



SAMUEL BECKETT'S *WAITING FOR GODOT* : AN ECO CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to depict the demolition of nature due to the Second World War. Nature takes an integral part in the lives of people. The paper, by using the drama waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett, illustrates how the unavoidable relationship between man and nature are fragmental during the Modern Era. In this paper I have tried to show Beckett's duality in representing nature through Vladimir and Estragon; Firstly, it reveals the exploitation of nature, and secondly, it precariously exposes the disintegration of modern society.

Keywords : *Vladimir, Estragon, Exploitation, Disintegration.*

INTRODUCTION

There is a symbiotic relationship between man and nature. Nature has a kind of healing power by which human beings along with all animals can survive in this bewitching earth. Ecocriticism emerged in the later half of the twentieth century and enjoyed its heyday in the twenty first century. The main idea behind this theory is to scrutinize the works by eco-scientific criteria. The word 'ecocriticism' first appeared in William Rickett's essay "Literature and ecology : An experiment in Ecocriticism in 1978. It remained in active citation until the 1989.



Cheryll Glotfelty defines ecocriticism as the study of the relationship between literature and physical environment. He further states that " ...all ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it. Ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts language and literature. As a critical stance, it has one foot in literature and the other on hand; as a theoretical discourse, it negotiates between the human and the non human" (Glotfelty XVIII). Thus, Scott Slovic in his essay, "Ecocriticism : Containing Multitudes, Practicing Doctrine, defines ecocriticism as "the study of explicit environmental texts by the way of any scholarly approach or conversely" the scrutiny of ecological implication and human-nature relationships in any literacy texts that seem, at first glance, oblivious of the non-human world."

Ecocriticism is the newly born child of the bond between nature and literature. It approaches nature as an aesthetic and not a scientific object. Nature is an indispensable adjunct to survive in this world. All types of environment can be presented through the help of nature and various elements of nature. The prevalent environment degradation has compelled the philanthropists and the intellectuals to consider this seriously, Raymond Williams in his essay, Nature in the Cultural Geography Reader opines that Nature meant the countryside, the unspoiled plants and creatures other than man. The use is especially current in contrasts between town and country : nature is what man has not made, though if he made it long enough ago-a hedgerow or a desert- it will usually be included as natural.

Samuel Beckett's points out the circumstance of the twentieth century society in which the destruction of nature is perspicuously portrayed. Vladimir and Estragon face a lot obstacles due to their quarrelsome activity. They showcase the disintegrity of this beautiful world at the beginning of this play. Nature is appreciated and prayed as 'God' at the beginning of human civilization. Vladimir and Estragon sit tacitly on a low mound and remind their by gone days in utter despair. In Hinduism, the Banyan tree is prayed from the ancient time to get salvation. It is believed that the leaf of Banyan tree is the resting place of the Lord Krishna. It is believed in ancient time that nature is the treasure of knowledge and bestows happiness of Buddhism, Gautam Buddha gets knowledge under the shade of Bodhi tree. Beckett's Waiting for Godot is the reflection of Vladimir and Estragon's skeptical mindset in which the two imbeciles jeer at the creation of the God. They behave like mad cap and loss the power. The classical Sanskrit writer, Kalidasa demonstrates the ruthlessness of nature in Abhijnana Shakuntalam because of disobeying the eulogizer of nature, Durvasa, the sage. The angry sage curses Shakuntala for her ill-mannered towards him. Vladimir and Estragon are also punished by the God because of their unmerciful nature.

The two trams behave strangely as if they lose their inner power and trying to consolidate it by engaging themselves in cheap worlds. An interesting advice to the mankind is found in the

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‘Yajurveda’- ‘Do not destroy anything of the sky and not pollute the sky. Sun shines in the sky and we get light from the sky. Modern Environmentalists believe that the sunrays strengthen our unconscious mind product. According to the Romantics, nature mollifies the minds of people. Vladimir and Estragon’s topsy-turviness indicate their licentiousness with nature. Vladimir and Estragon befall after observing the scenic beauty of nature. They are bewildered when they see the cover of leaves of the tree in the single night. Nature has a kind of healing power which is so calm and helpful to others. Rabindranath Tagore’s play entitled The Postmaster exhibits the Charisma of nature in which the main character i.e. the Postman becomes silent after watching the abundance of nature in a small district of Kolkata named Ulapur. Even if, Vladimir and Estragon do not recognize the wonder of nature profoundly but their appreciation of nature is visible implicitly through their conversation

Estragon – I see nothing

Vladimir – In a single night

Estragon – Leaves?

Vladimir – But in a single night.

A kind of destruction of nature wounds Didi in which he pathetically looks forward without emphasizing on the other activities. Plants only help man to lead a healthy life. In Rigveda, natural entities – trees, plants are praised because these are indispensable to men.

The extreme scarcity of food is also portrayed in which Vladimir takes a piece of meat which is already eaten by Pozzo. Even if, Estragon does not like radish much but his appetite forces him to eat radish. The devastation of nature during the Second World War and the rise of famine hammers upon the human beings during the Second World War which is described by Vladimir and Estragon in a very distinctive way.

Vladimir – There are radishes and turnips

Estragon – Are there no carrots?

Vladimir – No, any way you overdo with your carrots.

Estragon – Then give me a radish

(Vladimir fumbles in his pocket finds nothing but turnips, finally brings out a radish and hands to Estragon who examines it, sniffs it) It is black.

In every religion nature is obeyed as ‘divine’ and ‘mother’ for its reproductive quality. If someone questions the existence of nature then no one can save him/her from the grip of the same nature. In Ernest Hemingway’s For Whom the Bell Tolls abhors rain but when she dies it is raining. Vladimir and Estragon sometimes behave rudely to nature. Their lives become hell and have not found happiness because of cruelty nature of human beings.



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