

# Waiting for godot – samuel beckett essay sample

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At face value waiting for Godot could be called a simple play. It uses a basic setting consisting of a tree and a road; it is repetitive in its structure and character pairing. It is an uncomplicated play with no established plot, at face value Waiting for Godot could be described as a play about nothing. The substance of Waiting for Godot lies within the ideas and themes of the play, behind this front of simplicity and nothingness. It is a question which has never ceased to pervade mankind; the meaning of life.

A very simplistic setting is used in Waiting for Godot. We know very little about the setting, the time and geographic whereabouts is completely unknown. Although Beckett makes the viewer consciously aware of two components in the setting, the tree and the road. These are the only pieces of evidence Beckett gives us to the whereabouts of the setting, but its ambiguity is irrelevant as this simple setting has symbolic significance within the play and alludes to deeper aspects of life.

The tree and the road create two axes, vertical and horizontal. The road offers possibility of physical movement away, a horizontal transcendence. They can walk this path to find their own enlightenment or let enlightenment come to them, Godot. The tree is what keeps them rooted; it represents practicality and the physical realm. What are present here and now, a perception of reality? It represents an opportunity for growth and development of one's own self and room for spiritual enlightenment, a freedom from conventional (or rejection of conventional) of values and organised religion. To encompass a sense of self and being. The tree is symbolic of tension and conflict, as is shown in the characters Samuel Beckett's plays can be described as simple plays but only at a glance. As the <https://assignbuster.com/waiting-for-godot-samuel-beckett-essay-sample/>

themes and ideas behind them are perhaps not so simple. The main recurring theme throughout *Waiting for Godot* is the question of the meaning of life and existence. This is shown through the characters waiting or search for Godot.

Which could be translated as a search for 'God' or enlightenment. Godot has many associations with God. Firstly his name and perceived appearance; his long white beard. Secondly his association with sheep and goats, and the notion that 'everyone will be sorted'. The idea of Godot is also one of salvation; Vladimir: "We'll hang ourselves tomorrow, unless Godot comes." Estragon: "And if he comes?" Vladimir: "We'll be saved"(5). Along with this notion many ideas about the identity of Godot exist, that can be related to life itself. Who is Godot/God? Does Godot/God really exist? Which comes back to the on going question of the meaning of life. Vladimir and Estragon's search/wait for Godot shows a reflection of our subconscious or conscious quest. The quest for enlightenment.

This quest is again shown through the plays random nature. It conjures up questions as to how Vladimir and Estragon got 'there' in the first place, where they are and what they are 'really' doing. Returning to the notion of our subconscious/conscious need to find enlightenment and the question of the of the existence of God or a higher being.

Again we are faced with the same questions of identity and existence although in relation to reality or the perception of reality. What is really real and what is not. There is question of if they are in the place in which they arranged to meet Godot, if they were in the same place yesterday and if it is

even the same tree. Again, this idea of a perception of reality leads to our need to find enlightenment and a reality in which we can explore in order to do so. Beckett also questions the conceptual. Do things really exist, or do they only exist because we believe they do? This is shown through the passing of time and days within the play. Estragon: ' But what Saturday? And is it Saturday? Is it not rather Sunday?...'(6). This again ultimately brings us back to the notion of God and existence. And whether God does exist or if only within belief.

Beckett's plays are seemingly simple, but the ideas behind them are of a complexity we could not fathom. The meaning of life, the existence of God and our sub conscious/conscious need to find enlightenment. In Waiting for Godot other ideas of reality and concept, in relation to God and existence are also addressed, bringing his audience to question for themselves, the often questioned. Beckett also challenges the normal and the hegemony of values and religion, allowing us to find, within our selves our own enlightenment.

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unknown. Although Beckett makes the viewer consciously aware of two components in the setting, the tree and the road. These are the only pieces of evidence Beckett gives us to the whereabouts of the setting, but its ambiguity is irrelevant as this simple setting has symbolic significance within the play and alludes to deeper aspects of life.

The tree and the road create two axes, vertical and horizontal. The road offers possibility of physical movement away, a horizontal transcendence. They can walk this path to find their own enlightenment or let enlightenment come to them, Godot. The tree is what keeps them rooted; it represents practicality and the physical realm. What are present here and now, a perception of reality? It represents an opportunity for growth and development of one's own self and room for spiritual enlightenment, a freedom from conventional (or rejection of conventional) values and organised religion. To encompass a sense of self and being. The tree is symbolic of tension and conflict, as is shown in the characters Vladimir and Estragon's exchange: " Lets go": " We can't we're waiting for Godot"(1). It is the struggle between respecting the values you were brought up with and lie within your roots, and challenging these hegemonic beliefs in order for yourself to grow and develop as a person, to find your own path of enlightenment (if it is perhaps the true meaning of life).

Beckett's structure and action of *Waiting for Godot* too can be described as ' simple'. Its development occurs in a cyclic process and is often repetitive. The play moves through each day as the characters are searching/waiting for the idea of, or person (Godot) as it seems, and after each day they return to

the same questions and conclusions. Who is Godot? Does Godot really exist? And why are we waiting for him?

Throughout *Waiting for Godot* a constant repetition is noted mainly in the action of the play. Act two reiterates Act one, both Acts share the same motivation, waiting for Godot. Ideas in the first Act are repeated again in the second Act.

In the structure repetition is making for closure and silence. And the repetition of dialogue reverting back on itself, -“ Estragon: Like leaves Vladimir: Like sand Estragon: Like leaves”(2). Sequences of pause and action are also repeated throughout the play. Vladimir: “ Yes but not so rapidly” (pause) Estragon: “ What do we do now?...” (pause) Vladimir: “ How they have changed...”(3). As are certain words Vladimir: “ And dug the dog a tomb...And dug the dog a tomb...”(4).

Samuel Beckett's plays can be described as simple plays but only at a glance. As the themes and ideas behind them are perhaps not so simple. The main recurring theme throughout *Waiting for Godot* is the question of the meaning of life and existence. This is shown through the characters waiting or search for Godot. Which could be translated as a search for ' God' or enlightenment. Godot has many associations with God. Firstly his name and perceived appearance; his long white beard. Secondly his association with sheep and goats, and the notion that ' everyone will be sorted'. The idea of Godot is also one of salvation ; Vladimir: “ We'll hang ourselves tomorrow, unless Godot comes.” Estragon: “ And if he comes?” Vladimir: “ We'll be saved”(5). Along with this notion many ideas about the identity of Godot

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