

1. Anti/Aristotelian/Plotless play
2. Changed convention in Theatre
3. Doubling of action/duplication of action.
4. Carefully structured play.

Waiting for Godot

15/2/08

April

20 Samuel Beckett

14

Saturday

WEEK - 15
104/261

Post war drama - 1948 (written) set staged in a

small Theatre in Paris in 1953 where it ran for 400 performances

As a reviewer Roger Blin revived the play at the Theatre of France in 1961 and commented:

"This is a theatre marked out with a compass and built with a plumbline ... eight yrs ago ...

This was not as perceptible. Construction was effaced by surprise. Surprise is dead. What

remains is a somewhat too methodical arrangement." We might ask what is left when

the pleasure of surprise is gone. Once surprise is replaced by familiarity and

audience is free to give its attention to something more difficult but far from more shocking and interesting, the words of the play. The longer audience focusses on this, the more aware it becomes

of the endless, disturbing, & hilarious possibilities of meaning which, mercifully, no critic will ever have trapped.

Aristotle - plot essence of tragedy.

W for G → no plot in the A. sense. / no surprise. / drama built on the structure of surprise done by deliberate concealment of events.

NOTES

→ a play about perpetual waiting. Godot did not come till the end. The audience will therefore pay particular attention to the hilarious possibilities

of meaning/words / structure A. T. Blin.

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Sisyphus → wisest + most prudent of mortals
A.T. Homer

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Sunday

WEEK - 16
105/260

According to another source he was disposed to practise the profession of ²⁰⁰⁷ highwayman. April

A. → plot + action imp. for the tragedy.

The lack of plot in Wfotg leads the audience's attention to the word play in the drama.

Abсурдист philosophy — taken from Albert Camus' The Myth of Sisyphus.

taken from Gk. mythology — S was consigned to eternal punishment ⁱⁿ as he transgressed God's orders.

what significance?

— worst form of punishment
— unrequited labour

futile + hopeless labour

futilest labour
most painful thing to any human + frustrating

S. was supposed to push up a huge block of stone to a reclined side of the mountain and throw it on the other side. Each time he ~~put the st~~ brought the stone to the summit he was pushed back due to pressure and this continued to eternity.

The Myth epitomises the human predicament of eternal torture & fruitless labour.

Abсурдист Phil? — what is the meaning of human existence / Is there any meaning at all?

Zeus — the supreme Gk. God knew the meaning of existence. Told this to Hermes through whisper. H. whispered it to his ancestors and the 10th gen. of H. is H. This ~~magistat~~ magistat

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A. Dams
 revolves around
 cause. W of G
 doesn't have
 any causality.
 tries to
 recreate
 a moment
 of perception

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WEEK - 16
 106/259

Monday

and the 10th gen of HT is Jesus Christ

TC knew this } why are humans born? /
 reason of survival etc.

2007

April

Why? → change
 A.T. Absurdist
 Phil is illusory
 and essential
 human experience
 and predicament
 remains same.

Absurdist Philosophers →

(Harold Pinter / Eugene Ionesco / S. Beckett)

— Exploring passivity & uncertainty of human life.

In W. for G., the feeling uncertainty it produces, the ebb and flow of this uncertainty — from the hope of discovering the identity of Godot to his its repeated disappointment — are themselves the essence of the play. Any endeavour to arrive at a clear and certain interpretation by establishing the identity of Godot through critical analysis would be as foolish as trying to discover the clear outlines hidden behind the chiaroscuro (play of light and shade) by Rembrandt

by scraping away the paint. Beckett's plays (W for G / Endgame) lack plot even more completely than other works of the theatre of the absurd. Instead of a linear development they present their author's intuition of the human condition by a method that is essentially polyphonic.

NOTE: They confront their audience with an organised structure of statements and images that interpenetrate each other and that must be apprehended

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W for G: 1948 - written enacted - 1953

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Tuesday

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April

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in their totality rather like the different themes in a symphony which gained meaning by their simultaneous interaction.

Beckett - talking about a human situation / of ~~st~~ waiting

God a diminutive form of Godot
↓
endlessly varied and complex concept
→ ~~not~~ realization of desires.

French title Eng. title
waiting Godot.

→ thing that one aspires for / wants to be so that desires are fulfilled

Ruby Cohn - waiting theme of B's plays.

W for G highlights pessimism which is opposed to the optimism of Modernism
↓
essentially to

Western epistemology - a legacy of rationality / enlightenment - Modernism
↓

(84.6) - were erstwhile colonies) → Modernism is not emancipation from all bondage
the culminating point of human civilization / freedom from all kinds of bondage.

a period which culminated in the intellectual freedom of man. (+ pol. freedom)

NOTES

A.T. Post M. (M. a part of the social order of the time)

experimented with form + content and radical change of the conventions.

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Wednesday

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108/257

W for G.

— doesn't believe in the radical emancipation that modernistic art, usually said to do
 — dramatization of a human moment / a moment when human condition seems to ~~not~~ not to change.
 ∴ action → passive.

Existential Philosophy — believed that existence precedes essence
 (Jean Paul Sartre)

↓ Western in phil.

Exis Phil against this { Ch. God in oneself / oneself (having qualities in the element of divinity)
 Bible → God made man after his own image

On the Immortality of human soul (discourse by — soul partaken from God ∴ immortal.

↓ Humans are born set / then the ch. traits are formed by the environment / the people around us / ∴ No divinity in humans / Historical conditions play a role in preparing a human being / Environment plays a formative role + shapes our consciousness.

Exis Phil → believes in the assertion of human role in changing one's destiny / Stress on individuality / by active participation in world affairs.

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Thursday

WEEK - 16
109/256Act II repetition
of Act I
∴ a symmetry.growing of leaves (Act II)
— passage of time
A. T. S. Beckett.to do with ^{noting} productivity/fulfillment
in the lines of Vladimir +
Estragon.

April

Absurd Phil. → Puts forward a kind of passivity/
unchangelessness as part of human condition.Absurd Phil. & W. for G.:W. for G. is a dramatic re-enactment of the
unrecognised absurdity of the world that is lived
and perceived by Beckett's contemporaries. The
drama is absurd in 2 senses. In the 1st place,
it is ridiculously funny as is most of B's writing.
Placed in the perspective of eternity, in the shadow
of death that the living can never forget, the
antics with which the chs. fill their short span
are ludicrous. All are levelled down to the same
laughable status; Estragon's laments over his
aching feet, Vladimir's complaints of his friend's
sweaty socks ~~and~~ games of losing, finding,
swapping hats and boots, suicide attempts, debates
on damnation.The particular translation of 'Absurd' as comic
is B's dramatic version of the ^{its} other, philosophic
-al sense. His black, obscene, pantomime humour
(laughter in W for G arises
from mimetic activities)is an attempt to bring life-preserving detachment
into a situation so atrocious that to view ithead-on could only produce a formless
cry of despair. And absurd world is a
frightening one, it has in itself no norms, no

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Friday

2007

April

WEEK - 16
110/255

absolutes, no consoling certainties, no direction. It simply exists. There is no pre-ordained sense or purpose. These assumptions underlie the existentialism of Albert Camus and Jean Paul Sartre which eventually reshaped the post-war imagination running parallel with the dramatist's vision. To say that life is absurd is to challenge the 2 great acts of faith on which western culture is founded: reason and religion. Confidence in reason is the basis of belief in human ability to order and control the material world.

Religion, especially Christianity & its personal God whose providence directs history gives an overarching assurance that everything is in control. These are the 2 lang. with which V + F must make sense of their world, and they would seem to be just so many empty words. In B's own words, there is nothing but words, divorced from all meaning: (The Unnamable) "It all boils down to a question of words?"

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Saturday

2007

April

WEEK - 16
111/254

'In one of the great seminal heart-searchings of our time, *The Myth of S*, Camus tried to diagnose the human situation in a world of shattered beliefs.' — Martin Esslin

The myth of S is one of the most profound philosophical statements written this century. It is a discussion of the central idea of Absurdity that Camus was to develop in his novel *The Outsider*. Here Camus poses the fundamental question: Is life worth living? If existence has ceased to retain significance when confronted with the fragmented and meaningless reality of the human condition, what then can, or should, prevent suicide? Camus movingly argues for an acceptance of reality that encompasses revolt, passion and, above all, liberty. 'Although *The Myth of S* poses mortal problems, it sums itself up for me as a lucid invitation to live and to create, in the very midst of the desert' — Camus.

S → is the absurd hero he is as much through his passions as through his torture. His scorn of the gods, his hatred of death, and his passion for life won him that unspeakable penalty in which the whole being is exerted towards accomplishing nothing.

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08

Tuesday

WEEK - 19
128/237W. for G
— Samuel B.S.

7/2/08

May

Introduction to P + L — Reiteration.

Structural principle of the play — Repetition/
Duplication/
Action duplicated.

Human cycle is circular.

W for G is a tragicomedy / The tragi-c. implications of
the play — we.In Act 2, P is unrecognisable — blind & vulnerable.
to the pt. — V kicks him / P screams — irritating after a
pt. / This helplessness is
achieved only when all the 4 chs. on the ground.E. says "We are not carriated!"Memory is imp in the play. Q. of memory + Amnesia is
crucial. Certain episodes in the play apparently comical
and meaningless — V + E Q. why does L put down the
bag — P says carrying of the bags imply unequal
relation — Master-slave dialectic / L ∴presented as inferior person who is physically
abused — L is apparently responsible for arming
P with the lang. of morality that covers
up his selfish lack of morals, and with
all those rhetorical skills that
enable the unscrupulous to manipulate
the vulnerable. P acknowledges this.

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09

Wednesday

2007

May

WEEK - 19
129/236Pg. - 26 - ^{Pozzo:} 'Guess who taught me all these

Lucky is the intellectual, the man of ideas & words who has sold his skills to conserve, instead of criticize a corrupt society. He is not a philosopher but an entertainer, a song-and-dance man, and not a very good one any more. Lucky's ^(condition) fate shocks V + E. Though they learn nothing from it. There is a deep irony in the drama. V, the intellectual & would be authority tries to model himself on the self assured Pozzo. What he actually ^(refracting) finds himself imitating in the game of 'playing Pozzo and Lucky' which E. sensibly refuses to take part in is both of them. In the end he is just Lucky. He picks up the intellectual's hat from the floor & keeps it.

The stage business he performs with his own hat at the beginning is repeated at the end with L's hat: he peers inside, shakes it to get out what is stuck there and puts it on. With it, he puts on all the corruption of P's world. It is not only P's physical violence & bullying that sustains the master's power. It is also more insidious force of the intellectual tradition, which urges, as L. did in his speech, that authority, scientific reason and death are the natural fundamental principles of the universe. Death is certainly so; authority & scientific reason are equally so

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history → memory
∴ m. lapse → the history of humanity is wiped out/erased.

10 Thursday 2007 May

WEEK - 19
130/235

certainly not κ only L's persuasion ever made anyone think they were. At the end of the day, it is L's own fault that P. can dispose off him so easily because L. has recruited so many to P's service 'As though I were short of slaves'.

Sequence of action of the 2nd Part : — imp

Roger Blin — Whether leaves signify fruition/vegetation/fulfilment of life?

B — leaves only meant passage of time.

~~W for G~~ challenges W for G challenges concept of religion κ God.

Rein tied to L's neck → short

↓ shortened form indicate the power of the authority + P much more dependable on the L / P much more vulnerable ∴ needs more authority on L.

W for G → (sums up the monotony + boredom of human life ∴ repeated actions/cyclical pattern of actions.

V+E through their actions this brings out.

Farce — evokes laughter through physical movement/deviation in physical movement (ref. to E trying to pull V up κ falls).

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beginning
Assess para
- no of 5.

11

Friday

WEEK - 19
131/234

Critically examine this and comment
on the theme of WforG. from L's
pb. of views.

May

Lucky's tirade (expression of anger/abuse on
someone) Pg - 36-38

is actually thinking aloud so that
audience/readers can understand the ch's thought.
ch must articulate his thoughts.

Comment on L's tirade: - When rehearsing the
play in Berlin in 1975, B. began with L's speech,
as though it contained the core of the play.
The rehearsal diary kept by his assistant director,
Walter Asmus, quotes B's approach to the speech:
"We are going to divide it into 3 parts and the 2nd
part is going to be divided into 2 sections. The
1st part is about the indifference of heaven, about
divine apathy. This part ends with, quotes 'but not
so fast ...' 2nd part starts with 'Considering what
is more' and is about man who is shrinking,
man who is dwindling. Not only the dwindling is
imp here, but the shrinking too. These 2 pts. rep.
the 2 undersections of the 2nd part. The theme
of the 3rd part is 'the earth abode of stones' and
starts with 'considering what is more, much
more grave?'"

- God indiff. to man -> Absurdist phil/Myth of Sisyphus.
futile labour

NOTES

L. venting out anger - There is no

God/ no one to reward him for

his action/ No laws of morality/ethics/

casualty/ stumbled into an Absurdist
world.

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Gestapo
to the
German
soldiers
under Hitler's
leadership

Swift (satire)
in which every
beholder watches
others' faces
except his.

12

Saturday 2.

2007

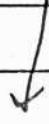
May

WEEK - 19
132/233

Imp:
Symbols

rope

whip



The symbol of the rope and the whip are central to B's W for G. The rope that joins them, the whip ~~th~~ with which P threatens, are symbols of authority, indispensable because custom. The normal bond of authority seems to have broken down. P is the man of property and lucky is helpless servant. W for G has also been read as a pol. allegory. Readers and audiences overlook the most obvious thing about the world of the play that it resembles France occupied by the Germans, in which its author spent the war ^(end) years. In many theatrical versions P's gesture is Prussian. He may be a Gestapo official clumsily disguised. We may state its universality in this way: only a fraction of the human race experienced the German occupation of France, and only a fraction of that fraction waited, or resistance business, for some Godot. But everyone, everywhere, has waited, and wondered why he waited. In other words the play is about human experience which endorses its universality.

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KL. - spans over more than 3 mths.

13 Sunday ^{Venice ← seat of capitalism} ^{Volpone - satire on lust/avarice/greed/capitalism} / has an element of ^{correcting the society} **May**

WEEK - 20
133/232

drama unfolds in time & space / It needs some time to finish / the hrs. needed for

the enactment of the play + the internal structure of the play / how many hrs it takes → imp.

space/locale - imp
→ without any geographical locale/ref.

Shakes. plays locale is an ~~archo~~ arcane / aesthetic reification ^(concretisation) - doesn't exist in reality (ref. Arden / Othello) (fantasy/imaginary) not related to reality.

B's biography / yrs spent in France during war yrs

links the play's pol.

ideology with the locale (France). Plays ∴ gains a pol. dimension.

Ben Jonson - realist playwright (Bartholomew Fair) - Eng. Fish market - setting

Cher Kristin Ross - The Emergence of Social Space - Bk.

→ Observes that Q. of space is always pol. & strategic.

↓ B. has deliberately situated play's locale is German occupied France / P. → the oppressor
↓ G. Soldier

L. → the common man of France.

W for G → Pol. Allegory / one must keep in mind

that P+L+V+E → cut off from the society /

NOTES

dissociated / delinked from society

Fig of tramp signifies a man detached from society.

↓ by nature is optimistic (trusts to better itself) + progressive

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14 Monday

2007

May

Wheel of Fire
- Arion's wheel
(classical)

WEEK - 20
134/231

→ develops new forms / Man who is detached from society are obviously not thinking of development → they are ^(apathetic in a helpless condition) static / insufficient
↓
doesn't do anything to change their situation

^{P+L}
Why V+E are looked as tramps? — Society's Fabric

{ collapsed during 1st WW. / V+E+P+L
→ state ^{rep.} of inbet. ness in which man is placed in a crisis be. it pol. / social / ecto. / Society passing through moments of pol+ historical crisis. / Tramps
∴ experience helplessness / they are men without any hope.

→ Play as a Pol. Allegory.

Gawain
Prologue

Tempest
Measure for Measure