Derridean deconstructive aspiration. Therefore, the text refrains the readers from determining only one fixed meaning, and prepares more room for different and deferral meaning and interpretations.

In this way, Samuel Beckett presents the illusory logocentric metaphysical presence in the aporetic form of Godot, which contradicts the logocentric preference for presence, the futility of binary signification and the non-rationality of the logos Godot. Therefore, the text of the play refutes the identity or the meaning of this absent being. Godot’s absence in the play that invalidates the characters’ presence, probe an insoluble ontological problem, which challenges the conventional interpretive assumptions of the literary text. In this way, Samuel Beckett resists to fix one meaning for Godot, asserting, “If I knew I’d have said so in the play.”(Bair, Deirdre, 1993, p. 382).The concept of the word Godot is like Jacques Derrida’s differance, escapes a one-to-one correspondence in the signification system because it does not refer to concrete real being in the objective world.

Delogocentrism

In “Waiting for Godot” Vladimir and Estragon are homeless tramps. Therefore, homelessness is shown to be a gift of capitalism. In this way, Samuel Beckett deconstructs sentimentalism of home and family by demythologization of sentimental concepts of home and family in the play. For this reason, he demithifies the traditional concept of home and family as a centre of shelter in the play to present his characters Vladimir and Estragon as homeless and familyless tramps.

However, Vladimir and Estragon create the logos in the name of Godot, which is an ultimate source of donation and salvation for them. Therefore, they are waiting for him. Nevertheless, Godot did never come to visit them. In this way, Samuel Beckett protests against different ontological problems. His interest in “the shapes as opposed to the validity of ideas” (Dearlove, 1982, 3) brings him very close to Derrida’s deconstruction. His play is ambiguous to define the word Godot and ambiguity and fluidity are the characteristics of non-relational

arts. His meta-dramatic text of the play refuses to fall in the order and strong sense of reality, which prevails most the modernist literature. As Michael Warton mentions:

“What Beckett says in his plays is not totally new. However, what he does with his sayings is radical and provocative; he uses his play-texts to remind (or tell) us that there can be no certainty, no definitive knowledge, and that we need to learn to read in a new way, in a way that gives us space to bring our contestations as well as our knowledge to our reception to the text” (Warton, Michael, 1995, p. 81).

Samuel Beckett understands impasses and aporia to find definitions for his art and has a sceptical attitude towards all definitions and categorizations. This characteristic makes his art delogocentric. In this connection, he once asserted that, “I produce an object. What people make of it is not my concern (Warton, Michael, 1995, p. 67). Moreover, some characteristics of his art like self-reflectivity, repetition, and antimimetic theatricality, displacing the authoritative central role of the author at the centre of the text, and decentralizing the narrative bring him very close to Derridean deconstructive theory of language and literature. However, Samuel Beckett postpones as well as differ the meaning and origin of the word Godot as the logos, which is produced by inherent “difference” of language, creating inaccessible domain in language, which both Samuel Beckett and Jacques Derrida call “unnameable”. In this connection, Jacques Derrida writes:

“There is no essence of difference, it (is) that which only could never be appropriated in the as such of its name or its appearing, but also that which threatens the authority of the as such in general, of the presence of the thing itself in its essence. That there is not a proper essence of difference at this point implies that there is neither a Being nor truth of the play of writing such as it engages difference... ‘There is no name for it’- a proposition to be read in this platitude. This unnameable is not an ineffable Being, which no name could approach: God, for example. This unnameable is the play which makes possible nominal effects, the relatively unitary and atomic structures that are called names, the chains of substitutions of names in which, the chain of substitutions of names in which, for example, the nominal effects difference is itself enmeshed, carried off, reinscribed, just as false entry or false exit is still part of the game, a function of the system” (Derrida, Jacques, 1982, p. 27).

Therefore, the nameability is also one of the forms of Derridean delogocentrism because nominalism is a logocentric phenomenon in language. We find in the play the boy who is messenger of Godot is unnamed; Vladimir, Estragon, Pozzo and Lucky are unfamiliar type of names and even Godot is no name of any person. The title of one of Samuel Beckett’s plays is also “Unnameable” in which Unnameable is the central character. In this manner, Samuel Beckett uses the infinite play of signifiers through a refusal of narrative closure, an idea that often finds expression in its tendency to embrace contradictions instead of resolving them. This is what Jacques Derrida says that, language is the ground of being, and the world is an infinite text in which an infinite chain of signifiers is always in play. Though human

beings are constituted by language, they speak, so they, too, are the texts. In other words, deconstructive theory of language has implication for subjectivity, for what it means to be a human being.

Therefore, deconstruction in Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" is both admitting this "unnameability" and parodying all efforts, especially of the characters, for deciphering this domain. For instance, Vladimir gropes for meaning but fails in his logocentric effort to overcome the difference of language and achieve meaning and origin. However, he is unable to access the meaning, essence and origin of the self. At last, he remains unable to move in an incoherent structure of the self. "one of the fundamental projects of the traditional theory" was to access a silent voice. (Kearney, Richard, 1987, p. 359). The possibility of such project, however, is "its very impossibility (Kearney, Richard, 1987, p. 359).

By depicting his characters' defeat in their impossible understandings, Samuel Beckett deconstructs the logic of this project. He does not only deconstruct his characters, but also deconstructs himself, whose struggle for mastering language remains futile. For this reason, his characters as well as he himself are ridiculed in his work. As Richard Kearney observes:

"Beckett's writing masterfully deconstructs itself by directing our attention to itself as writing that is a system of sounding signifiers irretrievably at odds with the ideal of corresponding silent signified. It is only by deconstructing the world's pretention to achieve self-adequation by means of silence, that we can uncover its hidden self-alienation. That irony, which Beckett makes such great play of, is, of course, that one obliged to use language to deconstruct language" (Kearney, Richard, 1987, p. 360).

Moreover, Samuel Beckett has a tendency towards playful treatment of subjects. Treating the text of "Waiting for Godot" as literary game, he seeks to develop his playfulness to everything, even to most philosophical concepts in his plot. He wants his audience or readers to revise their position towards theatre and text by putting the concepts of God, truth, origin, meaning and language in question in the inappropriate concepts of his language games. However, the game playing in his text appears in two levels in Derridean deconstructive manner: outside the text, either he plays game with the audience and readers, or he plays the game between the characters or elements of performance.

However, Samuel Beckett's characters seem perpetually playing with narration as game. For instance, Estragon tries to recollect the fragments of his lost past in a narrative. In this manner, the characters of the play change their tone from narrative to normal and constantly amend the text that this voice produces. They reshape their narration every time

that they have their voices; and they seek to entrap their past voice in a framed narration. They feel pleasure to construct and deconstruct their narration. It is a very interesting game for them. As Gabriele Schwab suggests, “The game is a private use of language, which gives one the freedom to play with the familiarity of old and empty rules” (Schwab, Gabriele, 1987, p. 90).

Moreover, the characters of the play seem to gather all these fragments in a loose performing strategy and technique of meta-theatre, which is very different from a conventional theatrical performance. Samuel Beckett himself asserts that, his characters unlike Kafka’s hero who “has a coherence purpose.....seem to be falling to bits” (Malkin, Jeanette R., 2002, p. 40). However, the impressions of the fragmented suffering characters of “Waiting for Godot” imprint vividly in the memory of the audience and readers, even if the stories behind them are forgotten. In this manner, Samuel Beckett produces characters, images and notions in language-by-language game in his play, which opens for us the window of plural and variable meanings. As Gontarski comments, Samuel Beckett creates images (on the stage and in language) that suggest the mutability and plurality of meaning (Gontarski, S.E., 1985, p. 16).

Conclusion

The present study tried to interpret Samuel Beckett’s play “Waiting for Godot” from a new and innovative perspective through Derridean deconstruction. It showed how the metaphysics of presence and messianic logocentrism imprint preventive effects on mental structure of human beings, and fall them in the aporetic trap of omnipresent and omnipotent logi. Therefore, they slavishly accept the authority of the messianic theocentric and anthropocentric logi. The study tries to prove that the techniques of meta-theatre used in Samuel Beckett’s play, reject the conventional dramatic realism, make the text of the play delogocentric text, and brings it very close to Derridean deconstruction, which rejects and deconstructs the semantic singularity and fixity of meaning or hidden transcendental meaning of the text.

The study attempted to unfold how the preventive stumbling aporic blocks of centralized and fossilized structure of the minds of characters make them imprisoned within the illusory web of the anthropocentric and theocentric messianic logi. The study also concludes that man cannot perceive and interpret the text until and unless he dismantles the messianic logocentrism of the prevailing tradition of the metaphysics of presence, which positions the presupposed messianic logos in the centre of our perception of the universe.

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