



POST MODERNISM IN SAMUEL BECKETT'S *WAITING FOR GODOT*

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ABSTRACT

Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot is a masterpiece in English literature with postmodernistic point of view. It is considered to be the last modernist or the first postmodernist literature. The characters Vladimir and Estragon represents the miserable condition of life in the present. The play gives deep insight into the human conditions, and reflects a mirror to the audience which makes them ask, is this me and my life circumstances.

INTRODUCTION

The early 20th century witnessed two World Wars and in literature, it gives birth two recognizable literary styles : modernism and postmodernism. All the happenings paved the way for the theatrical tradition the absurd drama. Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1948) is a leading play in the Theatre of Absurd, a theatrical outcome of postmodernism which was inspired by existential philosophy and its view that at the root of our being there is nothingness. It represents the psychological barrenness of modern people that arouse after two world wars. As a postmodernist work, the play has its own literary features such as fragmentation, truth and its denial etc.

Beckett's works occupy a particular point in literary history, spanning across the temporal division of modernism and postmodernism. Beckett, as a result, has plagued literary scholars who attempt to categories his works either distinctly modern or postmodern.

Post modernism was originally a reaction or response to modernism in late 20th century. It is considered to be a break from the 19th century realism. In it, the story is told from an objective point of view. The postmodernist theory deals with the turn of external reality into an inner state of consciousness. So, the writer's use of postmodernism in his characters means that these characters use unconsciously show and manifest their inner consciousness through the things that they do. It is used to describe a wide gamut of aesthetic, cultural, historical, literary, and philosophical goings-on. Influenced by Western European disillusionment, postmodernism refers to a cultural, intellectual or artistic state lacking a

clear central hierarchy or organizing principle. Actually, postmodernism is a dramatic deviation of man's thought line. It dismisses the existence of an absolute reality. It believes in the premise 'irrational is real, real is irrational'. There is no pre-determined rules, well-established and long term principles of the literary works of postmodernism. There is no unity of time, place and action in literary work in it. The ending of it can be interpreted in many different ways. Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* shares some postmodernist features.

The play depicts the concept of postmodernism through its major characters, Estragon and Vladimir. These main characters in the play primarily depicts the concept of having "hope" in a situation which does not seem to give hope. The play is basically about two men, Estragon and Vladimir, waiting for Godot. Throughout their waiting time, the only thing they do is to make the time pass by doing things that would practically entertain them.

The title of the play associated with the act of waiting itself. Technically, the play depicts the idea of waiting for someone who is not coming. Through the entire play, Godot does not arrive. He is never present or never introduced on the stage. He represents the thing or person whom most of us want to meet. Waiting entails hope and patience. This work represents the reality that happens most people in real world.

So, from beginning to end, the play explores a static situation. In the play, there is no absolute truth. All things are relative here. Postmodernism asserts that truth is not mirrored in human understanding of it. It is rather constructed as the mind tries to understand its own personal reality. The universe may be ordered by a God with pity for his creations or the universe might be controlled by chance or a cruel fate. The world may sometimes seem peaceful or it may be conditioned by sudden changes.

The characters in *Waiting for Godot* depicts the meaninglessness of everyday life activities. They are carefree, but hopeful and patient. These characteristics primarily show the real characteristics of people in reality. The play illustrates that the everyday life activities of people is meant to show and emphasize a perspective that tells that there is no future meaning that can put meaning to any action done in the present. The writer, Beckett, aims to emphasize the meaningless, pointlessness and nothingness of life. The play suggests that people should make what is present worthwhile.

The present play appears to be about nothing at all. The play is actually not just a play about nothingness at it projects. Thus we can say that the play is an interesting play for a study from postmodernist view. The character setting, language, and the style of the play go with the later 20th century literary movement called postmodernism.



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