CHAPTER III

THE ROLE OF FATE IN MAKING THE TWO TRAMPS WAIT FOR GODOT

In the course of waiting, Vladimir and Estragon undergo inescapable situation. The situation makes both of them suffer the feeling of absurdity: uncertainty, alienation, frustration, and the dullness of the flow of time. It is amazing that instead of running away from their condition, they are still persistent to wait for Godot. Do they have any desire to get rid of that condition? I believe they do but their fate does not allow them.

We cannot underestimate this factor called Fate. Fate has an important role in stirring the course of the story. It is not only a force that works outside but also

opposing the central figures. Unfortunately, in most tragic plays, Fate always gains victory over human's motivation to free himself out of it. Such kind of theme is not only embodied in a traditional play for instance Oedipus Rex, but also in a modern one like Waiting for Godot. It is strange indeed that amidst man's declaration of his ability in controlling his fate, Beckett confirms through his play that Fate does not want to lose its grip toward human being. No wonder that Jeanette Dodds Ferreira-Ross in her analysis asserts that the tramps' confined lives are caused by "unknowable fate" (59).

In the play, this unknowable fate prevails over human's motivation in two ways. One is through the tramps' failure to escape, the other through revelation embodied in the images of the unfriendly outside world and in the spoken messages. Examining **both** aspects can give us clear pictures and prove that the fate really plays a certain role in the play, that **is** to keep the two tramps waiting. This confirms as well that their fate is to wait for Godot and an acceptance upon their fate is already in itself a better way to face the absurdity.

3.1. The Failures to **Escape**

Absurd situation and unbearable catastrophe created by the act of waiting definitely raise human desire to take some steps to escape. Vladimir and Estragon takes—in my thought—two radical steps which represent human's ultimate desire to be free from such kind of calamity. Those steps are: physical escape embodied in their effort of committing suicide, and mental escape in Estragon's sleep. Yet

neither escape is successful. Beckett brings up this failure as the embodiment of Fate's disposition of the tramps.

3.1.1. Physical Escape

For the tramps, especially Estragon, suicide is an effective way to escape from absurdity. Nevertheless, we do not know what they have in mind in taking such action. Because our topic discussion goes to explore how fate prevails over human motivation, naturally at any rate, we should know what their motivation **is.** From that point we can experience their suffering of being victims of fate. It follows that we are able to apprehend their motivation of taking suicide by exploring some notions about suicide.

At least there are two men of letters who bring this idea forward. The first one is a renowned dramatist who intensely dealt with existential problem, Albert Camus. He considers that this life is meaningless, so there is no use of living in it. It's better for human being to commit suicide as an affirmation of life's absurdity. Later, Camus, however, said that it **is** a way taken by a coward though it seems, at a glance, heroic (Weij156). The second one is a Russian prominent novelist Fjodor Mihaljovich Doestoevsky. His idea of suicide is voiced by one of his novel character, Kirilov. By committing suicide, Kirilov wants to overcome man's fear of God and of the world after death. He defends that suicide is not an attempt to annihilate oneself but to annihilate God. Instead of being called, so at least it seems to Camus, a coward, Kirilov praises the one who commits suicide as an absolute hero. This hero wants to prove for all times that God does not exist, so nobody should be afraid of God and of eternity (Hegedus59). It is obvious that, in

any case, there are two possible reasons for committing suicide presented here: absurdity and fear.

So far we have explored dramatist's and novelist's suggestion of suicide. Finally, the turn goes to a poet to give advice of suicide. Unexpectedly the poet is Estragon himself. In the play he acknowledges himself as a poet, so does Vladimir:

> VLADIMIR. You should have been a poet.
>
> ESTRAGON. I was. ***(Gesturetowardhisrags.)*** Isn't that obvious.
>
> (1.9)

Eventhough, either of them comes to the agreement to commit suicide, the idea comes up first from Estragon, not from Vladimir. Hence, I put him in juxtaposition with Camus and Doestoevsky.

To relate to Camus' notion, Estragon comes **up** with the idea of suicide because of the meaningless world he lives in. Suicide is the manifestation of his attempt to escape from absurdity. Before the idea arises, both of them, especially Estragon, have begun to feel the absurdity of their waiting. The state of their conversation clearly exemplifies this. Every time they are engaged in a conversation—in the purpose of passing the time—Estragon feels that there is no conclusion on what they are talking about. Such condition—no-conclusion conversation; no story to tell; and the worse of it is that nothing to be done—brings about the suffering of the dullness of waiting. He is frustrated and tortured in no-meaning atmosphere. His desire to be free from it is echoed frequently,

mostly in the middle of their intense conversation, taking form in a desperate utterance: **"I** am going." Thus, all of them are accumulated in Estragon's suggestion to hang themselves. I discover that the idea always presents itself after they remember their state of waiting, that there is nothing they can do but waiting in which they meet the absurdity of life. Two scenes from the play give examples of it. The first one is when for the first time this idea of suicide arises:

> VLADIMIR. What do we do now?
>
> ESTRAGON. Wait.
>
> VLADIMIR. Yes, but while waiting...
>
> ESTRAGON. What about hanging ourselves. (1. 12)

The next is taken out at the end of Act 1. Here Estragon looks attentively at the tree as if he discovers a killing machine to execute his intention of suicide.

> VLADIMIR. He said that Godot was sure to come to-morrow. ***(Pause.)*** What do you say to that?
>
> ESTRAGON. Then all we have to do is to wait on here. **…**
>
> ESTRAGON. ***(looking at the tree).*** Pity we haven't got a bit of rope. (I.35)

Furthermore. when they come to the decision of committing suicide, they are in the peak of their calamity. In the other word, I dare say that suicide is their resolution over the problem of absurdity. Beckett's disposition of putting the

suicide scene at the end of every act supports this insight. But the significant thing I see in this scene is that it represents Camus' perspective of absurd man, that man in a meaningless world tends to come upon nihilistic view of his deeds and suicide becomes the confirmation of it.

Also to relate to Doestoevsky's idea of suicide, Estragon decision to commit suicide is attributed to his fear. On the one hand, there is a similarity between Kirilov and Estragon. For both of them, suicide is the way to overcome one's fear. But an important question should be settled first. Who **is** the object of Estragon's fear? Unlike Kirilov, Estragon is likely afraid of God and of many things. He does not even dare to touch Lucky for Lucky once attacked him. The most vital object of his fear, however, is Godot. In this case, he has a completely contrast attitude with Vladimir's:

> VLADIMIR. ***(triumphantly).*** It's Godot! At last! Gogo! It's Godot! We're saved! Let,s go and meet him!(he ***drugs Estragon towardthe wings. Estragon resists,*** *pull* ***himselffree, exit right).*** Gogo! Come back! ***(Vladimir runs to extreme left, scans the horizon. Enter Estragon right, he hastens towards Vladimir,falls into his arms.)*** There you are again!
>
> ESTRAGON. I'm in hell. (2. 47)

From this scene. we notice implicitly how, though Godot is not coming at that time, they would anticipate differently. Whereas Vladimir accept Godot's coming as a salvation, Estragon as a curse. That is why Estragon resists Vladimir's

invitation to welcome Godot and runs to hide. His fear of Godot is frankly expressed in his saying: "I am in hell".

On the other hand, if we examine carefully, we would find out that, not only Estragon is different from Vladimir, but also from Kirilov in the way they face the object of their fear. To overcome his fear, Kirilov decides to commit suicide in a sense that he can go to God, the object of his fear, and proves that he has annihilated God and what comes after death. On the contrary, Estragon with his decision to commit suicide, attempts to run away from Godot and to release himself from what comes after Godot's coming. The final part of Act 2 evidently demonstrates this. Before he is carried away by the idea of suicide, there is a conversation between him and Vladimir about the consequence of dropping Godot:

> ESTRAGON. And if we dropped him? ***(Pause).*** If we dropped him?
>
> VLADIMIR. He'd punish us... (2. 59)

In Estragon's pessimistic mind, being punished is what he would get after Godot comes. The reality of the world when Godot is present is nothing else but punishment. This thought of such kind of fear leads him away to think about suicide. From those points of view, meaningless world and fear of Godot, Estragon brings up the idea of suicide as an elusive way.

In executing this idea, however, Estragon fails. By comparing with Kirilov again, one may say that the failure is necessarily attributed to Estragon's

uncertainty. The one who can say such statement about suicide like Kirilov is the one who is certain that God and eternal world do not exist. Meanwhile, so far as Estragon's character is demonstrated troughout the play, he seems uncertain about everything. Estragon has no such kind of Kirilov's belief. But if we take a close look on it, we would discover the fact that his failure is not merely caused by his uncertainty. It is not the significant cause and the failure has nothing to do with the question whether Estragon is certain or not. Actually, the uncertainty is inherited from the destiny that suppress their motivation.

This failure, I faithfully believe, is attributed to the fate in which they live. Recognizing the role of Fate in the failure of their suicide is not easy, but somehow it is marked by two important hints discovered in the play. The first one is the fact that there is a force that works outside, even opposing the central figure as well. The worst of it is that this force is beyond their ability and motivation to fight against it. This can first be traced through the conflict emerging when the suicide is going to be committed. What happens to the tramps is a physical conflict in a sense that there is a struggle between them and physical world, even nature shows hostility to them. The setting of the play apparently describes this conflict. The tree that is about to be used for hanging themselves is a willow on which they comment more like a shrub or a bush **(1.10).** So we can imagine that this kind of tree is not strong enough and easily broken. Besides, how can it hold their weight. Beckett presents this as a sign of a failure. Another physical conflict is when they have neither tools nor ropes to do that. Even though at the end of the play they find the cord to use for suicide, still they cannot use it for it is too short

and not strong enough to hold their body (2. 60). Such obstacles, even only the simple ones, Beckett carefully puts in the play to suggest that the major characters gain no control over their own life. It was nothing else but Fate that has absolute authority over their life.

The second hint, as the force beyond human's control and motivation, is the fact that all efforts taken are likely to fail in the thought. They have not put suicide into practice but it has met a complete failure already in their thought. The failure comes up in their dispute about how they would commit suicide. After the idea of hanging themselves comes to Estragon's mind, they argue toward the question who wants to starts out to do that:

> ESTRAGON. ***(with effort)*** Gogo light—bough not break-Gogo dead. Didi heavy—bough break—Didi alone. Whereas—
>
> VLADIMIR. I hadn't thought **of** that.
>
> ESTRAGON. If it hangs you it'll hang anything.
>
> VLADIMIR. But am I heavier than you?
>
> ESTRAGON. So you tell me. I don't even **know.** There's an even chance. Or nearly.
>
> VLADIMIR. Well? What do **we** do?
>
> ESTRAGON. Don't let's do anything. It's safer. (1. 12)

The dispute reflects two considerations — the things they have in mind — that would prevent them from executing their suicide. So, from the dialog arises a question of a tension between the weight of their bodies and the strength of the tree. This factor is the first thing that is put into their consideration. Theoretically, according to Estragon, this suicide is likely to succeed if Vladimir wants to test the strength of the bough first, as he thinks that Vladimir is heavier than him. Yet, in Vladimir's thought, this idea would not work. He has questioned this idea before: "From a bough? I wouldn't trust it" (1. 12). Later, when Vladimir begins to put into question about his weight, Estragon is in doubt also that it would succeed. The other consideration is put toward the problem of their sense of belonging. This may become the moving moment at that time. Estragon does not agree if he becomes the first one who carries out the suicide. He is worried that Vladimir would fail; as a result, he would die alone. Yet, he is not certain either whether this suicide would succeed if Vladimir starts out first. This is the dilemma faced in Estragon's thought. Eventually, he comes into a deep uncertainty, finally closing their argument in a pathetic conclusion: "Don't let's do anything. It's safer" (1.12).

The same thing happens again while they decide to commit suicide for the second time. This time they have a cord to do that. But it is too short. But these obstacles are solved by Estragon's suggestion to Vladimir to hang on Vladimir's legs in order to reach the cord. But again, Vladimir raises a critical question that deadens their intention of suicide all at once.

ESTRAGON. Wait. there's my belt.

VLADIMIR. It's too short.

ESTRAGON. You could hang on to my legs.

VLADIMIR. And who'd hang on to mine?

ESTRAGON. True.

VLADIMIR. Show me all the same. *(Estragon loosens the cord that holds up his trousers which, much too big for him, fall about his ankles. They look at the cord.)* It might do at a pinch. But is it strong enough?

ESTRAGON. We'll soon see. Here.

They each rake an end of the cord and ***pull.*** *It breaks. They almost fall (2.* **60).**

Vladimir's question ("And who'd hang on to mine?"), like in the previous discussion, reflects his sense of belonging upon Estragon. Because if Vladimir took Estragon's suggestion, he would die alone. For they will be no one who can help Estragon to commit suicide. They would be separated forever. These are all the considerations struggling in their mind. Eventually, they come to a conclusion that the idea of suicide does not work. Their attempt has met failure in their mind. Furthermore, what they have resolved is confirmed through their act of testing the cord. Thus, the cord is brolen. This broken cord indicates that the decision of suicide whenever is put into practice is likely) to fail. It is a vain atttempt.

To conclude this part of discussion, something further should be said about the role of the destiny in the failure of their suicide. We must, undisputedly, acknowledge the power and the authority of Fate toward their life. It penetrates even deeply into their mind. Talking about the mind, the next section will discuss profoundly how powerful Fate's role is in the character's mind.

3.1.2. Mental Escape

Again in this part of discussion we meet with Fate's demonstration in the mind. Mental escape embodies in Estragon's sleep. The fact that Beckett repeated this scene in both acts--Act 1 and Act 2—implies that there is significant points concealed in this sleeping moment. Actually there are four sleeping moments in the play-one in Act 1 and three in Act 2—but I take only two of them because in these parts we clearly ***see*** how Fate prevails over Estragon's motivation to escape. It is not his act of sleeping that matters much. Sleep is only a common activity. Something, however, that we should give a deeper thought is what lies behind his sleep; what happens during his sleeping period; or what kind of experience he gets in his sleep. Sleeping is a physical activity but if those questions arise, we would undisputedly deal with such that it belongs to mental activity, which is associated with mind, soul and dream, like Arthur Adamov said that dream is "the great silent movement ofthe soul through the night" (qtd. in Esslin 49).

Concerning those matters above, Estragon always gets a dream in his sleeping moment and the dream we are likely to discuss is not the good one. The first thing which calls into our consideration is that, despite the fact that it is a bad

dream, Estragon uses this as an escape from absurdity. Into the mind Estragon seeks an escape. Beckett seems to present Estragon as a representation of the surrealists in the way they face the absurdity. Thus, in this section we are going to analyze further about dream as an escapist way. In doing so, we can see how Fate penetrates into Estragon's dream and then sends him back to his former absurd reality with its "metaphysical anguish" (Esslin xix).

Something should be said about the relation between his feeling of absurdity and his sleep. If we examine carefully, in both acts, before Estragon's sleeping moment there are significant dialogs that state their absurd condition. And the dialogs, either in Act 1 or in Act 2, have the same and precise construction which I believe that Beckett deliberately arranges those in such a way in to emphasize their importance of Estragon's sleeping.

In Act I :

> ESTRAGON. Charming spot. ***(He turns, advances to front, halts facing auditorium.)*** lnspiring prospects. *(He* ***turns to Vladimir.)***
>
> Let's go.
>
> VLADIMIR. We can't
>
> ESTRAGON. Why not?
>
> VLADIMIR. We're waiting for Godot.
>
> ESTRAGON. ***(despairingly).***Ah! ***(Pause.)***... (1.10)

In Act 2:

> ESTRAGON. ***(having*** *tried* ***in vain*** *to* ***work it*** *our)* I'm tired!
>
> *(Pause.)*Let's go.

VLADIMIR. We can't

ESTRAGON. Why not?

VLADIMIR. We're waiting for Godot.

ESTRAGON. Ah! *(Pause. **Despairing.)** ...* (2. 44)

Both dialogs begin with Estragon's suggestion to go, but they can't because they are waiting for Godot. Vladimir's answer reminds Estragon that they are destined to wait. That also means to keep staying in their state of absurdity. The answer "we're waiting for Godot" really undermines him and brings about his anguish, "Ah! (Pause. Despairing)". So, amidst that catastrophe—being tied to Godot, no opportunity to move—what Estragon can do but release himself into his dream. In his dream he thinks that he is able to break his bond from Godot, or to be precise, to absurdity.

Yet before Estragon comes up with his idea of sleeping, there is still a process—starting from above dialog—in which this feeling of absurdity accumulates and then leads him to his desire to go asleep. In Act 1, there is a dispute between Estragon and Vladimir which denies certainty. They argue about the exact place and time they are supposed to meet Godot. Since place and time are always the vital elements of universe, what they dispute about is symbolically an'attack on the certainty in universe. The dispute brings out the idea that every element in this universe is not certain actually. The idea of this uncertain universe is enough to make Estragon suffer the absurdity around him and then cries: "Let's stop talking ***for*** a minute, do you mind?" (1.11). Thus he falls asleep immediately.

The accumulation of absurdity is much more obvious in Act 2. On the contrary, there is no dispute like that in Act 1, only Vladimir's attempt to ease Estragon's suffering. This is just an attempt, like expressed by Estragon, to give them impression that they exist. I call these parts as "food" and "foot" moments. In the first place, in the food moment, realizing Estragon's despair of being tied to Godot, Vladimir tries to cheer him up by offering raddish. Estragon rejects it because he prefers carrot. Then, he intends to go and to get a carrot but strangely enough he still sticks to his place. We can see how absurd this foot moment is. It intrigues Vladimir with awareness of the meaninglessness and expressed it: "This is becoming really insignificant" (2. **44).** Surprisingly Estragon answers: "Not enough" (2. 44). This answer implies that for Estragon this food moment is not enough to get him to feel the absurdity. Then, comes the foot moment in which Vladimir offers Estragon to try the boots. By trying the boots, Vladimir has intention at least to cure Estragon's despair. Estragon accepts Vladimir's appeal but later he feels there is no use to do it. Unfortunately, it only makes his despair become greater. Finally, this foot moment tragically ends in Estragon's disgust: "Enough!" (2.45). His disgust reflects his awareness that what he has done so far is purposeless and absurd. From these two moments I want to point out that there is a gradual change of despair and anguish triggered by his absurd situation. This is clearly expressed in his saying "not enough" and then later "enough". Furthermore, we can see that, in any case, this" food and foot" moment is only physical activities by nature. These physical efforts are not able to satisfy

Estragon's desire to rescue himself from this calamity. He, therefore, seeks an escape into the mind.

Estragon's escape through his dream is involuntarily concluded in Vladimir's comment while observing his sleeping. "The air is full of our cries…he is sleeping, he knows nothing, let him sleep on" (2. 58). I agree with Martin Esslin when he analyzed this comment that Vladimir is aware of the full horror of the human condition (Esslin, **24).** In more specific way, when Vladimir says: "the world is full of our cries", he is aware the horror felt by Esrtragon—the horror caused by the absurdity of the universe—and there is no place unto which he may go. But he can do nothing for Estragon who is dying of this condition. Therefore, Vladimir lets him asleep and wander in his dream. This means that Vladimir begins to appreciate Estragon's elusive endeavor. Dream is probably the best escape for Estragon.

But is it true that dream is the best realm to go? At least for a while, Estragon thinks it so. Somehow, as what happens to their attempt of suicide, Fate never lets him easily flee. There is always unknowable force prevailing over these main characters' motivation. Noticing this tendency as usual, Fate has a mean to fail this escape ***so*** that, as a disclosed omen, they realize their fate is nothing else but to wait for Godot and to submit peacefully to their absurd condition.

Here, in this play, Fate demonstrates its effective mean to show its superiority over human's intention, that is by nightmare. In his writing of "Absurd Drama and Religion", John Weightman implies in the first place that Beckett found his salvation in dream. Yet, in other part of his writing he also points out

that Beckett was even deeply lost in nightmare which he mentions as "the dark night of the soul" (261). If we applied what happens to Beckett to his character, Estragon, we are able to see clearly what happens to Estragon in his sleep. For Estragon, dream is hopefully a way to find his salvation. He is likely to experience what Adamov mentions previously as "the great silent movement of the soul". Unfortunately, what he gets is horrible experience. This silent movement of the soul plunges him into the dark side of the soul and he gets stuck in it. Estragon's escape ends in static state of his dream. If Sigmund Freud had read the play he would have approved the fact for he insisted that even bad dreams have a point (Styan 53). This apparently brings him back into his mental anguish again. I assume that at this point, borrowing Poutney's term, the deep reality of Beckett, which is negative, is revealed (43).

This strange reality is actually a source of pain and sorrow. Weightman exposes surrealists' belief that dream is -- a valid revelation **of** the truth **of** the unconscious, or of super-reality" (259). Yet, Estragon's nightmare makes clear to us that the truth in dream is that which discloses the absurd realm. The most important elements of absurdity that are clearly identified in nightmare are confusion and uncertainty. Fernando Arrabal, an absurd dramatist who is intensely obsessed with nightmare, describes what it is like. He depicts that everything seems "contradictory, inexplicable, unexpected, interchangeable" (Cohn, **30).** In short, this realm is such that it represents confusion and uncertainty. Furthermore, he claims that such a condition is a realistic one. From this point we can make an inference that there is no longer any barriers between the reality of dream and the

reality of life. Both are the places in which absurdity presents. This truth is supported by Vladimir's comment while contemplating over his whole condition of waiting. His commentary reveals that he has difficulty to differentiate, which one is the reality of life and which one is the reality of dream, "Was I sleeping, while the others suffered. Am I sleeping now?" (2. ***58).*** He feels the presence of absurdity in these two realities. Ionesco feels the same way too. He concludes his contemplation about the universe by saying that the substance of the world is dreamlike. According to him, what makes this universe is identical with dream is because this universe becomes "useless, senseless, and impossible". These are traits of absurdity. So, considering Estragon's case, we would find out that what happens to him can be said absolutely tragic. He intends to rescue himself into his dream, in fact, as he gets there, he is "restored to the horror of his situation" **.(1.11).**

Nightmare is a demonstration **of** what Fate can do to undermine human's motivation, and yet Fate does more than that. If we take a closer **look** at Estragon's nightmare, we would find out that there is a growing intensity in it. To begin with, we can observe this in the way Estragon responds upon his nightmare. In Act 1, he wakes up with **a** start. In Act 2 he does the same thing but wildly, even with a jump. It shows that his nightmare is more horrible than the previous one. Moreover, in Act I, he starts up not solely because of his nightmare. Vladimir's attempt to awaken him contributes to this also. In Act 2, his nightmare is so intensified that he wakes with a start by himself without any interference from Vladimir. In fact, Vladimir becomes a good helper for Estragon by

comforting him. Next, eventhough we don't know exactly what nightmare Estragon gets in Act 1, still we can trace this growing intensity through analyzing his nightmare in Act 2. He dreams of falling. It symbolizes something that represents his fall into the abyss of his absurd condition. Not only he falls asleep but also he falls deeply into the dark night of the soul and meets face to face with absurdity. He can't help himself. He needs others to help him. This is the reason that Vladimir stands beside Estragon. He is always a good helper for him by waking him up and by comforting him.

All of these concerning with Estragon's nightmare are evidences that Fate does not allow them to run away from absurdity. There is no place to find their refuge from their horrible fate, even into dream, as believed by surrealists. Through this play Beckett develops his own view toward absurdity. Frederick J. Hoffman says that Proust's hero rescues himself within the memory and imagination, Doestoevsky's rescues within the mirror of the self., but Beckett's hero can do nothing else but facing the absurdity (Hoffman, ***86)***.

3.2. Revelation

In the previous discussion, we are presented with the main character's yearning to escape. In this discussion, still we are dealing with their effort to escape which is no longer related with death or dream but with place alone. They intend to escape to another place by giving up their waiting, leaving their appointment with Godot. As usual Fate always prevails over their intention. In this respect, Fate hinders them from going by displaying some revelations. John

Weightman says that Waiting for Godot is a description of "human expectation of some ultimate revelation" (259). It seems that through this revelation fate delivers its message more clearly than before. Through this sort of way, Fate demands the tramps to stick to the roadside until the night comes just for waiting for Godot.

In the play, it is described that there are obstacles that hinder them from getting this revelation. That the obstacles arise is attributed to the character themselves. They **look** like, as Weightman calls then, "a motionless pilgrim" or characters who are "rooted to the spot; instead of going along the road, they wait for the road to bring something to them" (262). Thus, because of that, it **is** obvious that something that should be brought to them is revelation. The next obstacle is attributed to the place itself conditioned by their destiny. According to John Fletcher, in most of his works Beckett applies a strategy ***so*** that his characters stand face to face with Fate. This strategy is by alienating his characters in the setting presented (271). What happens to Vladimir and Estragon is like that. They are trapped in their own setting. They cannot just **go** out to seek that revelation. It needs something or some one that can bring forward the revelation to them. Though the place where they wait is an open road, still it is an impasse. It **is** in accordance with their tragic destiny, as the tragic one is represented by a closed space that imprisons the characters (Issacharoff192). Robinson comments that Waiting for Godot's setting is a "zone approaching boundlessness, but remaining endlessly a boundary" (2 16). But again, here Beckett's ingenuity is tested in the play. By placing the character in an open road, he has created a certain kind of

setting which, even essentially a closed space, gives a possibility for a revelation to penetrate into it.

I focus however on the way Fate communicates its message to the main characters. I assume it is done gradually. Unlike other forms of literature, "drama seems to demand more gradual revelation" (Cohn 37). Through my observation, I dare to point out two ways: first, that it is communicated by giving images of unfriendly outside world; second, through the messages delivered implicitly by Pozzo and the boy messengers. By analyzing these we would truly perceive the role of Fate in making them remain in their waiting.

3.2.1 The Images of the Unfriendly Outside World

One thing that should be considered here is that Fate seems to condition the outer world in such a way that the tramps would give up their intention of leaving the place—an open road by a tree and a low mound. This is done so by presenting an image of such hostile outer world, the same image which is concluded in Hamm's saying in End Game, "out of here, it's death" (Beckett 1060). But behind this deadly condition outside, there lies an essential fact that the world outside is more absurd than the place they stay for waiting. In this respect, this image is imposed to them so they get an idea that there is no good out there. Their place to wait is still a better place to stay as long as they do their main job, waiting for Godot. This unfriendly situation is shown in Estragon's being beaten outside by people. In the moment of waiting, he looks as if he finds a refugee and a resting place in the roadside with its low mound. Beckett indicates this through

Estragon's habit of sleeping on the mound. But the recurrent incidents that happen to Estragon are not enough to disclose the cruel situation outside. It needs more revelation to inform them. In doing so, Fate presents other characters before them for, as told by Charles R. Lyons, "they will generate substantive images that inform major characters' consciousness" (36-7).

Something interesting to be said here is that fate presents those characters in their worse condition. We may wonder what the purpose of it. We may find the answer if we refer for a while to Albert Camus's Caligula. In informing his people about the absurd world, Caligula applies violence, suppressing them to their worse and deadly condition in a favor of teaching them to apprehend the surrounding world which is absurd. So does Fate in Waiting for Godot. The purpose is the same, to make Vladimir and Estragon realize that outside world is deadly and absurd. For that matter, Fate applies this worse condition to **Pozzo, Lucky** and the boy messengers.

Fate employs Pozzo and Lucky as victims. The easiest way to analyze this is by comparing their condition in Act 1 and Act 2, so that we see the difference — whether they become worse or not. In Act 1, they are still in their good and healthy conditions; Pozzo has good eyes and Lucky marvelously demonstrates his long speech. In this act also we cannot help seeing Pozzo's pride and optimism as he boasts, "Do I look like a man that can be made to suffer?" (Waiting for Godot 1.23). Nevertheless, in Act 2, after they leave Vadimir and Estragon and go to the outside world, something has changed them mysteriously. I consider that their changed condition is caused by Fate's penetration toward them outside. The

absurd world outside has made their condition worse than before. It is depicted that, in the second meeting with Vladimir and Estragon, Pozzo is surprisingly blind. We can also see an evidence how Lucky who has an amazing ability to give long speech becomes dumb. His tirade turns into a complete silence. Moreover, Pozzo's optimism changes into somewhat of discouragement. He no longer can boast that something bad would not happen to him, but he becomes the one who begs for help. Proud Pozzo falls to the ground and is not able to get up by himself. The same thing happens to the boy messengers; the second boy coming at the end of Act 2 informs Vladimir that his brother, the first boy who came to him yesterday is sick right now. The second boy himself was being beaten by Godot while the first boy came to the tramps. And the boys' sufferings happen outside. **All** of these can be evidences that the world outside is deadly. This knowledge informs that if Vladimir and Estragon were outside, they would suffer the same sort of situation. The roadside, their place of waiting is perhaps still the best place to protect them from nasty change. And this insight begins to be apprehended by them, "Very likely, they all change. Only we can't'' (Waiting for Godot 2.32).

In addition, it is much more important to state that their worse condition **is** likely to depict the absurdity of the world outside. If we take a close look, Pozzo's blindness signifies more than just a physical defect. Before he is blind, he can state firmly his relation with Lucky, as a master and a slave. At the moment of their arrival, Pozzo drives Lucky by means of a rope passed round his neck as if he drives a horse (1.15). In this sense, he still can demonstrate his master-like attitude. But because of his blindness, this somewhat fixed position is reversed.

We cannot help wondering to see, at their arrival in Act 2, that it is Lucky, though Pozzo walks before him, who drives Pozzo (2. **49).** A slave leads his master. Their master-slave relationship has broken in a reversed order. The same reverse also happens to the boy messenger. When Vladimir has a conversation with the first boy, Vladimir notices from him, that he who minds the goat is not beaten by Godot; on the contrary, his brother, the second boy who minds the sheep is beaten. In this sense, there is a reverse. James E. Robinson considers this as "a reverse parody of Christ's judgement in Matthew 25:31-46"(217). In this parable, Christ sets the sheep on his right hand and the goats on the left. He bestows the inheritance of the Kingdoms of Heaven and eternal life upon the sheep. But he sends the goats to hell, to suffer everlasting punishment. So what can we infer from these reversed situations? In fact, Fate wants to show that what happens outside is absurd. Everything outside is in a reversed process and is likely turned upside down. They are often in a contradictory and mostly confusing. All of these aspects are naturally the characteristics of absurd realm described previously by Fernando Arrabal.

All that happen to Pozzo, Lucky, and the boys more clearly exemplify the role of Fate toward them. In the other words, absurd fate embodies in **Pozzo's,** Lucky's and the boys' condition. In Pozzo's and Lucky's case they got this absurd symptom from their wandering outside. However, since Sophocles once said, "man is not merely the sum of his acts, but one links in a spiritual chain" (qtd. In Baxter 55-6), I believe that what happens to Pozzo and Lucky is not merely the sum of their acts either. I don't think that their wandering should be blamed for

this. It is linked with a "spiritual chain," that is Fate. Fate deliberately treats them in such a way. *So* does Fate to the boy messengers. What happens to them is merely related to the force outside which is beyond human's control and motivation. Only Fate can do such an authoritative game arbitrarily. Nothing else!

These things are conditioned in such a way in a purpose of giving an impression to Vladimir and Estragon so that they would have much to say about the outer world: deadly, unfriendly, cruel, contradictory, reversed, full of confusion and most importantly, absurd. Anyway I give my deepest concern to Pozzo, Lucky, and the boy messengers for they are willing to present themselves as martyrs. Borrowing Kay M. Baxter's comment of Lucky, I dare to say that through their suffering there is an attempt to communicate meaning (19). The meaning is that as long as Vladimir and Estragon are under compulsion of waiting, there is no place where they can go without dying. To deaden their intention of leaving, however, Fate does much more than making other characters become martyrs.

3.2.2. The Message **of** the Tramps' True Fate

After the tramps realize that they cannot leave their place, then, Fate has them notice vividly what their destiny is. For that matter, Fate needs somewhat spoken words to be delivered. Someone is needed to reveal this out of his tongue. In this sense, Pozzo inevitably becomes Fate's spokesman.

As a spokesman, Pozzo has a prophet-like figure. One obvious trait of this is his relation with Fate itself. On an occasion Pozzo says: "I woke up one fine

day as blind as Fortune" (2. 55). This statement suggests that Pozzo has at any rate an affiliation with Fortune or Fate. Furthermore, his blindness, as told in the previous discussion, is not ordinarily a physical defect. For me, it is much more likely to emphasize its connection with Fate. The explanation is like this. If a prophet is blind, it is natural since Fate is also blind. His blindness symbolizes Fate's blindness. We know that Fate plays a game of chance. Fate is like a thief. It comes anytime, anywhere, choosing its victim randomly. Its decisive act is inexplicable, unreasonable, and again most of all, absurd. Fate's blindness, as represented by Pozzo's blindness, signifies all those attributes.

Another trait of his prophet-like figure is apparent also in the way he calls his audience's attention to his explanation. Every time he wants to explain something important to Vladimir and Estragon, he acts like a prophet, though I suppose the clumsy one, sermonizing to his faithful audience. There are two events that indicate his prophet-like character.

The first events:

> POZZO. Good is everybody ready? Is everybody looking at me? ***(He** looks **at Lucky, jerks the rope. Lucky raises his head.)*** Will you look at me, pig! ***(Lucky** looks **at him.)*** Good. ***(He puts the pipe in his pocket, takes** out **a little vaporizer and sprays his throat, puts back the vaporizer** in **his pocket.)*** I am ready. Is everybody listening? Is everybody ready? … If we all speak at once we'll never get anywhere. (1. 20)

If we observed the events, we would discover a pattern here. The pattern develops Pozzo's prophet-like character: spraying his vaporizer before speaking; jerking the rope to call Lucky's attention; and building his narcissistic attitude (by summoning his audience to look only at him and to be quiet while he speaks). Pozzo follows this pattern again in the next event when he starts on his seemingly important speech.

> POZZO. Except the firmament. … (Vaporizer) A little attention if you please. ...But be a little more attention, for a pity's sake, otherwise we'll never get anywhere. (He looks at the sky.) Look! (All look at the sky except Lucky who is dozing off again. Pozzo jerks the rope.) Will you look at the sky, pig! (Lucky looks at the sky.) Good, that's enough. (1.24-5)

We discover also that Pozzo repeats the same words such as, "if we all speak at once we'll never get anywhere," or "but be little more attentive, for a pity's sake, otherwise we'll never get anywhere." All of these repetitions tends to give impression that Pozzo is the prophet who carries Fate's message.

Pozzo's prophet-like figure is apparently recognized by the other characters. At least, they frankly think him so. Observing Pozzo's blindness, Estragoninearly thinks that, even blind, Pozzo has a vision about the future, "Perhaps he can see into the future" (2. 54). Responding to this, he admits, "I used to have wonderful sight" (2.54). In Indonesian translation, wonderful sight is translated as "ramalan" meaning prophecy (Beckett, Menunggu Godot 2.220). Again. this is an acknowledgement of Pozzo's quality as a prophet. In addition,

Vladimir and Estragon's attentive attitude when they start listening to Pozzo can be a recognition that Pozzo is a prophet. Here, they listen attentively to Pozzo's explanation as if audiences listened to Jesus' Sermon on the Hill.

> VLADIMIR. Here
>
> ESTRAGON. What it is?
>
> VLADIMIR. He's about to speak.
>
> *Estragon goes over beside Vladimir. Motionless, side by side, they wait. (20)*

As having a prophet-like character, Pozzo naturally carries a message to deliver to Vladimir and Estragon. The message is clear, that they are destined to wait. One of his ways to reveal the message is by giving advice. The message lies behind his advice to the couple. This is one example. Feeling irritated, Vladimir intends to go. **But** lets hear what Pozzo responds, "I hope I'm not driving you away. Wait a little longer, you'll never regret it" (1. 19). This statement reflects that he tries to give suggestion to wait. This is a sort of a revelation. And for the rest of **Act** 1, he keeps on suggesting, stressing the importance of waiting. This can be an effective strategy to disclose the message in a very subtle way. His other advice also contains the message of waiting.

> VLADIMIR. I'm going
>
> POZZO. He can no longer endure my presence. I am perhaps not particularly human, but who cares? *(to Vladimir.)* Think twice before you do anything rash. Suppose you go now while it is still day. … what happens in that case to your appointment with this …

> Godet … Godot … Godin … anyhow you see who I mean, who has your future in his hand … *(at* ***least)*** … your immediate future? **(1.19)**

From the dialogs, it is obvious that he wants to say that waiting is worth doing for on their waiting their future depends.

The same message looks like being disclosed in a form of advice.

> POZZO. You don't feel like going until it does?
>
> ESTRAGON. Well, you see—
>
> POZZO. Why it's very natural, very natural. I myself in your situation, if I had an appointment with a Godin … Godet … Godot … anyhow you see who I mean, I'd wait till it was black night before I gave up. **(1.24)**

This is again Pozzo's suggestion to wait. Something distinct about it is that his strategy to deliver the message. He places himself in their position. He joins with them to endure the futility of waiting. By doing this, he involuntarily convinces them that waiting is worth doing, and at the same time encourages them in their steadfastness. In this sense, he imitates Jesus who is willing to be human just to suffer as human.

Amazingly, Pozzo tries to make them of their fate not only through suggestion, but also through his quietness. What he does is just giving a long speech and then all of a sudden he stops. What is left is only a long stillness. The effect of this speechless moment creates to his audience a feeling of being trapped in utter stillness, waiting for the nest words coming out from Pozzo's tongue, but

nothing to come. The tramps expect something that never comes. This moment actually symbolizes their situation of waiting as well. What Pozzo has done, even looks like a mockery, involuntarily teaches and trains them to be aware of their true fate. We can trace this through their response toward this long silence.

> POZZO. *(who hasn't listened.)* Ah yes! The night. *(He raises his head.)* But be a little more attentive, for pity's sake, otherwise we'll never get anywhere.... That's how it is on this bitch of an earth.
>
> *Long* ***silence.***
>
> ESTRAGON. ***So*** long as one knows.
>
> VLADIMIR. One can bide one's time.
>
> ESTRAGON. One knows what to expect.
>
> VLADIMIR. No further need to worry.
>
> ESTRAGON. Simply wait
>
> VLADIMIR. We're used to it. (1. 25)

"One can bide one's time." This expression adds to Vladimir's understanding of their waiting. This also should add to our understanding that, actually, their object of waiting is not on seeing Godot but on the waiting itself. Vladimir once says, "waiting for … waiting" (2.50). So there is nothing else they should do, according to their fate, but waiting for doing waiting and enduring the futility of waiting. This is their compulsory job and it seems they begin to get used to it. In this sense, Pozzo has succeeded in communicating the message in a very subtle **way.**

Here is also an example of his subtle way in communicating the message:

POZZO. I don't seem to be able ...*(long hesitation)* ... to depart.

ESTRAGON. Such is life. **(1.31)**

Showing his difficulty of departing, *Pozzo* gives an indication that it is a place that binds them. Their place of waiting is still the place they should belong to. Something interesting is that Estragon's response to it. He begins to accept that life should be like that which does not give any possibility for man to be free. Wherever he goes, he is always tied to something. And Estragon begins to learn that his life is tied to Fate. The idea of incapability of leaving because of his fate infects his perception toward life as well.

Unlike in the previous events, in Act 2, Pozzo delivers the message more subtly and in a very distinct way, that is by asking for help. Because of his blindness which also causes him to fall, he is no longer a talkative person. There are only few words coming out from his mouth. The very word uttered once he arrived is "Help". The word alone looks as if a mantra because it opens the gate for the tramp to understand their fate. For the tramps, especially Vladimir, this "help" is a revelation. We may wonder how Pozzo's asking for help can be consider as a revelation. Pozzo's asking for help still has no importance if we relate it with his fall. But try to relate it with Vladimir and Estragon's response after hearing this.

POZZO. Here! Here! Help me up.

VLADIMIR. He can't get up.

ESTRAGON. Let's go

VLADIMIR. We can't

ESTRAGON. Why not?

VLADIMIR. We're waiting for Godot. (2. 50)

Reading this dialog, we can get a picture that at any rate Pozzo's help has an effect on the two tramps. "We 're waiting for Godot." This is the key sentence of their fate. Pozzo's help leads them, especially Vladimir who are considered as a thinker in the play, to have a thought about what their true fate is.

More evidences are demonstrated in another part. Here, Pozzo's help engenders Vladimir's long contemplation about many things, particularly about what their role as human being in the universe.

POZZO. Help!

VLADIMIR. To help him—

ESTRAGON. We help him?

VLADIMIR. In anticipation of some tangible return.

ESTRAGON. And suppose he—

VLADIMIR. Let us not waste our time in idle discourse! ***(Pause. Vehemently.)***Let us do something, while we have the chance! It is not every day that we are needed. Not indeed that we personally are needed. Others would meet the case equally well, if no better. To all mankind they were addressed. those cries for help still ringing in our ears! But at this place, at this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it or not. Let us make the most of it, before it is too late! Let us represent worthily for once the foul

> brood to which a cruel fate consigned us! What do you say? *(Estragonsaysnothing.)* It is true that when with folded arms we weigh the pros and cons we are no less a credit to our species. The tiger bounds to the help of his congeners without the least reflexion, or else he slinks away into the depths of the thickets. But that **is** not the question. What are we doing here, that is the question. And we are blessed in this, that we happen to know the answer. Yes, in this immense confusion one thing alone is clear. We are waiting for Godot to come— *(2.51)*

Apparently this contemplation brings about his full conviction of their fate. After wandering in his self-contemplation, at last he concludes that "one thing alone **is** clear". their roles "in this immense confusion" is waiting for Godot to come **(2. 51).** Still, despite many interruptions, this speech goes on until Vladimir himself finally closes this with his expression of acceptance toward their unbearable fate, ·· We wait. We are bored. No, don't protest, we are bored to death, there's no denying it" (2. 52). Here the expression makes clear that Pozzo's help leads the tramps to the understanding of waiting. Again, for the last time, Pozzo's asking for help demonstrates its effectiveness in making them realize their fate. The same dialog as before is repeated. This repetition **is** a kind of affirmation of their fate of waiting:

> POZZO. Help.
>
> ESTRAGON. Let's go
>
> VLADIMIR. We can't

ESTRAGON. Why not?

VLADIMIR. We are waiting for Godot. (2. 54)

Concerning this, something further can be said about it. We are amazed with the power of Pozzo's help toward them. A paradoxical fact happens in this respect. "Help" as a statement of powerlessness can be a powerful mean to give strength and to encourage those who are in their state of deepest anguish. That's what I mentioned previously that Pozzo has a very distinct quality in delivering the message.

Pozzo has contribution to the clearness of the message, but other important thing should be taken into account as well. If we observe some dialogs while Pozzo is associating with the tramps, we would learn that either Estragon, Vladimir, or Pozzo relates waiting with "night". Let's watch how Estragon gives an explanation of their waiting, -- That's to say **...** you understand **...** the dusk **...** **the** strain **...** waiting **..."** (1. 16); Or see when Pozzo convinces Vladimir that it's no good leaving while evening hasn't come, -- Suppose we go now while it's still a day, for there is no denying it is still a day ..." **(1.19).** Even Vladimir considers night as something to be expected, "Will night never come?" **(1.** 24) This raises a question of the relation between waiting and night. To answer this, I ought to speculate that eventually their waiting, even hopefully ends when Godot arrives, should be undergone in certain length of time every single day. The period of their waiting every day is from dawn till dusk. Pozzo indicates this when he responds to Vladimir's question above, -- Why it's very natural, very natural. I myself in your situation ... I'd wait till it was black night before I gave up ..." (1. 24). In

addition, this is the more secret about the night. When Pozzo presents a matter to be discussed, "What our twilight can do. Shall I tell you ?" **(1.24),** he himself gives a long answer and thus concludes that twilight represents something which is, "pppfff! Finished!", in other words, "It comes to rest" (1. 25). This remarks implies that night is a sign of the end of their waiting in that day. No wonder that night is really expected for it is the time to take a rest from the monotony of waiting. From this discussion we need to shape our insight in such a way so that we are able to consider waiting as a job, not as a kind of recess in which we are doing nothing. We all know that Vladimir and Estragon know that waiting is a kind of job. As they have accomplished their job all day they have rights to take a rest. And for tomorrow in the second act, while resuming waiting, night is still expected. **"Now** we're sure to see the evening out" **(2.49).**

When **we** keep analyzing Vladimir's remarks we would learn that actually in facing his unavoidable fate of waiting, still he has several options. Those options are explored by Vladimir as follows: "waiting for the night", "waiting for Godot", and -- waiting for waiting" **(2.** 50). Another remark even exemplifies his alternatives in his limited fate. "We are waiting for Godot to come … or for night to fall" (2. 51). Here Vladimir has more developed insight toward his fate. If Godot still doesn't come at this day, he would not consider that his waiting all day as vain activity for he can turn his object of waiting from Godot into the night. Since night is surely to come, the tramps can be considered at least to undergo their fate.

Finally, if I take a deep thought upon the relation between the waiting and the night, it seems to me that their job is a kind of a performance. They come to a roadside (as their stage) with a tree and a mound (as the properties) just to perform what waiting is like. Vladimir, when he sees the night is drawing near, also considers this as a performance, "I can assure you it is very near the end of its repertory" (2. 55). In this case, the night functions as a curtain which closes the show.

The last persons presented to bring the message are the boys which appear at the end of their waiting. These two boys, it seems to me, give emphasis to what is already delivered by Pozzo. The first boy nearly the end of first act says, "Mr. Godot told me to tell you he won't come this evening but surely tomorrow" (1.33). This implicitly suggests to us that the absence of Godot at that day somehow reveals to the tramps that waiting is their unavoidable fate. Godot does not come or he perhaps deliberately intends not to come so that they cannot help but to wait. Remarkably Vladimir accepts this treatment as something that should be endured benevolently. And the next day Vladimir, without more explanation from *the* second boy, is clear enough about their true fate of waiting. Unlike in Act 1, it is not necessary for Vladimir to ask many questions anymore. No wonder, as he has learned to accept fate, he responds to the absence of Godot as follows:

> VLADIMIR. You have a message from Mr. Godot.
>
> BOY. Yes, Sir.
>
> VLADIMIR. He won't come this evening.

BOY. No, Sir.

VLADIMIR. But he'll come tomorrow.

BOY. Yes, Sir.

VLADIMIR. Without fail.

BOY. Yes, Sir. (58)

Indeed, this revelation is effective, for not only Vladimir but also Estragon eventually learns to understand and to accept the destiny imposed to him. Near the end of the play, Estragon surprised us with his answer to Pozzo's and Vladimir's questions:

POZZO. .... What is she waiting for?

VLADIMIR. What you waiting for?

ESTRAGON. I'm waiting for Godot. (2.56)

For the first time Estragon says that he is waiting **for** Godot. Before that such statement was a sort of taboo for him. **For** it reminded him of his suffering of undergoing his absurd waiting. **Or** later, in another scene, he renounces his own intention of leaving, "Let's go. We can't. Ah!" From the beginning, Estragon never mentions such statements. Those are always Vladimir's. Perhaps, since, as Ruby Cohn says that "modern heroes" tends to influence his surrounding, Vladimir at any rate influences Estragon so that he is able to utter such statements (Cohn 141). But anyway, Beckett's arrangement of Estragon's statements near the end of the play gives us a conviction that Estragon can accept his fate after the message has been completely revealed to him. Furthermore, his knowledge about his fate and his acceptance upon it apparently can ease his agony. His two last

sleeping moments exemplify this. His sleeps after he has understood his fate cannot be considered as his escape from absurdity like before. For in neither this sleeping moment, he gets a nightmare. In fact, in one of those sleeps, he gets a happy dream: "I was dreaming I was happy" (2. 57). Once he accepts his destiny, he can sleep peacefully without Fate's interference. What happens to Estragon develops an idea that an acceptance upon one's destiny, even the horrible one is already in itself a better way to face the absurdity.

In such play like Waiting for Godot, we have learned so far that the major characters demand revelation to convince themselves of their true fate in this universe. Fate applies several means to affirm this. Fate presents other characters to disclose their fate, either in a form of worse, dying conditions of those characters or through the message delivered implicitly by them. Bakdi Soemanto once comments about the use of these characters. They function as "poetical images" in favor of affirming the true situation of waiting suppressing the major characters (Soemanto xv). In this sense, those characters together become the living confirmations of the tramps' fate. To end our discussion so far I would like to make a list of Fate's roles in making them waiting. They are failed suicide, nightmare, other character's worse condition and the deliverance of the message. **All** of these moments work together and coherently to suggest the tramps' duty in this universe bound by time and space. One thing alone is obvious here that their fate is to undergo their "repertory". What repertory? Waiting for Godot; where? at an open road by a low mound and a tree; when? every day, from dawn till dusk;

how long they'll **keep** waiting? Until Godot's coming; if he never comes? just **keep** on waiting!