

Various interpretations or themes of waiting for Godot. (4)

Waiting for Godot is one of the most popular dramas of the modern age. It is a master piece of Samuel Becket, a great literary authority and a major influence on the progressive trend of modern literature. He has the first hand and intense experience of fear, horror, terror, suffering, hardship, poverty, misery and other negative aspects of human life. His works explore and present the modern life of material aggrandisement in a satirical vein and pessimistic tone. The present play, though an Absurd Drama, throws ample light on the enigmatic, exasperating and over all complex situation the modern people are entangled with in the name of modernity. It offers a variety of meanings and interpretations and has a wide-spread appeal to both the intellectuals and average men of understanding.

As a matter of fact, Waiting for Godot is a successful play not because of its ~~strong~~ story or characterization but because of the richness of its themes. It is not merely about waiting for certain Godot, as it appears to be, but man's endless wait for Christ or for Death. The various themes of the triviality and boredom of human life, of prevalence of suffering and ignorance, of economic and intellectual exploitation, of meaninglessness of space, time and identity, of purposelessness and futility of human efforts etc are cordially implied in it. Some critics opine that the waiting of the two tramps is the waiting for Christ, for man's redemption from misery and mortality. Others think that the waiting is man's long wait for Death that relieves him from the agonies of modern life. Death, however, does not arrive by informing in advance, rather it catches man without his knowledge.

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Some critics discover Christian elements in the play and call it a religious allegory. There is resemblance between God and Godot and the Tramps are also afraid of Godot. When Estragon suggests that they may drap Godot, Vladimir reminds him that he will punish them if they do so. That is they have to have faith in Godot, God. Thus the action for waiting for Godot becomes applicable to Christianity. The tree that has leaves in the second Act represents the Cross, that for which the two tramps are constantly waiting.

A few scholars find out the theme of existentialism in this drama and point out the doubts about time make the two tramps doubt about their own existence and identity. The passage of time is not absolute but relative to one's mental condition. The tramps main problem is to make time pass. Neither time, nor existence, nor reality, nor the past has any meaning or significance for them. They are on the point of becoming hollow men in a possibly hollow universe.

It seems, as if the play is nihilistic one, that shows that suffering is an inseparable part of human condition. The tramps cannot even laugh without suffering. They have nowhere to rest their head. They have to eat carrots, turnips and radishes. They long for death by jumping from Eiffel Tower. Lucky gives expression to human condition by dancing the dance of the net, the net from which no escape is possible. Pozzo, being blind is at his slave's mercy who expresses the misery of human lot. The worst of reality is that the suffering is both purposeless and hopeless.

The tramps, the main characters of the play suffer from ignorance and darkness. They cannot

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who and what Godot is and what will happen if he comes or if they abandon awaiting. They have no time-tables, no information and no essential knowledge and, so, cannot act and are impotent. They produce a sense of baffled helplessness. The way they pass time, questioning, contradicting and abusing each other without any intention, indicates the boredom and triviality of human activities, the lack of significance in life and constant suffering which existence in reality is. It also brings out the hollowness and insincerity of most social intercourse.

The episode of Pozzo and Lucky throws light on the rampant exploitation being perpetrated in the modern society of material edification. All the fine words and ideas that Pozzo speaks out are derived from Lucky, yet he holds him on a rope and treats him worse than an animal. When the master has derived out all that could, he wants to sell him in a fair. The shrewdness of the haves is to this that they employ the have nots, besides other sourcing, even to do their thinking for them. The tragedy of the situation is that the exploited lots have become so demoralised that they are unable to offer resistance to their exploitation. That is why when the exploiter Pozzo becomes blind, the exploited Lucky does not have guts to free himself from this enslavement.

Thus, we see that the themes of waiting for Godot have an inexhaustible richness of meaning and implication. It is really a great work of art and presents themes of universal appeal.