

## Waiting for Godot and Relation with World War II

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**Abstract.** *The concept that guides "waiting for Godot" as a practical application of this philosophy also determines the work's organisation. Therefore, Samuel Beckett, an absurdist playwright, abandoned the majority of conventional theatre's logical structures. There isn't much action that is considered dramatic. The aim of the characters is to emphasise that nothing occurs that would alter their lives. (Biggsby, 2004, page 24). This essay examines how our movement and the war relate to each other. More precisely, it discusses how the Second World War was the primary factor in the rise of absurdity as the largest movement throughout the stated time period.*

*Our drama removes the plot and creates a timeless, circular quality as two lost creatures—typically portrayed as tramps—spend their days waiting, without knowing for sure who they are waiting for or if it will ever arrive. The absence principle underpins the play's operation. The main character is never seen in it. One is largely silent out of the two that we do see. Movement is minimal or nonexistent. There isn't much or no storyline. It appears that negativity is the guiding principle.*

### CHAPTER ONE

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

One of Albert Camus's famous quotes is, "This world, which is full of wrongdoings, has not become so because of the willing rule." Europe was split into factions determined to crush each other, creating the possibility to unleash the monster hidden beneath the heavy layers of the inner world. Throughout his life on this cursed planet, man has had various beliefs about his load, or his own one. These beliefs have been revealed through a variety of perspectives, each of which is seen as correct in and of itself based on what is known as inner logic.

According to some, philosophy is the product of circumstances, and what a circumstance the Second World War was! What is self in the face of such a predicament but a gentle creature that spends itself searching for significance, sense, or just calmness? Fifty million people lost their lives, and Europe was turning into the land of death. The mind at the target period considered it inevitable to adopt the philosophy of meaninglessness and emptiness when faced with all those questions that created questions about thinking.

A new perspective was emerging among others during and after the war years; it was extremely comprehensive and useful. The doubting faith, the believing disbelief If there is a God, then "waiting" on him is pointless. How could a God exist who tells his sheep to wait when they are ready and need something? How patient someone could be to withstand Estragon's wishes while viewing all these pictures of devastation and experiencing all these feelings of disappointment! The origin of sorrow, pain, agony, and all kinds of adversity was absurdity, or what is referred to as the theatre of the ludicrous in literature. The landscape of ruins must also be recognised as forming an integral part of

much of the literature of the late 1940s and early 1950s. It was a landscape that provided a metaphor for broken lives and spirits, in some remote and less-defined sense. (Luebering, 2011, p. 269–270).

When some European and American dramatists from the 1850s and early 1860s agree with existentialist philosopher Albert Camus that human existence is fundamentally absurd and meaningless, their dramatic works are referred to as the "Theatre of Absurd." The phrase was also used figuratively to refer to those playwrights and the creation of those pieces. Dramatists as varied as Samuel Beckett, Jean Genet, Arthur Adamov, and a few others shared a gloomy image of humanity striving in vain to find a purpose and control its fate, even if there was no official Absurdist movement as such. In this perspective, humanity is left feeling helpless, perplexed, and nervous. Indeed, the introduction of such radical thought came from perspectives on the conflict.

The concept that guides "waiting for Godot" as a practical application of this philosophy also determines the work's organisation. Therefore, Samuel Beckett, an absurdist playwright, abandoned the majority of conventional theatre's logical structures. There isn't much action that is considered dramatic. The aim of the characters is to emphasise that nothing occurs that would alter their lives. (Bigsby, 2004, page 24). This essay examines how our movement and the war relate to each other. More precisely, it discusses how the Second World War was the primary factor in the rise of absurdity as the largest movement throughout the stated time period.

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## **1.2 LIFE OF SAMUEL BARCIAY BECKETT**

On April 13, 1906, a Good Friday, Samuel Barclay Beckett was born in Dublin, Ireland. William Frank Beckett, his father, was employed in the construction industry, and Maria Jones Roe, his mother, was a nurse. Oscar Wilde attended Portora Royal School, which young Samuel transferred to at the age of 14 after attending Earls Fort House School in Dublin. In 1927, he graduated with a bachelor's degree from Trinity College. He used to get severe depression episodes in his adolescence, which would keep him in bed until midday. His writing would eventually be influenced by this encounter. In the 1930s and 1940s, he wrote his first novels and short tales. He was a poet, playwright, and writer. In addition to well-known plays like *Waiting for Godot*, he wrote three novels in the 1950s. Novellas, collections of short stories, and poems were among his latter works.

Samuel Beckett was able to stay in Paris as a neutral country during World War II thanks to his Irish citizenship. He participated in the resistance activity up to Samuel 1942, when the Gestapo detained several of his group's members. Until the conclusion of the war, he and Suzanne escaped to the uninhabited zone. Samuel Beckett received the *Croix de Guerre* after the war in recognition of his valour as a member of the French resistance. He made his home in Paris, where he started writing more frequently. He authored two books of short stories, a book of criticism, *Malloy*, *Mallone Dies*, *The Unnamable*, *Endgame*, *Eleutheria*, and *Waiting for Godot* in five years.

### **Later Year**

For Samuel Beckett, the 1960s were a time of transition. With these plays, he achieved enormous global popularity. An invitation to visit practices and shows resulted in the pursuit of a profession as a theatre director. With Suzanne Dechevaux-Dumesnuil handling his business concerns, he secretly got married in 1961. Offerings to write for radio and film during the 1960s followed a 1956 BBC commission.

Mostly in a modest home outside of Paris, Samuel Beckett continued to compose during the 1970s and 1980s. There, he could completely devote himself to his work while avoiding notice. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969, but he chose not to accept it in person so he wouldn't have to speak at the ceremony. Still, he could not be regarded as a recluse. He frequently got together with researchers, other artists, and fans to discuss his work.

Due to his deteriorating health, Samuel Beckett moved into a tiny nursing home in the late 1980s. In July 1989, his spouse, Suzanne, passed away. He would greet visitors and write in the small room where his wife was imprisoned. On December 22, 1989, he passed away in a hospital due to respiratory issues, only a month after his spouse.

### **1.3 THE FAMOUS WORKS OF THE WRITER**

Waiting for Godot (1948).\*

Samuel Beckett Reader (1967). \*

Every Stranger is Far(1970).\*

Come and Go (1965).\*

A company (1981).\*

Echo Bones (1971).\*

Dramas and dialogues (1983).

In 1948, Samuel Beckett composed the play "En attendant Godot" in French. Two years later, in 1953, the play was translated into English as "a tragicomedy." Between October 9, 1948, and January 29, 1949, the original French text was written. Roger Blin directed the debut, which took place at the Parisian theatre Babylone on January 5, 1953. In addition to its initial theatrical run in Paris in 1953 and London in 1955, it was published in New York in 1954 and London in 1956. "The most significant English-language play of the 20th century" was the verdict.

### **1.4 THE REASON FOR WRITING THIS PLAY**

Samuel Beckett wrote this play for several reasons:

1. He was critical of negative changes in society, the way people's think, war and government.
2. Put differently, the drama endeavours to explore the purpose of existence or acknowledges its pointlessness.
3. He want to reflect the suffering of the people at this time.
4. There is no specific reason to write this play, but the writer in general was critical the situation at that time.

### **1.5 SUMMARY OF WAITING FOR GODOT**

#### **ACT-1-**

Undoubtedly, one of Samuel Beckett's most well-known pieces is Waiting for Godot. The performance begins in an unidentified location with a barren landscape and dry trees, and the mood doesn't seem hopeful or happy.

The scene is an evening on a rural road with just one tree in sight. Estragon, one of the two protagonists named Gogo, is a moron who only remembers what is said to him right away and depends on his friend Didi to remind him of things. As he tries unsuccessfully to remove his boot, Vladimir, another protagonist named Didi who doesn't give a damn about his physical needs, enters and greets Estragon, telling him that he has spent the night in a ditch after being beaten. Estragon manages to retrieve his boot with incredible difficulty. He peers inside to check if anything is inside, and Vladimir follows suit with his hat.

Vladimir mentions the two thieves who were crucified next to Christ. He asked Estragon if he knows the Gospels. Estragon gives a short description of the maps of the Holy Land at which point Vladimir tells him he should have been a poet. Vladimir continues with his narrative about the two thieves in order to pass the time.

"Nothing to be done" is what Estragon says (Estragon, Act 1, page 9). Given that we are all ensnared in an absurd cosmos, our only option may be to wait. And though Godot is the one that Vladimir and

Estragon are constantly waiting for—a man who never shows up in the play—he wants to go, but Vladimir makes him stay.

The two idiots are clueless as to the exact location and time of Godot's appearance. They don't even know what they originally begged Godot for; it is later revealed. As they wait, Estragon grows weary of waiting and proposes that they kill themselves by hanging from the tree. Though they both think it's a good idea, they can't agree on who should go first.

They fear that should one of them pass away, the other might be left by themselves. Ultimately, they determine it would be safer to hold off until Godot shows up. Estragon queries Vladimir about their continued legal rights. Vladimir seems to be saying that they were removed. Then, out of dread, he believes he is hearing something, but it soon becomes apparent that the sounds are only in his head. Before long, Vladimir gives Estragon a carrot to eat.

Following that, Pozzo and Lucky show up; Pozzo is the master and has authority over Lucky. In order to have some company, he strikes up a conversation with Lucky (who is Pozzo's slave). Lucky is carrying a stool, a basket, a bag, and a greatcoat. He has a rope tied around his neck. Pozzo uses a wipe that he carries around to manipulate Lucky. Pozzo becomes agitated when Estragon mistakenly thinks he is Godot.

Pozzo takes a few minutes to put in a lucky-round order. Lucky is perfectly quiet and follows commands like a robot. Pozzo is lucky enough to set down the stool and open the food basket with the chicken. After that, Pozzo consumes the chicken and discards the bones. After every command is finished, Lucky appears to be falling asleep as she stands hunched over the luggage.

Vladimir and Estragon visit the intriguing Lucky. Why does he never set down his baggage? they wonder. When Pozzo refuses to tell them, Estragon goes on to ask them to take the chicken bones that Pozzo has been chucking their way. Pozzo informs him that they are, in theory, part of Lucky. Estragon receives the bones because Lucky fails to respond when they ask whether he wants them. When they ask why Lucky held the bags the entire time, Pozzo eventually explains. According to him, it's because Lucky is scared of being taken away. Lucky begins to cry as Pozzo explains to them why he keeps carrying his baggage. As Estragon reaches to dry Lucky's tears, he is kicked hard in the shin.

Next, Pozzo informs them that he and Lucky have been a couple for about sixty years. Vladimir is horrified by how Lucky, who seems to be such a devoted servant, is being treated. Pozzo says that being fortunate is such a burden that he can no longer stand it. Vladimir shouts at Lucky that it is later.terrible how he handles such a fine master.

After that, Pozzo gave a speech about the night sky. They tell him it was a pretty decent speech when he asks how it went. Pozzo is overjoyed to hear the support and promises to help them. Vladimir advises Estragon to be quiet when he asks for five francs right away. Pozzo offers to dance for them, then thinks for them.

Lucky does a happy dance for them, and when requested to do it again, she does it step-by-step. Unimpressed, Estragon tries to mimic it and nearly trips. They then conjure up lucky ideas. What follows is a torrential flow of political and theological dogma that never finishes the concepts it begins. When Lucky is ultimately taken to the ground by the three men and his cap is taken off, he stops talking. "Unfinished" is the final word.

After that, the men make a concerted effort to rouse Lucky up again. When the packages are placed in his palm, he eventually awakens again. Pozzo rises to go, and he and Lucky exit the area. Gogo and Dide take their places once more and wait for Godot.

A little boy that Mr. Godot dispatched shows up. He worries Estragon, who is furious because it took him so long to arrive. Vladimir interrupted and inquired about the boy's memory of him. The boy replies that this is his first time meeting them and that Mr. Godot might not be there today, but maybe tomorrow. With the directive to inform Mr. Godot that he has seen them, the kid is dismissed.

Vladimir and Estragon talk about the past and then make the decision to get out for the evening. Neither one gets up from his chair.

## **ACT-2-**

It is scheduled for the same time the next day. The hat belonging to Lucky and the boots worn by Estragon remain on stage. Estragon arrives barefoot, and Vladimir joins in and begins to sing. Since Vladimir was not present, Estragon finds it offensive that he was singing and having fun. Admittedly, they both feel happier alone, but they trick themselves into believing they are content while they are with each other. They have not given up on Godot yet. Poetically, Didi and Gogo discuss "all the dead voices" they hear. The sound of nature, particularly the rustling of the leaves, haunts them with whispers. To stop Estragon from hearing the voices, Vladimir yells at him. After some trial and error, Estragon concludes that they ought to start a conversation. They are able to have a brief conversation.

Everything that happened the day before is lost on Estragon. He had completely forgotten about his desire to hang himself from the tree, as well as about Pozzo and Lucky. His footwear are gone from memory, therefore he believes they belong to someone else. He tries them on and, for whatever reason, they suit him now. Estragon remarks that since the tree has been sprouting leaves since the previous evening, spring must be here. Vladimir notices that Estragon's shin is still swollen and bleeding from the kick that Lucky gave him.

They quickly run out of things to say and try to come up with anything else. Vladimir locates and puts on Lucky's cap. After exchanging hats for a while, he and Estragon question each other how they look before Vladimir tosses his own hat to the ground. They then make the decision to pretend to be Lucky and Pozzo, but to no avail. After leaving, Estragon comes back, panting right away. They're coming, he says. Vladimir believes Godot must be the one arriving to save them. When the tree grows too small to conceal him, he tries to hide Estragon beneath it out of fear.

The conversation then degenerates into abusive phrases. Estragon says, "That's the idea; let's abuse each other." They continue to hurl insults at one another until Estragon calls Vladimir a critic. They embrace and continue waiting.

This time, Pozzo is bound, and Lucky is silent as they enter. Lucky halts upon noticing the two men. Pozzo strikes him, and they both collapse onto the ground in a heap. The fact that more people have shown up to assist with the waiting makes Vladimir very happy. Estragon believes Godot has returned.

Estragon and Vladimir debate whether it's worth helping Pozzo get up from the spot where he fell. Estragon responds, "Billions," to Vladimir's question about how many other guys wait. In a state of despair, Pozzo offers to pay 100 francs for assistance. It is insufficient, according to Estragon. Vladimir is reluctant to pick up Pozzo because doing so would put him and Estragon back together. At last, he approaches and tries to lift him up, but he is unsuccessful. Vladimir persuades Estragon to assist first before departing, despite his initial decision to go.

Vladimir and Estragon stumble and fall while attempting to assist Pozzo. Vladimir violently kicks Pozzo to get him to stop talking when he starts talking again. When Didi and Gogo do stand up, Pozzo starts yelling for assistance once more. They head over to assist him. Pozzo queries their identity and the time. They are unable to respond to his inquiry.

Estragon goes to get Lucky to wake up. After kicking him, he begins to verbally attack him until his foot hurts again. Estragon returns to his seat and tries to remove his boot. Vladimir informs Pozzo of his friend's injury.

Vladimir then requests that Pozzo do the Lucky a dance or reconsider for them. Pozzo informs him that Lucky has no voice. Pozzo becomes enraged and asks Vladimir where he's been. He advises them to quit bugging him with inquiries about his time because he doesn't know. After giving Lucky a hand up, they go. Vladimir muses over the impossible nature of truth and the fact that he won't know anything about the events of the previous day by tomorrow. Since Estragon consistently forgets everything that happens to him, it is impossible to verify his memories.



The youngster returns, but he doesn't recall seeing Vladimir or Estragon. He informs them that he is meeting them for the first time. The exchange is the same in that Mr. Godot promises to show up tomorrow even though he will once again be unable to attend. Vladimir demands that the boy be sure to remember that he saw him. "You are sure you saw me; you won't come and tell me tomorrow that you never saw me!"

Having to wait for Godot, the two idiots decide to escape, but they are unable to get very far. They consider hanging themselves while they gaze at the tree. Estragon removes his belt, but when they tug on it, it breaks. His trousers slipped down. If Godot doesn't show up to help them, Vladimir threatens to have them hang themselves tomorrow. He gives Estragon instructions on how to put on his trousers. Once more, they resolve to depart yet remain still.

## **1.6 THE SYMBOLS IN THIS PLAY**

**The Hat :** The characters frequently remove and put on their hats, which is symbolic of protection; it's possible that they are doing so in an attempt to find cover while doing so.

**The Tree :** The importance of the "tree" in the context of Godot's waiting typically, the "tree" stands in for the "cross" that was used to execute Jesus Christ. Because the "tree" indicates that the religious element is present in the play, others claim that it serves as a symbol of hope.

**The Boots :** Boots or shoes represent power or authority. The idea comes from ancient times as only wealthy people could wear shoes or boots. But also, shoes represent connection with life and this idea comes from the fact that people who commit suicide by drowning leave their shoes on the shore. So, most probably Estragon trying to take off his boot shows that he is not completely connected with reality, with life.

**Rope :** Represents being bound to one's circumstances, as Vladimir and Estragon are left waiting without a clear understanding of why. They even mention being bound to Godot, which suggests that they are unsure of the true reason for their waiting yet insist on doing it anyhow. Lucky is also controlled by Pozzo like a rope, and he isn't even able to think for himself without guidance. When the two discuss hanging themselves from the tree, the rope is also used as a symbol of escaping being bound.

## **1.7 THEME OF THIS PLAY**

### **Hope**

There is always a lot of hope, even in spite of the protagonists' terrible circumstances. Despite their extreme physical and mental anguish, they never give up on the idea that one day Godot will show up and make their lives better than they currently are. They always have faith that there will be light at the end of the tunnel, however agonising the waiting is. The tie between Estragon and Vladimir is strengthened by their shared suffering; they understand one another, support one another in enduring their ordeal longer, and have faith that their lives will end soon.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.1 THE WAR**

The war is the most demonstrated conflict in human history. A global military conflict. The latter has become separate; one of the civil and military resources has been demonstrated and has been activated to enable full economic and industrial capacities for the purpose of the war effort. The inclusive massacres and bombings, the deaths of hunger and disease, and the use of nuclear weapons in the war.

### **2.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PLAY AND WW II**

Beckett was one of the writers of the mid-1900s whose works together are known as the theatre of the absurd; they were existentialism-influenced and depicted life as meaningless. This pessimistic perspective on human existence is possibly best illustrated in the movie *Waiting for Godot*.

A conflict and a play are remarkably similar to each other. As psychological pain and crises are brought on by the battle. Communities and families are destroyed by war, along with the loss of life, financial damages, suffering of the populace, and environmental degradation. Thus, the author made an effort to depict every consequence of the conflict through the pain of the characters. Thus, the connection, or resemblance, is:

1. Starting the play in a mysterious area also signifies the location of the war and makes the soldier feel abandoned and afraid.
2. We noticed during the play that Didi and Gogo are dull because they are waiting and talking about suicide. This suggests that soldiers are waiting for either death or victory during the battle, and we attribute this to the soldiers.
3. Estragon, one of the two protagonists in the play, brought hunger to our attention by stating that all he ate was carrots, a sign of the hunger among the soldiers following the war.
4. The play's protagonists' frequent conversation reveals their discomfort with waiting and their attempts to pass the time. Additionally, it suggests that the soldiers are making an effort to shorten their interactions, eliminate monotony through conversation, and possibly even incite hostilities.
5. One of the two characters' shoes and the anguish he feels from wearing them are symbolic of the soldier's inability to take off his or her painful, hard shoes during the battle. The soldier's dominance over the ruling state is also indicated by the shoes.
6. Upon seeing Pozzo and Lucky, we notice that Lucky has a rope around its neck, resembling a hostage. This shows the rope that the POWs were bound to.
7. Pozzo's act of eating a special meal, throwing away the bone, and taking it to be lucky speaks volumes about the soldiers' extreme hunger, which motivates them to consume the bones along with the remaining food.
8. The phrase "Lucky can think only when he wears his hat" alludes to a soldier who is captured during combat and is worn by feel. The hat also alludes to authority, or the government, and how it manipulates other people.
9. The play depicts our youngster giving a message to the godot leader, which alludes to the military officers preparing their soldiers for battle.
10. In Act 2, Pozzo and Lucky make a reappearance; however, they are blind and raised, signifying the psychological toll that the conflict has taken on the minds of soldiers and civilians.
11. The player's defects, which included suicidal thoughts due to extreme boredom, are indicative of what soldiers would have thought in similar situations.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

#### **3.1 THE PLAY OF WAITING FOR GODOT**

The play is a representation of the meaninglessness of human existence. While Godot appears and represents the unknown, it is absent from both acts of the play. Vladimir, Estragon, Pozzo, Lucky, and the boy all represent mankind.

The discussion opened with two characters experiencing psychological strife. They chose to travel to a desolate area in the hopes of seeing Godot, who is invisible in the play but may hold the key to their salvation. They planned to wait for Godot to talk to them about their problems and provide them with a solution, but the play ended before Godot appeared.

#### **3.2 THE WAR**

The wealthy were blamed for starting the wars that claimed the lives of numerous soldiers and innocent civilians throughout the period of suffering from conflicts. As a result, many widowed

women and their families went hungry as a result of the wars. So, the rich guys are holding the blood of the poor warriors.

### **3.3 THE RELATION BETWEEN WWII AND THIS PLAY**

This drama has numerous images that, by connecting it to some of the issues surrounding World War II, represent anguish and grief. Thus, Beckett is a well-known author who popularised the idea of time and tranquilly in this life; there are no moral principles here, only misery.

### **3.4 OPINION ABOUT THE PLAY OUR**

Waiting for Godot shows us that the play deals with a lot of issues that are relevant to our lives and may even reflect our reality, such as sorrow, agony, anguish, injustice, hostility, and hopelessness. Therefore, in our opinion, the injustice that occurs in this play, the way the two men mistreated themselves and wasted a lot of time waiting for nothing in return, and the way a boy made false promises to them, as well as the unfair relationship between Pozzo and Lucky, in which Pozzo treated his slave Lucky cruelly and disrespectfully, are all examples of how the government treats people and how our reality is. The change that Didi and Gogo desire is also a crucial aspect of this play. Although they wait for the change, they do not take any action on their own behalf, which indicates that they rely on other people to make life changes. This is wrong because if someone wants the best change possible, they should make the change themselves rather than waiting for others to make it for them. Accordingly, the individual can alter his desires or realities if he transforms himself in a positive way.