

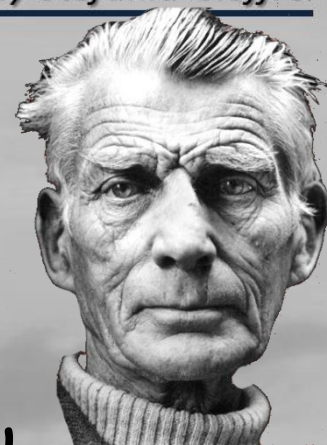


WAITING FOR GODOT





Samuel Beckett



- Irish playwright, novelist and poet
- Born in Dublin, April 13 1906
- Studies French, Italian and English at the Trinity College
- Meets James Joyce and becomes his secretary
- Settles down in Paris
- 1969 Wins Nobel Prize for Literature
- 1989 Dies in Paris





Historical Background to Waiting for Godot

- Effects of WWII.
 - a) Shock and disillusion
 - b) Alienation and anxiety
 - c) Loss of faith
 - d) Pessimism





Philosophical Background to Waiting for Godot

- Existentialism
 - a) Loss of belief in reason and faith
 - b) Life as meaningless
 - c) Only what we can see truly exists
 - d) Humans , therefore, are free

IS IT A GOOD THING?

«There is, thererore, no pre-existent spiritual realm, no soul...no cosmic compassion for or interest in human life, no afterlife, no cosmic meta-narrative, no angels and devils, no divine will, no destiny, no inevitable faith.»





THEATRE OF THE ABSURD

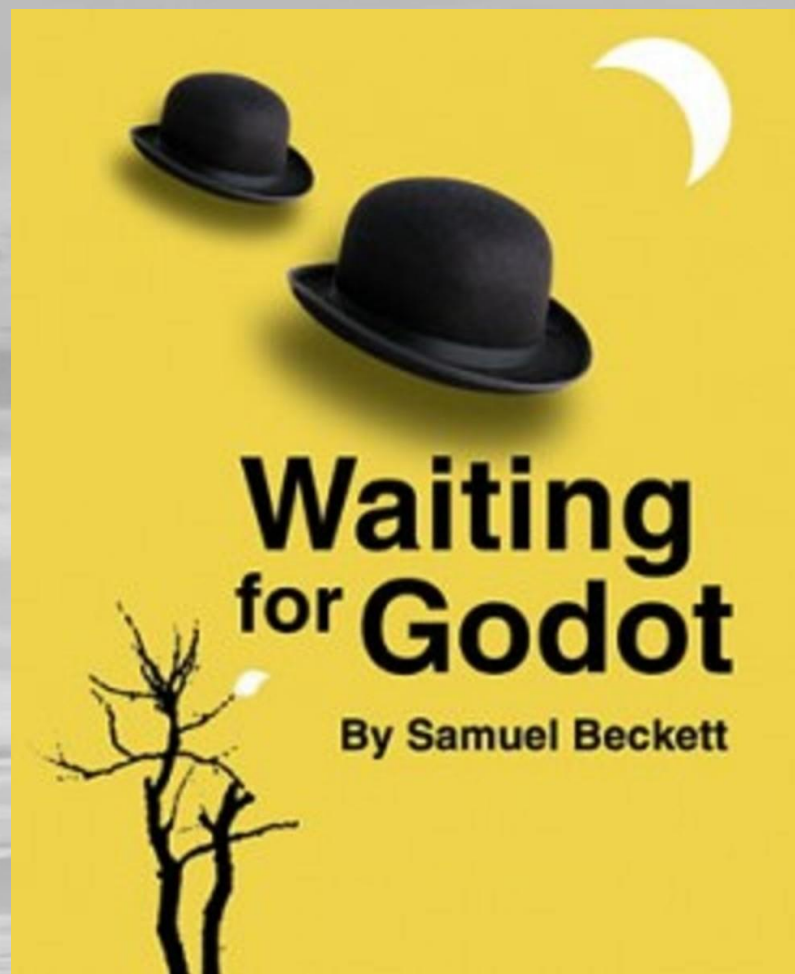
- Existentialist theatre
 - Absurd content in a rational form of presentation
 - Often called "**anti-theatre**": does not follow standard plot lines (no clear beginning, middle, or end), unrecognizable characters, dialogues seem meaningless.
 - Writers attempt to express their vision of the world





Waiting for Godot

- 1952 Written in French
- 1953 Premiered at the Babylone theatre in Paris
- 1954 First English translation





Themes

1. The void - life is meaningless
2. The hopelessness and cruelty of hope
3. Dependence on one human on another
4. Passing of time
5. The world as a wasteland
6. Lack of communication - nothing is worth communicating, but we cannot stop talking.
7. Psychological theme
 - a) Loss of memory=los of meaning
 - b) Our cosmic insignificance
 - c) Lack of self-awareness
 - d) The pain of cosciousness





Characters

- **Vladimir (tramp)**

- a) Estragon calls him Didi
- b) Responsible and mature

- **Estragon (tramp)**

- a) Vladimir calls him Gogo
- b) Weak and helpless
- c) Has poor memory

- **Pozzo**

Passes the spot where Vladimir and Estragon are waiting

- **Lucky**

Pozzo's slave

- **Boy**

Appears to say that Godot won't be coming that night

- **Godot**

The man the two are waiting for. He will never show up.





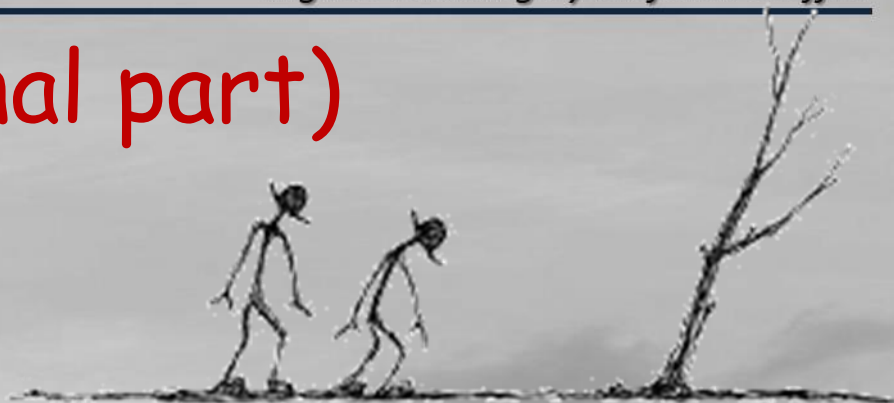
Plot (?)

- **Act 1.** Vladimir and Estragon are near a tree to wait for Godot. Pozzo and Lucky enter. After Pozzo and Lucky leave a boy enters to say that Godot won't be coming that night. Estragon and Vladimir decide to leave but they do not move. Curtains fall.
- **Act 2.** The next day the two are still near the tree waiting for Godot. Pozzo and Lucky arrive. The former is blind while the latter is dumb. Pozzo does not remember having met them the day before. A boy arrives and says that Godot won't be coming that night and can't remember having seen them the day before. The two contemplate suicide. Then Estragon and Vladimir decide to leave but they do not move. Curtains fall.





Act 2 (final part)



- ESTRAGON:
What do you want?
VLADIMIR:
Approach!
The Boy does not move.
ESTRAGON:
(forcibly). Approach when you're told, can't you?
The Boy advances timidly, halts.
VLADIMIR:
What is it?
BOY:
Mr. Godot . . .
VLADIMIR:
Obviously . . . *(Pause.)* Approach.
ESTRAGON:
(violently) Will you approach! *(The Boy advances timidly)* What kept you so late?
VLADIMIR:
You have a message from Mr. Godot?





BOY:

Yes Sir.

VLADIMIR:

Well, what is it?

ESTRAGON:

What kept you so late?

The Boy looks at them in turn, not knowing to which he should reply.

VLADIMIR:

(to Estragon). Let him alone.

ESTRAGON:

(violently) You let me alone. *(Advancing, to the Boy)* Do you know what time it is?

BOY:

(recoiling) It's not my fault, Sir.

ESTRAGON:

And whose is it? Mine?

BOY:

I was afraid, Sir.

ESTRAGON:

Afraid of what? Of us? *(Pause)* Answer me!

VLADIMIR:

I know what it is, he was afraid of the others.

ESTRAGON:

How long have you been here?

BOY:

A good while, Sir.





ESTRAGON:

That's all a pack of lies. (*Shaking the Boy by the arm*) Tell us the truth!

BOY:

(*trembling*). But it is the truth, Sir!

VLADIMIR:

Will you let him alone! What's the matter with you?

(*Estragon releases the Boy, moves away, covering his face with his hands.*

Vladimir and the Boy observe him. Estragon drops his hands. His face is convulsed.) What's the matter with you?

ESTRAGON:

I'm unhappy.

VLADIMIR:

Not really! Since when?

ESTRAGON:

I'd forgotten.

VLADIMIR:

Extraordinary the tricks that memory plays! (*Estragon tries to speak, renounces, limps to his place, sits down and begins to take off his boots. To Boy.*) Well?

BOY:

Mr. Godot—

VLADIMIR:

I've seen you before, haven't I?





VLADIMIR:

You were afraid of the whip?

BOY:

Yes Sir.

VLADIMIR:

The roars?

BOY:

Yes Sir.

VLADIMIR:

The two big men.

BOY:

Yes Sir.

VLADIMIR:

Do you know them?

BOY:

No Sir.

VLADIMIR:

Are you a native of these parts? (*Silence.*) Do you belong to these parts?

BOY:

Yes Sir.





BOY:

I don't know, Sir.

VLADIMIR:

You don't know me?

BOY:

No Sir.

VLADIMIR:

It wasn't you came yesterday?

BOY:

No Sir.

VLADIMIR:

This is your first time?

BOY:

Yes Sir.

Silence.

VLADIMIR:

Words words.. (Pause) Speak.

BOY:

(in a rush). Mr. Godot told me to tell you he won't come this evening but surely tomorrow.

Silence.

VLADIMIR:

Is that all?

BOY: Yes Sir.





Silence.

VLADIMIR:

You work for Mr. Godot?

BOY: Yes Sir.

VLADIMIR:

What do you do?

BOY: I mind the goats, Sir.

VLADIMIR:

Is he good to you?

BOY: Yes Sir.

VLADIMIR:

He doesn't beat you?

BOY: No Sir, not me.

VLADIMIR:

Whom does he beat?

BOY: He beats my brother, Sir.

VLADIMIR: Ah, you have a brother?

BOY: Yes Sir.

VLADIMIR: What does he do?

BOY: He minds the sheep, Sir.

VLADIMIR: And why doesn't he beat you?





BOY: I don't know, Sir.

VLADIMIR: He must be fond of you.

BOY: I don't know, Sir.

Silence

VLADIMIR:

Does he give you enough to eat? (*The Boy hesitates.*) Does he feed you well?

BOY: Fairly well, Sir.

VLADIMIR: You're not unhappy? (*The Boy hesitates.*) Do you hear me?

BOY: Yes Sir.

VLADIMIR:

Well?

BOY: I don't know, Sir.

VLADIMIR:

You don't know if you're unhappy or not?

BOY: No Sir.

VLADIMIR: You're as bad as myself. (*Silence.*) Where do you sleep?

BOY: In the loft, Sir.





VLADIMIR:

With your brother?

BOY:

Yes Sir.

VLADIMIR:

In the hay?

BOY:

Yes Sir.

VLADIMIR:

All right, you may go.

BOY:

What am I to tell Mr. Godot, Sir?

VLADIMIR:

Tell him . . . *(he hesitates)* . . . tell him you saw us. *(Pause.)* You did see us, didn't you?

BOY:

Yes Sir.

He steps back, hesitates, turns and exit running. The light suddenly fails. In a moment it is night. The moon rises at back, mounts in the sky, stands still, shedding a pale light on the scene. Silence. (....)





VLADIMIR:

We've nothing more to do here.

ESTRAGON:

Nor anywhere else.

VLADIMIR:

Ah Gogo, don't go on like that. Tomorrow everything will be better.

ESTRAGON:

How do you make that out?

VLADIMIR:

Did you not hear what the child said?

ESTRAGON:

No.

VLADIMIR:

He said that Godot was sure to come tomorrow. (Pause.) What do you say to that?

ESTRAGON:

Then all we have to do is to wait on here.

VLADIMIR:

Are you mad? We must take cover. (He takes Estragon by the arm.) Come on.

He draws Estragon after him. Estragon yields, then resists. They halt.

ESTRAGON:

(looking at the tree). Pity we haven't got a bit of rope





VLADIMIR:

Come on. It's cold.

He draws Estragon after him. As before.

ESTRAGON:

Remind me to bring a bit of rope tomorrow.

VLADIMIR:

Yes. Come on.

He draws him after him. As before. How long have we been together all the time now?

VLADIMIR:

I don't know. Fifty years maybe.

ESTRAGON:

Do you remember the day I threw myself into the Rhone?

VLADIMIR:

We were grape harvesting.

ESTRAGON:

You fished me out.

VLADIMIR:

That's all dead and buried.

ESTRAGON:

My clothes dried in the sun.

VLADIMIR:

There's no good harking back on that. Come on.

He draws him after him. As before.





ESTRAGON: Wait!

VLADIMIR: I'm cold!

ESTRAGON:

Wait! (He moves away from Vladimir.) I sometimes wonder if we wouldn't have been better off alone, each one for himself. (He crosses the stage and sits down on the mound.) We weren't made for the same road.

VLADIMIR: *(without anger)*. It's not certain.

ESTRAGON: No, nothing is certain.

Vladimir slowly crosses the stage and sits down beside Estragon.

VLADIMIR: We can still part, if you think it would be better.

ESTRAGON: It's not worthwhile now.

Silence.

VLADIMIR: No, it's not worthwhile now.

Silence.

ESTRAGON:

Well, shall we go?

VLADIMIR:

Yes, let's go.

They do not move.

The End





Stanley and Oliver

- Beckett modelled the main characters of "Waiting for Godot", on Stanley Laurel and Oliver Hardy .
- Just like Stanley and Oliver:
 - a) Vladimir and Estragon are known by their Christian names,
 - b) Use their nicknames Didi and Gogo as Stan and Ollie.
 - c) There is difference in weight between the two characters







The Theme of Suicide



- Just like in *Waiting for Godot*, the two fear that one of them may live while the other dies.
- On stage it is expressed the fear of remaining lonely in an absurd world.
- The presence of a companion is the only real comfort.
- **Impression** of being rooted somehow.





Two tramps



- "The tramp" is generally a good-hearted sort of man, who looks at the world with the innocent eyes of a child.
- Even if he has been relegated to the margin of society he endeavors to behave as much as possible with the manners and dignity of a gentleman.
- The clothes he wears are the sign of his marginalization.
- They never fit properly as to symbolize that tramps are no longer fit to be part of the system.
- Marginalization of the entire humankind









Man in a Bowler Hat (1964)

*"It is a headdress that is not original.
The man with the bowler is just
Middle-class man in his **anonymity**."*

Magritte loved the image of the man in a bowler hat because there is something inherently surreal about it: it is familiar and everyday but it is also strange because it becomes a kind of **impersonal**, even **dehumanising, uniform**.





Son of a Man, 1964. Magritte



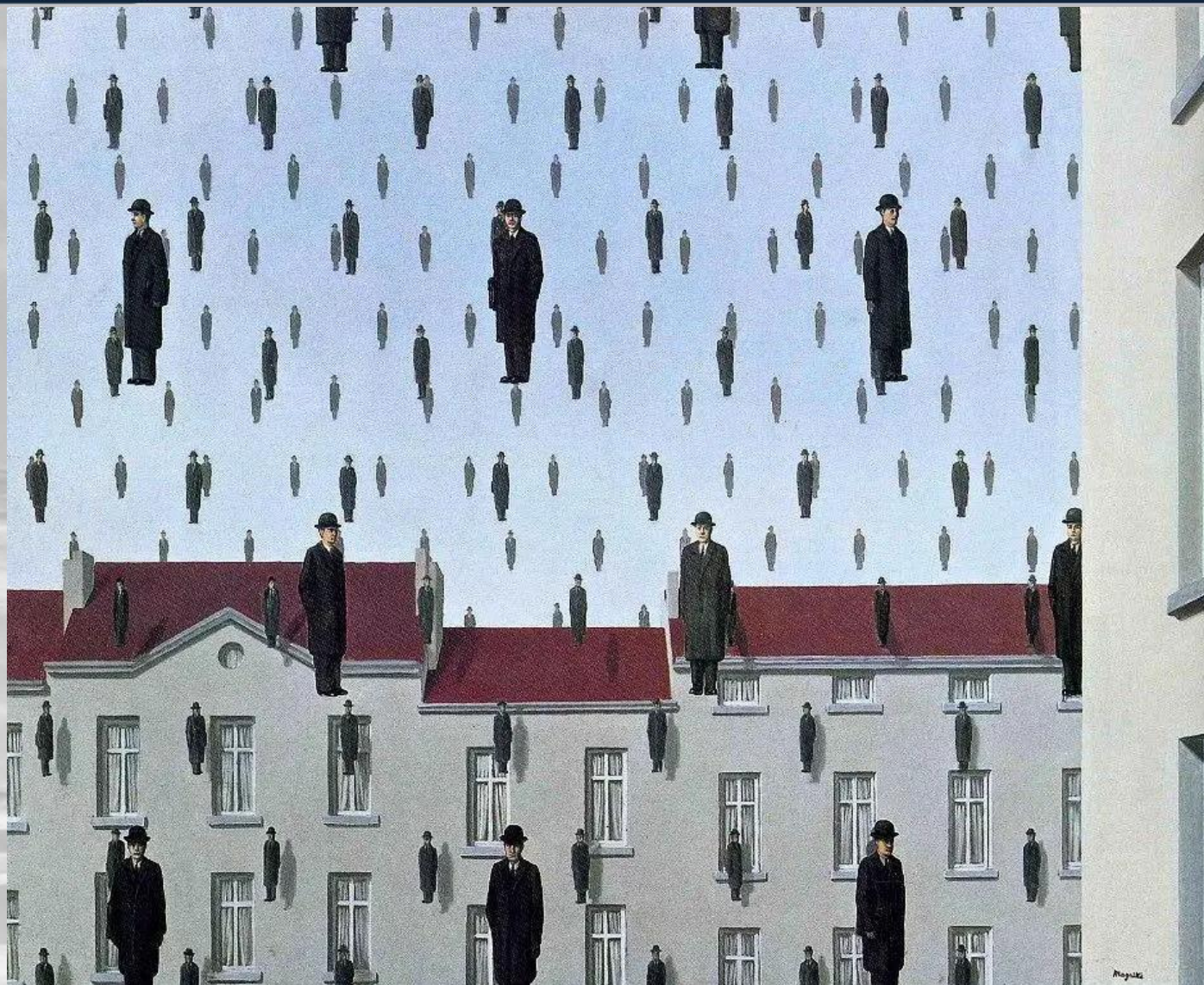


Son of a Man

- Magritte painted **The Son of Man** as a self-portrait.
- The painting consists of a man in an overcoat and a bowler hat standing in front of a short wall, beyond which is the sea and a cloudy sky.
- The man's face is largely obscured by a hovering green apple.
- The man's eyes can be seen peeking over the edge of the apple.

Magritte said: «At least it hides the face partly. Well, so you have the apparent face, the apple, hiding the visible but hidden, the face of the person. It's something that happens constantly. Everything we see hides another thing, we always want to see what is hidden by what we see. There is an interest in that which is hidden and which the visible does not show us. This interest can take the form of a quite intense feeling, a sort of conflict, one might say, between the visible that is hidden and the visible that is present.»





Golconde , 1953 . Magritte





Golconda

- The piece depicts a scene of "raining men", nearly identical to each other dressed in dark overcoats and bowler hats. They seem either:
 1. falling down like rain drops,
 2. floating up like helium balloons,
 3. just stationing in mid-air

A possible interpretation: the canvas generates a sense of **positivity** for the geometry of the elements together with a feeling of **anguish** due to the presence of a multitude of indistinguishable, anonymous figures, without any kind of recognizable individuality and interaction.





What is Surrealism?

- Artistic movement started in the twenties.
- Dalì and Magritte best known painters.
- Surreal means "both real and un-real."
- Surrealism is a style of art that is very much based on dreams.
- Surrealist artists juxtapose unrelated things. They are placed side by side.
- In dreams your mind can create a strange world.
- Surrealist artists wanted to try to capture that in real life.



