

# РОЗДІЛ 5.

## СТИЛІСТИКА ТА ІНТЕРПРЕТАЦІЯ ТЕКСТУ

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### ALLUSION IN S. BECKETT'S PLAYS "WAITING FOR GODOT" AND "ENDGAME"

*This article deals with allusion used by Samuel Beckett in his early plays "Waiting for Godot" and "Endgame". As the main reader of Beckett's plays is an intellectual reader, the central stylistic device is an allusion relying on the reader's profound knowledge of the Bible. The structure of the allusion can be various – from a word or a short phrase to a whole sentence or a passage. Very often Beckettian allusion contains stylistic devices among which are rhetorical questions, parallel constructions, detachment, epithet, metaphor and different graphical means. The function of these stylistic devices is to add expressiveness or colouring, emphasize certain idea, give the author's vision of the problem or reflect his attitude. Except for quotations and characters from the Bible, the texts of the plays are filled with biblical lexicon. The playwright uses not only explicit allusions, when the very name or quote from the Bible is given in the text in its original or slightly modified form, but also implicit allusions, when the reader should take a hint as the idea is given in indirect way. Both plays focus on core Christian values and concepts like sincere repentance, mercy, compassion, hope, salvation, predestination, punishment and sinfulness.*

**Key words:** biblical allusion, explicit, implicit, stylistic devices and biblical lexicon.

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### АЛЮЗИЯ У П'ЕСАХ С. БЕККЕТА «ЧЕКАЮЧИ НА ГОДО» ТА «КІНЕЦЬ ГРИ»

*У статті розглянуто використання С. Беккетом алюзії у своїх ранніх п'єсах «Чекаючи на Годо» та «Кінець Гри». Оскільки основним читачем беккетівських п'єс є читач-інтелектуал, центральним стилістичним прийомом є алюзія, яка розрахована на обізнаності читача у Біблії. У п'єсах, які аналізуються у статті, домінує біблійна алюзія – як експліцитна, так і імпліцитна. Структура алюзії є різноманітною – від одного слова чи короткої фрази до цілого речення. Часто у складі алюзії присутні стилістичні прийоми – риторичне запитання, паралельні конструкції, відокремлення, епітет, морфологічний повтор, метафора та різноманітні графічні засоби. Окрім цитат та образів з Біблії, тексти дуже широко наповнені біблійною лексикою.*

**Ключові слова:** біблійна алюзія, експліцитна, імпліцитна, стилістичні прийоми та біблійна лексика.

As the title suggests, the present article investigates allusion in Beckett's early plays *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*. According to Yu. Skrebnev, allusion is a special variety of metaphor [12]. It is a hint, an indirect reference to something presumably known to the listener/reader, usually from literature, mythology, history, the Bible. Allusion is realized in the text by means of nomination (the word level) and quotation/citation (the phrase/sentence level). The speaker just mentions some detail of what he thinks analogous in fiction/history to the topic discussed, without having to expand on it. It should, nevertheless, be added that the educational level of the listener/reader must be sufficient to recognize the allusion and decode its meaning [7, p. 110]. Allusions, especially quotations (i.e. words/phrases taken from a book, play, etc. and used again by another author), are intertextual elements, they are effective "means of increasing the volume of information in a literary work" [21, p. 152]: they actuate the reader's thesaurus, cause him to recognize the source and correlate the original message with that in the text he is reading at the moment [7, p. 110].

According to certain dictionaries, the term itself appeared approximately in 1540-50s (16; 17; 18) while Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary mentions 1612 [19]. Since then allusion was used by many authors but it became an object of thorough research only in the XX century. Allusion was studied in terms of literary criticism, stylistics and linguoculture by O. Abramova [1], O. Akhmanova [2], I. Giubenet [4], O. Dronova [5], M. Kiose [6], A. Mamaeva [8], L. Mashkova [9], I. Potylitsyna [11], O. Perelomova [10], I. Khrystenko [14; 15], G. Machacek [20], M. Tukaheli [13] and A. Gariffullina [3]. The article is an attempt at analysis of allusions used in the plays *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* focusing on their origin and function. The object of our research is the text of the plays *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*, and the subject of the paper is allusions in the given plays.

The whole play *Waiting for Godot* is built around Biblical allusions. In Act I, Vladimir utters a phrase "Hope deferred maketh the something sick, who said that?" [29, p. 5] which refers to Biblical proverb: *Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life* [22] meaning that the delay of the object hoped for makes everyone grievous, uneasy and sick while

the coming of that which is wished for makes us delighted and brings happiness. Being a representative of the Theatre of the Absurd Samuel Beckett reflects one of the basic ideas of the Theatre of the Absurd in his play – there is no hope because of inevitably futile human efforts. The playwright provides a range of key Christian concepts. For instance, in the same act, Vladimir says to Estragon “*One of the thieves was saved... Suppose we repented*” [29, p. 5] representing a core Christian value – salvation, which is achieved through sincere repentance. Also, the Holy Land mentioned by the vagabonds in *Waiting for Godot* is shown by the author as a kind of paradise, so much attractive and desirable:

*Estragon: I remember the maps of the Holy Land. Coloured they were. Very pretty. The Dead Sea was pale blue. The very look of it made me thirsty. That's where we'll go, I used to say, that's where we'll go for our honeymoon. We'll swim. We'll be happy* [29, p. 6].

Detached descriptive epithets (*coloured* and *very pretty*) at the beginning of the utterance and final repetitive parallel constructions (*we'll go; we'll swim* and *we'll be happy*) emphasize the blissfulness of the Holy Land.

The first Act of the play refers to the image of Christ. Vladimir's query how it is that only one of the four evangelists, St. Mathew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John, speaks about the salvation of a thief being saved, and his statement that only one i.e. St. Luke makes a mention of it whereas, of the other three i.e. St. Mathew, St. Mark and St. John do not make any mention of it whereas St. Mark says that both of the thieves abused Christ, and Vladimir's subsequent reference to the Saviour – all these reveal the author's deep insight into the various incidents in the Bible [23].

*Vladimir: ...how is it that of the four Evangelists only one speaks of a thief being saved. The four of them were there – or thereabouts – and only one speaks of a thief being saved...*

*Estragon: I find this really most extraordinarily interesting.*

*Vladimir: One out of four. Of the other three two don't mention any thieves at all and the third says that both of them abused him.*

*Estragon: Who?*

*Vladimir: What?*

*Estragon: What's all this about? Abused who?*

*Vladimir: The Saviour. [29, pp. 6-7]*

When Pozzo asks Estragon: *What is your name?*, he answers: *Adam* [29, p. 30]. Adam, being the first man created by God and punished for disobedience, represents all the people. The author shows that all his characters are common, ordinary people – God's children inclined to sin. Talking to Estragon and Vladimir, Pozzo also adds: *You are human beings... Of the same species as myself... Made in God's image!* [29, p. 17]. On the next pages Vladimir himself utters: *...all mankind is us, whether we like it or not* [29, p. 72]. The phrase “made in God's image” is a direct reference to words from Genesis: So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. [24].

Other biblical characters mentioned in the play are Cain and Abel – Adam and Eve's first sons. In one of the episodes, Vladimir and Estragon try to remember Pozzo's name:

*Vladimir: I tell you his name is Pozzo.*

*Estragon: We'll soon see. [He reflects.] Abel! Abel!*

*Pozzo: Help!*

*Estragon: Got it in one!*

*Vladimir: I begin to weary of this motif.*

*Estragon: Perhaps the other is called Cain. Cain! Cain!*

*Pozzo: Help!*

*Estragon: He's all humanity [29, p. 76]...*

Through his characters, the author refers to a biblical story about Cain's treacherous murder of Abel. In this context Cain embodies fallen and sinful mankind. Stylistically, the playwright emphasizes the key names through successive repetition.

Throughout the whole play two vagabonds, being hopeless and desperate to see Godot, talk about committing a suicide – hanging themselves:

*Estragon: What about hanging ourselves? [29, p. 11]*

*Estragon: Pity we haven't got a bit of rope... Remind me to bring a bit of rope tomorrow [29, p. 46].*

*Estragon: Why don't we hang ourselves? [29, p. 85]*

*Estragon: You haven't got a bit of rope?... Then we can bring a good bit of rope [29, p. 86]*

With the help of root repetition of the words “hang”, “hanging” along with a repetitively used noun “rope” Samuel Beckett hints at a Biblical statement: Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole” [25]

Despite being desperate and repeating a phrase “*Nothing to be done*” [29, pp. 3, 6, 15] Estragon and Vladimir come to a tree over and over again:

*Estragon: You're sure it was here?*

*Vladimir: What?*

*Estragon: That we were to wait.*

*Vladimir: He said by the tree. [They look at the tree.] [29, p. 8]*

*Silence. Estragon looks attentively at the tree.*

*Vladimir: What do we do now?*

*Estragon: Wait [29, p. 11].*

*Enter Vladimir agitatedly. He halts and looks long at the tree... [29, p. 49]*

The tree, mentioned in characters' dialogue and in author's remark, is a symbol of the Garden of Eden (Paradise) lost by humanity. The tree, alluding to the Garden of Eden, represents hope – all the people hope for salvation. Although the vagabonds are grief-stricken and suicidal, they still expect to meet Godot.

Godot, Estragon and Vladimir have been waiting for, is a direct allusion to God. Firstly, Godot is similar to God in pronunciation. Secondly, according to the play, Godot has a white beard (just like he is shown in the Bible and all the icons):

*Vladimir [softly]: Has he a beard, Mr. Godot?*

*Boy: Yes Sir.*

*Vladimir: Fair or ... [he hesitates]... black?*

*Boy: I think it's white, Sir [29, p. 84].*

Thirdly, Godot, just like God, is invisible to everyone – a boy-messenger is the only one who has seen God. Finally, Godot is similar to God in his function – he can be pitiful (*Estragon: God have pity on me!* [29, p. 69] or *Vladimir: You mean we have him at our mercy?* [29, p. 71]) but at the same time he can punish (*Vladimir: He'd punish us* [29, p. 85]...) or save (*Estragon: And if he comes? // Vladimir: We'll be saved* [29, p. 86].)

At the end of the play Estragon asks: *And if he comes?* and Vladimir answers: *We'll be saved* [29, p. 86]. The question and the answer allude a reader to the main idea of the Bible and all the Christians – God's coming will save all the people.

In general, one can notice numerous words and phrases referring to God and the Bible: save [29, p. 5], repent [29, p. 5], Bible [29, p. 6], Gospel [29, p. 6], our saviour [29, p. 6], hell [29, p. 6], evangelists [29, p. 6], hope [29, p. 11], prayer [29, p. 12], made in God's image [29, p. 17], soul [29, p. 18], endure [29, p. 22], blessings [29, p. 23], suffer [29, p. 28], bless [29, p. 31], divine [29, p. 35], God [29, p. 35], damnation [29, p. 39], Christ [29, p. 45], crucify [29, pp. 27, 45], cross [29, p. 54], God have pity on me [29, p. 69], revenge [29, p. 80], one day we shall die [29, p. 82], mercy [29, p. 84], punish [29, p. 85], curse [29, p. 86].

The play *Endgame* begins with Hamm's words about his pitiable life: *Can there be misery – [he yawns] – loftier than mine?* [29, p. 92]. These words hint at the words from Bible: If only my anguish could be weighed and all my misery be placed on the scales! [<https://biblehub.com/niv/job/6.htm>]. Hamm's only wish is to make his sufferings stop and he utters: *Enough, it's time it ended and yet I hesitate to – [he yawns] – to end. [Yawns.] God, I'm tired, I'd better be off in bed* [29, p. 93]. His exclamation is an echo of Biblical phrase: For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest [27].

As a true Christian, Hamm clearly understands that death awaits everyone, so throughout the whole play he repeats: *"Infinite emptiness will be all around you"* [29, p. 117]; *"There I'll be, in the old shelter, alone against the silence and... [he hesitates] ... the stillness"* [29, p. 142] and *"Then one day, suddenly, it ends, it changes, I don't understand, it dies, or it's me, I don't understand, that either:"* [29, p. 150]. Clov even once asks Hamm: *Do you believe in the life to come?* [29, p. 126] These words about afterlife remind a reader of words from the Bible: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life [28].

An obvious connection with the Bible is traced in Clov's and Hamm's words:

*Hamm: Every man his speciality* [29, p. 98];

*Hamm: We do what we can* [29, p. 99];

*Hamm: What's happening?*

*Clov: Something is taking its course* [29, p. 114].

*Clov: What's the matter with you today?*

*Hamm: I'm taking my course* [29, p. 121].

These words prove that Clov and Hamm, like all Christians, believe in predestination – they accept the idea that human life is predetermined and nothing can change or influence it.

According to the Bible, compassion is one of the key Christian concepts, and every Christian should be compassionate to others. Samuel Beckett expresses this idea in a dialogue between Hamm and Clov:

*Clov: Why I always obey you. Can you explain that to me?*

*Hamm: ...Perhaps it's compassion. [Pause.] A kind of great compassion* [29, p. 147]...

An implicit reference to the Bible can be found in Hamm's words: *Accursed progenitor!* [29, p. 98] when he characterizes his father. The following words from the Book of Job in the Bible come to one's mind: Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, there is a man child conceived. [27].

When Nagg tells Nell a story about an Englishman, who could not get a pair of trousers from a tailor because of constant delays, he alludes to Bible, namely the story about the creation of the world: *God damn you to hell, Sir, no, it's indecent, there are limits! In six days, do you hear me, six days, God made the world. Yes Sir, no less Sir, the WORLD! And you are not bloody well capable of making me a pair of trousers in three months!* [29, p. 107]. Capitalization is used by the author for the sake of irony and produces contrast between six-day creation of the world and three-month making a pair of trousers.

While reading the play a reader definitely sees an allusion to Biblical episode about Noah:

*Hamm: Let's go from here, the two of us! South! You can make a raft and the currents will carry us away, far away...* [29, p. 116]

*Hamm: I once know a madman who thought the end of the world had come. He was a painter and engraver. I had a great fondness for him. I used to go and see him, in the asylum. I'd take him by the hand and drag him to the window. Look! There all the rising corn! And there! Look! The sails of the herring fleet! All the loveliness! (Pause) He'd snatch away his hand and go back into his corner. Appalled. All he had seen was ashes [Pause]. He alone had been spared. [Pause.] Forgotten [Pause]. It appears the case is... was not so... so unusual* [29, pp. 122-123].

According to the Bible flood was sent to earth by God and Noah, being the only one who knew about it, was instructed to build an ark in order to save his family and two of each species of animals. The ark would take Noah "away, far away", as it is mentioned in *Endgame*. In his quote Hamm speaks of "a madman, a painter and an engraver". From the Bible we know that Noah, planning to build a huge ark, was considered a mad man by everyone. The playwright also calls him a painter and an engraver because he himself built and painted the ark.

An interesting thing is that the most often repeated words found in *Endgame* are: punish [29, p. 92]; believe [29, p. 93]; suffer [29, p. 93; 96]; sufferings [29, p. 93]; die [29, pp. 95; 100; 106]; forgive [29, p. 96; 100]; love [29, pp. 96; 101]; death [29, p. 97]; dead [29, pp. 109; 125; 136; 143]; hell [29, p. 110; 118; 124]; resurrected [29, p. 117]; sinner [29, p. 128]; pray [29, p. 131; 152];

God [29, pp. 107; 115; 129; 131; 133]; hope [29, pp. 131; 132; 134]; Christ [29, p. 146]; compassion [29, p. 147] which are closely connected with Bible.

As Beckett's reader is an intellectual, it is impossible to decode the texts of the plays without enough knowledge of the Bible. In both plays by Samuel Beckett there are abundant Biblical allusions – both explicit and implicit ones. The structure of these allusions varies from a word or short phrase to the whole sentence.

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