

A BAKHTINIAN INTERPRETATION OF BECKETT: “WAITING FOR GODOT”

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ABSTRACT

The study explores whether Heteroglossia is restricted to unraveling novelistic discourse or it can be used as a major deconstructive tool beyond the novel such as the Theatre of the Absurd. The data was comprised of dialogues, actions and incidents from Waiting for Godot. The study applied Bakhtin’s use of Heteroglossia as a theoretical cover to analyze the contentious voices of polyphonic novels and enlarges it to explore voices that denote the dynamics of social systems: power, resistance, identity and the solidarity. The study reveals Heteroglossia’s capacity for investigating historical and cultural influences on human behavior, social attitudes and language ideologies. The study provides a broader vision to Beckett’s existentialist views and empowers Bakhtin by displaying his influence over areas such as Sociolinguistics and Anthropology. Hence, the study enables an anthropological, social and political understanding of the play.

Keywords: *Heteroglossia, Language, Contentious Voices & Discourses*

INTRODUCTION

The Bakhtin’s theories present language as uniting force, a cultural and historical link between generations of people. This unifying principle is particularly observed in Heteroglossia and translated into its subdivisions Carnival and Dialogism. Henning (2015) describes Heteroglossia as the objective condition of language marked by a plurality of perspectives and value-laden ideological practices, in the challenging contact with each other. In the words of Matz (2008) Heteroglossia shows us language breaking up and as Reyes (2011) maintains, Heteroglossia reflects the notion of voice capturing the process of creating, shaping or changing social meaning. Voice, thus assumes various forms. It can be voice of *carnival* that exercises power and destroys social differences. It can be the voice of authority that is being mocked in the carnival, it can be voice of resignation that causes carnival to end. The strength of Heteroglossia lies in the force and quality of the numerous voices it represents. In the genre of the novel, it becomes possible to appreciate egalitarian dimension of Heteroglossia not through the representation of voices of individual characters but of entire groups/strata of society (Plochocki, 2010, p.137).

The languages of Heteroglossia are described by Bakhtin (2010) as, “specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and value” (p. 293). In *Waiting for Godot*, these Heteroglossic languages are heard as conflicting voices in discourse. Within the confusing and chaotic world of *Waiting for Godot* each character has a voice and a specific world view carrying meaning and value. Since Beckett, presents his themes through his characters, who in turn symbolize different

aspects of life, the human condition and Beckett's own perception of the world, they (the characters) become voices rather than passive individuals. It is through the incongruous voices of these characters that Beckett reveals the human plight and chastises social systems. The study aims to extract Bakhtin's concepts of Heteroglossia from the confines of the novel and use it to explore the socio cultural influences on human behavior. For this purpose, it will be applied on an unconventional and complex play as, "Waiting for Godot" and will address the following research question: Is Heteroglossia restricted to novelistic discourse or does it have wider implications?

RESEARCH DESIGN

The above mentioned research question was addressed by applying Heteroglossia to Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* which possesses none of the aesthetic qualities of the novel nor does it follow the structural design of a traditional play. It is, however, extremely rich in symbolism and imagery and its characters though physically unstable are vocally strong since they possess polyphonic voices. Heteroglossia, when used as a tool for deconstruction, serves the dual purpose of bringing out the elusive richness of *Waiting for Godot* and identifying the duality of voices on which it (the play) is structured.

Heteroglossia was used firstly, to highlight the structural dichotomy of the play and later for an analysis of the thematic binaries through an expansion of its (Heteroglossia's) core function, which is to identify the co-existence of and the conflict between diverse voices within a single voice. Structural dichotomy refers to the componential binaries of *Waiting for Godot* contained within the elements of Time, Waiting and Godot. Time is both valued and shunned, Waiting will bring either salvation or damnation and Godot could be merciful or cruel. Likewise, thematic binaries refer to the numerous dichotomous strands which emerge, more or less, in consequence of the major binaries such as hope/despair, loneliness/togetherness, decay/fertility to name but a few. The four characters in *Waiting for Godot*, add to the structural dichotomy by appearing in the form of two pairs, each pair possessing a voice, made of diverse tones. These opposing pairs construct the polemic voices of the play and it is through Heteroglossia that their incongruous harmony is emphasized.

Nature of Data

The research made use of secondary data extracted from Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. Due to the play's incongruity and Beckett's resistance to the conventions of theatrical writing, the data does not have a strictly organized pattern and is characterized by rapid shifts of time, situation and action. The play spreads over two acts but there is no scene division and neither do the main themes appear through well-made episodes. Thus, the data collection involved a careful selection of dialogue, action and incidents which suited the research purpose. In this connection, scenes that show all four characters interacting and drawing influences from each other are a major part of the analysis. Lucky's silent yet strong character has been focused upon in relation to the

Carnival framework of which he is an integral component as he symbolizes the rebellion that precedes revival. Similarly, situations that show Estragon and Vladimir challenging Pozzo's authority have been included to show the Carnival operating towards bringing about change.

The Carnival aggression then gives way to dialogic encounters between the four characters. Reconciliatory speeches between the two pairs have been singled out to show that the strife is finally over and a spirit of camaraderie has been inevitably created. In addition to this, some poetic and philosophical speeches have also been chosen for discussion as they show Beckett's rejection of a consistent style of writing corresponding to his belief in the unfinalizability of all creative realities.

Although the play was thoroughly evaluated for analysis, it was not possible to include all its aspects in the discussion and therefore certain speeches were deliberately excluded from the sphere of analysis. One of them is Lucky's long tirade, which though not without significance was not helpful to the research design. Vladimir's song in the beginning of Act 2 could have added to the ambiguity of the play and so was left out. Speeches that contained biblical references and religious allusions were also not discussed because a religious interpretation would have restricted the scope of the play.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data was analyzed in four stages. The first stage deals with the structural dichotomy of the play and therefore includes dialogues which show a paradoxical approach towards the concepts of Time and Waiting and the dual implications of Godot's character. The second stage highlights the use of Heteroglossia through parody and the element of the grotesque. The third stage explores Heteroglossia through carnival voices enforcing the play's political element whereas the prospects of change and renewal are highlighted in the fourth stage of analysis through the dialogic assimilation of voices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

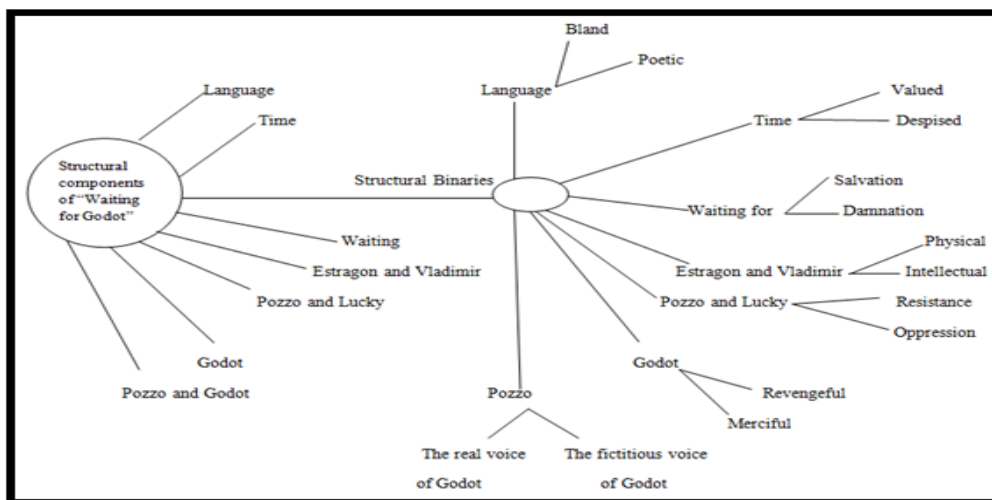
Structural Dichotomy

The play has a natural tendency towards making meaning and an equally natural resistance to it and this is partly due to the stubborn distinction that Beckett makes between what he calls *the form* and *the chaos*: "The form and the chaos remain separate. The latter is not reduced to the former. That is why form itself becomes a preoccupation, because it exists as a problem separate from the material it accommodates" (as cited in Kane, 1984, p. 180; Harty, 2009, p. 56). Beckett believed that the form suffered because it has to bear the aesthetic weight of the chaos (content). Thus, a dichotomy is created, because for Beckett, as has been described by Byala (2006) "the form does not have to be content (and) the shape of a work of art can be separate from the idea it accommodates" (p.271). This is more than true about *Waiting for Godot* where the form deceives

the content and a rich expression is constrained by an incongruous form, leading to an ambiguity which according to Shultz (2014) “brings various contexts and subcontexts into contention with one another in an arena bereft of specificity” (p.167). However, play in the words of Krasner (2016) “by appearing impenetrable and inscrutable never abandons its efforts at simplicity and clarity” (p.31).

This natural dichotomy between form and expression extends to other facets of the play as illustrated in figure 1. Estragon and Vladimir appear to be opposing halves of one being or as Hutchings (2005) says, the “divided self ... in that Vladimir is the most intellectual of the pair whereas Estragon is the more physical and bodily” (p.61). Graver (2004) goes a step further and calls them “two halves of a couple: married, single, external, internal, separating and coming back together” (p.32). Similarly, the most flagrant dichotomy exists between Pozzo and Lucky. The master/slave duo vocalizes many crucial themes of the play, the foremost being the concepts of power and resistance essential to all power relations. Together they compose a voice: subtle and unique. It is as Sternlicht (2005) says; Pozzo and Lucky are yin and yang in their relationship: part of one personality or entity (p.55).

Figure 1 Binaries in the Structure of Waiting for Godot



The play is structured on the more powerful concepts of language, time and waiting (and their internal dichotomies) and the multi voiced allusions of Pozzo and Godot. These concepts and allusions provide a framework for other thematic binaries to emerge. Let us observe, for example the internal conflict from which language suffers in *Waiting for Godot*: it is bland, poetic, disjointed and noncommunicative therefore the characters oscillate between communicating, miscommunicating and not communicating at all. Structural dichotomy is also observed in the play’s title with its emphasis on the word ‘waiting’. The act of waiting has double implications;

the characters are either waiting for betterment or for life to end, for salvation or damnation. There is an uncertainty about how the waiting will materialize and what it entails for the people. The indefinite and arduous waiting results in alternative spells of hope and despair and thus another strong binary is created which runs as an important theme of the play.

Waiting also leads to another heteroglossic allusion: Time. As mentioned earlier, time, in *Waiting for Godot*, is both valued and shunned. The characters do not belong to any particular time or age and are thus not chained by the conventions of any particular period. In rendering them timeless, Beckett is able to liberate them from moral and ethical constrictions and present them as natural beings with natural needs. Though beyond time, the characters are sharply aware of the impact of time on their lives: how the passing of time has debilitated them and how essential it is for them to conquer it. Each of the play's two acts ends on a common note:

Vladimir: Well? Shall we go? Estragon: Yes, Let's go (They don't move)

Here, the necessity of immediate action is realized but it is suppressed by the greater urge to resist change which could be brought about by their 'moving'. Time is forceful because everything in the play is conditioned by its smooth and rough passage. It presents challenges for the characters because on the one hand they want it to pass rapidly so that they don't have to invent ways to kill it and on the other hand they lament its swift passage because it is bringing them nearer to their end (Luk & Lu, 1990). This is seen as follows: *Vladimir: We are no longer alone, waiting for the night, waiting for Godot, waiting for waiting. All evening we have struggled, unassisted. Now it's over. It's already tomorrow.*

(ACT II)

Here, Vladimir is seen taking pride in struggling unassisted against "waiting" but not without regret on "its" being finally "over". Estragon and Vladimir's battle with time shows a fear of choices resulting in a paradoxical approach towards life. There is a desire for change (possible through death of the old systems) and a resistance to change (resisting renewal brought about by death of the primitive order). There is an urge to avail choices (a longing for isolation and death) and a fear to do so (remaining static in the face of opportunities). It as Leonard & Flynn (2015) describes "the barren blasted world of Beckett makes us aware of how frightening it is to be free. In *Waiting for Godot* we see the discomfort that might arise from what Jean-Paul Sartre refers to as the burden of freedom". While tramps clutch at the last straw, hoping to be saved by Godot, his messenger shatters the allusion by saying, "He does nothing, sir" or in other words, *Godot* has little if nothing to offer tramps. He is as inactive as tramps, fails to keep a promise, is a cruel task master and yet for Estragon and Vladimir, he is vision of hope. He serves purpose of Panoptican watch keeper, for his silent presence hinders growth of rebellious attitude among his people.

Godot is Heteroglossic in that he mirrors double perspective of life. He offers religious salvation in resembling God and becoming an invisible and all controlling force. He also symbolizes the

progressive life offered by Avant-Gardism with it all its newness and novelties. The prospects which such a life offered are yet vague but hold attraction for the people. The name Godot in its uniqueness is a source of wonder for them as it symbolizes some mysterious breakthrough as shown below:

Vladimir: I'm curious to hear what he has to offer. Then we'll take it or leave it.

Estragon: What exactly did we ask him for?

Vladimir: I can't have been listening.

Vladimir: Oh...nothing very definite.

Estragon: A kind of prayer.

Vladimir: A vague supplication.

Vladimir: Exactly.

(ACT I)

The word Godot has a rotund structure, very similar to Pozzo. Both names indicate circular movement and a personality interflow. It was as though, Pozzo is what Godot will really turn out to be, if he ever makes himself seen.

Pozzo: You took me for Godot.

Estragon: Oh no, sir, not for an instant, sir.

Pozzo : Who is he?

Vladimir: Oh, he is a kind of acquaintance.

Estragon: Nothing of the kind, we hardly know him.

(ACT I)

The question to the messenger: *he doesn't beat you? Does he feed you well?* Arises after Pozzo's maltreatment of Lucky. The relationship that Pozzo and Lucky share reinforces the expectations that the tramps have of Godot and the reason Estragon runs away in fear when he feels Godot approaching. A portion of Godot has been revealed over Pozzo. The tyrannical aspect of Godot reflected through Pozzo overcomes the merciful aspect that the tramps had been nurturing for so long. The white hair of Godot offers little/no solace as Lucky has white hair and white becomes a symbol of rebellious submission or suppressed violence as Lucky attacks the tramps when they try to help him and even shows resistance to Pozzo's orders by his body language through acts of falling asleep and becoming static. Godot suffers from an internal contention. In opposition to Godot's real voice is his fictitious voice: his merciful self which remains obscure since Godot never comes to offer Estragon and Vladimir release from their suffering. In partially exposing Godot as such, Beckett reveals the real and the projected image of ruling systems. The softer side of Godot and Pozzo is insinuated but never really shown because for Beckett, the revolutionized social systems offered mythical repose and were merely designed for demobilizing intellectual capacities of human beings and leading them deceptively towards a slavish submission of the ruling authorities.

Parody and Elements of Grotesque

Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* parodies the human condition as caught between circumstances of war, political upheavals and devastated social systems. It is aptly termed by Brater (2013) as "a work of its time written for its time" and as "grotesquely carnivalesque" (p.9) since its 'defoliated landscape' parodies the 'ugly aftermath of Second World War'. During a parody, the parodying voice casts an impact, stronger than that of the voice being parodied. It enriches the parodied object by giving it new manifestations and suggesting fresh possibilities as reinforced by Morson and Emerson (1990) "parody emerges here as a sub category of creative potential" (p.434). With Beckett and Bakhtin, parody acquires some distinct qualities apart from its traditional functions of satire and ridicule. Parody for Bakhtin, is a source of corrective laughter which leads to new and creative ways of thought and action. In parodying an object, an idea or a hypothesis, we aspire to rid it, of its superfluties through positive transformation. In this sense, parody is a form of Heteroglossia because it is double voiced; it bears the voice of the simulated and the simulator. Parody is a confrontation of two voices and thus dialogic. Pozzo and Lucky's grand locomotive is the greatest source of parody in the play. In their pairing, Beckett shows two distinct voices in dialogue as identified by Sternlicht (2005): Pozzo the sadist who stands for capitalism in exploiting his worker and Lucky the slavish masochist and the tormented intellectual made ineffectual by the society.

The equipment which Lucky carries makes up the necessities of modern living but the structure of their machinery is traditional as they represent a horse and carriage. Pozzo pretending to be riding on a carriage but in fact only mounted on his legs and Lucky substituting a beast of burden presents a sorry picture of humanity under the bondage of modern contraptions. Lucky and Pozzo who appear to be machine (rather than human duo) show precision and perfect physical alignment through the way Pozzo gives out commands and the way they are received and obeyed by Lucky. The mechanical movements of Pozzo and Lucky echo working of huge administrative systems with their apparent perfection but inner deterioration; the type of deterioration which gradually crumbles foundations of administrative structures and necessitates change. It is as Hutchings (2005) says master/slave dichotomy, battle for recognition between two self-consciousnesses (p.65). Together they construct a grotesque voice with overtones of Bakhtin's *comic body* and Beckett's *abject body*. The distinctions which Weller (2006) makes between the Rabelaisian body which both laughs and makes laugh and Beckettian body which shows "radical resistance to official culture" (p.115), melt and mingle in collective body of Pozzo and Lucky, making them polyphonic. They are laughable because they have overgrown their limits in being absurd and they are formidable because their abjectness is a sign of resistance to and liberation from all normativity.

Carnival Voices

Apart from the dichotomies that make up the structure of the play as in the concepts of time, waiting and Godot, other stronger binaries exist which for their vocal strength shoot out as loud

and conflicting voices. Among these are the Carnival voices: raw, aggressive and conflicting, denoting the powerful concepts of identity, power and resistance. The carnival traits of ritual, rebellion and reversal are reflected through the individual and collective interactions of the two pairs. The play opens showing Estragon and Vladimir sharing a relationship which though rationally inexplicable is culturally significant. Years of togetherness has nurtured between them, a spirit of camaraderie, which calls for ritualistic displays of celebrations and embraces. Each morning, Vladimir celebrates his union with Estragon saying “Get up till I embrace you”. Their friendship has given them an identity and the power to exercise that identity when the need so arises. Carnival discourse is constructed on binary voices; it acquires a rebellious hue when territorial integrity and cultural dignity is at stake and at the same time it also stands for fraternity and communal love. Love and aggression exist in the form of binaries in *Waiting for Godot*, as is seen in the love / hate relationship between the two pairs. Pozzo is driven away from the land he claimed to own by the tramps who in being more terrestrial than the other pair, had a stronger claim to it. Estragon and Vladimir are silent guardians of their territory and this leads them to counter Pozzo’s authority and firmly establish their identity, saying ‘We are men’. On another occasion, they save Pozzo with that spirit of fraternity when even “the tiger bounds to the help of his congeners without the least reflection” (Act II).

The master/ slave dichotomy constructed through the characters of Pozzo and Lucky serves to heighten the contrast between the official and the non-unofficial (or the second) life of the people. The tramps, initially struck by Pozzo’s grandeur are moved to call him “sir” since he bore the official voice and commanded respect. However, as time passes. Pozzo’s glory wanes partly because of his cruel treatment of his slave, Lucky and partly because of his condescending attitude towards the tramps. This systematically leads to rebellion and the usurpation of authority. The carnival spirit is evoked and the tramps indulge in their unofficial life as symbolized by the pratfalls and the tomfoolery and during this energetic display, Pozzo is toppled. He is smacked and called a “bastard”. He is also reminded of his down fall, “you slipped and fell”. Another form of rebellion is seen through the formidable figure of Lucky who symbolizes the simmering violence beneath the carnival chaos. Lucky, for all his miseries is entitled to retaliate which he does through sporadic acts of violence. He follows the Carnival principle: the sending out of warnings to the state through implied violence. The kick aimed at Estragon can in good time be aimed at Pozzo, who is aware of such a possibility when he says it’s “a good sign” on seeing Estragon’s bleeding shin. The spilling of blood in the Bakhtinian tradition symbolizes purgation which in turn signifies change. Pozzo anticipates his imminent downfall and has almost come to terms with it.

Dialogic Assimilation

In recent times, Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism for its versatility has already transgressed the landscape of the novel and extended to the art of movie and cinema. The present study uses a similar approach for scrutinizing *Waiting for Godot* in a social, political and semiotic arena. The

strife between the natural and the artificial and the dichotomy of birth and death are prominent themes of *Waiting for Godot*. However, there are situations in the play where these contentious voices through assimilation transform into dialogic voices. The spirit of accommodation which one voice naturally bears for the voice of the 'other' enables a dialogic discourse. The effects of dialogic encounters are more abstract than physical because they consist of an internal and psychological molding of our belief systems. In *Waiting for Godot* the dialogic voices of the two pairs provide occasions for self-analysis. The tramps realize more than ever that they are real human beings and Pozzo who is already in the process of disintegration, comes crashing to the ground when faced by the solid presence of the tramps. In the character of Pozzo, we find the best example of dialogic voices because he represents both the natural and the artificial life. Ironically, some of the best words of wisdom are uttered through this mouth because he had had the taste of both lives. He speaks of abandoning nobler values because they were beyond him:

Beauty, grace, truth of the first water, I knew they were all beyond me. So I took a knook. And yet, he finds it difficult to part from the tramps that are of the same species as him. I don't seem to be able ... (long hesitation)...to depart

Just as in the Bakhtinian sense, one word travels from one mouth to another and constitutes an ongoing process, similarly such a process is felt in the death of one generation and the evolution of another; each generation retaining a portion of the previous one and thus becoming a source of transmission. Happiness and sorrow are legacies of the human race. *Pozzo: The tears of the world are a constant quantity. For each one who begins to weep, somewhere else another stops. The same is true of the laugh (He laughs) Let us not then speak ill of our generation, it is not any unhappier than its predecessors.* Dialogic encounters are according to Henning (2015), "the classic means of sounding out various strains that constitute the cultural as well as the individual self" (p.198). This is observed when the two pairs are interacting and their voices collide. It is then that they lose their garbs, both of officialdom and puppetry and become humans. Once the social hierarchies are demolished, Pozzo and the tramps develop a humanitarian attitude for each other. Even, Lucky is eyed with compassion and Pozzo is moved to show concern for him:

Pozzo: What happened exactly?

Estragon: Exactly!

Vladimir: The two of you slipped (Pause) and fell.

Pozzo: Go and see is he hurt (Lucky)

Vladimir: We can't leave you.

(ACT II)

Such a display by the characters is in sharp contrast to their behavior when they had first met and when their voices stood apart and had not begun to melt and assimilate: Pozzo: I present myself:

Pozzo...So you were waiting for him? Here? On my land?

Vladimir: We didn't intend any harm.

Pozzo: The road is free to all.

Vladimir: That's how we looked at it.

Pozzo: It's a disgrace. But there you are.

(ACT 1)

The life of the tramps in *Waiting for Godot* has a dialogic progression. It is characterized by their struggle to live, desire for death and hope for betterment. It is as Pattie (2000) says, "Beckett's work in the theatre enacted a dialogue between the characters' sense of hope, their compulsive need to act, and their strongly expressed wish for extinction" (p.196). The dichotomy of birth and death in *Waiting for Godot* is conveyed through shocking imagery. Beckettian characters repel fertility because it is preceded by death. In *All That Fall*, the old Dan Rooney asks his wife "Did you ever wish to kill a child. Nip some young doom in the bud?" (Esslin, 2014, p. 53). Child, a symbol of a new life, denotes the death of an old generation. Beckettian characters repel fertility because it is preceded by death. Vladimir rejects Estragon's suggestion that they hang themselves as it would bring about a much feared change: "*It'd give us an erection...with all that follows. Where it falls mandrakes grow*". The mandrake was believed to be a miniature image of a human being that grew from the sperm fallen from hanged criminals (Busi, 2015). Vladimir knows that their death would bring new life and a new era and such a change through the annihilation of the old order was not desirable. The assurance that night follows day, a naked tree will go green in spring and an erection leads to fertility is at once promising and frightening. This binary (created by birth/death), gives dialogic voices to the play. In one of the most famous motifs of *birth*, the *grave digger* and *the forceps*, is found this very subtle blend: *Vladimir: Astride of a grave and a difficult birth. Down in the hole, lingeringly, the grave digger puts on the forceps. We have time to grow old. The air is full of our cries.* (ACT II)

The image of giving birth over an open grave is rather crude but it shows the co mingling of birth and death or as Barr (2015) calls it, *Beckett's compression of birth and death*, which according to him, supports the play's *meta-theatrical acceleration of the diurnal cycle* (p. 252) as is seen in the quick succession of night and day, the overnight growth of leaves on the tree and the fast deteriorating condition of Pozzo and Lucky which would ultimately lead them to death. Here again, we observe a cyclic rotation of birth and death in such rapid succession, that there comes a stage when they become synonymous: the nurse pushing a black pram is referred to as "a most funeral thing" in *Krapp's Last Tape*. Similarly, life and death are juxtaposed in *Waiting for Godot* when towards the end Vladimir says, "Everything's dead but the tree" and Estragon suggests that they hang themselves from that very *alive* tree.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals the ability of Bakhtinian theories of language when applied over a Beckettian text such as *Waiting for Godot*, not only in diminishing the obscurity that characterizes the *Theatre of the Absurd* but also in enhancing the literary dimensions of Samuel Beckett's oeuvre. The study dissipates the misconception which arises from his (Bakhtin's) connection with Rabelais and popular Russian culture and which brands his linguistic theories as indigenous to

Russian folklore and limits them to the domain of the novel from which they primarily emerged. The Bakhtinian notion of duality of voices or the double voiced quality of language as manifested in the concept of Heteroglossia and its sub divisions: Carnival and Dialogism when applied to an unconventional and highly complex play like *Waiting for Godot*, brings out the universality of Bakhtin's philosophies.

This study encourages innovation through a broader interpretation of literary theories and linguistic concepts and demonstrates modern methods of implementation by exploiting concept of Heteroglossia to its farthest propensities in the analysis of *Waiting for Godot*. In doing so, Heteroglossia countered the strongest challenge faced by Beckettian critics which according to Rudrum (2013) is "the temptation to conclude that Beckett's works are essentially meaningless and on the other hand, the compulsion to read into them layers and levels of supposedly "deeper," pseudo-philosophical, metaphysical meaning" (p.86). Heteroglossia serves to allay challenges by giving each layer and level of *Waiting for Godot*, a meaningful voice of its own. The present study establishes the success of Heteroglossia in decoding, a play which Buning (1993, p. 341) describes as "sense-denying, meaning-refusing, (and) absurd" and which according to Rabate` (2010) asserts a "*spirit of resistance in art*" (p.104). It is hoped that the study may contribute to the vast body of literature on Mikhail Bakhtin and Samuel Beckett, in that it offers a renewed perspective of both writers and paves way for research on Bakhtin by empowering his linguistic theories and redefining them as important tools for analyzing social and political discourse.

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