

## (11) Use of symbols in 'Waiting for Godot'.

'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 who has been a major influence on the progressive trend of the modern literature. He has the first hand and intense experiences of fear, terror, suffering, hardship, poverty, misery and other negative aspects of human life. His literary works explore and symbolically present the modern life of material aggrandisement in a satirical vein and ironically pessimistic tone. The present play demonstrates his creative genius and, at the same time, throws ample light on the enigmatic, exasperating and over all complex situation the modern people are entangled with, in the name of modernity. The play is ~~there~~ also thoroughly and heavily rich in the excellent use of varied symbols. Let us see it in a brief.

As a matter of fact, Samuel Becket, quite in the fashion of the Absurdist, has used symbols elaborately and artistically in 'Waiting for Godot'. He has dexterously employed fewest possible words to convey the inner reality through symbolic suggestions and references. His symbols are highly functional, most obsessive and involuntary. Becket clothes and animates his characters with a symbolism that is harsh, violent, bitter and not only original but also personal. A critic has even evidently called his symbolism as autosymbolism. In fact, Becket's symbolism is a symbolism of persecution, terror, suffering and mockery, represented by a few external images, a few properties and the physical make-up of his characters. The whole of the action and presentation of this drama is beautifully enwrapped with the shroud of physical

and metaphysical symbolism.

The very title's words 'waiting and Godot' are deeply and variously symbolic in their meaning. 'Waiting' suggests modern man's constant belief and hope that inspire him to fiddle with life with all pomp and and show resulting in nothing. Godot represents something godly and god-like. He is the earthly ideal of a better social order that is never attained by the ever waiting tramps. Godot also means death or silence. Further more, it may stand for a mythical human being whose arrival is expected to change the modern pathetic situation. Godot, further, represents, for the two tramps, peace and rest from waiting, a sense of having arrived in a heaven. They are hoping to be saved from the instability of the illusion of time. Thus, Godot represents the objective of their waiting - an event, a thing, a person, death, etc.

The two waiting Tramps of the novel represent the ordeal of waiting, the ordeal which is experienced by almost every human being all through his life. In addition to that, they stand for ignorance, helplessness, impotence and boredom. They do not have the essential knowledge, do not know who exactly Godot is, and do not know what will happen if he comes or if they drop waiting. Being ignorant, they are unable to act, hence, they face boredom and problem of passing time. As a fact, the entire experience of Vladimir and Estragon has a universal application and it is <sup>this</sup> fact that gives the play a wide appeal.

Pozzo and Lucky <sup>who</sup> appear as the master and the slave, stand for the exploiter and the exploited or the ruler and the ruled. They also symbolize the relationship between capital and labour or between the

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The wealth and the artist. A critic opines that Pozzo and Lucky are the body and intellect, capitalist and the proletarian, coloniser and colonised. They create the metaphor of society, not as it is, but as the tramps see it, <sup>as</sup> with a social structure reduced to an essential disintegration between master and slave. Pozzo appears all powerful, dominated by his gesture and inflated language. He is like an emperor and absolute monarch. It has also been pointed out that they represent the quality of body and mind and the relationship between the material and the spiritual sides of man, with the intellect subordinate to the appetites of the body. They are also described as representing mankind, the sufferer, and Christ, the deliverer.

The leafless and dried tree, standing in the middle of the stage is also symbolically significant. It is willow tree that weeps. It suggests the actual condition of the tramps who are devoid of knowledge as the tree is divested of its leaves. As leaves are the obvious feature of a live and growing tree, so the knowledge is the quality that makes a man real man and active one. The tramp's shoes, being unyielding and ill-fitting, are symbolic of the essential inability of human construct. Similarly, Lucky's dance of net suggests the net of modern materialism, in which modern people are making all fret and fury.

Thus we see that *Waiting for Godot* is a richly symbolic play. Its title, its characters, its settings are all symbolic. Its beauty lies in the fact that the dramatist has minimised the use of the words and yet has conveyed a great deal of meaning through his subtle and delicate symbols.