

Unveiling the Marxist Tapestry: An Intriguing Analysis

Hafsa Shamoon¹, Maleeha Adil² and Shabbir Ahmad³

<https://doi.org/10.62345/jads.2023.12.3.105>

Abstract

This study examines Marxist criticism to identify conflicts between members of different socioeconomic strata to identify social and political issues. "Waiting for Godot" (1952) exposes human suffering, the repressive consequences of contemporary capitalism, and the exploitation of people; moreover, it lays an ideological foundation by creating a reflexive mistrust of the notion that any attempt to change the existing capitalist system is absurd and worthless. The main objective of this work is to draw attention to the characters' horrible conditions, which stem from their poverty. Estragon and Vladimir are victims of capitalism because they are not able to live happy lives. And how luck has become a commodity in capitalist society. The sole purpose of this study is to highlight the horrors and cruelties that occur between the upper class and the lower class. Through its never-ending, futile waiting for Godot, the play's hero, the drama highlights how the capitalist system exploits and alienates the working class. This interpretation explores power dynamics, class conflict, and the absurdity of existence to show how "Waiting for Godot" can be read as a commentary on the nonhuman effects of capitalism and the need for revolutionary transformation.

Keywords: Bourgeoisie, Proletariat, Marxism, Social Absurdity, Modern Capitalism.

Introduction

Karl Marx (1818–1883) is considered less of a philosopher and more of an activist and revolutionary, and many communist governments were founded in the 20th century due to his teachings. Karl Marx's philosophical and political views significantly influenced subsequent developments in intellectual, political, and economic history. Despite criticism of his views, he is primarily recognized for developing a school of social philosophy and is still considered one of the most significant figures in human history. Marxism is the collective term for his critical theories of politics, economics, and society based on class. The absence of distinct social types and hierarchical political structures characterizes Marxist civilizations. Marxism is the collective term for his critical theories of politics, economics, and society based on class. Conflicting social classes and a lack of established governmental institutions characterize Marxist civilizations. Marxism is the term used to describe his critique of politics, society, and economics based on the class struggle. Social classes are at odds with one another, and formal governmental structures are absent in Marxist nations. Marxism is the collective term for his class-struggle-derived critical

¹University of Sahiwal, Sahiwal, Email: Hafsashamoon18@gmail.com

²Women University Mardan, Email: maleehadil2603@gmail.com

³Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of Sahiwal, Email: shabbirahmad@uosahiwal.edu.pk



views of politics, economics, and society. Social classes are at odds with one another, and governments are absent from Marxist civilizations.

Marxism is the collective term for his critical perspectives on politics, economics, and society that emerged from class struggle. There is no longer any struggle between socioeconomic classes and no government in a Marxist society. His conception of power as the foundation of social interactions significantly contributed. Marx believed that to become the ruling class, the working class had to demolish the foundation of class society. In capitalist society, there is a struggle between the working class and the bourgeoisie. He was applying historical materialism as a critical lens. Marx believed that capitalism created social tensions that, like those in earlier socioeconomic systems, would ultimately cause the system to collapse. Some fundamental concepts, including economic commitment, dialectical material, and alienation, are presented in Marxist theory.

From 1906 to 1989, Irishman Samuel Beckett worked as a dramatist, critic, literary translator, and author of short tales. In his dramatic and literary works, absurdity and dark humor are frequently blended with tragicomic, dehumanizing, and horrible life experiences. Throughout his career, he continued to play around with language and aesthetics. The repetition method disrupts the impression that a piece moves in a straight line by showing how human behavior repeats itself.

Samuel Beckett, the most well-known dramatist in Ireland, wrote "Waiting for Godot" in French in 1949 and translated it into English the following year. In the years following World War II, this "classic absurdity" drama was effectively presented on stages across America, Europe, and other countries. Beckett's art offers the most constant critique of realist concepts. To concentrate on the fundamental elements of human experiences, he has established the ideas of theatrical Samuel and fiction, which give conventional plotlines and the unities of place and time.

Godot is being waited upon by two of the play's men, Estragon and Vladimir. Estragon and Vladimir converse extensively while waiting for Godot, who is taking a long time to come. Even though they don't know if they will ever see Godot or if they have seen him before, they wait. Throughout the play, the two characters and the situation stay in the same physical area. Pozzo and another man named Lucky walk by and continue their journey once they have finished speaking with Vladimir and Estragon. Estragon and Vladimir revert to their previous conversational subjects, sometimes even paraphrasing one another.

A youngster appears at the close of Act I, claiming to be God's messenger. He claims that Godot will appear tomorrow rather than today. Estragon and Vladimir are seen chatting about unrelated topics while seated tensely beside the same tree at the beginning of Act II. But when they saw that the leaves of the tree beneath which they had been sitting had significantly grown and changed color, they immediately realized that their lengthy wait for Godot had been in vain. Even though some time has passed, they are still waiting. Upon their return, Lucky becomes mute, and Pozzo loses his sight. They quickly leave. The messenger boy from Act I reappears, but he insists he is a new boy who has never seen Estragon and Vladimir before. However, he conveys the same message: Godot will not appear today. Estragon and Vladimir are exceedingly depressed and dissatisfied; they think about ending their lives, but they don't have a rope. They ask Godot for wisdom. They become noble, which gives them wings to fly over their meaningless lives

because they have hope for purpose and direction. They consider reaching for a rope as the curtain falls but stay where they are.

Literature Review

Bronte (1847) offers a theoretical perspective on Karl Marx's concepts as they relate to her passionate novel "Jane Eyre" (1847). She paints a picture of the rigidly hierarchical English class system and socioeconomic circumstances that made maintaining class positions necessary. In addition, Jane's persona highlights the areas in Victorian England where class divisions were starting to show through in the system. The friendship between Jane and Rochester further shows class differences. It becomes clear what class Jane belongs to. By asserting the gentleman's rights, she implies that Jane's family belonged to a lesser social class. She makes a point of stating that she is aware of the inherent corruption of the governing elites. She portrays herself as a rebellious, enslaved person to draw attention to the isolation and oppression she faces because of her class. Is she John's slave, or is he her true master?

Jane's tale exposes the corruption and even authoritarianism of the upper classes while warning her audience that the middle classes were assuming the position of the protectors of moral and intellectual superiority. The ruler's role is questioned in the book: is she an upper-class member because of her superior education or because she serves as a domestic servant? What happens when people from different socioeconomic classes, like Jane and Rochester, become friends? One of Jane's goals in the book is to redeem the upper class, which has fallen into pride and depravity. The novel demonstrates how the upper class generally needs the middle class's hard work ethic and unadulterated moral principles, much as Rochester desires Jane for her freshness and purity. By the book's end, Rochester has realized the folly of his ways and has suppressed his overbearing emotions. As a devout, kind husband, Reborn is contentedly reliant on his wife's moral and intellectual leadership. Charlotte Bronte's characters, especially Jane Eyre, are complex and multidimensional. Jane is a strong, independent, wise woman who doesn't let her environment dictate who she is. She analyzes religious hypocrisy, class inequality, and gender conventions. She uses gothic elements, such as the mysterious Mr. Rochester and the wife locked away in the attic, to create suspense and atmosphere. She uses beautiful and poignant language, which eloquently describes the narrative.

Dean (2016) applies Marxist theory to an analysis of Jane Austen's 1813 classic "Pride and Prejudice." She sees it as a perfect illustration of both societal conformity and resistance. Marx's theory demonstrates that there were still enslaved people in America, that colonialism and imperialism were the norm, that women had no right to vote anywhere, and that incredibly wealthy men genuinely controlled the world. The characters in the book also struggle with issues of power and wealth, as well as gender norms. She makes startling revelations about human nature and the social class structure. Marxist social criticism of Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" (1813) offers an intriguing viewpoint on the dynamics between the upper and lower classes about enduring problems with subsistence and the pursuit of social and economic achievement. Through the relationships between the characters in the novel, especially the one between Darcy and Elizabeth, Austen depicts class differences, difficulties, and struggles. A Marxist interpretation of *Pride and Prejudice* illustrates how class, society, and wealth in pre-industrial England shaped relationships. The novel then demonstrates the rise of the bourgeoisie and how it impacts class dynamics. Mrs. Bennet represents the pinnacle of Marxism in *Pride and*

Prejudice because her only objective is to marry off her daughters to affluent, upper-class men. The Bennet family's deep-seated desire for wealth and power stems from their exposure to upper-class society. The way the upper class denigrated those beneath them is illustrated by Jane Austen's characters in *Pride & Prejudice*, where Lizzie is treated snobbishly by Mr. Darcy's aunt simply because he is more prosperous than she is. Marx's theories about class struggle being the "chronicles of every previous society" are amply demonstrated, even though *Pride and Prejudice* was written before his manifesto. The novel's main characters—Darcy and Elizabeth—embodied his views on social class conflict, the importance of accepting people from different social classes to survive, and wealth as a gauge of one's worth. Though many saw *Pride and Prejudice* as a romance, it was a critique of the world that Jane Austen created. Marx believed that the novel thus portrays the difficulties people have faced throughout history.

Akhtar (2015), whose paper focuses on the various details and interpretations of Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" (1952). He highlights the absurdity, sorrow, futility, despair, and meaninglessness of human existence in presenting a fundamental aspect of the human condition. In his portrayal of Pozzo and Lucky's master-slave relationship, he also illustrates class ties. This is a dark allusion to the oppressed classes and nations of the contemporary capitalist world. Just as Godot is believed to not emerge in the play, people wait for something that does not materialize in the modern capitalist social construction. The 1952 play "Waiting for Godot" is a literary masterpiece because of its bizarre and unusual dramatic conflicts, wide range of themes, and absurdity.

Prieto (2014), whose paper "Writing about her own experience growing up in Civil in the Rights Era, Toni Morrison explores the Marxist theme in her 1987 novel "Beloved." Given that it highlights Morrison's goal to dismantle racism, patriarchy, slavery, and other social and historical norms, the book is grounded in a Marxist perspective.

Therefore, the class conflict in Morrison's 1987 film "Beloved" is not about blacks against whites but how African-Americans perceived themselves in the 1980s. The society portrayed in the story is likewise rife with social and economic inequalities. In addition to being subjected to implicit, historical slavery before being freed, all of the characters in "Beloved" (1987) suffer from the temporal intertextuality of the author. The total independence of African Americans is their only means of escaping white expectations. Morrison also lost her freedom and liberty, which are fundamental rights. Morrison depicts the radical African-American society, culture, and class divide in the book. While both characters are physically destroyed and will only be remembered as beacons of hope and light for all eternity, Baby Suggs is viewed as an optimistic individual who has triumphed over the actual and symbolic chains of slavery and is released from her right. Like Morrison, Seth maintained that the only way to entirely free African Americans from slavery was to confront its aftereffects; nonetheless, rather than being about class, the most significant conflict was between blacks and whites. As in 124 Bluestone Road, white culture is diminished in the novel to the status of an observer.

In the 1998 book "Critical Theory Today" by Tyson Lois, He writes that Marxism holds that the goal of all political and social endeavors, including those about government, education, religion, philosophy, the arts, science, technology, and the media, is to maintain and acquire economic dominance. "Beckett's play involves two pseudo-couples, a relatively equal team of two Clochards, with a very different and decidedly unequal pair in the person of Pozo," according to Frederick Jameson's interpretation of the play. Linked to the duo were the enslaved person,

Lucky, and the enslaver, most likely England, as well as Ireland's intelligentsia. Marxist criticism was characterized as follows by Terry Eagleton, a cultural and critical theorist, in his 1983 book "Literary Theory: An Introduction": Marxist criticism addresses issues of novel publication and working-class mentions, going beyond the simple categorization as a "literature of sociology." Its main goal is to make literary works more accessible, which entails being able to relate to their forms, styles, and meanings. Class conflict and production relations are the primary analytical tools of Marxist criticism. According to Ruby Cohn (1998), Beckett is cited as saying, "I think that all that has nothing to do with me," on the flyleaf of her version of the Bulatovic play.

Theoretical Framework

Karl Marx's theory of Marxism will be used to comprehend the specific research. Marxist theory places a strong emphasis on how class antagonism shapes the processes of social transformation. Marxism centers on the thesis that social class struggles, especially those between the upper, middle, lower, and working classes, determine economic relations in a capitalist society and that these struggles will eventually result in economic equality. Marxism asserts that economics, which also encompasses the material forces of production, including labor, the means of production, and the relations of production, is more necessary than socialism. The research aims to explore the difficulties and struggles of the characters in the novel through Karl Marx's theory. Even in the 20th century, people were oppressed by the power class system and faced problems of inequality.

Analysis

"Waiting for Godot" was written in French by the most famous Irish dramatist, Samuel Beckett, in 1949 and later translated into English in 1952. In the years following World War II, this piece was presented as a comedy of absurdities with startling popularity throughout Europe, America, and other parts of the world. The play "Waiting for Godot" begins and ends with the same title; the language is conventionally meaningless, the characters are unidentifiable, and the scene is remote. The characters are portrayed as incomprehensible talking machines akin to mechanical puppets. The setting of Beckett's 1952 drama *Waiting for Godot* is simple and unadorned, with a sense of worldly estrangement. Martin Esslin described it in his 1961 books "The Absurdist Theater" and "A Theater of Victories in War."

In this play, the pair of tramps, Estragon and Vladimir, eagerly await the appearance of a guy identified as Godot, the play's eponymous figure, but one who does not appear in it. The play began with the scenes from "A Country Road" and "Tree." Roads are a sign of modern man's great suffering and anguish. The road's identity still needs to be clarified as ridiculous and meaningless, so although it originates and ends someplace, neither the characters nor the audience know where. The sense of futility and helplessness is intensified by this constant ambiguity, which transforms it into a powerful metaphor that penetrates the whole play. A waiting attitude is the same as a sluggish way of living. People seldom take action; therefore, they can never be sure. The bare tree is a metaphor for poverty, rigidity, and economic progress. The withered tree represents the economic stagnation that defines Estragon and Vladimir's lives. "Waiting for Godot" is both the play's beginning and end.

As "Waiting for Godot" (1952) puts it, nothing is more accurate than the need to avoid disturbing the truth. Godot is the epitome of capitalism. He could be a monarch, a business owner, or the

head of state. In addition to being strong, Godot is also far away and unseen "imagine a drama where the characters are speechless, and there is no action," says Roger Blin. The social doctrines of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, which were expanded upon by their adherents to create communism, are referred to as "Marxism." Marxism brought ideas such as financial decision-making, alienation, and comparative materialism. Karl Marx thought that whereas capital is independent and unique in upper-class society, a living being lacks individuality and depends on others. The conversation between Vladimir and

In the play's first act, Estragon discloses their respective social circumstances. Vladimir is wiser and more intellectual than Estragon. He upholds high social norms and is dignified. He possesses dignity and high social standards. Vladimir doesn't seem to comprehend imagination or fantasy. Although they both have various aspirations, they are aware of their social and economic circumstances since human needs are aware of the basic needs of all people. Food turns into the most critical resource in these folks' barren world. Estragon lustfully searches for Pozzo's chicken bones that are left over. As a result of this social structure, Pozzo has more resources than Estragon and Vladimir, who are regarded as foreigners and are considered inferior. Pozzo also has more excellent clothing, food, and land, but tragically, he also has a slave of his own in fate. One of the most essential socio-political subjects in the way that master-slave relationships are portrayed is the bond between Lucky and Pozzo, which highlights class ties and serves as a symbol of economic exploitation. The unlucky individual who is set to be sold at the fair is seen as a member of the exploited, a dehumanized proletariat, an oppressed worker, and a human being who has been reduced to a commodity. Even though Pozzo gives the impression of being more of an enslaver than anything else, he might also be considered a capitalist figure who represents dominance in terms of social classes. I'm taking him to a fair hoping to win a nice prize. Producing things in a capitalist economy is primarily done to sell them for a profit on the market rather than to meet consumer demands. Pozzo never values Lucky for his labors; instead, during a scene in the play, he calls Lucky derogatory names like "hog" and "pig," among other things. Rise, swine! "Walk or crawl!" (He kicks Lucky.) In terms of luck, Pozzo is worse than an animal. Pozzo further establishes his supremacy and exposes his lack of humanity when he eats the chicken and then throws the bones to Lucky with an air of complete dominance. Theoretically, the carrier, Lucky, of course, receives the bones.

On the other hand, Estragon is a defenseless victim, much like his friend Vladimir, and he shows an unrestrained appetite for the chicken bones Pozzo has thrown on the ground. When asked why Lucky does not put his bag down, Pozzo responds, "He wants to impress me so that I can keep him." This demonstrates even more of Pozzo's disregard for Lucky.

Pozzo's biggest worry is maintaining his dignity since he wants to continue acting like a capitalist and treating the tramps like a super lord. When Pozzo first meets Vladimir and Estragon, he acknowledges that they are humans but still beneath him. This picture supports his autocratic style as a genuine capitalist disregarding human identity. In addition to Lucky, he even chastises the tramps for approaching him with a query. This merely demonstrates his capitalist mindset and the labor exploitation it encompasses. Pozzo is wealthy and possesses land. Lucky, on the other hand, is an enslaved person without land. Pozzo speaks harshly about Lucky. Pozzo commands Lucky to take care of most things for him because he is too weak to perform independently and relies on Lucky for survival (e.g., food, shelter, etc.). This illustrates Pozzo's dependent on Lucky more than Lucky is on him. Lucky symbolizes the working and lower

classes, while Pozzo represents the aristocracy and capitalism. The upper class exploits the weaker lower class to complete tasks for it. The lower class needs education; hence, they must learn to take advantage of opportunities or enjoy life. Instead, the upper class is in charge of them. But in the absence of the working class, the upper-class crumbles because it cannot sustain itself. The working class is necessary for the wealthy aristocracy to function. It highlights the flaws of capitalist societies. The theory of alienation, a key idea in Marxism, can also be used to examine the play. It illustrates the central struggle in society was between classes, namely the battle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

In-Depth Analysis of the Play

Alienation

Vladimir and Estragon's social alienation is evident throughout the play. The separation that the proletariat feels inside a capitalist society is shown in their seclusion from the outside world, their continual repetition of behaviors, and their lack of memory for past events. When we first meet Pozzo, he is shown as a wealthy guy living in a realm of beggars. He is cruel, irresponsible, and self-obsessed—a masterfully rendered portrait of the capitalist elite. Conversely, Lucky serves as Pozzo's slave. A rope restrains him, and he appears more animal than human; his life is a satire of the human condition. Lucky exhibits every sign of isolation. Marx contends that production forces and capitalism create an alienated ego in a society built on alienated work. A person from a lower social class no longer has value as a whole person and cannot interact with people from higher social classes. Marx argues that the human meaning of capitalism is this: individuals cut themselves apart from others and themselves by quitting their jobs. Pozzo and Lucky, two significant characters, are the ideal representations of capitalism. The 1952 novel "Waiting for Godot" expresses the late modernist bourgeois ideology by showing the loss of human recognition inside the capitalist social structure.

Religious Critique

The story's ongoing waiting for Godot, frequently seen as a savior figure, can be read as a critique of religion for using the promise of salvation in the afterlife to dominate and appease the working class while prolonging their misery in the here and now. The play's characters experience many obstacles and tribulations, but no supernatural assistance exists. It is possible to interpret this lack of involvement from a higher power as a criticism of religious belief and the notion that God will always be present to guide and encourage people. Some have regarded Godot as a manifestation of a higher power, and the characters Vladimir and Estragon depict humanity's longing for salvation or divine revelation. The religious symbolism in the play might be interpreted as a critique of people's propensity to look to religion for guidance and purpose in life.

False Consciousness and Hope

A type of false consciousness in which the working-class clings to the prospect of a better future. At the same time, ignorance of their exploitation and the structural problems may be observed in Vladimir and Estragon's unwavering hope for Godot's arrival.

Class Struggle

The working class, represented by Vladimir and Estragon in "Waiting for Godot," is a group that struggles to understand its place in the world. Like the working-class experience of hoping for change or salvation that might never come, they are caught in a never-ending cycle of waiting for someone (Godot). Marx's darkest worries about a society that has destroyed the human soul and spirit will be confirmed by the inhuman experiences and thoughts of all crucial characters at that time, including Estragon and Vladimir. Another significant representation of the voicelessness of the lower working class is Lucky's quiet. Throughout the play, Lucky asks a probing question in an emotional monologue that begins with the possibility of a personal God and ends with the picture of a petrified, empty skull. He removed Lucky's bowler hat and declared, "That concludes his reasoning!" Pozzo diffuses the tense conversation. Marxist theory enables us to understand Pozzo in the play Lucky as both the proletariat and the ruling class of capitalist society.

Beckett offers several illustrations of how people in the working and lower classes are perceived in contemporary society. The Marxist play "Waiting for Godot."

(1952) clarifies that workers are essential to humanity because of Lucky's fervor. Beckett cleverly and realistically portrays material interest in general and Marxist interest in particular in the play. Lucky works tirelessly day and night to win Pozzo's acceptance, yet all he feels is bitterness. Pozzo is undoubtedly a symbol of the callousness and bourgeois system of the bourgeoisie. When Pozzo and Lucky first appear on stage, the audience immediately understands their connection. Hegelian metaphorically represents the master-slave relationship; Lucky is toting a greatcoat picnic basket, a folding stool, and a huge bag. Seize a whip.

Conclusion

Ultimately, societies run by capitalists exploit their people. Karl Marx's theories are predicated on the premise that socialism is unavoidable and intolerable. Like the existentialists, he emphasized individualism. Marx argued that the highest being is the individual. Marx believed that all of history was riven by conflict. The idea of chaos arising from the pursuit of order is an existential concept. The wealthy bourgeoisie is pitted against the poor in traditional Marxist theories.

Godot and Pozzo play aristocratic ruling class members in this drama. However, Lucky, Vladimir, and Estragon are the exploited and oppressed workers who are at the whim of their overlords. Expecting Godot's intricate dramatic structure is based on ideological ideas and symbolism that express existential agony. Fear of the absurdity of human existence and freedom the play's text's primary structural element is vertical repression and layering, also known as sedimentation. The play's growing fragmentation of the capitalist socio-cultural ethos reflects the late modernist bourgeois ideology, an ideological embodiment of capitalism and its reification of lifestyle. Therefore, it was against existentialist principles to confine people to this social structure and reduce their lives to economic classes. Beckett assigns clear Marxist roles to his primary characters to demonstrate this idea.

References

- Akhter, J., Muhammad, K. & Naz., N. (2015) Waiting for Godot a Marxist Study. *International Journal of Literature and Arts*, 3(4), pp. 42-48.

- Alsharadgeh, Z. S., (2020). The Themes in Samuel Beckett's Play Waiting for Godot. *European of English Language and Literature Studies*, 8(2), 31-39.
- Brontë, C., (1847). *Critical Essays: A Marxist Approach to the Novel Jane*. Cliffsnotes.
- Bulatović, M., (Paris: Seuil, 1967). *Quoted in Cohn, R., From Desire to Godot* (London: Calder Publications; New York: Riverrun Press, 1998), p. 17.
- Dean, K. (2016). *Marxism in Pride and Prejudice, Research paper*. West Career and Technical Academy.
- Eagleton, T., (1976). *Marxism and Literary Criticism, Berkeley*. <https://dtllc.fflch.usp.br/sites/dtllc.fflch.usp.br/files/Eagleton%20-%20Marxism%20and%20Literary%20Criticism.pdf>
- Esslin, M., (1960). The Theatre of the Absurd. *The Tulane Drama Review*, 4(4). (May 1960).
- Kibin, (2022). *A social critique of samuel beckett's waiting for godot*. <http://www.kibin.com/essay-examples/a-social-critique-of-samuel-becketts-waiting-for-godot-3KWRNR9K>
- Majeed, M. & Akbar, N. (2019). A Marxist Approach to Bapsi Sidhwa's the Trouble-Easers. *International Review of Literary Studies*, 1(1), 39-45.
- Panda, K. A., (2015). Marxist Approach to Literature: An Introduction. National Translation Mission, Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore-570006. *Journal of Teaching and Research in English Literature*, 6(3).
- Prieto, C. A., (2014). A Marxist Approach to Toni Morrisons Beloved: Materialism and Class Struggle through Tempory Intertextuality.
- Ruby, C., (1987). *Beckett: Waiting for Godot. London, Great Britain*. Casebook Series Macmillan Education Ltd.
- Tyson, L., (2014). *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly*. Routledge.