

P.G SEM III
CC-II
UNIT I

WAITING FOR GODOT
SAMUEL BECKETT

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DR.VANDANA SINGH,ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,P.G. DEPT. OF ENGLISH,MAHARAJA COLLEGE,ARA

BY
VANDANA SINGH
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
P.G DEPT. OF ENGLISH
MAHARAJA COLLEGE, ARA

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SAMUEL BECKETT

Samuel Barclay Beckett was an Irish novelist, playwright, theatre director, and poet, who lived in Paris for most of his adult life and wrote in both English and French. His best work includings waiting for Godot, endgame, unnamable, krap's last tape etc..



What is the Theater of The ABSURD?

- The word “ Absurd” means foolishness , senseless , opposed to reason , something silly and ridiculous
- The “ Theatre of the Absurd” is also known as a “ New Theatre”. “Theater of Absurd” is a term or particular movement started in late 1950s.
- in 1960 Critic Martin Esslin coined the term in his essay . What is the “ Theatre of the Absurd”?

characteristics of the Theater of Absurd

- Meaninglessness of life
- Lack of plot
- Elements of “ Existentialism “
- Nonsense language
- Characters are stereotypical and archetypal
- Importance of Repetition.
- Absurd or unexplained ending
- Comic Scenes
- Different from Traditional drama

Element of Existentialism

Absurd theatre question the existence of man.

Human existence has no meaning and purpose. "The mystery of human existence lies not in just staying alive, but in finding something to live for".

Vladimir: Let's wait and see what he says.

Estragon: Who?

Vladimir: Godot.

Estragon: Good idea.

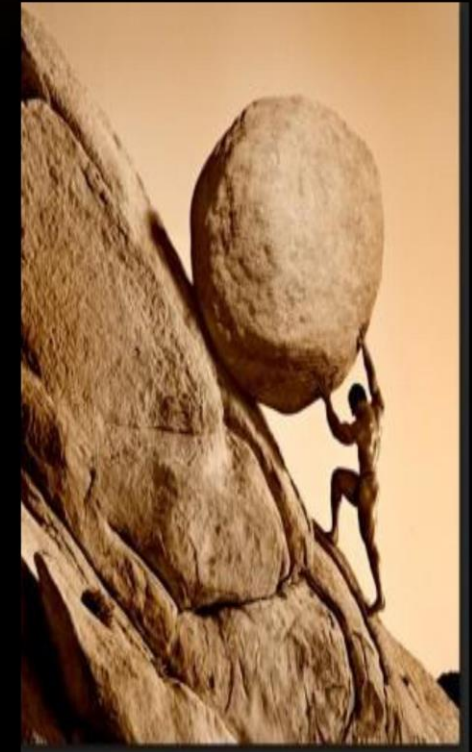
Vladimir: Let's wait till we know exactly how we stand.

Estragon: On the other hand it might be better to strike the iron before it freezes



The Myth Of Sisyphus

- ❑ The philosophy articulated by French philosopher Albert Camus in his essay The myth of Sisyphus.
- ❑ In which he defines the human condition as basically meaningless.
- ❑ Camus claims that there is a fundamental conflict between what we want from the universe (whether it be meaning, order, or reasons) and what we find in the universe (formless chaos). We will never find in life itself the meaning that we want to find.
- ❑ life is meaningless.



Lack of Plot



- No beginning ,climax and ending.
- Same place and time
- Unexplained story
- Nothingness and emptiness
- Dramatic Divisions section in and observe that the structure of each act is exactly alike.
- In Waiting for Godot, we never know where the play takes place, except that it is set on "a country road."

MEANINGLESSNESS OF LIFE



- In the play waiting for godot we can see the Senseless activities of Vladimir and Estragon .
- vladimir takes off his hat, Estragon takes off his one boot,
- “see into it shakes it put it on again and say nothing to be done”
- The proposal to hang themselves.

comic scenes

- song of “death of a dog” by Vladimir, The dog is killed, and the other dogs dig a tomb and erect a tombstone that tells the story.
- changing “Hat” scene



Non-Sense Language

- The uselessness of language was used by the characters constantly, they speak in clichés ,overused, tired expressions.
- Lucky’s speech in Act-1 (quaquaquaquaqua)
- Dialogues of Vladimir and Estragon make misunderstanding. Nonsense Language,

Vladimir: well? Shall we go?

Estragon: yes, let's go

(they do not move)



Importance of Repitition

- Absurd play has a repetitive cyclical structure.
- Similar setting- Debris
- Timing- day to moon rise
- Actions- hat Swapping scene Similar Acts structure
- Same acts ending Same dialogues :-

ESTRAGON:What do we do now?

VLADIMIR:Wait for Godot.

ESTRAGON:Ah!Silence



Complexity of Characters

- Who is Godot? Man or God
- No female character
- pozzo dependes on lucky or lucky depend on pozzo?

“ its characters are also just mechanical puppets with their incoherent conversations”.

- Though characters are present but are not recognizable for whatever they do and whatever they present is purposeless.



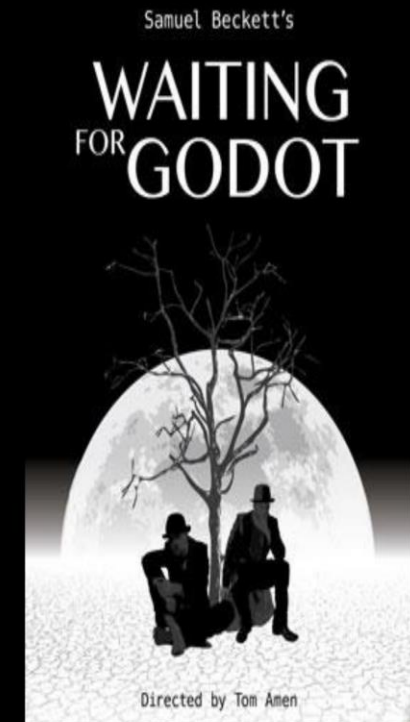
Absurd ending

- what makes the play absurd is its ending.
- We note that the ending of the play is not a conclusion in the usual sense.
- The wait continues; the human contacts remain unsolved; the problem of existence remains meaningless, futile and purposeless.
- The conversation between the two tramps remain a jargon,
- So all this makes the play an absurd play.



Different from Traditional Drama

- No use of interesting plot
No sense of story
- No use of dream , fantasy
and poetic language
- Beckett combats the
traditional notions of Time.



• **Q.1. What is the significance of the title of the play “Waiting for Godot”?**

- **The significance of the title rests on the situational irony that the wait for Godot is entirely trifling. Within an existentialist context, the wait is symbolic of human reality. It is the amalgamation of our need for hope, purpose and direction versus the reality that there is no absolute law that explains any hope, purpose, or reason for anything. Realistically, our lives are a product of perspective and upbringing, not to mention the eternal debate of nature versus nurture. Hence, we all wait in different ways: praying, hoping, meditating, thinking ahead, or stopping altogether. Essentially, this "wait" is an existential problem for all individuals. The succession of issues that present themselves in a lifespan may render us dependent on the expectation that something may come our way, or may change us forever. In the meantime, we meet characters, see things, and witness situations not unlike those seen by Vladimir and Estragon: things that are odd, cruel, senseless, even morbid. It is all a part of existing. The wait will always be there.**

-VLADIMIR He didn't say for sure he'd come.

ESTRAGON And if he doesn't come?

VLADIMIR We'll come back tomorrow.

ESTRAGON And then the day after tomorrow.

VLADIMIR Possibly. ESTRAGON And so on.

VLADIMIR The point is—

ESTRAGON Until he comes.

The two main characters, Vladimir and Estragon, spend days waiting for someone named Godot. A boy comes with a message that Godot is not coming and they continue to wait. The waiting itself is an exercise in futility. Godot is never going to show up and the two characters discuss options such as suicide (which they fail in the attempt),

- **Q.2. How does Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* reflect on the existentialist view of human reality?**
- **Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* is generally regarded as a quintessential example of existentialism precisely because of its treatment of the play's titular figure. Godot never appears in the play—forcing readers and playgoers to ask questions like "does Godot actually exist?" Troublingly, no answer is provided by the play, which forces audiences to confront the absurdity of potentially waiting for someone who does not exist. *Waiting for Godot* examines the problem of existentialism in some detail, without ever suggesting a solution. Although "existentialist" is a label applied to a wide range of thinkers, some of whom, such as Camus, rejected it, the philosophy is always concerned with meaning and, more specifically, with the idea that life has no predetermined meaning for us to find. The solution often suggested, with varying degrees of confidence, is that one must decide for oneself the meaning of one's own life.**
- **The characters in the play, however, do not find, decide upon, or create meaning. Vladimir and Estragon wait endlessly for someone who never comes. Lucky babbles**
- **incoherently when requested to think. Pozzo falls from a position of dominance and confidence, yet his fall has none of the significance and dignity of tragedy. These actions and attitudes are all failures of meaning.**
- **Beckett, however, adds to existentialism some of the ideas he learned from Proust.**

1.Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot: A Reference Guide: William Hutchings

2.Waiting for Godot: Samuel Beckett

3.Images: Google.co.in