

# The Unending Waiting of Homo Sapiens: A Comparative Study of Anand's *Untouchable* and Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*

**Sadia Afrin & Sheikh Md. Muniruzzaman**

Lecturer, Department of English, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University, Gopalganj-8100, Bangladesh  
E-mail: [sadia.du@bsmrstu.edu.bd](mailto:sadia.du@bsmrstu.edu.bd); [smmzaman@bsmrstu.edu.bd](mailto:smmzaman@bsmrstu.edu.bd)

**Abstract** Indian novelist Mulk Raj Anand's Bakha and Irish Nobel laureate dramatist Samuel Beckett's Estragon and Vladimir have encompassed the whole world where Bakha is from the East and Estragon and Vladimir are from the West bearing uniformity in their voices. They are standing in the labyrinth of waiting as if waiting is the essence of human existence. Through the characterization of these three characters, Anand and Beckett have depicted the existential and identity crises of humankind on earth. They represent those people who are entangled with their surroundings and circumstances being completely unaware of their forthcoming future. Although the three protagonists have been shaped from two different worlds, there is a symphony of voices. The protagonists of both texts bear resemblance to some incidents of the contemporary world which are socially, culturally and politically significant to the world intelligentsia. This is a qualitative study and the objective is to critically analyze the unending waiting of *homo sapiens* (the scientific name of human beings) in relation to their existential crisis and their optimism for a better future in light of the masterpieces *Untouchable* and *Waiting for Godot*. The psychological trauma and never-ending waiting of the three protagonists Bakha, Estragon, and Vladimir can be observed through the lens of the materialistic class distinction, attempt of mimicry, oppression of the high caste, identity crisis of the inferior class and their living under the fear of continual domination and exploitation. To elucidate these socio-psychological dynamics, psycho-analysis and post-colonial theories and writings have been considered.

**Key words** waiting; Homo sapiens; untouchable; mimicry; existentialism

**Authors** **Sadia Afrin** is currently teaching as Lecturer in the Department

of English at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University in Bangladesh. She has three years of university teaching experience at private and public universities in Bangladesh. She received BA (Honors) in English in 2015 and MA in English Literature in 2016 from the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Her academic areas of interest are contemporary British literature, cultural studies, postmodernism, Victorian literature, Continental literature and South Asian literature. **Sheikh Md. Muniruzzaman** is currently teaching as Lecturer in the Department of English at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University in Bangladesh. He has seven years of university teaching experience at private and public universities home and abroad. He received BA (Honors) in English in 2011 and MA in Applied Linguistics and ELT in 2012 from Jahangirnagar University, Bangladesh. In 2016-2017 academic year, he completed Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) Program from New York University and worked as Cultural Ambassador of Bangladesh in the United States. His academic areas of interest are ESL/EFL approaches and methods, ESP, materials development, educational technology, critical thinking skills, dialectology and multilingualism.

## Introduction

Samuel Beckett (1906-1989), the prominent Irish dramatist has given his main focus on the miserable condition of the exterminated tramps who are the victims of existential crisis as well as the philosophical crisis in the masterpiece *Waiting for Godot* (1948) whereas Mulk Raj Anand (1905-2004), a writer of the Indian sub-continent has given his paramount concentration on racism and the psychology of the working-class people who are the victims of the vile caste system in the novel *Untouchable* (1935). *Waiting for Godot* is the representation of the ultimate helplessness of human beings on earth focusing on the universal themes like existentialism, absurdity, hopelessness, and nothingness whereas *Untouchable* is the vivid manifestation of the Indian caste system covering some significant themes like racism, untouchability, and social hierarchy. Being born and brought up in two different parts of the world, both Anand and Beckett have accumulated experience regarding the suffering souls on earth that subsist almost in each corner of this vast universe. Through the inscriptions of the Indian novelist and the Irish dramatist the ultimate helplessness and unflagging waiting of life on earth have been portrayed. Anand observed the heinous caste system prevailing in India whereas Beckett faced two massive World Wars and their consequences. In both texts, the reflection of

the authors' experiences is presented and the writers are the social critics of their contemporary world. Anand's Bakha represents the East and Beckett's Estragon and Vladimir represent the West with a sense of uniformity in their voices and similarity of their sufferings, and longings. Despite having different contexts and settings, these three characters Bakha, Estragon, and Vladimir represent the universal phenomenon of the oppressed, suppressed, traumatized, homeless, and helpless people of the world. The unity among these three characters is the portrayal of the universal human atmosphere in this universe where there are sufferings, trauma, and socio-political afflictions as well as existential problems. It will not be an exaggeration to mention the name of the Syrian child *Anal Qurdi*<sup>1</sup> (Gunter 2015) that reminds the "...naked shingles of the world" (Arnold 1867). So there is a sense of hollowness and emptiness in the existing world in which 'waiting' is unavoidable for every human being irrespective of race, caste, creed and nationality that has been portrayed by Bakha, Estragon, and Vladimir. This paper is a humble attempt to elaborate these critical issues in microscopic details and compare the novel and drama based on the theory of Bhabha's mimicry, ambivalence, hybridity, and Sartre's existential crisis. This study will help readers understand the inner sufferings of the tormented souls and their experiences with the flow of time.

### Background of the Study

Many of the researchers have shed light on hopelessness and significance of time in human life whereas the present paper focuses on the never-ending waiting of human beings. Noorbakhsh and Torkamaneh claim that Samuel Beckett portrays a mysterious world of waiting 'wrapped in enigma' in the play *Waiting for Godot* (42). They further add that both optimism and pessimism of human life are simultaneously observed in the play. People become pessimistic in the world of suffering and destruction and again they find some new hope to live on (44). Khilfa asserts that due to the WWII, people become hopeless about life and suffer from existential crisis. All the characters of the play are trapped in the net of time and waiting (1). Being completely unable and helpless to get out of the situation, they are thinking about the miserable condition of their life that is based on waiting.

Yuehua has talked about the universal sufferings of human beings, whereas this paper asserts the universal waiting of human beings. Everybody in the play is suffering from some kind of agony and pain that life has brought them either physical or mental. Through the portrayal of the tramps' several attempts of suicide

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1 Alan Qurdi is a Syrian child who drowned in the Mediterranean sea whose dead body was found in the Turkish seashore.

and Estragon's boot act, Beckett wants to make the readers aware of the fact that human beings are born to suffer and they have to undergo sufferings till death (Yuehua 71). The four main characters (Estragon, Vladimir, Lucky, Pozzo) of the play are trapped in 'today', 'tomorrow', 'now', 'at present', 'at this place', 'at this moment' which represent the general human condition of the world. Roy illustrates that human beings are completely dependent on fate and sometimes they become helpless victims of 'ontological fate' since they cannot play any active role to change it (11557). The two tramps are stuck at a place without any hope, salvation, and destination, they just pass their time through several insignificant activities.

The massive destruction of the two World Wars created a world of fragmentation, emptiness, loss and alienation. In the post-war period, people lost their rationality and logic and a feeling of nothingness grew in their minds. They even lost the concrete vision of life, death, time etc. and they used to spend time by waiting. As they waited, they deliberately attempted to distract their mind from the 'burdensomeness of time' by speaking nonsense, playing games, and doing irrelevant gestures which can barely be considered as events or actions (Khilfa 2). Each action of the characters, Vladimir, Estragon, Pozzo, and Lucky is to pass the time and to prove that they exist in this meaningless universe.

Researchers have focused on the miserable life of the subaltern class but this paper concentrates on the longing and waiting of the oppressed people for salvation and solution to their miserable condition. The representation of the "outcastes" in the novel *Untouchable* discloses the miserable condition of the *Dalit* community in society (Bhat 87). Christopher presents that the failure of this novel lies in its incapacity to address the issues of equality and justice of the downtrodden rather it has glorified the Gandhian philosophy (64).

Anand demystifies the inner agony and suffering of the subalterns and explores the superstructure of the society where the lower caste people are deprived of fundamental needs. Bakha's miseries and pains are not because of his fault but of his birth in the subaltern class. Being a member of the downtrodden group, he faces humiliation and oppression everywhere in his daily life (Dar 85). Bakha was amused at hearing Gandhi's words of establishing equality in society. He also listens to the view of the poet Iqbal Nath Sarshar that the problem of untouchability can be solved if the modern flush-latrine is introduced. Then the sweepers can get recognition and prestige in society (Hossain 3). Therefore, Bakha is waiting for a better future like the two tramps Estragon and Vladimir.

### Waiting as the Essence of Human Life

Waiting is the unavoidable aspect of human life; everyone waits for something all the time, even for a lifetime. There is no limitation of human expectations, desires, and sufferings that is why they cannot but wait until they reach the final destination. The same scenario is observed in Anand's *Untouchable* and Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. Regarding the latter Esslin mentions:

The subject of the play is not Godot but waiting, the act of waiting as an essential and characteristic aspect of the human condition. Throughout our lives, we always wait for something, and Godot simply represents the objective of our waiting for an event, a thing, a person, death. (50)

The inevitability of waiting for different things in different times of human beings gets overt through these lines. Estragon and Vladimir are waiting for Godot without knowing who s/he is and when and where s/he will come. The interpretations of Godot can be God, hope, regeneration, salvation, omnipotent power, punishment, love, death, future, etc. It represents the general condition of mankind, a lifelong journey of longing and waiting for something. All the human beings of the universe are waiting for some new hope, goal, and achievement of life till their death. Whenever people are in extreme danger, they always long for some omnipotent power, maybe God to be rescued from that problem. The following dialogue of Estragon and Vladimir represents their eternal waiting for Godot:

ESTRAGON. Let's go.

VLADIMIR. We can't.

ESTRAGON. Why not?

VLADIMIR. We're waiting for Godot. (Beckett 1.47)

Similarly, it happens in the case of Bakha who waits for the end of hatred, untouchability, and racism from society in *Untouchable*. He is waiting for a new morning where he has social, cultural, and racial status. There is a class binary in the same religion in which Bakha belongs to the lowest category. He wants to be treated rightfully in his community since he is a subaltern. Therefore, Anand utters regarding Bakha's pain: "But now he knew that there were degrees of castes among the low-caste and that he was of the lowest" (80). Bakha's longing and waiting are for the abolition of this class system and hatred towards the sweepers since by

belonging to the sweeper class he becomes untouchable in the society.

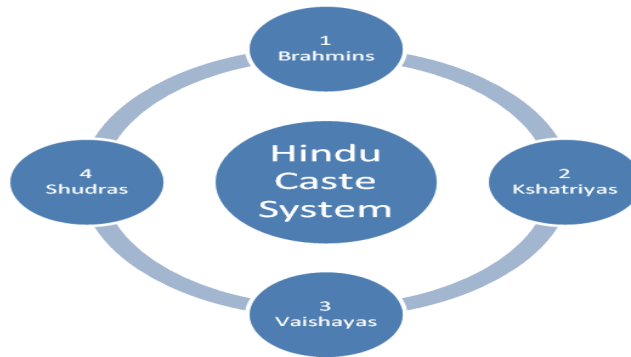


Figure 1: Class Distinction in Hindu Religion<sup>1</sup>

This figure shows the *Hindu* caste system that exists in Indian society where *Brahmins* stand high, then comes *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas* and *Shudras* and the *Dalits* are considered the lowest community. The *Harijans* or *Bhangis* belong to the *Dalit* community and people having high caste consider them ‘untouchable’ in society. This is related to Bakha’s waiting since this abominable caste system makes him outcast from other communities and he wants the termination of it. It is a matter of great concern and agony for him since he is deprived repeatedly by others even in his very own religious association. Bakha utters with sorrow “Posh, posh, sweeper coming. The undertone, ‘Untouchable, Untouchable,’ was in his heart; the warning shout, ‘Posh, posh, sweeper coming!’” (Anand 44). He waits and wants the consummation of ‘untouchability’ that is why the words ‘posh’ and ‘untouchable’ are so important here as these words reveal the inner agony of Bakha.

### Universality of Waiting

Anand’s Bakha sounds like an Indian Hindu name and Beckett’s Estragon and Vladimir sound like French and Russian names respectively. Beckett’s other two significant characters Lucky and Pozzo resemble English and Italian names respectively. Thus it can be argued that all these characters portray the general human condition across the planet. Bakha, a sweeper of the lower caste, is the victim of the Indian caste system because of the existing class distinction. This social system makes Bakha a colonized psyche where he is fascinated by western culture ignoring his own identity. Bakha is waiting to get rid of his lower-class identity and his waiting is for a new identity where there is no class consciousness,

<sup>1</sup> Figure 1: The Hindu Caste System

racism, and hatred in the society. In the text, it is presented that he is unable to play with everyone, incapable of eating proper food, and going to school because he is poor and untouchable. Bakha's dream is social equality where he could get that opportunity to enjoy his life to the fullest like others. These characters remind us of the wretched condition of millions of children and people of Syria, Palestine and African countries who are suffering from malnutrition due to scarcity of food and waiting for a better tomorrow.

In *Waiting for Godot*, Vladimir and Estragon wait for an unknown thing or person who can save them and make an end of their tormenting waiting. These two characters are jobless, purposeless and they are static in a particular situation. This stagnant condition is the reason for their sufferings as they have no food for survival and destination of life. Vladimir and Estragon are also traumatized and without any sense of belongingness, they just pass their time with lots of meaningless thoughts with the expectation of a blissful life. On the other hand, Bakha is a working boy whose work has no recognition in Indian racist society as sweeping is considered as insignificant work. Bakha is a character in pre-independent India when people are waiting and longing for an independent nation. Childs and Williams talk about the Indian people's longing and waiting for independence and the importance of 'the non-violent forms of Gandhian satyagraha' that combine all classes of people of Indian society irrespective of race, religion, and culture (28). It reveals and intensifies people's longing for Independence, *Swaraj*<sup>1</sup>. So, the motif of Anand's and Beckett's characters is the same and that is waiting, waiting to get relief from their present bitter condition. All three characters suffer from identity dilemmas and existential crises. Thus, in both texts, the context of pre and post-World Wars is the same. Beckett's characters are waiting for salvation and Anand's character Bakha is waiting for social equality.

The Indian oppressed people of all walks wanted to be relieved from British colonial rule and emancipation was their dream and subject of waiting. In 1947, India got independence, and then maybe another kind of desire and longing started to rise among people including waiting to get rid of neo-colonialism. During WWI and WWII, people's longing was to stop the war and destruction. This very scenario has been meticulously represented in Beckett's characterization. After the two World Wars, the world entered into a Cold War and people then longed for the end of the Cold War. In postmodern time, people are now encountering wars, conflicts, and violence like the Middle East crisis, Syria crisis, Rohingya crisis, and many more. People now are waiting for the end of the present crisis like the Rohingya

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1 Liberty, freedom, emancipation

are waiting to go back to Myanmar with fundamental human rights, the people of Kashmir are waiting to get independence and termination of repeated bloodshed. Syria is waiting for constructive politics, Palestine is waiting to get relief from the aggression of Israel and the whole world is now waiting to overcome the global pandemic, Covid-19. Thus, Bakha, Vladimir, and Estragon represent the universal human condition through their characterizations in similar types of contexts where people are longing for salvation and relief from crisis. The wretched people who are the victims of war, conflict, domination, and crisis spend their time like the two tramps of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*.

### **The Expectation for an Omnipotent Power for Salvation**

In both texts, there is the presence of hardships, the portrayal of the persecuted souls who are the victims of some kinds of oppression and maltreatment. There is the significant authority of the whites on the psychology of the natives in Anand's *Untouchable* and again there is the visible and invisible influence of the upper-class people having high caste status on the so-called lower or inferior class in society. Bakha's inner agony is exposed through these lines since he is a victim of cruel social distinction:

All of them abused, abused, abused. Why are we always abused? The santry inspictor and the Sahib that day abused my father. They always abuse us. Because we are sweepers. Because we touch dung. (Anand 43)

There is direct oppression and suffering in the case of Bakha as people ignore him but in the case of Vladimir and Estragon, there is no direct oppression rather a trace of invisible oppression since their waiting for Godot turns into claustrophobic life. The sweeper class of people has no identity in society; they are not even touchable by other people having a high caste. Bakha's waiting is to get 'touch-ability' by others since he belongs to the outcast community where he cannot communicate with the superior community. Bakha expresses his agony by uttering "For them I am a sweeper, sweeper-untouchable! Untouchable! Untouchable! That's the word! Untouchable! I am Untouchable!" (Anand 43). The lower class people have restrictions and regulations to maintain while communicating with the upper class and this signifies the communication gap due to the class system. In *Waiting for Godot*, Vladimir and Estragon's souls are also tormented by some kind of unknown, invisible power that is either domination or salvation. They are spending time on that invisible power but Godot does not come which is the cause of their suffering.



So, they are entangled in a world of nothingness as Estragon says “Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it’s awful!” (Beckett 1.84).

Lack of communication is a conspicuous feature of absurd drama that is observed in the characters of Vladimir and Estragon. They are talking but they are not communicating appropriately since there is fragmented language and repetition of things in their speech as they repeat the words ‘nothing’ and ‘nothingness’. The drama begins with this line “Nothing to be done” (Beckett 1.57) and later Estragon repeats it several times. The two tramps are talking most of the time without effective communication with the ultimate communication gap which is the aftermath of their tormented psychology.

ESTRAGON. I asked you a question.

VLADIMIR. Ah.

ESTRAGON. Did you reply?

VLADIMIR. How’s the carrot?

ESTRAGON. It’s a carrot. (Beckett, 1.56)

They are unable to give proper feedback to each other since one asks a question about one thing but the other answers something different. The communication gap and the inability to use language is a common phenomenon in modern plays. Language and non-communication is a conspicuous feature of the *Theatre of the Absurd*. In the play *The Birthday Party*, Pinter exposes the issue of non-communication through the lines uttered by Stanley “But what I mean is... you know how it is... away from your own...all wrong, of course... I’ll be all right when I get back...but what I mean is...” (34). We observe the fragmentation of language and the failure of communication since nothing is exposed clearly. Similarly, Estragon and Vladimir are not communicating at all, they are just passing time to distract their mind forgetting the existing affliction because they have to wait there for Godot whose existence is in serious doubt. Thus, Bakha waits for someone or something that would make an end of untouchability whereas Vladimir and Estragon wait for Godot who can be either savior or punisher.

### **Things Fall Apart**

Both texts present the picture of the psychological sufferings of the wretched class of the society through the presentation and characterization. The powerful section of the society always wants to establish its authority over the subaltern or the powerless and marginalized people. This conflict and praxis of power are

universal in all nationalities. So, the subaltern class always has to wait for equality, touch-ability, and freedom of speech. To talk about the colonized society Sartre illustrates “Thus Europe has multiplied divisions and oppositions, forged classes and sometimes racisms, attempted by every means to cause and to increase the stratification of the colonized societies” (139). The fact is that these marginalized people are the worst sufferers because of the white man’s so-called established superiority- the superiority of culture, religion, ideology, and everything.

As *Waiting for Godot* is contextualized after the Second World War, the two tramps represent those people who observed the destruction and suffering during wartime. People on earth observed that their familiar world was turning into an unfamiliar planet with the inauspicious arrival of manmade crises like capitalism, individualism, moral degradation, nuclear Holocaust and massive destruction in the World Wars. In the post-war world, they are stuck in psychological trauma being claustrophobic. That is why the two tramps are waiting for Godot believing that s/he can solve their problems and bring prosperity and destination in their lives. The English writers W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, and Matthew Arnold also talked about this conflict and suffering of the modern era in their writings. In the poem “The Second Coming” Yeats utters: “Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold/ Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world” (120). The phrase ‘things fall apart’ signifies the deconstructed society represented in the contemporary world.

In the post-war world, there were death, destruction, sorrows, and sufferings everywhere. People observed massive destruction because of the conflict of power of powerful countries. Many people became alienated as they lost everything during the war. It is transparent from Vladimir’s words, “In an instant, all will vanish and we’ll be alone once more, in the midst of nothingness” (Beckett 2.134). People’s faith in God and religion become diminished because God cannot save them from the danger of war since Nietzsche has mentioned, “God is dead! God is dead!” and

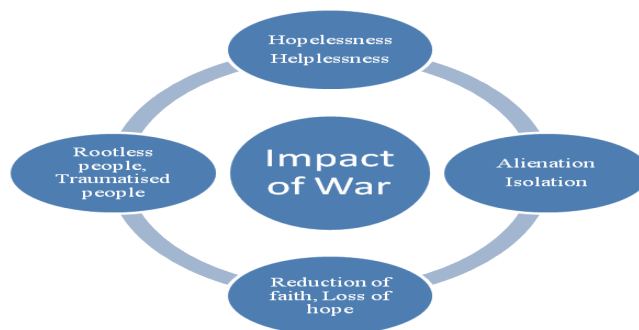


Figure 2: Presentation of Post World War Society

later he repeated, “God is dying! God is dying!” (Sautet 180-181). People need some optimistic power who can rescue them from their sufferings and Godot symbolizes that power. Beckett attempts absurd play to show the emptiness, isolation, alienation of the war victims through the two tramps Vladimir and Estragon who are waiting for that omnipotent power.

Therefore, the waiting of the common people is for getting rid of this kind of ‘horror’. The two tramps symbolize the common people who want to be saved by some kind of unknown savior like Godot. In *Untouchable*, Anand presents the picture of the colonial period where there is colonial prevalence as well as domination among the natives within their same religion as he presents Indian racial society. Social discrimination is important to continue domination as is exposed through the line: “Nothing is more consistent, among us, than racist humanism, since Europeans have only been able to make themselves human beings by creating slaves and monsters” (Sartre 151). Anand’s purpose is to present a group of people who are dominated by the people of the same society and also by the colonizers. So, there is a double layer of domination- by the natives and by the colonizers. A binary opposition has been constructed by the native themselves in their very own community as they cannot tolerate the sweepers who belong to their homeland and another imposition is executed by the colonizers who establish themselves as the superior. So, the agony and trauma of Bakha are the consequences of double colonization. The feeling of inferiority of the colonized is correlative to the European’s feeling of superiority. Beckett presents the situation of the post-colonial period whereas Anand presents the situation of the colonial period in pre-independent India. In both texts, there is a picture of oppression, sufferings, sorrows, inner agony, and psychological trauma resulting from both internal and external forces.

### **A Blending of Pessimism and Optimism**

Irrespective of their caste, creed, color, and nationality, Bakha, Estragon, and Vladimir are the role models of optimism since all of them are longing for a new morning where Bakha is in a prestigious position in the Hindu society, and Estragon and Vladimir get food, clothes, shelter, and a destination. In a word, they will become free from their current traumatic sufferings and get a world of self-fulfillment. Despite being optimistic, their past and present contexts drive them to pessimism, and again they get revitalized. Their pessimism is presented by Estragon’s narration: “Let’s hang ourselves immediately!” (Beckett 1.52) and optimism is by Vladimir’s: “Let’s wait till we know exactly how we stand” (1.53).

Again in his speech, optimism is observed: “Ah Gogo, don’t go on like that. Tomorrow everything will be better” (1.99). In *Untouchable*, being a sweeper, Bakha cannot enjoy the right of education, entrance to the temple and he becomes pessimistic thinking about their condition where they are only ignored and hated by the high caste. But his father Lakha pacifies his anger and handles his pessimism by uttering these words: “We must realize that it is religion which prevents them from touching us” (Anand 74). So, Lakha wants to explain their condition as a result of the religious system. Hindu religion creates this kind of binary and discrimination among different castes as higher and lower. From then Bakha thinks about the religious system and the existence of God. Bakha understands that what is necessary for all of them is to reconstruct the whole system. Though he becomes depressed sometimes for the existing system, there is a hope that the system will change when they will get recognition from all. In the speech of Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup>, Bakha finds some hope: “Well, we must destroy caste; we must destroy the inequalities of birth and unalterable vocations. We must recognize an equality of rights, privileges and opportunities for everyone” (Anand 145).

There is hope for change and a better future for the sweepers who are considered untouchable. There is a Gandhian voice against ‘untouchability’ and Mahatma Gandhi was keen to uplift the ‘untouchables’. He delivered a speech on the need to uproot untouchability from India and it brings tranquility to Bakha’s mind. Gandhi wants to unite all classes of people to fight against British rule; he wants to eradicate hatred, racism from India to get an independent nation. Childs and Williams assert Gandhi’s dream of Indian independence and his ideology regarding the importance of establishing harmony among all classes of people in society (29). Gandhi’s love for an untouchable boy is observed in Narayan’s novel *Waiting for the Mahatma* where he says, the untouchables are the true cleaners. To glorify the worth of the sweepers Gandhi asserts “Now one can believe that the true cleansers of the city live here” (Narayan 52). *Mahatmaji* spoke of untouchability and caste system and Mahatma represents a great soul for whom Bakha is waiting for all these years. Similarly, Vladimir and Estragon are waiting for Godot who may also be a great soul like Mahatma whose arrival will resolve the mystery of their puzzled life.

### **Waiting and Time**

Waiting is very much related to the concept of time. Time is an important aspect

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1 Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is an anti-colonial nationalist, social activist and pioneer of the nonviolent movement.

in the case of an absurd play like *Waiting for Godot* that resembles existentialist literature because it deals not only with existence or identity but also with the momentary and the internal time. The time mentioned in this play is related to the human psychological condition. The eternal waiting of two tramps makes them frustrated and helpless but they cannot but wait. The human trait to pass time is related to their existential dilemma. Beckett believes that human beings reduce their pain of living or existence through habit. 'Tomorrow' is an important word that indicates the near future for which each character waits. Tomorrow connotes new hope, a new beginning, and a new journey with new vitality. Therefore, time is very much related and relevant to the concept of 'waiting'. To wait for an uncertain time is tormenting for the two tramps as observed in their conversation:

VLADIMIR. We'll hang ourselves tomorrow. (Pause.) Unless  
Godot comes.

ESTRAGON. And if he comes?

VLADIMIR. We'll be saved. (Beckett 2.152)

The two tramps firmly believe that they will be saved and rescued from their present hellish condition by the entrance of Godot who represents savior. As in the absurd play, time is not certain; the concept of time for these two tramps is confined in tomorrow:

VLADIMIR. We have to come back tomorrow.

ESTRAGON. What for?

VLADIMIR. To wait for Godot. (2.150)

The messenger boy also delivers the message that Godot will come tomorrow and they wait for this uncertain tomorrow. This tomorrow represents the undying, eternal, and endless time of human life. Everyone has to pass their time by doing something just to prove that they exist. Existentialist writer Albert Camus (1991) also portrays a similar picture in *The Myth of Sisyphus* where he describes the absurd condition of human beings who always wait for 'tomorrow' in this world that is a foreign, strange, and inhuman place. Shakespeare in his play *Macbeth* reveals it excellently through the voice of Macbeth:

To-morrow, and to-morrow and to-morrow,  
... Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
 And then is heard no more, It is a tale  
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury  
 Signifying nothing. (Shakespeare 203-204)

These lines signify the futility of human existence in this universe. People always desire to achieve things and that is why they wait for tomorrow. This tomorrow is continuous and one-day they face death waiting for this tomorrow. The same idea about time sounds repeatedly in these words- “Clocks slay time... time is dead as long as it is being clicked off by little wheels; only when the clock stops does time come to life” (Faulkner 85). Time is futile and sometimes becomes meaningless in the context of human life where people only wait for future happenings. Till death people have to wait for livelihood, better life, social security, job, freedom, liberty, and whatnot!

In *Untouchable*, Bakha also waits for the time when his life will be changed. He tries to copy the English master continuously ignoring his own cultural identity that Bhabha termed as mimicry. Nayar puts his thoughts as “Mimicry is the disciplined imitation of the white man by the native” (170). Similarly, to copy the master Bakha utters the lines, “I will look like a sahib, he had secretly told himself. And I shall walk like them. Just as they do, in twos, with Chota as my companion. But I have no money to buy things” (Anand 3). Thus a sense of mimicry grows in Bakha’s psychology and at the same time, it is a matter of agony for him as he is helpless, poor, and unable to buy things like his master. Childs and Williams talk about Bhabha’s ‘colonial discourse’ where people are in an ambivalent situation to follow the colonial master (124). Bakha tries to follow the *sahibs* and he becomes mesmerized by observing how they talk, walk, eat, wear dresses etc. It has a great impact on the psyche of people like Bakha who is the victim of the social class system as illustrated through the text: “But Bakha was a child of modern India. The clear cut styles of European dress had impressed his naive mind” (Anand 2). Racial domination and class discrimination have a great impact on the psychological growth of the outcastes. It is very queer that there is racial discrimination within the same Hindu community and religion:

The outcastes were not allowed to mount the platform surrounding the well, because if they were ever to draw water from it, the Hindus of the three upper castes would consider the water polluted. (Anand 14)

Bakha suffers from mental agony and trauma thinking about this caste system. He does not want to accept the caste system that creates distinction among people and also brings chaos and hatred in society. He has a great passion for learning but he could not learn because of this class struggle and objectionable racial restriction. As a child, he visualizes everything with tender imagination and thought and he cannot accept the reality that remains in society for long. The sweepers are called “dirty dog,” “son of pig,” “blackman,” “swine,” “dog,” “bitch,” “low caste vermin,” and similar vulgar words. So some issues arise in Bakha’s mind like if it is their fault that they are sweepers and if it is their mistake to be a low caste. All these are the results of the inconsiderate construction of society, religion, and culture. It never brings any good for people or society but becomes the result of psychological sufferings of the downtrodden and low caste people like little Bakha. He always tries to get relief from this kind of work because others always hate his community. He always thinks about dignity, respect, and wants to get rid of humiliation and social discrimination.

In the name of religion, the upper castes establish this kind of discrimination but they manipulate religion for their very own advantage. His sister Sohini is molested by the *Pundit* in the temple and this same pandit Kali Nath shouted saying ‘Polluted! polluted!’ seeing Bakha entering into the temple as the untouchable class has no access to the holy place. It makes Bakha furious and helpless as he could not punish the Pundit for his crime because Bakha is inferior to him and at the same time untouchable. His father warns him saying- “‘No, no, my son, no,’ said Lakha, ‘We can’t do that. They are our superiors’” (Anand 71). Bakha thinks about this hypocrisy of society and like Stephen Dedalus in Joyce’s (1964) *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Bakha thinks about the futility of society, religion, community, language, and everything where he has found no place for him or his class in this vast universe. He wants to break everything as it has no ideal rules; people make rules, customs, and rituals for their very own purpose. He wants to find peace and salvation in religion at a time when a priest tries to convince Bakha about Christianity and the mercy of Jesus Christ. Bakha is ambivalent with a traumatic psyche so it is easy to manipulate him by talking about mercy, peace, harmony, relief etc. Bakha questions equality, God, Christ, religion but he becomes confused as he utters “‘Yes, yes, Sahib, I understand,’ said Bakha eagerly. ‘Yessuh Messih makes no difference between the Brahmin and myself’” (Anand 120). Thus, each character is waiting for something supernatural or benevolent for a change in their fate.

### **The Inception of Industrialization and Waiting**

After industrialization, with the entrance of machinery into the production system manual labor started to be diminished. It triggers the abolishment of the cultural identity of a state or nation as stated here: “In the colonial situation, culture, which is doubly deprived of the support of the nation and the state, falls away and dies” (Fanon 197). At the end of the novel *Untouchable*, a similar picture is observed as there is the possibility of the arrival of machinery which has been presented as the solution to uproot untouchability from society. But the matter is whether the profession of sweeping has gained any respect or identity as other professions or not. It is a question of the cultural identity of a particular community that has been neglected due to the indifference and hatred of the people.

Bakha's agony is not for changing the nature of his profession with the entrance of machinery but for a respectful identity and an end to the existing social racism. Nayar describes the race as a ‘marker of difference’ that is responsible to create ‘slavery, exploitation, and death’ (222). The problem is the existing social racism but the solution has been presented through machine production and the application of new machinery. It has destroyed the necessity of manual labor for human beings. Lane explains the picture of pre and post-industrialized society where after industrialization people get detached from manual labor forgetting the use of tools that were used in manual labor earlier (73). So in the industrial period, lots of modern instruments have been invented to make human life luxurious and comfortable but those do not bring any prestigious change for the lower class people who always seek better identity and approval or acceptability in society. According to Lane:

What this means is that human beings in industrialized capitalist nations no longer understand their “social relations”, which were stable within older societies. Neither do human beings consider themselves as subjects given meaning by the tools they use at work- as did, according to Marxist, the craftsperson in pre-industrialized society. (69)

Modern machinery could not help to bring or establish social harmony rather creates social isolation and discrimination. Despite these truths, Bakha becomes happy with the hope of changing his fate listening to the words of Mahatma:

When the sweepers change their profession, they will no longer remain



untouchables...Then the sweepers can be free from the stigma of untouchability and assume the dignity of status that is their right as useful members of a casteless and classless society. (Anand 146)

Besides, in *Waiting for Godot*, two helpless, purposeless tramps are the witnesses and victims of war. The question 'who can save us?' becomes stuck in their mind. Godot signifies that savior; s/he might be some hope of prosperity, diversity, mobility, salvation, regeneration, and vitality. Being in the middle of the valley of death and decay, with some new hope and belief they just wait there whatever happens to them. Everything becomes meaningless, illogical to them in a post-war atmosphere, only emptiness and nothingness remain. It becomes transparent from Vladimir's words: "In an instant, all will vanish and we'll be alone once more, in the midst of nothingness" (Beckett 2.134). War evokes death and destruction that remain in the psyche of the people to make them traumatized. They become alienated from their work and now they are waiting for a new life with a new future where they can start again with new enthusiasm being saved by someone like Godot or Mahatma. Two World Wars symbolize the failure of reason, logic of the modern world and the breakdown of grand narratives. The two tramps still wait for that unacknowledged Godot who remains invisible until the end of the play. The two tramps continue their waiting for him/her:

VLADIMIR. Well? Shall we go?

ESTRAGON. Yes, let's go.

They do not move. (Beckett 1.100 & 2.152)

They are standing there with the belief in mind that 'Godot will come tomorrow' and without this hope, they cannot exist and everyone in this uncertain universe lives with hope.

## Conclusion

It can be asserted that there is consonance in both texts that deal with waiting, a common phenomenon of every human being. The novel *Untouchable* ends with the prospect of scientific development and the ultimate message is that the inception of technology and science can eradicate the problems of the sweepers and outcasts. Thus, the rejection of Indian roots and culture is closely intertwined with British colonialism. Bakha is not the only Indian fascinated by English superiority and culture; it is the authentic picture of all colonized people. At the end of the novel,

it has been suggested that the European ‘machine’ might be the path of salvation and freedom for the “untouchables.” It also shows the paradigm shift of agricultural society to modern technological and industrial society highlighting the rejection of Indian heritage and their way of clearing waste replaced by the European and modern way of flushing system. But the question is the professional identity of the sweepers whether or not they will get proper respect and identity in society. Maybe their waiting remains as usual but in a different way. Likewise, in *Waiting for Godot*, Vladimir and Estragon’s ‘waiting for Godot’ does not come to an end. They suffer from physical as well as psychological quandary being stuck in a crucial situation from which they need to be relieved by some omnipotent and supernatural power. Therefore, the three characters wait until the end of both texts. It is questionable and uncertain whether they continue waiting until death or it comes to an end during their lifetime. This waiting signifies the waiting of humankind for something in their lifetime. From birth to death, everyone has to go through this waiting and longing for something. Waiting is the ultimate essence of human life; people always pass their time through this continuous process of waiting. Whatever happens, good or bad, happy or sad, people will start waiting again for some new destination with the expectation of a certain life. The three characters Bakha, Vladimir, and Estragon go through this vicious cycle of waiting that replicates the eternal waiting of the *Homo sapiens*.

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