

Meaning of Life in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*MEANING OF LIFE IN SAMUEL BECKETT'S *WAITING FOR GODOT*

Zaenal Makhfuddin

English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Surabaya  
zaenalbfd@gmail.com

Prof. Dr. Fabiola D. Kurnia, M.Pd

English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Surabaya

## Abstrak

Karya ini berpusat untuk menganalisa arti hidup para pemeran-pemeran utama pada drama *Waiting for Godot* karya Samuel Beckett. Dimana permasalahan-permasalahan yang didiskusikan dalam karya ini berhubungan dengan kehidupan Vladimir dan Estragon selaku pemeran utama dalam drama tersebut serta apa saja pengaruh dari kehampaan terhadap kehidupan mereka. Untuk menganalisa hal tersebut karya ini menerapkan teori absurditas yang digagas oleh Albert Camus dalam tulisannya yang berjudul *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Drama tersebut memerankan kehidupan Vladimir dan Estragon yang mana mereka tidak mempunyai tujuan dalam menjalani kehidupan, mereka hanya menjalani tingkah laku yang sama setiap harinya sehingga membuat hidup mereka tidak berharga. Gambaran ketidak berartian hidup Vladimir dan Estragon ditandai dengan aktifitas-aktifitas pandir dan lucu mereka seperti: Bersusah paya dalam melepas sepatu kemudian mengintip kedalamnya, menggoyang-goyangkannya berharap ada sesuatu yang keluar dari dalam sepatu tersebut. Melepas topi mengetuk-ketuk bagian atasnya seperti dalam sebuah sirkus, dan juga ditandai oleh percakapan-percakapan mereka yang menunjukkan ketidak berartian dalam kehidupan mereka. Sementara itu kehampaan dan ketidak berartian tersebut mempengaruhi kehidupan mereka, mereka menjadi frustrasi dalam menjalani hidup, menderita bahkan mencoba untuk mengahiri hidup, dan juga membawa perpecahan diantara mereka.

**Kata Kunci:** absurditas, kehampaan, ketidak berartian hidup.

## Abstract

This study focuses on analyzing the meaning of life of the main characters in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. The problems discussed in this study are related to the life of Vladimir and Estragon as the main characters and also the impacts of nothingness to their life. To analyze it, this study applies the theory of Absurdity that taken from Albert Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus*. This play portrays Vladimir and Estragon's life that they have no purpose in leading their life, they just lead their same behavior everyday that make their life worth living. The depiction of Vladimir and Estragon's meaningless life is indicated by their silly activities like; taking off the shoes then looking inside, shake it hoping that something will come out. Taking off the hat and knocking the top like a circus, and also indicated by their communication that showing the meaninglessness of their life. Meanwhile, the nothingness and meaninglessness influences them to frustration in leading their life, sufferance even trying to hang themselves, which brings disunity in their relationship.

**Keywords:** absurdity, nothingness, meaninglessness life.

## INTRODUCTION

The world is actually absurd, which means that there is no meaning or purpose (Esslin, 1961:5). The absurdity comes from the life of human being. Human in the world always tends to imitate others because some powers have influenced them. People, aware or not, tend to follow those who have power. The power can be negative when is followed by cruelty and when it causes frightening events. The condition or state which humans exist in a meaningless, nothingness, irrational universe wherein people's lives have no purpose or meaning. Beside that Martin Esslin mentions, Ionesco's parallel concept of the

absurdity: "Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose. [...]Cut off from his religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, and useless" (Esslin, 1961)

*Waiting for Godot* is one of the most absurdist plays. It was staged first staged on 5th Jan. 1953 with its original French version *En Attendant Godot* when it was staged for the first time English in 1955. English audiences were overtaken by *Godotmania* remembering the line 'Nothing happens, nobody comes, and nobody goes. It's awful. The director of the play, Peter hall remarked "film is simile Lifelike; theatre is metaphor, about life itself each and even.' action of the play indicates us the absurdity while

selecting the setting, plot, characters, dialogues. We become aware of the settingless setting, plotless plot, characterless characters, actionless action and truthless truth. I think that the whole play is packed with absurdity, because whatever happens, but does not take any motion, is the activity of absurdity to the readers and to the audiences. When they finish reading or coming out of the theatre are marred with the thought of foolishness of life. It is normally thought that the play is about what happened while waiting for Godot But I think that it is a play in which nothing happens anything The play is about the act of waiting itself, which would necessarily problematize what or who is being waited for. What is involved in the act of waiting and who is this Godot and why should anybody wait for Godot? (<http://www.novelguide.com/WaitingForGodot/biography.html>)

This play has interesting topic to study that is Nothingness (nothing to be done). *Waiting for Godot* tells about two tramps Vladimir and Estragon who are homeless and hopeless. They are converse a various topic and reveal that they are waiting for someone named Godot (hope to get happiness and enlighten) but actually they do not know who he is or where he comes from. But they wait just the same, apparently because he represents hope. While they wait, two other men enter. Pozzo is on his way to the market to sell his slave, Lucky. He pauses for a while to converse with Vlademir and Estragon then Lucky entertains them dancing and thinking, and they leave. After Pozzo and Lucky leave, a boy enters and tells Vlademir that he is a messenger from Godot. He tells Vlademir that Godot will not be coming tonight, but he will surely come tomorrow. Vlademir try to ask him some questions about Godot and the boy departs. Vladimir and Estragon decide to leave the area. However, the stage direction at the end of the play says, "They do not move." Apparently, they plan to continue their search for meaning by continuing to wait for Godot. The next night, Vlademir and Estragon again meet near the tree to wait for Godot. While they wait, Pozzo and Lucky enter again, but this time Pozzo is blind and Lucky is dumb. Surprisingly, Pozzo does not remember meeting the two tramps the night before then they leave the two tamps who are still wait for Godot. The boy who is a messenger from Godot comes again and tells Vlademir that Godot will not be coming and insists that he did not speak to Vlademir yesterday. After he leaves, Vlademir and Estragon decide to leave, but again they do not move as the curtain falls till the end of the play.

In accordance of background study above, it can be simplify to discuss among two problems that emerge as significant concern toward this play

1. What is the meaning of life in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*?

2. What are the impacts of nothingness to the life of the main characters in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*?

This study will use the theory of absurdity and the meaning of life by Albert Camus in his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus* which are in line with statement of the problems. The first statement of the problem is what is the meaning of life in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. This statement will use the theory of absurdity and the meaning of life by Albert Camus in *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Then the second statement of problem is what are the impacts of nothingness in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. This statement will use the theory of nothingness by Corey D Koup compared with *The Myth of Sisyphus* By Albert Camus.

### Research Method

1. Source of Data

This study takes Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot* printed in 1956 by The Grove Press in New York. And Drama *Menunggu Godot* the Indonesian version of the play translated by Bakdi Soemanto and published by Yayasan Bentang Budaya in Yogyakarta.

2. Data

The data are the quotations, action, and conversation taken from Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* that related to the statement of the problems, such as, the description of life meaning in the main characters and the impact of nothingness to the life of the main characters

3. Theoretical Framework

Theoretical approach uses the theory of absurdity and the meaning of life by Albert Camus in his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus* that taken from Robert C Solomon in his book *Morality and a Good Life* which contains many philosopher's essays included Albert Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus*. To support the main theory this study uses Nothingness theory by Corey D Koup.

The central concern of *The Myth of Sisyphus* is what Camus calls "the absurd." Camus claims that there is a fundamental conflict between what human want from the universe (whether it be meaning, order, or reasons) and what human find in the universe (formless chaos). Human will never find in life itself the meaning that human want to find. Either they will discover that meaning through a leap of faith, by placing our hopes in a God beyond this world, or they will conclude that life is meaningless. Camus opens the essay by asking if this latter conclusion that life is meaningless necessarily leads one to commit

suicide. If life has no meaning, does that mean life is not worth living? If that were the case, they would have no option but to make a leap of faith or to commit suicide, says Camus. Camus is interested in pursuing a third possibility: that they can accept and live in a world devoid of meaning or purpose

### 1. The Myth of Sisyphus

Albert Camus (1913-1960), a French novelist and essayist, who worked out the theory of absurdity and who also applied this thesis in his literary writings, deals with the absurd fate of man and literally demonstrates it with the legendary ancient myth of Sisyphus in his stimulating analysis *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Camus goes into the problem what the absurdity is and how it arises. He also gives the characteristics of human basic ontological categories as the feelings of "denseness" and "the strangeness of the world" (Sisyphus, 398), which are the feelings of the Absurdity of man in a world where the decline of religious belief has deprived man of his certainties.

In the last chapter, Camus outlines the legend of Sisyphus who defied the gods and put Death in chains so that no human needed to die. When Death was eventually liberated and it came time for Sisyphus himself to die, he concocted a deceit which let him escape from the underworld. Finally captured, the gods decided on his punishment: for all eternity, he would have to push a rock up a mountain; on the top, the rock rolls down again and Sisyphus has to start over. Camus sees Sisyphus as the absurd hero who lives life to the fullest, hates death and is condemned to a meaningless task.

Camus is not told how Sisyphus endures his punishment in the underworld: that much is left to our imagination. What fascinates Camus is Sisyphus's state of mind in that moment after the rock rolls away from him at the top of the mountain. As he heads down the mountain, briefly free from his labor, he is conscious, aware of the absurdity of his fate. His fate can only be considered tragic because he understands it and has no hope for reprieve. At the same time, the lucidity he achieves with this understanding also places him above his fate.

Camus suggests that Sisyphus might even approach his task with joy. The moments of sorrow or melancholy come when he looks back at the world he's left behind, or when he hopes or wishes for happiness. When Sisyphus accepts his fate, however, the sorrow and melancholy of it vanish. Camus suggests that acknowledging "crushing truths" like the eternity and futility of his fate is enough to render them less crushing. He refers to Oedipus, who, having suffered so much, is able to "conclude that all is well."

Camus has argued that the absurd hero sees life as a constant struggle, without hope. Any attempt to deny or avoid the struggle and the hopelessness that define our lives is an attempt to escape from this absurd contradiction. Camus's single requirement for the absurd man is that he lives with full awareness of the absurdity of his position. While Sisyphus is pushing his rock up the mountain, there is nothing for him but toil and struggle. Yet in those moments where Sisyphus descends the mountain free from his burden, he is aware. He knows that he will struggle forever and he knows that this struggle will get him nowhere. This awareness is precisely the same awareness that an absurd man has in this life. So long as Sisyphus is aware, his fate is no different and no worse than our lot in life.

He reacts to Sisyphus's fate with horror because he sees its futility and hopelessness. Of course, the central argument of this essay is that life itself is a futile struggle devoid of hope. However, Camus also suggests that this fate is only horrible if human continue to hope, if they think that there is something more that is worth aiming for. Our fate only seems horrible when they place it in contrast with something that would seem preferable. If they accept that there is no preferable alternative, then we can accept our fate without horror. Only then, Camus suggests, can they fully appreciate life, because they are accepting it without reservations. Therefore, Sisyphus is above his fate precisely because he has accepted it. His punishment is only horrible if he can hope or dream for something better. If he does not hope, the gods have nothing to punish him with.

Camus suggests that, happiness and the absurd are closely linked. They are both connected to the discovery that humans' world and fate is their own, that there is no hope and that our life is purely what they make of it. As he descends the mountain, Sisyphus is totally aware of his fate. Camus concludes: "One must imagine Sisyphus happy." (Sisyphus, 401). It means that, happiness and absurd awareness are intimately connected. Human can only be truly happy, he suggests, when they accept their life and fate as entirely their own—as the only thing they have and as the only thing they will ever be. The final sentence reads: "One must imagine Sisyphus happy." But why must we imagine Sisyphus happy? Camus's wording suggests that human have no choice in the matter. But is there an alternative? Sisyphus is the absurd hero, the man who loved life so much that he has been condemned to an eternity of futile and hopeless labor. And yet he is above that fate precisely because he is aware of it. If Sisyphus is not happy in this awareness, then absurd awareness does not bring happiness. It would then follow that happiness is only possible if we evade absurd awareness, if we leap into hope or faith.



If the leap into hope or faith represents an attempt to escape from the reality of our fate, and if happiness is only possible through such a leap, then happiness would essentially be an escape. Life itself would be inherently unhappy and happiness would be a sham born out of denial. We must imagine Sisyphus happy if we want to believe in genuine happiness. Though this is the last sentence of the essay, we might see it as the initial premise that starts Camus's reasoning. Because Camus essentially believes in the idea that individual human experience is the only thing that is real, if he wants to show that happiness is real he must show that individual humans can truly be happy based on their experiences, not on their denial of experience. If happiness is real, we must be able to find happiness without relying on hope, faith, or anything else that goes beyond immediate experience. The Myth of Sisyphus is essentially an elaborate attempt to show that this is possible, and it concludes with its starting premise: if genuine happiness is possible, then Sisyphus must be happy.

Camus' Sisyphus is a typical absurd hero personifying the real quality of an absurd life; he is absurd through his passion and suffering, through his eternal fate, work that can never be finished: "The Gods had condemned Sisyphus to ceaselessly rolling a rock to the top of a mountain, whence the stone would fall back of its own weight. They had thought with some reason that there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labor." (Sisyphus, 396). We see the great effort in him, recurring again and again; he tries to move the boulder and push it up the hill thousands of times. Finally, at the end of his long, exhausting effort, he reaches his aim. However, at the same moment, he sees the boulder rolling down back to the lower world from where it will have to be lifted again. And so he returns back to the bottom. "It is during that return that pause, that Sisyphus interests me. A face that toils so close to stones is already stone itself! I see that man going back down with a heavy yet measured step toward the torment of which he will never know the end. That hour [...] is the hour of consciousness." (Sisyphus, 395). These moments of consciousness open up the world of the absurdity, the world of never-ending effort to go on, the world from which it is impossible to escape, the world of estrangement, loneliness, waiting, and continual endurance.

## 2. Nothingness theory

Nothing is a pronoun denoting the absence of anything and Nothing is a pronoun associated with nothingness. In nontechnical uses, nothing denotes thing lacking importance, interest, value, relevance, or significance. So nothingness is the state of being nothing, the state of nonexistence of anything, or the property of having

nothing. Nothingness theory is "the connection between the evolution of the universe and human thought" (Corey, 1989).

The other hand Walter Niebrzydowski commented in the creation of nothingness theory that "Nothingness is relative non-existence. Absolute non-existence is postulated by the logic of the theory. Theologians pick up from here and say that absolute non-existence is the closest science can get to what they would call the Fullness of Existence, which is God. Then, the explanation why there is something rather than nothing is that relative non-existence (nothing) is attracted to the Fullness of Existence. This process creates something, and so the Fullness of Existence in theological terms is the Creator".

The play revolves around Vladimir and Estragon and their pitiful wait for hope to arrive. At various times during the play, hope is constructed as a form of salvation, in the personages of Pozzo and Lucky, or even as death. The subject of the play quickly becomes an example of how to pass the time in a situation which offers no hope. The meaningless and nothingness of life in the play caused some impacts to the life of main characters.

## Analysis

### 1. Meaning of Life in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*.

How meaning of life portrayed in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. We can see sit from activities of the main characters. It is portrayed in following quotations:

As explained in the previous chapter, that human always try to find the meaning of life whether their life is worthliving or its meaningfull by described in Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Camus describes Sisyphus as the man who get the punishment to roll a rock (a big rock) to the top of a mountain, whence the stone would absolutely fall back down of its own weight and its done again and again. Such in *Waiting for Godot*, the two main characters Vladimir and Estragon who have absurd duty to wait the absurd object named Godot that can gives them everything. The two tramps do not have anything to do when they are waiting, their waiting seems to be foolish and irrational, they are just keeping a promise to wait.

The play begin with the simply Estragon's statement "Nothing to be done" is uttered by Estragon who is having trouble with his boot. It sets a tone of despair that indeed there is nothing that can be done.

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

*He gives up, exhausted, rests, tries again.*

*As before.*

Enter Vladimir.

ESTRAGON:

(giving up again) Nothing to be done.

VLADIMIR:

(advancing with short, stiff strides, legs wide apart)

I'm beginning to come round to that opinion. All my life I've tried to put it from me, saying Vladimir, be reasonable, you haven't yet tried everything. And I resumed the struggle.(He broods, musing on the struggle.) (p.3)

The Act and Quotations above are the representation of meaninglessness that Estragon said "nothing to be done". It means they do nothing in this play that makes their life have no meaning and explicit purpose.

VLADIMIR:

Pah!

He spits. ESTRAGON moves to center, halts with his back to auditorium.

ESTRAGON:

Charming spot. (He turns, advances to front, halts facing auditorium.) Let's go

VLADIMIR:

We can't

ESTRAGON:

Why not?

VLADIMIR:

We're waiting for Godot. (p. 7)

Absurdity consists in permanent conflict; it is a contradiction and a struggle. It can be faced only through struggling with it and disagreeing with it. That is why, as Camus says, to commit suicide means to agree with absurdity, it means to give in, because the sense of life is looked for in another world. (None of Beckett's characters commit a suicide or die in any way.) It seems that it is impossible to escape from the absurd fate, to stay here means to face it, to commit suicide means to consent to it, and therefore it must be accepted. Camus says that this question of suicide is the most basic philosophical question. He opens his essay with this fundamental point:

"There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy. All the rest – whether or not the world has three dimensions, whether the mind has nine or twelve categories – comes afterwards. These are games; one must first answer [the questions of suicide]." (Sisyphus, 395)

The characters' absurd behavior (looking inside their hats and boots) is never explained. Vladimir ignores Estragon's pain, and repeats Estragon's assertion that there is nothing to be done: they are not only bored, but crippled by their inability to do anything at all.

VLADIMIR:

I get used to the muck as I go along.

[...]

VLADIMIR:

Nothing you can do about it.

ESTRAGON:

No use struggling.

VLADIMIR:

One is what one is.

ESTRAGON:

No use wriggling.

VLADIMIR:

The essential doesn't change.

ESTRAGON:

Nothing to be done. (p. 9)

This is the second time we hear Estragon's line "Nothing to be done," the phrase which opened the play. Here, both men have accepted the stagnancy of their situation and abandoned any hope of change or betterment. This becomes not only an excuse for passivity, but a prison of inaction, as neither man can bring himself to break the cycle of waiting for Godot. Estragon and Vladimir are, like all human beings, dependent upon each other. They take turns soothing each other in an attempt to alleviate the overwhelming despair they feel in their long, long wait for Godot to appear.

According to the quotations above the meaning of life in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* is depicted by nothing. It means that in the play the life has no meaning or life is meaningless. It shown by the activities of the two main characters that nothing to be done, they do not do anything, just wait and wait the coming of Godot the character of the play who do not appear until the end of the story. They are waiting for him and hoping if they can get the enlighten(happiness). Eventhough, Godot itself is something or some one absurd that no one knows. While waiting they often disagree each other, ever commite suicide but fail, and try to leave the place but do not move. Alike the Greek Mytologi told by Camus The Myth of Sisyphus which was punished for all eternity to roll a rock up a mountain only to have it roll back down to the bottom when he reaches the top. Camus' Sisyphus is a typical absurd hero personifying the real quality of an absurd life; he is absurd through his passion and suffering, through his eternal fate, work that can never be finished: "The Gods had condemned Sisyphus to ceaselessly rolling a rock to the top of a mountain, whence the stone would fall back of its own weight. They had thought with some reason that there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labor." (Sisyphus, 396). Camus claims that Sisyphus is the ideal absurd hero and that his punishment is representative of the human condition: Sisyphus must struggle perpetually and without hope of

success. So long as he accepts that there is nothing more to life than this absurd struggle, the absurd struggle is rolling up the heavy rock to the top of the mountain by repetition because of the rock will drop again and again, then he can find happiness in it, says Camus.

## 2. The impacts of nothingness to the life of the main characters in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*.

Nothingness theory is "the connection between the evolution of the universe and human thought" (Corey, 1989). The play revolves around Vladimir and Estragon and their pitiful wait for hope to arrive. At various times during the play, hope is constructed as a form of salvation, in the personages of Pozzo and Lucky, or even as death. The subject of the play quickly becomes an example of how to pass the time in a situation which offers no hope. The meaningless and nothingness of life in the play caused some impacts to the life of main character such as:

### 1. Frustration

The play is explained about waiting, wait for an absurd object named Godot who will bring happiness, enlighten to the two tramps Estragon and Vladimir. But in the reality the object that they wait is not come until the end. In other hand the two tramps are faithful in waiting, even though, they get suffering, feeling bored, even intention to suicide.

ESTRAGON

What about hanging ourselves?

VLADIMIR

Hmm. It'd give us an erection.

ESTRAGON

(highly excited) An erection!

[...]

ESTRAGON

Let's hang ourselves immediately! (p.10)

The appeal of hanging isn't that it would bring death, but rather that it's something to do during the eternal wait. The men are unable to comprehend the consequence of such an action. Estragon's intention to move is the evidence of being bored in waiting and caused by nothingness of his activities.

ESTRAGON

Do you remember the day I threw myself into the Rhone?

VLADIMIR

We were grape harvesting.

ESTRAGON

You fished me out.

VLADIMIR

That's all dead and buried.

ESTRAGON

My clothes dried in the sun.

VLADIMIR

There's no good harking back on that. Come on.

He draws him after him. As before.

ESTRAGON

Wait!

VLADIMIR

I'm cold!

ESTRAGON

Wait! (He moves away from Vladimir.) I sometimes wonder if we wouldn't have been better off alone, each one for himself. (He crosses the stage and sits down on the mound.) We weren't made for the same road. (p.40)

The men seem to be talking about a suicide attempt on Estragon's part. Notice that the discussion of Vladimir saving his life prompts Gogo to remark that maybe they'd be better off alone. If they had been "each one for him," Estragon would have successfully drowned himself. So what he's really saying is, maybe it would be better if he were dead. It absolutely the sign of the helplessness.

ESTRAGON

It'd be better if we parted.

VLADIMIR

You always say that and you always come crawling back.

ESTRAGON

The best thing would be to kill me, like the other.

VLADIMIR

What other? (Pause.) What other?

ESTRAGON

Like billions of others.

VLADIMIR

(sententious) To every man his little cross. (He sighs.) Till he dies. (Afterthought.) And is forgotten. (p.94)

Both men seem to see death as some sort of relief or end; for Estragon, it is "the best thing," or for Vladimir it is the end of each man's personal crucifixion. It follows, then, that they are not only waiting for Godot, but waiting for death. Estragon said that "better if we parted". The statement shown the boredom of life which is only wait in his daily life, do the same habits too.

ESTRAGON

All the dead voices.

VLADIMIR

They make a noise like wings.

ESTRAGON

Like leaves.

VLADIMIR

Like sand.

ESTRAGON

Like leaves.

Silence.

VLADIMIR

They all speak at once.

ESTRAGON

Each one to itself.

Silence.

VLADIMIR

Rather they whisper.



ESTRAGON

They rustle.

VLADIMIR

They murmur.

ESTRAGON

They rustle.

Silence.

VLADIMIR

What do they say?

ESTRAGON

They talk about their lives.

VLADIMIR

To have lived is not enough for them.

ESTRAGON

They have to talk about it.

VLADIMIR

To be dead is not enough for them.

ESTRAGON

It is not sufficient.

Silence.

VLADIMIR

They make a noise like feathers.

ESTRAGON

Like leaves.

VLADIMIR

Likes ashes.

ESTRAGON

Like leaves. (p.49)

VLADIMIR

And they didn't beat you?

ESTRAGON

Beat me? Certainly they beat me.

VLADIMIR

The same lot as usual?

ESTRAGON

The same? I don't know. (p.16)

VLADIMIR

It hurts?

ESTRAGON

(angrily) 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

(angrily) Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts!

ESTRAGON

(pointing) You might button it all the same.

VLADIMIR

(stooping) True. (He buttons his fly.) Never

neglect the little things of life. (p.17)

Much of the suffering in *Waiting for Godot* is the result of uncertainty. Uncertainty of what their waiting, their feelings, and their absurd life.

The boy finally delivers his message: "Mr. Godot told me to tell you that he won't come this evening but surely tomorrow." Vladimir asks if the boy works for Godot, and the boy says he does; he looks after the goats. He says Godot is good and doesn't beat him, though he does beat the boy's brother, who minds the sheep. He says Godot feeds him well. Vladimir asks if the boy is happy, and the boy is unsure.

Godot's arrival is the entire point of the characters' waiting and of Beckett's play itself. The revelation that he will not come is at once frustrating, funny, and sad. From the boy's description, it is unclear whether Godot is really a way towards freedom or merely another form of domination, as he seems to be the boy's master.

### 3. Disunity

The two main characters of this play are friends. They are helping each other, reminding each other, and they're waiting together all the times. Although, Estragon is impatient and constantly wants to leave Vladimir, he also has the idea to pass their time by hanging themselves. Like a normal human, they often disagree each other even be separated because they have different concept. It shown in quotations bellow that they always have different idea:

ESTRAGON:

What is it?

VLADIMIR:

I don't know. A willow.

This is arguably the darkest moment in *Waiting for Godot*, and it pretty much comes out of nowhere. It is disturbing that both men are in utter agreement about the voices they hear; it means either that the noises of the dead are a real, shared experience, or that one man is willing to indulge the macabre fantasies of the other. Check out the three pairings of repetition in Estragon's line. First "like leaves" is repeated twice, then "they rustle," and finally "like leaves" yet again. The repetition is par for the course in *Waiting for Godot* – a reminder of cycles and absurdity. But the image of leaves is also cyclic – just think about the tree which has sprouted overnight.

### 2. Sufferance

Every human who want to search the meaning of their life will be experienced the tertness of life. As explained before in previous chapter that "We will never find in life itself the meaning that we want to find. Either we will discover that meaning through a leap of faith, by placing our hopes in a God beyond this world, or we will conclude that life is meaningless". (Camus,19)

*Waiting for Godot*'s main character are doing absurd activity that make their life has no meaning at all. Whereas, in *Myth of Sisyphus* the character of the absurd hero (Sisyphus itself) held the punishman to do something absurd too. Both of them are experience the tartness life.

ESTRAGON:  
Where are the leaves?  
VLADIMIR:  
It must be dead.  
ESTRAGON:  
Looks to me more like a bush.  
VLADIMIR:  
A shrub. (p.7)

ESTRAGON:  
We came here yesterday.  
VLADIMIR:  
Ah no. There you're mistaken.  
ESTRAGON:  
What did we do yesterday?  
VLADIMIR:  
What did we do yesterday?  
ESTRAGON:  
Yes.  
VLADIMIR:  
Why... (angrily.) nothing is certain when  
you're about.  
ESTRAGON:  
In my opinion we were here. (p.8)

Estragon asks where the tree's leaves are and Vladimir says it must be dead, or else it's not the right season for leaves. The two agree that the tree is more like a bush or shrub. Vladimir doubts whether Godot will really come. Estragon asks what they will do if he doesn't come, and Vladimir says they'll come back to the same place the next day, and the next day, and so on, until Godot arrives.

Estragon says they came to this place yesterday, but Vladimir disagrees. Estragon asks if Vladimir is sure that they are at this spot on the right day. Vladimir thinks so (it is Saturday), but looks through his pockets to see if he wrote down somewhere on which day they were supposed to come. Estragon doubts what day it is and worries that maybe Godot came yesterday and they weren't there to meet him. Unlike Vladimir, who has a somewhat stable sense of time, Estragon is completely temporally disoriented, and has no idea what day it is, let alone a sense of what he and Vladimir did yesterday.

Estragon feels he has not same road, he has not same idea as quoted bellow:

ESTRAGON:  
Wait! (he moves away from VLADIMIR.) I  
sometimes wonder if we wouldn't have been better  
off alone, each one for himself. (he crosses the  
stage and sits down on the mound.) We weren't  
made for the same road.  
VLADIMIR:  
(without anger): It's not certain.  
ESTRAGON:  
No, nothing is certain. (p.44)

## Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the previous chapter, the analysis includes two points. The first deal with the description of the meaning of life and the second is the impacts to live of the main characters.

Meaning of life in *Waiting for Godot* is that reveals with the theory of *The Myth of Sisyphus* told by Albert Camus, describes that the meaning of life is nothing. There is no meaning in the life of Estragon and Vladimir as the main character in the play. Estragon and Vladimir only waiting all the time without any struggle, revolt, or make a freedom about how to live the meaningful life. They just waiting for the arrival of people named Godot as they believe that he can give them the meaning, the happiness, enlighten. Alike with the ancient Greek mythology told by Camus on his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*, which the character of the story itself is given punishment to rolling up the big and heavy rock to the top of mountain. Sisyphus does it over and over as the rock will always falling down because of the weight.

Both of *Waiting for Godot*'s main characters and the character of Sisyphus are shown the absurdity of life: The first, Estragon and Vladimir shown their inability to take of the shoes and the take off the hat, peer inside it, feel about inside it, shake it, and put it on again. Then do it again by repetition. They are waiting for an absurd thing whether it has a benefit or just meaninglessness and nothingness like their life. The second, Sisyphus also struggling to roll up the rock whether he conscious that it will roll down again but he don't stop it while hoping that he can find the happiness on his life.

Because of life is not worth living, or it means the life is meaningless, life is nothing, the life of main characters in *Waiting for Godot* become helpless (frustrating), tartness (suffering), and get disunity between them. Frustration here depends on the boredom of being waiting for something that never come. The boy coming twice in another day bringing the message from Godot. Unfortunately, Godot will never come today and also tomorrow. They also get many sufferings and even be a parted in their relationship, get disagreement while doing waiting.

Nothingness of this play influences the life of the main characters Vladimir and Estragon. Their hope rejected Estragon wants to go far away, but Vladimir says they can't go far, as they have to come back here tomorrow and wait for Godot. Estragon suggests they hang themselves on the tree using his belt, but when they test the belt's strength by pulling on either end, it breaks. Vladimir and Estragon prepare to leave for the night. They say they are going to leave, but neither moves until the end of the play.

## References



- (<http://www.imagi-nation.com/moonstruck/clsc7.html>)
- Abrams, M. H. A Glossary of Literature Term. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.
- Beckett, Samuel. 1956. *Waiting for Godot*. New York: Grove Press.
- Britton, K. 1969, *Philosophy and the Meaning of Life*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Calderwood, James L. 1986. "Ways of Waiting in *Waiting for Godot*." *Modern Drama*. Toronto. University of Toronto Press. 363-75.
- Camus, Albert. 1996. "The Myth of Sisyphus." Trans. Justin O'Brien. *Existentialist Philosophy: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. Ed. L. Nathan Oaklander. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, p. 358.
- Corcoran, Paul E. 1989. "Historical Endings: Waiting 'with' *Godot*." *History of European Ideas*. Brighton: Elsevier Science, 331-49.
- Esslin, Martin. 1961. *The Theatre of the Absurd*. London: Methuen Publishing Limited.
- Hepburn, R. W. 1966. "Questions about the Meaning of Life." *Religious Studies* 1 : 125-40.
- Hutchings, William. 1991. "Waiting for *Godot* and the Principle of Uncertainty." *Approaches to Teaching Beckett's Waiting for Godot*. Ed. June Schlueter & Enoch Brater. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 26-30.
- Jones, Edward, H. 1968. *Outline of literature*. United States of America: Macmillan Company.
- Kaup, D. Corey. 2003. *Comment on Nothingness Theory*. London: Matheun.
- Kekes, J. 1986. 'The Informed Will and the Meaning of Life', *Philosophy and*
- Kiergard, Soren. (1844) (1980). *The Concept of Anxiety* edited by Reidar Thomte: Princeton University Press.
- Metz, Thaddeus. 2001. "The Concept of a Meaningful Life." *American Philosophical Quarterly* 38 : 137-5
- Metz, Thaddeus. 2005. "Critical Notice: Baier and Cottingham on the Meaning of Life." *Disputatio* 19 : 251-64.
- Nagel, T. 1970. 'The Absurd', *Journal of Philosophy*, 68, 716-27; reprinted in *Life and Meaning: A Reader*, (ed.) O. Hanfling, 49-59, Oxford: Blackwell, 1987. (1986). *The View from Nowhere*, New York: Oxford University Press. *Phenomenological Research* 47, 75-90.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. 1973. *Existentialism and Humanism*. Translated by Philip Mairet. London: Methuen.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. 1956. *Being and Nothingness. An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*. New York: Philosophical Library.
- Soemanto, Bakdi. 1999. *Menunggu Godot*. Yogyakarta: Yayasan Bentang Budaya.
- Solomon, Robert C. 1992. *Morality and the Good Life*. New York: Mc Graw Hill, Inc. p. 393-400.
- Stanton, Robert. 1965. *An introduction to fiction*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- (<http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages/3526/Absurdity-of-Life-Title-Absurdity-of-Life.html>)>Absurdity of Life Title: Absurdity of Life)
- (<http://www.amazon.com/waiting-for-godot/study-guide.html>)