

In the Name of God

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The Crisis of cognition in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*

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for the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature**

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To everyone who has taught me and has kept me Inspired

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Abstract**The Crisis of Cognition in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*****Narjes Jafari Langroudi**

The aim of the present thesis is to trace the crisis of cognition in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* which is indicative of the crisis of any kind of knowing and perceiving. The culmination of this crisis in the play is not an end in itself; however, it can be an ideal point of departure for finding a suitable strategy in the play. As the ontological ground of the world of *Godot* is in crisis, the characters constantly confront aporia and proceed only by doubt and ambiguity. The researcher aims to find out how to trace the crisis of cognition in the play and to see whether this crisis is tantamount to ambiguity or not. And if they are tantamount, then attributing absolute absurdism to the play is fair or not. Furthermore, is language a tool for creating the crisis? And why the characters of the play are not capable of defining a certain relation with time and space? By taking all these questions into account, the researcher traces the crises of language, identity, time and space which are all inter-related. In fact, the crisis of cognition is suggestive of the deconstructionist potentiality of Beckett's play, and for emphasizing this, the researcher presents the shadows of different philosophies especially, different metaphysical questions, existentialist and absurdist or non-absurdist streaks which demonstrate the aggravation of the characters' skeptical view toward their surroundings. Moreover, language is comprised of sound and silence and in this regard, using the words of language without recourse to silence lead to crisis; therefore, silence is no longer the other in comparison with the sound. Eventually, in the play the only thing that does emanate from the characters' phenomenology is skeptical epistemology; in that any deliberate search for knowledge and quest for the scrutiny of time and space highlights spatial and temporal uncertainty and exacerbates skepticism. Finally, although the characters are fallen into everydayness and inauthenticity, they crave for emancipation from everydayness which is suggestive of the point that the world of *Godot* oscillates between inauthenticity and authenticity.

Keywords: Absurd, aporia, cognition, epistemology, existentialism, metaphysics, skepticism

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. General Background

Samuel Barclay Beckett was born into a middle-class protestant family in the south of Dublin on 13 April 1906. He was an Irish avant-garde novelist, playwright, theatre director, and poet who lived in France most of his adult life. But he is probably still better known as a playwright. Beckett is widely recognized as one of the major European writers of the century. And because of his concerns with form, Beckett revolutionized fiction and theatre. Beckett was strongly influenced by James Joyce and also shared Joyce's intense obsession with language. Besides, he is one of the key writers in what Martin Esslin called *The Theatre of the Absurd*. However, it is very hard to attach Beckett's works to the conventions of any specific literary school, because even when Beckett's works are marked by all-encompassing pessimism and spiritual despair, the symbols are used without any specific structure of belief.

Beckett's works are the manifestation of the formalist beliefs that form is content, content is form. According to Kennedy "Beckett's writing is not about something; it is that something itself" (27). Beckett has a reputation for obscurity and difficulty and his works transfer a kind of bafflement to his readers. According to Graver and Federman, in Beckett's works form is "suspect, the Artist's tools inadequate, the exploration agonizing, futile and necessary" (29).

Beckett showed striving for an art of disassembly, disintegration and ignorance rather than the process of assimilation, integration and allusion that James Joyce had so resoundingly explored. This inclination was a big revelation in his life and after all he decided to write in French in order to shift the stylistic augmentation that he followed in English, as Beckett says, "more and more his language appears to him like a veil that must be torn apart in order to get at the thing or the nothingness behind it" (*Disjecta* 172). Later on, he translated his French works to English; therefore, he wrote in both English and French.

Beckett began his career with an arcane poem *Whoroscope*, inspired by the life of Rene Descartes, which won the first literary prize in 1930. He had a trilogy of novels *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *Unnamable* that are among the most important and innovative novels of the twentieth century. But the work which would secure Beckett's place in the canon of great writers was *Waiting for Godot*. Actually, this play acts as a breakthrough to transform Beckett from an avant-garde novelist to a global star. And *Waiting for Godot* was hailed as the most revolutionary and influential play of the twentieth century.

Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* suggests that the play lacks the conventional form. It has been called an 'anti-play' as it has no characterization and no traditional plot and even no conventional closure, as Graver mentioned "in Beckett's dreamscape the logic of cause and effect and of conventional explanation has been broken down" (50). Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* as well as his other works, highlight that "nothingness, minimalism and indeterminacy" (Yeoh 121) and indeed these features in Beckett, shows that "how [he] put into question [his own] representations of reality" (Yeoh 119). Apparently, Beckett appears to be an extraordinary author; therefore, Peter Boxall was concerned with the issue of how to write after Beckett; the suggestion being that Beckett "is in some sense the last writer" (7); and he is "the artist at the very perimeter of experimental literature, of non-representational art, and perhaps even of linguistic expression" (Feldman and Nixon 26).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the present thesis is to study the crisis of cognition in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. This crisis is manifest in the interrelation of content and form of the play which is in itself traceable in the crises of language, identity, time and space. The researcher tries to take a suitable method to deal with the juxtaposition of inauthenticity and the desire for authenticity in the play which is latent in the depth of the crisis. Although inauthenticity and authenticity respectively denote meaninglessness and meaningfulness, the connotation of these terms have to be taken into account as well, that inauthenticity of life connotes the characters' fall into everydayness and the authenticity of their lives connotes their awareness of the trap of everydayness. In the world of *Waiting for Godot*, any sort of cognition and recognition is under the shadow, but it is not fair to call it a meaningless or totally inauthentic world. In fact, Beckett's characters feel a desire for finding meaning in the world, as a result their world has tendency toward authenticity and meaningfulness. And the abeyance or suspension between meaningfulness and meaninglessness which culminates in the crisis of cognition is not an end in itself, but it can be an ideal point of departure for finding a true way of life. In other words, the crisis is suggestive of the ambiguity of meaning-making rather than the absolute meaninglessness of the world.

Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* does not try to elucidate any kind of solution for the crisis the play bespeaks of. In the same way, the researcher in this close-reading of the play is not after substantiating what the text is about, but is after what the text is in itself. And in this regard, the

aim of this study is to resist univocal readings of *Waiting for Godot* and to prove that trying to interpret who Godot is, is only a red-herring as so many reviewers could not resist the temptation to allegorize Godot. Indeed, the crisis of cognition and the crisis of any kind of clear recognition is an impediment to a one-dimensional theory based reading of the play.

What is important in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* is considering indeterminacy in its every aspect; according to Brian McHale – “*Waiting for Godot* invites us to read allegorically but refuses to satisfy our drive. These are over-determined allegories: they have too many interpretations, more than can possibly be integrated in a univocal reading. The result of over-determination is indeterminacy” (142), Beckett's text projects states of affairs which could be reconstructed in more than one way, as “oscillation between two states of affairs” is what Roman Ingarden called ‘opalescence’ of ambiguity and has to be taken into account “under the rubric of ambiguity” (qtd. in McHale 99).

In Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, we are confronted with the “aporias” (in Derrida's term) of Western metaphysics which is laid bare. In this play, we confront with the incessant presence of forking paths and are deflated with the gaps or nothingness that paradoxically allow the readers breathe and not to be stifled by the mere closedness, according to Kennedy “the play ends with a kind of everlasting beginning” (49). And this study is mainly concerned with the crisis of cognition, which is to be traced in the warp and woof of the play, by referring to Beckett's play which evades any kind of elucidation and transparent orientation. Considering these points and for the close-reading of the play, it is crucial to have a better understanding of the postmodernist, existentialist, phenomenologist and absurdist aspects of the play as far as they will be conducive to the crisis of cognition that is apparent in the play. Indeed, at one time, the drama seems existentialist or absurdist, phenomenologist but a moment later you can see existentialist, absurdist, phenomenologist's theories in disguise and that is why no univocal theory is applicable in *waiting for Godot*, taken all these points into account, in a longer run, the indeterminacy of postmodernism is a real catalyst behind this reading.

1.3. Research Questions

This study addresses the following questions:

1. How is the crisis of cognition traceable in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*?
2. Is the crisis of cognition tantamount to the ambiguity of meaning-making which is itself against attributing the play to absolute absurdism?

3. Is language a tool for creating the crisis of cognition?
4. Why aren't the characters of *Waiting for Godot* capable of defining a certain relation with time and space?

1.4. Significance of the Study

The importance of this study is couched in the esoteric status of Beckett and his mysterious and ground-breaking *Waiting for Godot* which are common concerns among so many reviewers of this play. But the researcher's specific concern is to read this play exactly like Beckett himself, as he avoids clear-cut definition or unequivocal classification, and to prove that reading Beckett is not totally facilitated by the conventions of any fixed literary school. The key question that may pop to one's mind in dealing with Beckett's play is that if nothing happens in this play and nothing is certain; then, why it has captivated so many readers? As we know, Beckett's text undermines the role of convention and logic to the extent that even at times we have the mastery of illogical and irrational which is opposed to the representation of any convention. Artistically, Beckett embellishes his text with paradox, tension, or mere contradiction and funny enough, readers embrace these contradictory and illogical points satisfactorily in many cases.

Actually, Beckett's text is teemed with rambling, interminable, shape-shifting structure and this text intermittently projects allegories, allusions, anecdotes, then reabsorbs them into its own constantly changing surface. In fact, his text warns the reader of the ending of logic, philosophy and even ending of life but at the same time one never reaches the end. His play is open-ended, and this open-endedness is scattered throughout the text as Richard Schechner states: "structurally as well as thematically, *Godot* is an 'incomplete' play; and its open-endedness is not at the end but in many places throughout" (17).

Waiting for Godot as a play that brought Beckett to reputation has eclipsed any kind of convention, including, linearity of time and space, absolute identity, and even absolute function of language as a means of communication. Bearing these in mind, the researcher by means of Beckett's text and the inherent indeterminacy in it is going to prove that nothing can be certain.

1.5. Approach and Methodology

The present study is a library research. The researcher will use an inclusive approach which simultaneously includes absurdist, existentialist, phenomenological streaks for studying Beckett's play. Therefore, this study is mainly concerned with the very potential of Beckett's text and writing as far as it is suggestive of the apparent crisis of cognition. Here, the researcher is going to closely analyze the play and avoid reading the text dogmatically; like absurdist reading of the play by Esslin or specific existentialist reading by Lois Gordon. In this study, Beckett's literary background, his relation with philosophy, formal and conceptual innovations in this specific play and particularly the relation of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* with the theatre of the absurd would also be taken into account. In this regard, the researcher seeks to highlight that although different philosophical streaks and absurdist elements can be found in the play; neither does any specific philosophy nor the absurdist reading of the play elucidate the world of *Waiting for Godot*. Subsequently, the researcher will try to analyze language and silence and their roles in the characters' search for identity. And it will be highlighted that the characters' quest for identity leads to their identification with nothingness. But the characters' search for their identities does not end in the discovery of nothingness and as a result they continue searching for their identities through the other. Furthermore, characters' constant forgetting will be analyzed as a simultaneous help and obstacle in recognizing their identity. And later on, the trajectory of time and space in the play will be traced and in this regard, the linearity and circularity of the time will be scrutinized. And consequently the authenticity or inauthenticity of everyday life will be excavated and the finitude or infinitude of time and space will also be probed.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

Absurd, Theatre of the: This phrase 'the theatre of the absurd' was coined by Martin Esslin who wrote *The Theatre of the Absurd* (1961). Regarding the etymology of the word, Cuddon asserts that "mathematically, a surd is that which cannot be expressed in finite means of ordinary numbers or quantities. Hence irrational rather than ridiculous" (911). Absurd highlights the indomitable nature of time and the feeling of solitude in a disorientated world. The relation of absurd and *Waiting for Godot* will be discussed in the chapter two of this study.

Aporia: It is derived from Greek which means impassable path. According to J.A. Cuddon, aporia is used in Derrida's "theory of deconstruction to indicate a kind of impasse or insoluble

conflict between rhetoric and thought” (50). As Beckett’s text is deconstructive in itself, it is full of aporias which suspends the judgment of the characters in the play as well as the judgment of the readers of the play; fittingly, aporia is a proper term “to describe the kind of ‘impossibility’ of judgment which Lyotard identifies in the aesthetics of the sublime and the avant-garde, with which he identifies postmodernism” (Sim 99).

Cognition: Cognition as an umbrella term includes the forms of knowing and perceiving, such as attention, memory, reasoning and perception through which human beings amass information. Cognition is primarily concerned with the complicated realm of thinking and reasoning which is supposed to lead to some sort of knowledge. According to the Webster Dictionary (2003) cognition is the act or process of knowing which includes both awareness and judgment. The word cognition originates from Latin and Latin philosophers used the word cogito as a “translation of the Greek gnosis” which the Western philosophical tradition translates as knowledge. Cognition has two stages. “The first is a process: cognition as something that humans do (along with several other animals). The second is a product: cognition as mental representations that surface to consciousness when we perceive, reason, or form mental images” (Brandimonte, Bruno, and Collina 2). Husserlian Phenomenology as the principal movements of the twentieth century introduces the concept of intentionality. Richard Cobb-Stevens in his *The Beginnings of Phenomenology: Husserl and his predecessors* asserts that, “our cognitional acts are intentional, that they reach out beyond sense to things in the world” (43). In spite of the importance of cognition, in Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* any sort of cognition is in crisis. Therefore, getting the natural outcome of cognition, knowledge, and the outcome of knowledge, certainty, through intentionality is impossible.

Epistemology: Epistemology or the theory of knowledge is that branch of philosophy which is concerned with the nature of knowledge – with what and how we know and the limits of human understanding. It is generally concerned with the inquiry into the sources and validity of knowledge. And the researcher is using epistemology in order to highlight skepticism in the world of *Waiting for Godot*; indeed knowledge which was supposed to be conveyor of certainty is only a means for intensifying uncertainty. And regarding epistemology Paul K. Moser asserts that “epistemologists have debated (1) what knowledge consists in, (2) what knowledge is based on and (3) what the extent of our knowledge is” (158). Traditional epistemology from Descartes to Kant, explores influential responses to the challenge of skepticism and their approach was exclusively subjectivist. And for discovering truth, their protagonists were to be more

spectators. But Heidegger's epistemology is different from these traditionalists. According to Mulhall, for Heidegger "understanding is a matter of being competent to do certain things, to engage in certain poetics . . . I perform the task for the sake of some more general existential possibility that serves to define who I am" (81).

Existentialism: The name existentialism "commonly given to a group of somewhat loosely associated philosophical doctrines and ideas which found expression in the work of such men as Sartre, Heidegger, Marcel, Camus and Karl Jaspers" (Drabble 342). Existentialism relates to a vision of man's existence, his role and purpose in the world and his relation or lack of relation with God. There are two kinds of existentialism; atheist and theist, but whether Beckett's characters in *Waiting for Godot* are representative of which of them is not certain. And whether they see themselves extremely free like existentialists is also controversial. Furthermore, in existentialism it is inherent that human beings should be active participants of their lives, as "in philosophy, the terms *exist* and *existence* denote something active rather than passive and thus are closely dependent on the Latin root *ex*, 'out' + *sistere* from *stare*, 'to stand'" (Cuddon 294).

Metaphysics: According to Philip Stokes, metaphysics is that branch of philosophy which is concerned with the "first principles, particularly being (ontology) and knowing (epistemology), as well as with the ultimate nature of what exists" (214). In this regard, some common metaphysical questions will be enumerated concerning; the origin of life, and the meaning of the concepts such as time, space, logic, cause and effect and free will, the nature of mind and subsequently the nature of reality, among others. These metaphysical questions are engaged in finding solution for the mysteries of life and the ultimate truth, but in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, the answer to these questions remains opaque and this opacity makes room for pataphysics, which is according to J.A. Cuddon "a pseudo-philosophical system devised by Alfred Jarry, and is known as the science of imaginary solutions" (649). Pataphysics has a great influence in the development of the Theatre of the Absurd, as pataphysics is known as metaphysics of nonsense and the absurd.

Skepticism: Skepticism is the philosophical stance which questions the possibility of attaining the reality quite distinct from appearance. According to Philip Stokes, in skepticism "it is impossible to know anything with certainty," as it is the case in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. "Hence, absolute knowledge is unattainable and doubt is central to human knowledge and experience" (217). According to Drabble:

As a historical movement, skepticism had its origin in the teaching of some of the sophists in the fifth century B. C. ‘pyrrhonian’ skepticism, associated with Pyrrho in the following century, held that any argument supporting one side of a case could be balanced by a contrary argument of equal weight, so that the wise person suspends judgment and cultivates tranquility and indifference to outward things. (917)

Skepticism is a threat in the theory of knowledge. The importance of skepticism lies in the point that Stroud declared “philosophy thrives on paradox, absurdity, dilemma, and difficulty” (364). The aim of philosophy is to give us knowledge of the world around us, but as it is proved in Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (2002) philosophy reaches its end and except skepticism nothing remains.

1.7. Limitation/Delimitation

The present thesis is limited to the reading of Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* in the light of the crisis of cognition. In addition to this specific play, some of the other of his plays like *Endgame and Happy Days* and his *Trilogy of Novels* to name only a few and the recurrent concerns with the crisis of cognition that can be found in his works are also a good help. The whole thesis is devoted specifically to the crisis of cognition throughout *Waiting for Godot* and it is the crisis that binds Beckett’s text together. This study is not concerned with the specific cognitive theorist in its technical and purely linguistic sense. The researcher deals with the crisis of cognition as far as it is engaged with the crisis of any kind of knowing and perceiving. This research will also be limited to ontological and epistemological uncertainty as far as they are related to phenomenology. And here Phenomenology is only limited to the characters’ attempt for their view of the world by means of the simultaneous correspondence between consciousness and real world objects and not Husserlian phenomenology as Husserl was very much concerned with the apriori content of consciousness rather than the tracing of the object in the real world. And because Beckett’s play shows the trace of postmodernism’s indeterminacy or aporias, the researcher attempts to use existentialist and absurdist views to the extent that they do not turn to be the nomenclature for the play to be attached to their theories slavishly. Moreover, the whole thesis will focus on the crisis of cognition which is linked to the crisis of using language in any sort of identification even that of individuation and also in the crisis of the recognition of the trajectory of time and space.

1.8. Literature Review

As previously mentioned, the focus of the present research is primarily Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. In order to facilitate such a study, the first part of this review is allocated to a number of critics whose theories can be partially traced in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. Some of the basic sources used to extract the critical base of this study will be briefly introduced in the following paragraphs:

Ihab Hassan, in his *The Dismemberment of Orpheus, Toward a Postmodern Literature* (1982), is useful. He discusses salient features of postmodernism like incomprehension and indeterminacy which have their correspondence in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. These sources will be used in chapter two of this study.

Jean-Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (1995), *Nausea* (1938), and *No Exit and Three Other Plays* (1989) help the researcher to the extent that the study does not turn to be Sartrean as Beckett's view is not totally convergent with that of Sartre's. These books show that Sartre like Beckett sees the dilemma of human existence and human being's quest for attaining a rational source for their lives and their final failure to attain one. Moreover, Sartre mentions the dichotomy of "self" and "other" and also the "origin of nothingness". These books will be used in chapters two and three of this study.

Martin Esslin in his *The Theatre of the Absurd* (1960), discusses different absurdist writers and dubs Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* as the paragon model of the absurdist literature. Besides, Martin Esslin's introduction about Beckett in a book named *Samuel Beckett: A Collection of Critical Essays* (1965) was also useful. And the researcher will use these sources throughout this study to tackle the absurdist streaks of the play.

Simone De Beauvoir in her *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1948), explicates that ambiguity is the basis of her ethics. Freedom is always limited and situated; each person needs the other's freedom for her own to be recognizable. The researcher refers to this book and a book by Barbara S. Andrew about De Beauvoir named *Beauvoir's Place in Philosophical Thought* (2003) throughout this study for substantiating her claims that definitiveness cannot be reached, instead ambiguity is the realm of potentiality.

Jacques Derrida's "*Of Grammatology*" (1976) and "*Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences*" (1970), illuminate his stance against the metaphysical tradition and demonstrate his theory of deconstruction. These essays are concerned with decentralization of any sort, especially the instability of the center of a system like that of

language. The researcher will use these sources to reveal not only Beckett play's constant deferral of meaning and its aporias as the ultimate impasse, but also the continuous desire for coherence apparent in the play; for example, Beckett's characters crave to know who Godot is, but apparently Godot remains a conundrum till the end and simultaneously the desire for reaching Godot and solving their impasse remains fervent for Beckett's characters.

Arthur Schopenhauer in his *The World as Will and Representation* (1969), argues that time and space which are the principles of individuation, are modes of our cognition. The researcher will use this book for defying the point that space and time is the source of cognition. And it is specifically used in chapter four for using his ideas regarding subjectivity of time.

Martin Heidegger in his *Being and Time* (1962) discusses primarily the meaning of being which he named Dasein. Here, in this study, the researcher is mainly concerned with Heidegger's Dasein as a mode of being and its spatiality and temporality. Dasein's spatiality deals with space as Existential; description of the way we exist, making things available to ourselves and this spatial process is aimed toward something or in a certain direction which is determined by our concerns. Besides Heidegger's *Being and Time*, his *Basic Writings* (1978) are also useful for his elaboration on language and silence and beyond that for his idea of 'thought'. These books are employed in chapters three, four and five of this study.

Ludwig Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (2002), discusses the problems one encounters while using language. One of the important concerns of this study as problem of epistemology; is about the relation between thought and language which is not a clear-cut relationship. This book will be used in chapters two and three of this study.

Philip T. Grier's *Identity and Difference; Studies in Hegel's Logic, Philosophy of Spirit and Politics* (2007), in the introduction of the book illuminates the obsession with the dichotomy of "identity" and "other". Besides this, the book contains some essays which seem to be useful in this study.

Henry Bergson in his *Time and Free Will* (1889), stresses the subjective perception of space and time. And that time cannot be measured by the hands of a clock as time is fundamentally spatial. In his *Matter and Memory* (1988), and *Creative Evolution* (1944), Bergson argues about the spontaneous remembering which is intuitive and is the evidence for memory's non-dependence on external cues for its operation and highlights the perception of change. This idea of spontaneous remembering also shows the susceptibility of cognition and recognition. The researcher will use these sources in chapters three and four of this thesis.

Gilles Fauconnier in his *Mappings in Thought and Language* (1997), discusses the importance of meaning construction from the cognitive perspective in which he emphasizes the referential opacity and also the scope of indefinites which is indicative of ambiguity. He tackles the cognitive operations as far as they are related to the organization of language and thought which serves to construct the meaning of everyday life. This book will be used in chapter three of this study, in order to show the crisis of cognition as it is specifically manifested in the crisis of language.

After reviewing some critical literature for explicating different theoretical base of Beckett's works, the second part of this review will consider those critical works which are directly related either to Samuel Beckett or to the critical readings of his works specifically readings of *Waiting for Godot*. They will be briefly introduced in the following paragraphs:

Ghassan Hage's *Waiting* (2009), discusses waiting and highlights the positive facets of waiting and that it can be a sign of expectation, proves to be a good source in chapter four of this thesis.

Simon Critchely in his book *Very Little ... Almost Nothing: Death, Philosophy, Literature* (1997), discusses the mysteriousness of nothingness and declares that perhaps nothingness is more entertaining than unhappiness. This book is employed in chapter three for its ideas on nothingness.

Janus Adrienne's *In one Ear and Out the Others: Beckett....Mahon. Muldoon* (2007), traces Beckettian silence as a function of the politics of presence. The researcher will use this source as far as it is related to silence as the product of a breakdown in subject and it will be used in chapter three of this study.

Godwin Okebaram Uwah's *Pirandellism and Samuel Beckett's Plays* (1989), discusses generally the aesthetic relevance of Pirandello and Beckett, their dramaturgical framework and also unreality of the real, the researcher will use this book in chapter two for discussing content and form of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and in chapter three for discussing failure of language and the disintegrating personality.

Anthony Uhlmann in his *Samuel Beckett and the philosophical Image* (2006), explains how an image is different from 'representation' and analyzes Beckett's use of images borrowed from philosophy and aesthetics. This book stresses the failure to translate or decipher a sign which is indicative of the poststructuralist aspects of Beckett's works. Uhlmann also shows how Beckett makes use of images which are borrowed from Bergson. He discusses that Bergson

proposes to understand the image as a bridge between the objective things and thought; According to Uhlmann, in Beckett's works "The Crisis stems from the hardening of the image into a representation, and the hardening of our perceptions into cliché or habit" (23).

In Hugh Kenner's *A Reader's Guide to Samuel Beckett* (1973), his aim is to highlight that facet of Beckett which resist the habit of reading for the story. Kenner believes that Beckett's work should be grasped as a whole and should not be defined. In this regard, Kenner confirms that Beckett should not be aligned under any specific category even that of the theatre of the absurd. This book introduces formalist approach to the researcher and will be used in chapter two of this thesis.

Harold Bloom's *Modern Critical Interpretations: Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot* (2008), shows some traces of Gnosticism in *Waiting for Godot* which is mostly known as an agnostic play. It contains some important essays which would be used in this study. Important essays embedded in this book are: Richard Schechner "There's Lots of Time in Godot", Normand Berlin's "The Tragic Pleasure of Godot" which attempts to define the aesthetic pleasure of Godot, Michael Worton's "Waiting for Godot and Endgame: Theater as Text" which compares *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*, and Lois Gordon's *Waiting for Godot: The Existential Dimension* that deciphers the existentialist streaks of *Waiting for Godot*. In addition to this book, Bloom's *Samuel Beckett: Modern Critical Views* (2011), contains some other important essays by important figures like Alan S. Loxterman who elaborates on Beckett's idea of uncertainty which is shared by, Zeifman's consideration of the ambiguous endings of Beckett's works and Lois Gordon who turns to the fragmentary nature and dreamlike language of *Waiting for Godot*. These sources will be useful throughout this study.

Lawrence Graver's *A Student Guide: Beckett, Waiting for Godot* (2004), is specifically dedicated to Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and not only discusses play's genesis and reception, but also approaches the play in the light of play's potentiality and in the framework of the drama of unknowingness. This book will be used throughout this study.

L. Graver and R. Federman's *The Critical Heritage: Samuel Beckett* (1979), analyzes different works of Beckett including his *Waiting for Godot* which is also useful throughout this study.

Paul Stewart's *Zone of Evaporation: Samuel Beckett's Disjunctions* (2006), uses a consciously eclectic use of certain critical theories. And Stewart believes that this eclecticism is the fruit of the belief that Beckett's works cannot be grasped by any single