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Araştırma Makalesi

MEANINGLESSNESS OF LIFE IN THE WORKS NAMED WAITING FOR GODOT AND CLINTON GODSON*

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Abstract

This article is a comparative study of *Waiting for Godot* (1948) by Samuel Beckett and *Clinton Godson* (1970) by Leyla Erbil. The first one is an absurd play; the second one is a short absurd story that the traditional forms in modern literature were rejected. In this study focused on the concepts absurdity and meaninglessness of life in Beckett's and Erbil's works, the endless waitings and questionings that have no solutions aside from absurd and meaningless conversations, in other words futile questionings and waitings ironically covered the both works will be discussed and evaluated in the light of the method of comparative literature.

Keywords: Meaninglessness, absurd, irony, humor, postmodernism, existentialism, nihilism.

GODOT'YU BEKLERKEN VE CLINTON GODSON ADLI ESERLERDE YAŞAMIN ANLAMSIZLIĞI

Öz

Bu makale Samuel Beckett'in *Godot'yu Beklerken* (1948) ile Leyla Erbil'in *Clinton Godson* (1970) adlı eserlerinin karşılaştırmalı bir çalışmasıdır. İlki absürd bir oyun; ikincisi, modern edebiyatta geleneksel formları yıkan kısa absürd bir öyküdür. Beckett ve Erbil'in eserlerindeki saçmalık ve yaşamın anlamsızlığı kavramları üzerine odaklı olan bu çalışmada, her iki eseri de kapsayan saçma ve anlamsız konuşmalar bir yana, hiçbir çözüme ulaşamayan sonsuz bekleyiş ve sorgulayışlar, bir başka deyişle beyhude sorgulayışlar ve ironik bekleyişler karşılaştırmalı edebiyat yöntemi ışığında tartışılacak ve değerlendirilecektir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Anlamsızlık, saçma, ironi, mizah, postmodernizm, varoluşçuluk, nihilizm.

Introduction

Samuel Beckett (1906-1989), one of the masters of British literature, whose name is mostly associated with the theater of the absurd emerging as a result of the demolition, chaos and traumas of the Second World War, the Irish writer writing works in French and English, is among the most significant modernist and postmodernist writers of the twentieth century with

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his novels, plays and radio dramas which won him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969.

On the other hand, since 1950s, Leyla Erbil (1931-2013), one of the leading writers of Turkish literature, the first female writer nominated for the Nobel Award in Turkish literature, who uses a feminine language in her stories and novels, is the pioneer in the growth of a feminist consciousness and women's fiction. She opens windows to the worlds of strange men and strange women, and strange lives of diseased societies and waste lands on the edge of the notions existentialism, nothingness, absurdism and postmodernism that we also come across in Beckett's works that make significant contributions to world literature from modernist existentialism to postmodern existentialism, from absurdism to nihilism or existential nihilism.

While Samuel Beckett wrote several plays and narrative fictions, the play *Waiting for Godot*, *Krapp's Last Tape*, *Eleutheria*, *Endgame*, *Happy Days*, *Ohio Impromptu*, and a trilogy of novels *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnameable*, *More Pricks Than Kicks*, *Murphy*, *Watt*, and the minimalist prose collection *Stories and Texts for Nothing*; Leyla Erbil also produced landmark works in both story and novel genres. Erbil whose stories were collected in the books *Hallaç* (Wool-Carder), *Gecede* (At the Night), *Eski Sevgili* (Ex-Lover) has the famous novels titled *Tuhaf Bir Kadın* (A Strange Woman), *Karanlığın Günü* (The Day of Darkness), *Mektup Aşkları* (Love in Letters), *Cüce* (The Dwarf), *Üç Başlı Ejderha* (The Three Headed Dragon), *Kalan* (The Rest) and *Tuhaf Bir Erkek* (A Strange Man).

Here Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (En attendant Godot), which is well-known absurd play played around the world, will be compared to Leyla Erbil's absurd story *Clinton Godson* that is one of the stories in her famous story book *Ex-Lover*. But Erbil's *Clinton Godson* is not so a well-known work as Beckett's *Waiting For Godot* is. For whatever reason it has rarely been recognized. In fact, although the longest story *Ex-Lover* given its name to her story book consisting of five stories is known so much, the third story *Clinton Godson* in the book is almost ignored by the critics, researchers and readers. Whereas this story written in 1970 did in the genre story the thing that *Waiting for Godot* did in the genre theatre in 1949. While Beckett's work is a theatrical revolution in the classical theatre, Erbil's work is a narrative revolution in the tradition of modern story.

Like Proust, Joyce, Woolf, Eliot, Faulkner and Beckett and many writers who placed individual at the center of their literary understandings and changed the narrative characteristics of modern literature Erbil also dealt with individual's stream of thought and consciousness, experiences, identity problems, struggles, rebellions, relations to the society as well as the human self, human existence, human nature, the essences of mentally disabled or crippled beings, meaningless and absurd universe in a different way from the previous literary tradition

In this respect when *Waiting for Godot* and *Clinton Godson* are compared Erbil's work can clearly be regarded as a tragicomic absurd 'story' of Beckettian tragicomic absurd 'play'.

Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* is an absurd play; however Leyla Erbil's *Clinton Godson* is a short absurd story. These two works that we can say postmodern and absurd works rather than modern ones have many postmodern and absurd approaches such as humorous, destructive, schizophrenic, ironic, psychological, identical, existential and nihilist characteristics.

While *Waiting for Godot* focuses on meaningless waiting, existential and identical crisis that has no solution of two major characters Vladimir and Estragon waiting for Godot who never comes by a tree on a desert road in the edges of nihilism and absurdism; *Clinton Godson* narrates one/two naked mental person/s, whose name/s is/are unknown, meaninglessly falling in the trap of questioning about life and death of a man named Clinton Godson, humorously and ironically sitting, waiting and speaking on a bench in the garden or courtyard of an asylum.

The main characters of *Waiting for Godot* as a two acted play are two vagabonds, Vladimir and Estragon who wait on a country road near a single tree for Godot who never appears in the play. In the both first act and the second one the characters, time and place are the same. Vladimir and Estragon waiting for Godot spend their time telling about some stories or talking about things and hoping that Godot will come. In the middle of the first act, we see Pozzo as a master and Lucky as a slave. At the end of the first act and the second act a messenger boy by Godot informs two tramps that Godot will not come that night, but certainly the following day. But absurd waiting of the individual will go on in this way. The main character/s of *Clinton Godson* which is a four page story is/are naked insane person/s. The absurd and meaningless situation in this story is not so much different as in the play *Waiting for Godot*'s. The individual on the edge of postmodernism, absurdism, existentialism and nihilism shares the same or similar destiny in anywhere of the world. No matter whether an individual is on a barren road, under a dry tree, or on a bench in the courtyard of a mental hospital, she or he will futilely struggle like a wounded bird in the tragedy of waste lands. Every day will not be different from the other, time will flow like a harsh river, life will surround the individual by its meaninglessness and absurdity, and the individual physically and mentally disabled will wait for someone or something in the same place, in the same way, the similar destinies that there is nothing to be done. Hers or his will be an endless waiting in some ambiguities between life and death.

Erbil's story according to Beckett's play is very ambiguous. Where is the place or space which the character/s is/are situated in? There is/are the character/s on a bench in anywhere of

the world. There is a narrator in the text, but is this narrator the writer or character? Is there one person or more than one person? Or are the voices or speakers in the dialogues belonged to one person or two persons? It is quite ambiguous. There is a metafictional text that the writer involves herself with fictional character/s before the reader. Erbil's unnamable narrator in the story that no singular truths or meanings exist is also sexually ambiguous, is it a man or a woman? Male or female? It is not clear. Sometimes the naked narrator appear as a character to have double personality, sometimes as if he/she is together with an another naked friend, sometimes as the writer telling the story as one of the two naked protagonists, even sometimes one of the naked characters in the text is seen as a narrator.

The atmosphere is not much different for or the naked character or characters in Erbil's story as Estragon in Beckett's play complains: "Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful!" the only Pozzo, Lucky and the messenger Boy appear on the scene, but they are not the persons Didi and Gogo wait for or hope to see. On the other side, the naked schizophrenic narrator/s and the other insane persons suffering mental illness or alienation are also alone. When it is dark the nurse routinely comes and takes the patients to their wards. Nobody comes, nobody goes, nobody helps and nothing is done. The next day will go on for them in the same way. Both the two works end as they start in the same way. Nothing is more real than nothing on a deserted country road in anywhere of the world in *Waiting for Godot* and the naked lunatics on an isolated courtyard of any mental hospital or any asylum of the world in *Clinton Godson* as characteristics of the literature of the Absurd. The readers or audiences find themselves face to face with meaningless condition of the two vagabonds spending the time by talking in an eternal expectation on very bare stage-setting by a single tree, a waste hill or stony place covered some meaningless land, meaningless life, meaningless situation of the naked character/s waiting on a bench, passing the time by talking about meaningless life, meaningless, isolated or solitary existence and nothingness, a mysterious Godot and an insane Godson. Human being is blind like Pozzo, dump like Lucky, absurd like the messenger boy, and senseless like the nurse of the asylum.

Estragon: Let's go

Vladimir: No we can't.

Estragon: Why not?

Vladimir: We're waiting for Godot.

Estragon: That is true. (*Pause.*) Are you sure it's here? (Beckett, 1952, p. 16)

—You're so naked you'll be cold!

—You'll be cold too!

— Come close to me!

— You too close to me. (Erbil, 1984, p. 81)¹

Life and death will be the same for the helpless individual. Vladimir saying to Estragon “nothing you can do about it is right, and in that case “no use struggling,” “ no use wriggling,” because “one is what one is” and “the essential doesn't change.” (Beckett, 1952, p. 28). The insane narrator will utter a discourse like this. “— He's dead, huh? Ha ha ha ha! — I say death! ... Ha ha ha ha ha. —What will happen now? —Nothing, everyone will die!” (Erbil, 78)² Because death like life is also reality of the human being, individual will have nothing to be done about it.

In the play and story, “Nothing to be done” appears several times to show the nothingness of the two vagabond Vladimir and Estragon and the naked insane persons. Nothing will be done for individuals in meaningless and purposeless without a past and without a future. Expectation will be postponed to another spring in every time.

Beckett and Erbil concern with individual as a social and political, psychological being, and they express the absurd condition of human being who is inadequate in perceiving and managing the world as crippled persons. The individual gets more and more forgetful or amnesiac. Pozzo will answer with the words “I don't remember having met anyone yesterday. But tomorrow I won't remember having met anyone today” to Vladimir saying “We met yesterday. Do you not remember? (Beckett, 1952, p. 124-125). Even we meet this kind of situation in Vladimir and Estragon's talks.

Estragon: We came here yesterday.

Vladimir: Ah no, there you're mistaken.

Estragon: What did we do yesterday?

Vladimir: What did we do yesterday? (Beckett, 1952, p. 17-18)

More Beckett's characters have no ideas about what the day is, is it Saturday, Sunday, Monday or Friday? (p. 18) at the end Estragon will renounce “Nothing to be done.” Even the questions will also be meaningless and absurd, because the answers will not change the result.

¹Böyle çınlıplak üşüyeceksin!

- Sen de üşüyeceksin!

- Gel yaşlan bana şöyle!

- Sen de bana yaşlan (Erbil, 81)

² Ölmüş ha? Ha ha ha ha! -Ölmüş diyorum be!.. Ha ha ha ha ha. -Ne olacak şimdi? -Hiiiç, herkes ölecek!

As whether or not the day is Sunday, Tuesday or Friday is not important; the fact that when Pozzo went blind, Lucky went deaf is also unimportant. The 'issue of what, how, why or when' will not change anything, individual became blind, deaf or dumb one day, it is enough. In this respect Pozzo's fury is quite remarkable. When Pozzo driving him by means of a rope around Lucky's neck enters the scene with his slave Lucky carrying a heavy bag, a folding seat, a picnic basket and a greatcoat (p. 28).

Pozzo will be very furious with questions of Vladimir and Estragon on time. "You have not finished poisoning me with your doomed time? It's insane! When! When! One day, is that not enough for you, one day like the others he went dumb, one day I went blind, one day we will go deaf, one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same moment, is not that enough for you?" (p. 126). On the other in *the Clinton Godson*, whether the insane narrator's statements about Godson's past are true or not will not make sense. There is a letter sent to Godson whether or not Godson has an elder sister. And Godson is dead. The explanations that the naked insane tells to another insane or herself or himself show the individual's meaningless and absurd situation clearly: "You told me last days that he posted the letter to himself, he had no elder sister ... I am wrong; There is absolutely someone ... There is one ... (Erbil, 1984, p. 82)³

Leyla Erbil obviously identifies the absurdity of life, mankind and universe in her story *Clinton Godson* that is an example of tragicomedy. The concepts of revolt, passion, self-determination or freedom among the characteristics of absurd life focused on human being and universe's absurd situation are remarkable. Absurd individuals neither believe in God nor need no moral codes. They are not heroes or heroines who have abilities to be able to change the world or human nature. They are lack of morality or free from morality or any responsibilities. Concepts of love, friendship, happiness, desire, power and luck are also alien to them. The mental patients who are left alone in the mental hospital with their fate and abandoned to any square of an asylum feel in need of refuge to each other. Loneliness, despair and fear, pain and anxiety bring them closer to one another. The landscape is nothing less than this for two vagrants, Vladimir and Estragon who are alone and helpless as well. Even there is no love, respect, loyalty or friendship in the situations of the master and the slave, blind Pozzo and dumb Lucky which is linked by a rope to one another, in both works it is impossible to speak of moral and conscientious reasons. In terms of form and content the writers' rebellion grammars overlap with the character's nostalgic revolts. The world will not give anything other than frustration to

³ Geçen sefer o mektubu kendi kendine postalamış, ablası yokmuş diye anlattıydın... Yanılmışım; vardır mutlaka biri vardır... Biri vardır...

the individual. That is, the world presents an absurd life which is full of disappointments for the individual.

The reader meets a play and a story *Waiting for Godot* and *Clinton Godson* without any plot that is not based on cause and effect relation, Beckett's play and Erbil's story are absurd and postmodern works having no beginning and end, telling nothing in a timeless, empty and desert space. The reader is covered the repeatable dialogues, stable situations, the same or similar questions and behaviors, unbroken life, meaningless and absurd conditions of essence of being. Whereas any modern literary work like a story, novel or play "must have a cleverly constructed story, a fully explained theme neatly exposed and finally solved , a just dialogue and be a good representation of our time, *but* absurd plays *or postmodern literary works* have no plot, no story" (Esslin, 1972, pp. 21-22). The works like *Waiting for Godot* and *Clinton Godson* are far from any of these criteria of conventional literature.

Absurd literature and meaningless of life

The word absurd which is a disturbing concept which means 'unharmonious,' 'ridiculous,' or 'meaninglessness' in the playwriting after the Second World War was shaped in the hands of famous existentialist writers and thinkers like Gabriel Marcel, Martin Heidegger, Jean Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus followed by the some European and American dramatists such as Harold Pinter, Samuel Beckett, Jean Genet, Edward Albee, Uğene Ionesco, Fernando Arrabal, and adapted into Turkish plays and stories by Güngör Dilmen, Adalet Ağaoğlu and Mehmet Baydur with plays, Leylâ Erbil with her stories. In fact Søren Kierkegaard's contributions to notion of absurd and twentieth century existentialists as the father of 'existentialism are vital to remember.

The word "absurd" originally means 'out of harmony', in a musical context. Hence its dictionary definition: 'out of harmony with reason or propriety; incongruous, unreasonable, illogical'. In common usage, absurd may simply mean 'ridiculous.'" (Esslin, 1972, p. 23). However when we look at what absurd or absurdism in literature means, we run into multiple meanings as well as its dictionary meaning. In an age that human being is lost, alone, helpless, hollow, disabled and isolated, it is impossible not to meet an absurd literature tradition. The world is a breathless, waterless, charmless, waste, nonsense, incomprehensible and dead place. This is an absurd situation. The union of individual's life and universe is absurd, aimless, meaningless "in a universe suddenly deprived of illusions and enlightenment, man feels himself a stranger. His exile is without recourse since he is deprived of the memories of a lost country or the hope of a promised land. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, is the feeling of absurdity." (Camus, 1942, p. 18). In the selected works based on meaninglessness

and absurdity we come across language, dialogue and style of Theatre of the Absurd whose “novelty lies in its somewhat unusual combination of such antecedents, and a survey of these will show that what may strike the unprepared spectator /reader as iconoclastic and incomprehensible innovation is in fact merely an expansion, revaluation, and development of procedures that are familiar and completely acceptable in only slightly different contexts.” (Esslin, 1972, p. 317).

Eugene Ionesco’s conception of the absurd “is that which has no end: and this final goal can only be found beyond history, it is what should guide human history, that is to say, give it meaning. ... Cut off from his religious or metaphysical roots, man is lost; all of his struggles become absurd, senseless, useless.” (Ionesco, 1962, p. 231-232)⁴. As the individual in fictional world lives in a corrupted or crippled universe, the languages that the writers use are crippled as well. When we look at the works of absurdism we recognize that existing theatrical traditions in modern playwriting and traditional narrative techniques in the other writing styles like story, novel and poetry have been rejected. Rules of language like grammar, syntax punctuations and word orders have been broken down. Individual’s existence also is as much meaningless as life and world. Therefore Martin Esslin’s description of absurd is based on meaningless and devoid of purpose is right. In fact ‘meaninglessness’ in the absurdist works is partly ‘ironic’, partly ‘word play’, sometimes surrounded by several ‘metaphoric, sermonic, moralistic or paradoxical’ meanings. As Michael Y. Bennett suggests “an alternative term ‘parabolic drama’, which is meant to show a structural similarity of aesthetic form between some select quintessential plays, for the word ‘absurd’ (not a term to replace, but to sit alongside), reflecting solely structural elements” (Bennett, 2015, p. 17, 132) that are mostly common for absurd and postmodern plays.

Waiting for Godot which is a famous tragicomedy play written by Samuel Beckett and *Clinton Godson* that is an unfamiliar tragicomedy story by Leylâ Erbil portray meaninglessness, absurdity and nothingness of the life and universe as well as the painfulness and suffering of human beings. The works are covered absurd and meaningless questions, purposeless, endless inquiries, god, birth, death, life, love, suffering, existence, nothingness, absurdity, disability, duality, dilemmas.

When focused on meaningless of life and reflections of the Literature of the Absurd inspired by ideas of Existentialism, Nihilism, Postmodernism and Dadaism in Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* and Leylâ Erbil’s *Clinton Godson*; it is recognized that the characters

⁴ Est absurde ce qui n’a pas de but: et ce but final ne peut se trouver qu’au delà de l’histoire, il est ce qui doit guider l’histoire humaine, c’est-à-dire lui donner sa signification. (p.231)
... coupé de ses racines religieuses ou métaphysiques, l’homme est perdu, toute sa démarche devient insensée, inutile, étouffante.

surrounded by an absurd life and a waste universe are lost, mad, senseless, miserable, powerless in both works as well. The characters in both *Waiting for Godot* and *Clinton Godson* either lose their own individual identity and so they mostly act in pairs they are in search of identity. They are afraid of loneliness and they need someone. For instance; Vladimir depends on Estragon; Pozzo on Lucky in *Waiting for Godot*, and nameless naked mental persons on each other in *Clinton Godson*. That is, each character needs the other, because it is necessary for their existences in a meaningless and absurd world.

They have nothing to do other than eat, drink, defecate and endless wait. They have no expectations in their life and no desires to live. They are confronted as individuals who remain trapped in the middle of the universe between death and life. In Beckett and Erbil's works *Godot* and *Clinton Godson* are the other characters mentioned in the works, but they never appear. *Godot* is alive, but *Godson* is dead. *Godot* represents God or any savior that never appears, but everyone feels his existence, Estragon and Vladimir who want salvation wait for *Godot* as if he comes they will be saved. In fact we can say God in Beckett and Erbil's works as in Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is dead, lost, and human being also is lost. God left mankind. Human being was abandoned by the God disappeared, both God and individual are lost now as well. So God's presence and absence are also one. *Godot* is symbolically alive in Beckett's play, he sends a messenger boy to Vladimir and Estragon two times, the boy brings messages from *Godot* describes his physical aspects; however *Godot*'s presence and absence are also one. Then *Godot*'s presence will not save Didi ve Gogo. Dieu in French means God, Didi may be derived from Dieu, Gogo also from God/*Godot*. 'Gogo' and 'Didi' which are the nicknames of two vagabonds mark Vladimir and Estragon's identities. The first one is active, the other one is passive. Whereas *Godson* brings to mind as a word the Son 'Jesus Christ', The Son of God is dead and *Godson* is dead too. Everyone is sick; they go mad and fall into the mental hospital. But *Godson* is in their minds. *Godson* who was alone like all mental patients also died in an asylum as a mad, a mental patient. He is abandoned in the universe he alone died one day in a waste field. The mental patients in the asylum will also die one day like *Godson*. There will be no other way than waiting for death. However, it seems ironic that even if *Godson* looks like the Son of God. *Clinton Godson* who the naked insane characters mock with black humor in the story is probably a merchant of religion living in Pennsylvania, not benefiting himself and anyone. On the other hand Leylâ Erbil refers to the American former presidents Bill Clinton and George Bush by the words 'Clinton' and 'Bushmen' in the story. Mr Clinton *Godson* has been chosen by Godfathers Clintonmen or Bushmen helping him survive, but *Godson* living a lonely life in a guesthouse during one year goes mad and he is found alone in a field. Then he is abandoned to an asylum, and his fate results in death. When the story begins

Godson is dead. When he died a piece of paper was not found on him. He is a man without ID. The dotard Godson is described by the narrator with some theological and philosophical thoughts black humors and word games.

The cops found him alone in the bush.

Bushman in bush, huh?

In the field or? In the field, he was sitting by himself! Hah hah ha!

A paperless man in the middle of the field! Ha ha ha ha ha ! (Erbil, 1984 , p. 77).⁵

As well as we learn from speeches of the insane narrator/s in the asylum, Godson from Pennsylvania whose mother is Bertha Bushman, whose father is Tohomson Godson is fond of women at the same time. He “is weak, short, beardless, freckled, and his ears start from his mouth line and swing from both sides of his neck.” (p. 80). When we look at the insane narrator or the main character/s, the dialogues, the structure and language of the story, the writer’s style of writing is so ambiguous. At first, the naked narrator’s sex is ambiguous. Whether or not the narrator speaking by some short sentences, silence dialogues and meaningless words is she or he is not clear. At the beginning of the story she or he claims to have been a young and handsome PhD student studying a thesis in the mental hospital before she or he went mad, then the narrator presents herself or himself as a doctor once upon a time before she or he goes mad. As the writer uses the word ‘handsome’ instead of ‘beautiful’ the narrator is probably a male character, but there is not another clue for the narrator’s sex.

Another ambiguous situation is who the narrator is. She or he behaves sometimes as a writer, sometimes a character, sometimes a narrator acting as she or he has another identity. It is quite ambiguous the character talks to herself or himself or to another person. It seems as though if she or he is talking to another person and till the nurse comes she or he is telling, arguing, laughing and waiting on a bench. As if there are two persons speaking and waiting, the story is organized in the form of two-person dialogues. I suppose two persons in the dialogues. In fact I am not sure. The second person in the dialogues can be the narrator’s second identity. This possibility seems to be quite strong as the narrator is a dotard or an insane person. There is a ambiguity about the messenger boy in Waiting for Godot. It is not clear whether the young messenger boy sent by Godot in each act is one boy or two different ones, or two brothers.

⁵ Çalılıkta tek başına bulmuş onu polisler.

Çalılıkta Bushman ha?

Tarlada ya da? Tarlada kendi kendine oturuyormuş! Hah ha hay!

Tarlanın ortasında kâğıtsız bir adam! Ha ha ha ha ha ha!

The naked insane character/s waiting for salvation like Didi and Gogo is/are nameless. The narrator that we never know her or his name is like Vladimir. She or he remembers past events, tells the Godson's story to her or his naked friend or to herself or himself. But the story is differently told in every time. The narrator's memory is partly lost, and her or his friend or second identity recognizes the narrator's dilemmas. The naked narrator is not the only one to forget past. Estragon and Pozzo do also not remember some events in the past. Estragon forgets the past, the name of Godot, even why or for whom they are waiting. Estragon who forgets why they are waiting for wants to go, but Vladimir stops him. Pozzo going blind and defenseless in the second act, never remember meeting anyone previous day. The reader is sure that Pozzo will not remember meeting anyone or what happens today in the future as well. The messenger boy of Godot who comes twice towards the end of the play also forgot the first meeting with Vladimir and Estragon.

These forgetful, schizophrenic, strange and helpless individuals curiously need one another. While the narrator is a protector of her or his pair or identity, Vladimir is like a protector of Estragon, and Lucky is also the protector of Pozzo. There is a strange relation among them. They need each other in a mental and physical sense. There is meaningless and aimless in what the characters say, tell or do. In both *Waiting for Godot* and *Clinton Godson* reflecting an absurd world both subjects and objects sink into nothingness. The characters suffering from existence and nothingness are in the meaningless expectation and quest. The reader witnesses absurdity of human condition in an absurd universe. All the characters in both *Waiting for Godot* and *Clinton Godson* wear hats representing the identity and personality of each of the characters. In *Clinton Godson* all insane patients stand naked on the seats, leaning against each other, whispering, like children, doddered. They are naked, but they wear hats. When the naked character/s is/are cold she or he wraps around her or his hats. Probably the hat is the only abject that they have. In a way the hat is an absurd and humorous symbol of the purposeless and meaningless nature of their existences. Estragon is neurotically busy with his hat and his boots, Vladimir as a thinker man throughout the play constitutently focuses on his hat. On the other hand Lucky needs his hat to think, but stops talking when her hat is pulled out. Pozzo is also peculiarly preoccupied with his hat. Even the scene that Vladimir and Estragon curiously exchange Lucky's hat and their hats represents an exchange of the individuals' identities. In one context, this symbolizes the metaphysical absurdity. Lucky's long monologue is nothing, but it is "word salad" formed by mixture of random words and phrases, some wild, schizophrenic "word salad" (Esslin, 1972, p. 55) found its meaning in Martin Esslin's description.

Another significant point of the works is the motto “Nothing to be done” that appears several times to show the nothingness of Beckett’s characters Vladimir and Estragon waiting for Godot who never comes. On the other hand the saying “Nothing to be done” is also very essential for Erbil’s naked insane character/s in the seven-page story. Godson is dead, the shipmaster is dead, and death will come for them one day as well. Everyone will die. In this case there is nothing to be done for the mental patients waiting for their salvations or death in anxiety and despair with no meaning. Every time, salvation will be postponed to another spring. The act of waiting for salvation will be meaningless for the insane persons because there is nothing to be done, but to wait after all, just like Vladimir and Estragon. They do nothing during their meaningless of waiting, but speak and only speak in a place where there is nothing to be done. Therefore in Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* and Erbil’s *Clinton Godson*, language used as a means of killing time instead of a means of communication will certainly express emptiness of life, meaninglessness and absurdity of human state or aimless, ridiculous, helpless and lost characters who have no power to live in in a waste world.

—He is dead, isn’t he? Ha ha ha ha!

—I say he is dead! ... Ha ha ha ha ha.

—What will happen now?

—Nothing, everyone will die! There all of them will die (Erbil, 1984, p. 78)⁶.

Every morning, the naked narrator and the other insane patients sit on a bench in courtyard of the asylum and wait there until the sun sinks. They have to be busy with something till the nurse comes and brings them in. They are in need of something like telling a story, speaking several subjects or objects to make themselves busy, in order to forget their grief or sorrows. Everything is meaningless, all human beings will die one day.

As seen in the following examples, the characters of Beckett and Erbil look like puppets, puppets arranged in rows on the benches in the story *Clinton Godson*, or the puppets that never move although they want to go at the end of the play *Waiting for Godot*.

- Such naked, like newborn children they were side by side

While the evening was coming, they would come close to each other.

The nurse came in shortly, and they put all of them in the wards.

⁶—Ölmüş ha? Ha ha ha ha!

—Ölmüş diyorum be!.. Ha ha ha ha ha.

—Ne olacak şimdi?

—Hiiiç, herkes ölecek! Oradakiler hep ölecek

They would not like to go in. Suddenly all of them started crying. (Erbil, 1984, p. 82)⁷.

Vladimir: Well? Shall we go?

Estragon: Yes, let's go. They do not move. (Beckett, 1952, p. 134).

The Existential approaches of Camus who claimed that life is absurd and meaningless are also valid for Beckett's tragicomedy and Erbil's story reflected the absurdity and meaninglessness of human life and universe under the shadow of existentialism and nihilism. Existentialism, which is a widespread concept during the 20th World War in all over the world, that Weil described with the word 'depression', Mounier with 'despair', Hamelin with 'anxiety', Banfi with 'pessimism', Wahl with 'rebellion', Marcel with 'freedom', Lukacs with 'idealism', Benda with 'irrationalism/irregularity' and Foulquie with 'nonsense' or 'absurdism'. (Sartre, 1985, p. 7) is a philosophical movement that highlights individual existence. There is human being in the main focus of existential philosophy based on the thought that every individual should be responsible for her or his acts and she or he should be free in her or his choices. Both two works centered on absurd and nihilist condition and meaningless existence of human life are attractive in the sense of their unreliability and irrationality as well. The characters thrown to the waste lands suffer as a part of their existences. The naked characters in the *Clinton Godson* and Vladimir, Estragon, Pozzo, Lucky and the messenger boy in *Waiting for Godot* are all alone in the universe, they are in distress and they suffer during their absurd waitings for somebody or something like God, Godot, rescuer, salvation or hope. Frustration, hopelessness, meaninglessness, postponed death, delayed salvation and endless waitings are individual's destiny surrounded by thought of suicide or death. While Vladimir and Estragon have thinking of attempting at suicide by hanging themselves during their absurd waitings in the waiting for Godot, the insane persons do not think about suicide, but about the death. Especially they are busy with Godson's death and the idea that one day everyone will die.

As the act of laughing very often met in the naked character's talks in the *Clinton Godson* breaks silences causes some pauses. It is a humorous and ironic game to kill the time. The writer plays on words, it is a meaningless game that the naked characters of the story try to draw an absurd picture of humanity. The language is not a tool of communication, but it is necessary for purposeless, useless and killing-time dialogues in this sense, the dialogues in Erbil's *Godson* are similar to those of *Godot*. Humor in the character's mannerism and behavior

⁷—Ölmüş ha? Ha ha ha ha!

—Ölmüş diyorum be!.. Ha ha ha ha ha.

—Ne olacak şimdi?

—Hiiiç, herkes ölecek! Oradakiler hep ölecek

together reflects from top to bottom tragic and comic aspects of the story. Life is full of nonsense to be taken seriously.

A letter, huh?

A letter!

An envelope? An envelope! Terrific!

It was very terrific, an envelope writing “Mr Clinton Godson” over it

“Mr. Clinton Godson, huh?” Ha ha ha ha! Who wrote it? Sister! A sister?

Clinton had an elder sister. Before dementia presumably? And after dementia... Ha ha ha!

Ha ha ha ha

I have my mother, Hahahahahahah

-I had mine too. Ha ha ha ha! (Erbil, 1984, p. 79)⁸

In the similar way, Beckett also gives great deal of humor in his play. This is also a situation of absurdity.

Estragon: Come see. (He trains Vladimir on the tree. They stop in front. Silence.

And if we, hanged?

Vladimir: With what?

Estragon: You haven't got a bit of rope?

Vladimir: No.

Estragon: Then we can't.

Vladimir: Let's go.

Estragon: Wait, there's my belt.

Vladimir: It's too short.

Estragon: You will hang onto my legs.

Vladimir: And who'll hang onto mine?

⁸ Bir mektup ha? Bir mektup! Bir zarf? Bir zarf! Müthiş!

Çok müthişti, üzeri «Sayın Bay Clinton God-son» yazılı bir zarf.

«Sayın Bay Clinton Godson» ha? Ha ha ha ha! Kim yazmış? Ablası! Bir abla?

Bir ablası varmış Clinton'un. Bunamadan önce herhalde? Bunadıktan sonra da... Ha ha ha! Ha ha ha ha ha!

Benim annem var, Hahahahahahah'-Benim de vardı. Ha ha ha ha ha

Estragon: True. (Beckett, 1952, p. 132).

While the naked insane character does not notice that she/he is trembling in cold in the Clinton Godson till the other insane patient warns, Estragon whose pants are fallen off his feet does not recognize that, and Vladimir is aware of that.

-Come on, closer, rest against me, shivering!

-you too come close, wrap your hat. (Erbil, 1984, p. 82).⁹

Vladimir: Pull up your trousers. (*Estragon gives a leg to Vladimir, staggers. Vladimir takes the leg. They stagger.*) Pull up your trousers.

Estragon: I can't. *Vladimir pulls up the trousers, looks at the leg, lets it go. Estragon almost falls.* (Beckett, 1952, p. 94).

Conclusion

When we look from perspectives of comparative literature, the concepts like ambiguity, complexity, discontinuity, deconstruction, separation, disintegration, fragmentation, and silence in dialogue, irony, parody, black humor, nostalgia, meaninglessness of the world and life, alienated individuals, disability, dissolution, purposelessness, death, helpless and endless waitings are basic common aspects of both two works. On the other side we also recognize that there exists no absolute truth as a postmodern element, but there is truth as an illusion, truths and untruths are used interchangeably, there is no concrete truth, the facts are different for today, and they will be different for tomorrow or future. The concept of truth like traditional rules in modern language or modern literature is also refused.

As a conclusion, Beckett's play and Erbil's story emphasize the characters' waitings for salvation at both the beginnings and ends of the works. They reflect the meaninglessness and absurdity of individual's life and the universe promising no hope for humanity rather than Godot and Godson.

The individuals are identified by postmodern and absurd elements such as parody, irony, play, satire, ridicule, humor, tragedy, absurdism, post-structuralism, fragmentation, otherness, self-depreciation, loss of consciousness, search for identity, trinity of Past, Present and Future, multi-meaningfulness, loneliness, destruction, fear, paranoia, existence-absence dilemmas, expectation and sameness, as Ihab Hassan also stresses they "are in luck and

⁹ -Gel gel, iyice sokul, yaşlan bana, titriyorsun!
-Sen de sokul, şapkana sarın

equipping of the absurd actions, they are devoid of moral behavior, alienated from the environment, life is full of irony and contradictions.” (Hassan, 1961, p. 115-118).

To sum up, when these two works are compared, the characters of Beckett’s *Godot* and Erbil’s *Godson* with no starting, no ending, no plot, no event, no story including common characteristics and similarities such as unfinishedness, obscurity, disconnections, contradictions, renunciations, coincidences, extremes, repetitions, desire to die, insecurity, fear, stream of consciousness, game, meaninglessness, nihilism, existentialism, fragmentation, reburning, quest, inquiries, alienation, fragile experiences, sickness from life, inconsistencies are sick, disabled and schizophrenic protagonists who are dying in the purgatory, shut in a bell jar or a cage. The writer or a narrator is a clown holding the strings; the individual or the reader is a puppet swayed on the string.

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