
UNIT 2 *GODOT* : A CRITICAL ANALYSIS-I

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Brief Comments and Key Questions
- 2.3 Critical Analysis : Act I

2.0 OBJECTIVES

To analyse the text of the play in the background of the distinct aspects of the play discussed briefly in Unit 1.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

We will raise some key questions here, which you should bear in mind when you start reading the play along with the critical analysis. As you look for answers to these questions, you will get to understand the play better.

2.2 BRIEF COMMENTS AND KEY QUESTIONS

Let us first look at the stage decor in *Waiting for Godot*: Compare it with the elaborate stage decor in other plays you have studied.

In this play it is an open country road with a leafless tree--a tree if we can call it. Beckett has not placed his characters in a 'specific' place or time. By refusing to mention the specifics, is Beckett trying,

- i) to decontextualize the play and lend it, simultaneously, a 'universal' dimension in terms of time and space?
- ii) Do you think this dramatic device makes the play an open-ended play which, in turn, reinforces (i) above?
- iii) Further, can we take the road as an emblem of movement, future, and progress, where other people might come along?
- iv) Do you think a positive answer to (iii) above will possibly make the play, a play of hope which the word "waiting" in the title seems to denote? However, if read ironically, will "waiting" acquire different connotations? If so, what?

In case of the *dramatis personae* too, Beckett strips them of their genealogy and renders them rootless. We are not told anything about the two main characters, Estragon and Vladimir. We are left to hazard a guess about their nationalities as also

about their background only by their names. Beckett, thus, takes away man's individuality, identity, his property, his family, his place and function in society, and then begins to strip man of his normal 'human equipment' also as is seen in *Endgame*, where the main characters are deprived of their legs and mobility.

It is not just that the two tramps, Estragon and Vladimir, have no home and no locale, what is worse, they seem unaware that they have neither.

We will talk about the significance of these aspects in the later units. Please first try and find out the significance of the 'names' of the *dramatis personae* as you attempt to find answers to the questions that follow.

As stated above, Beckett does not give the nationality, history or past life of the characters. So,

- i) What, in your view, is Beckett trying to convey through this device?
- ii) Do their names hint at their possible nationality?
- iii) Does he wish to make the play cross-cultural in its content and intent, although Beckett denied any attempt to "internationalize" the play by giving the characters French (Estragon), Russian (Vladimir), English (Lucky), and Italian (Pozzo, pronounced Podzo) names?

2.3 CRITICAL ANALYSIS: ACT I

The play starts with the reunion of two tramps Vladimir and Estragon. You will note that in beginning of Act I, Vladimir says, "I am glad to see you back . . . Together again at last" (p. 9). The use of the word "again" shows that they have been here earlier also. Compare Vladimir's remark in Act II "You again!" (p.58)

There is a lot of exaggerated physical action in the play, which provokes laughter. Note how Estragon pulls at his boots "with both hands panting" and is "exhausted."

Beckett believes, that "the first words should introduce the theme of the play. The opening words in *Godot* "Nothing to be done" do precisely that. These words will echo again and again during the course of the play.

In line with the exaggerated action we observe that Vladimir moves with "Short, stiff strides, with legs apart" as he suffers from the enlargement of the prostate gland--a complaint common in old age. His gait reminds us of the king of comedy, Charlie Chaplin.

On their meeting the two tramps embrace each other; whenever they meet they go through the same motions of greeting.

Also, you will note the mock-heroic manner in which Vladimir addresses Estragon, "May one enquire . . .?" The latter's response to it, "In a ditch" instantly pricks the air bubble of the heightened style.

Estragon informs that he had been beaten by some people whom he identifies only as "They". What "they" refers to remains a mystery, much like the malevolent cosmic forces, the tormenters of humanity. "They" are as mysterious as *Godot* is to be later. Beating here signifies human suffering. So when Vladimir remarks that "We should have thought of it [the human suffering] a million years ago" Beckett attempts to historicize it and also brings it closer to our times ("in the nineties").

How do human beings cope with their suffering? Estragon and Vladimir had, during their younger days, together planned to commit suicide by jumping off the Eiffel Tower. But, Vladimir thinks, in their present condition, they would not be allowed to go up the Eiffel Tower and will thus be denied even the most despairing choice (of committing suicide).

Estragon, however, remains occupied with his personal "suffering" caused by his hurting shoes. Aghast when asked by Vladimir if his shoes hurt, Estragon addresses the audience directly, "Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts!" He, thus, draws the audience into the play -- an instance of Brechtian influence on Beckett, who through such theatrical devices, breaks the illusion of being in a theatre.

A little before this Vladimir mimics maternal scolding to a child: "Shoes should be taken off everyday. I'm tired telling you that." (p.10). Such a characteristic feminine banality is further repeated in a conjugal tone: "There is a man all over for you.... Fault of his feet." (p.11). Vladimir suddenly has an urge to pass water - his kind of suffering due to the prostate problem. The play introduces a more sombre note, which, with the tramps' comic manner in the background is further accentuated. When Vladimir plays upon the Proverb, "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick," and uses the word 'something' in place of 'heart' Beckett introduces 'uncertainty' as a theme.

Both, remain preoccupied with their respective problem, Estragon with his boot and Vladimir with his intense urge to pass water. He feels it coming and yet it doesn't. So he is "Relieved and at the same time appalled. Estragon in order to even up with Vladimir asks if his difficulty in urinating hurts, Vladimir's response to it is identical to Estragon's. He too addresses the audience directly: "Hurts...". Vladimir keeps examining his hat for some foreign body in it and Estragon, in the meanwhile, succeeds in taking off his shoe. The play once again moves from banality to the biblical plane when Vladimir refers to the story of the two thieves and Christ. Beckett himself referred to St. Augustine's words about the two thieves: "Do not despair, one of the thieves was saved; do not presume, one of the thieves was damned." Beckett claimed that he had always been impressed by the symmetry of St. Augustine's words

You will observe that such a symmetry works at different levels in the play: it corresponds to Estragon's feet, one of which is 'damned', the other is 'saved'. Later, of the two tramps, Estragon is 'beaten', the other, Vladimir 'saves' him and is 'saved' himself.

Vladimir, ever resilient, finds the percentage of being saved 'reasonable'-- as chances are fifty-fifty.

Also, it is interesting to note that only in the list of characters are the tramps named Estragon and Vladimir. Right through the play the two address each other by their nicknames, Gogo and Didi. Could we say that with passage of time their eight-lettered names (Vladimir and Estragon) have been reduced to four-lettered each (Gogo and Didi), which falls in line with what, Lucky later says about man "that man in spite of the strides of physical culture the practice of sports . . . shrinks and dwindles."

Estragon's proposal to "repent" for the sin of their being born, which brought about their respective suffering, evokes a hearty laugh from Vladimir which he stifles immediately as laughter revives his pain (due to prostate gland enlargement).

Beckett quoted Calderon who said, 'Man's greatest sin is to have been born.' It seems to be Beckett's one of the most deeply felt convictions.

Having stifled his laughter suddenly Vladimir smiles as suddenly from ear to ear. Laughing and smiling mechanically highlight Vladimir's clownish antics. On being

asked if he had read the Bible, Estragon's reply, "I must have taken a look at it" is characteristic of his inconsistency", since later in the play he affirms that all his life he has "compared himself to Christ" (p. 51). Estragon goes on to speak graphically about the maps of the Holy Land, and his deep desire to go to the Dead Sea. Since there is "Nothing to be done" Vladimir offers to tell the story of two thieves in the Bible to pass time. Estragon, however, is disinterested in the story and declares: I am doing. Yet he doesn't move. Such a dichotomy between proposal and action underlines element of the absurd in the play, which will be repeated several times.

The story of two thieves was used by Beckett in *Murphy* also, where Neary says, "Remember also one thief was saved". In the Bible three Evangelists speak of the thieves: St. Luke 23:43 speaks of a thief being saved. Of the other three Evangelists, St. Matthew 27:38 and 27:44, and St. Mark 15:27, contrary to Vladimir's assertion, do mention the thieves. Thus, an inaccuracy is committed by Vladimir ~~when he says~~, "Only one speaks of a thief being saved . . . of the other three two don't mention any thieves." This inaccuracy can be attributed to the theme of "uncertainties" in the play. Besides, Vladimir is not a student of theology.

Vladimir maintains that people believe the kindlier version of the story because they, possibly, hope that they too shall be saved if they have the faith even of one of the malefactors.

After some feverish movement Estragon alternately turning his back to the auditorium and then facing it, is appreciative of the "Inspiring prospects" and suggests they leave. Vladimir, however, reminds him: We are *waiting for Godot*. This, like "Nothing to be done," is one of the leitmotifs that run through the play and give it cohesion. The two tramps, however, are not sure about the place and day they were to meet *Godot*. As they stand by the leafless tree near which they were to meet *Godot*, Vladimir tries to guess about the species of the tree. Perhaps it is a willow, a weeping-willow. With its leaves now dead, there will be no more weeping. Suffering, in case of human beings too, ends with death. In the existentialist view living is suffering.

Gogo and Didi keep contradicting each other about time and place of their appointment with *Godot*, Vladimir, finally, turns towards the auditorium, which alongwith the tree, should be the the place to meet *Godot*. Vladimir calls the auditorium "that bog". Vladimir draws the audience too, into the absurd situation in which the tramps themselves are. Here is another example of Brechtian influence.

Further, bog is a wet, muddy area, or, a toilet in informal British English. Look how Beckett is reductive of the auditorium and audience. If Estragon slept in a ditch, audience is in "the bog". Would you say that Beckett is, thus, trying to universalize the absurd situation.

Estragon and Vladimir's uncertainly about their appointment further reinforces the elusive and shadowy nature of *Godot*. Finally, Estragon falls asleep and has a dream, during which Vladimir feels lonely, which shows that the two tramps need each other's company very badly, This is further reinforced when they plan to commit suicide together later in the play.

Estragon desires to narrate his dream to Vladimir, who declines to share his nightmares. The intellectual, rational mind, Vladimir recoils in horror from the fantasies of the creative mind, Estragon. Their conversation leads Estragon to an obscene French joke which turns on the alleged preference of the English for odomy. Estragon invites Vladimir to embrace him which the latter does reluctantly. Estragon, however, recoils since Vladimir stinks of garlics. So, if Estragon has stinking shoes, Vladimir has stinking breath. Such parallellisms are a pervasive feature of the play.

Since they have nothing to do, Estragon and Vladimir think of hanging themselves. They, by mentioning "mandrakes", (p.16) give an evidence of their love for knowledge. An ancient fertility symbol, mandrake, is believed to grow below the gallows. Note that death and birth being two facets of the same coin, Gallows, a symbol of death, is put side by side with mandrakes, fertility symbol.

Also see the humorous situation how each is urging the other to commit suicide first. They in the end decide not to do anything but wait for *Godot* to see what he has to offer them.

Estragon's question: What exactly did we ask him for? sets off the first music-hall type cross talk between the two tramps at the end of which the two sink into abrupt, temporary silence. After a while they adopt a grotesquely rigid posture, remain frozen in this posture as they hear some indiscernible voices or shouts. These give them a scare and also a hope--hope about *Godot's* arrival.

Estragon asks Vladimir whether they *are* tied. They are tied to "*waiting*" for *Godot*. They cannot get away from it as doing so would mean giving up hope, howsoever illusory that hope may be? Notice how Vladimir does not reply and the question is dropped and then picked up again. In doing so Beckett replicates the inconsequentiality of every day conversation in which the subject of discussion gets dropped, and then is either lost sight of completely or picked up again much later. Estragon's remark about the carrot, which he is eating, that "the more you eat the worse it gets", elicits a sick response from Vladimir: "I get used to the muck as I go along." His concluding remark that "The essential doesn't change" is an expression of despondency about human condition. Or, may be of the futility of human struggle. Or, further still, a belief that, at one level, change changes nothing, essentially speaking. Or, as Pozzo would state: "The tears of the world are a constant quantity.

The tramps once again hear a terrible cry. They feel threatened and also wait expectantly for the human source of cry to emerge on the stage. Their response to it is a mixture of the comic and the pathetic. It also underlines their vulnerability and need for each other.

Lucky enters, driven by Pozzo by means of a rope. Though Pozzo drives Lucky, he is no less bound to Lucky himself. There is complementarity in the master-slave relationship, which gets further reinforced in the Second Act, where Pozzo's dependence on Lucky, as he goes blind, increases.

Beckett's "drama of inaction" does not really lack in action and suspense. See how suspense is created about Pozzo's appearance on the stage. The audience too is wondering, like the two tramps, whether this isn't *Godot* at last.

Pozzo, a local landlord introduces himself in a highly dramatic manner, which, reflects his pride, his loudness and the pompous attitude. His arrogance and pompousness are further reinforced, when he is peeved to find that his name does not stir them. The two tramps on their part put on an act of not recognizing him in order either to deflate Pozzo of his pompousness, or to make fun of him.

Pozzo on the other hand, is condescending in his attitude towards the two tramps, who, he grants, belong to the same species as he (Pozzo), and have been made in God's image Pozzo, thus is not only self-elevating, but is also, on the other hand, undercutting God's image.

Estragon and Vladimir make statements in which they contradict themselves, about their initial reaction to Pozzo and instantly create a comic situation.

The question, "Why doesn't he put down his bags?" asked on p.25 too is dropped, and is not answered until p. 31, by Pozzo. Pozzo's exaggerated behaviour is quite comic and in this backdrop his treatment of Lucky as a beast of burden underscores human

tragedy. Lucky, in order to impress Pozzo, doesn't put down his bags. In the meanwhile they have a close look at Lucky and describe him by themselves lapsing into a music hall cross talk. Pozzo feasts on chicken and wine and Estragon craves for the discarded bones, which Pozzo maintains should go to the carrier (Lucky). However, in face of Lucky's silence, they are offered to Estragon, who, to Vladimir's embarrassment, darts at them and gnaws them.

Writing about Lucky, Professor Duckworth while making two suggestions about the source of his name, says (i) Lucky is 'lucky' because he gets the bones or (ii) he is lucky because he has no expectations, hence he'll not be disappointed in life. cf. "Blessed are those who do not hope, for they shall not be disappointed." Is Estragon, in usurping Lucky's role as a taker of discarded bones, identifiable with him, in a limited sense?

Pozzo's speech on pp. 29-30 is noteworthy for its monologic quality. Besides he mimics a nervous public speaker, as Pozzo himself admits: "You're making me nervous." Before starting to answer the question, he "Sprays his throat . . . clears his throat, spits". His exaggerated action heightens the comic effect.

There is drama with in drama, when Pozzo forgets the question he was asked and, Vladimir and Estragon act as prompters. The former prompts by mimicking Lucky and the latter by uttering monosyllabic words and half sentences to help him recall the question, which he finally does and gives his own explanation for this, ridiculing "Lucky, son of Atlas" trying to impress him [Pozzo] in vain.

Pozzo nonetheless realizes the blind freakish nature of fate. He could have been in Lucky's position, if fate had so willed.

Lucky begins to cry when he learns that his master wishes to get rid of him. There is an instance of black humour as black humour as Lucky's suffering affords Pozzo an opportunity to poke fun at him and playfully suggest to Estragon to wipe away his tears before he stops crying. As soon as Estragon approaches Lucky, the latter kicks him violently in the shins. Estragon starts bleeding, and howls with pain. He, as if, has replaced the weeping Lucky.

"Pozzo suddenly turns very philosophical, when he says: "The tears of the world are a constant quantity: for each one who begins to weep, somewhere else another stops. That is, human suffering remains unmitigated, Lucky, Pozzo acknowledges, taught him all beautiful things.

The intellectual barrenness of Pozzo is symbolized by his baldness, in contrast to Lucky's abundant white hair. Pozzo's baldness fits well in the scheme of things. There is all round barrenness! The subject of turning Lucky out of job is resumed and we have the two tramps mockingly sympathizing with Lucky and Pozzo by turns. On his part, Pozzo too acts as an aggrieved person at the hands of Lucky. He, however, puts on a brave face when he asserts, "Do look like a man that can be made to suffer" (34). The tramps are having a charming evening.

Here is an example of drama within drama, in which the two tramps now play the role of audience to Pozzo's performance. It is made more apparent a little later. On the next page (P.35) when Vladimir compares it [Pozzo's role] to the pantomime, the music hall, and the circus. The idea of drama-within-drama reaches a climax when Vladimir wishes to relieve himself of full bladder and asks to Estragon to 'Keep my seat' (p. 35). In an immediate reverseal of roles Estragon hurries Pozzo (to be a spectator and) to watch Vladimir urinating.

Beckett, thus, breaks the illusion of the world of drama, which, paradoxically, at one level, gets accentuated. In the meanwhile Pozzo loses his smoking pipe, of Kapp and Peterson make, which he had smoked after eating chicken. Another comic situation arises when Pozo who had got up to leave wants to sit for a while but wishes

Estragon to request him to take a seat with all the formality attending it. The latter in a rather comic and circumlocutory way asks him "to take weight off your feet. I implore you, you'll catch your death" When asked by Pozzo, Estragon gives his name as "Adams". Either Estragon assumes "Adams" to be (i) a character in the game he plays with Pozzo, when he requests him to be seated, or (ii) Beckett thereby attempts to add to the symbolic meaning of the play representing the entire mankind.

Pozzo's indulges in a harangue about night; where it becomes synonymous with death, with Vladimir longing for night, "Will night never come?" - which will bring relief, albeit temporary, from their long *Waiting for Godot*. Pozzo has found the two of them quite civil to him and wonders if he could do something for them, whereon Estragon grabs the opportunity and says, "Even ten francs would be welcome." A comedy of error ensues when Vladimir is outraged at Estragon's lowering himself to a beggar's level. Estragon, however, interprets Vladimir's angry words, "That is enough," to mean that five francs would be sufficient, and is quick to declare that he wouldn't settle for anything less than that.

Desiring to do something for the two, Pozzo wishes to know what they would want Lucky to do for them: dance, or going, or recite, or think. Vladimir, the intellectual wishes to "hear him [Lucky] think but later on goes along with Estragon's preference for 'dance' first and 'think' afterwards.

Lucky dances, which is another example of 'performance' within drama. As this point Estragon playing the 'critic', attempts to dance like Lucky but fails and almost falls Beckett, thus, under scores the big hiatus between 'creativity' and 'criticism'. A little later Vladimir too feels called upon to make some critical comment on Lucky's dance. His "squiriming like an aesthete" only reveals his pretentiousness. Thus Vladimir fails as a critic while Estragon fails as a performer.

Footnote

Beckett mentions a number of dances here which are as follows:

Farandole	:	French dance performed in a long string.
the fling	:	Scottish impetuous dance.
the brawl	:	old French dance: mentioned in <i>Love's Labour Lost</i> , III, i, 5-6.
the jig	:	a lively (jerky) dance.
the fandango	:	lively Spanish dance.
the horn pipe	:	Sailor's dance.
Caper (ed)	:	danced in a frolicsome manner.

Lucky calls his dance variously, 'The scapegoat's Agony,' 'The Hard Stool' and 'The Net' a trap. Lucky's dance is supposed to convey agony, strain and entrapment. It calls up the sense of being hunted, . . . having no escape in much the same way as Estragon and Vladimir remain on stage (they do not move - p. 54 and p. 94); as there is no other world for them.

When Estragon says "My left lung is very weak! But my right lung is as sound as bell" it echoes the motif: One thief was saved the other was damned! Chances of our being saved are fifty-fifty.

Reflecting on the basic situation of their life, Estragon notes: "Nothing happens nobody comes, nobody goes, it is awful!" It applies, in a limited way, to the play as well.

After watching Lucky's dance the two of them want him to think. Pozzo tells them that Lucky can't think without his hat on. This is comic, because the other three cannot think with their hats on. You will see how in order to terminate Lucky's

thinking they have to remove his hat, as if an energizer has been removed from a machine. Thinking, thus, becomes mechanical. This is in line with "thinking" later, as a command performance. Lucky stops suddenly after commencing "thinking" when he is commanded to "stop," and resumes when asked to "think" by Pozzo (p.42)

MacGowran is of the opinion that Lucky's speech is really one long sentence.

General points from Lucky's speech are enumerated herebelow:

1. We are told God exists and loves us, yet we cannot be sure;
2. We work, play, apply our rationale, yet none of these activities is able indefinitely to avert decay;
3. The physical world of water, earth, air and fire (or the elemental forces are) is indifferent to man;
4. We must face the incapacity of our reason to make sense of life and the inevitability of our extinction.
5. Lucky's speech is a monologue of non-sequitur. Beckett has modified a specific form of dramatic convention. He has altered the stream of consciousness device to jar coherence at every level.
6. Lucky's attempt at thought stands as a brilliant monument to man's entanglement in uncertainties.

Ruby Cohn has stated that "the repetitive passages summarize or parody several of the play's themes: the erosive effect of time, the relativity of facts, the futility of human activity, faith in God, and proof through reason" *Samuel Beckett: The Comic Gamut*, p. 217.

"Lucky's speech is, thus, more than a continuous run-on of unpunctuated idiotic words and phrases; there is a latent intelligibility" (Open University Lesson, p.).

Lucky's speech begins with "Given the." We know "Given that" is a traditional way of introducing a rational argument and a basis of deductive logic. Parody of rationality in one sense, Lucky's speech is, in another sense, the ultimate in rationality, because it makes the overall point that the faults of existence and the surrounding universe do not submit to reasoned exposition or rational explanation.

Lucky invents names like, PUNCHER and WATTMANN which literally mean, ticket puncher and tram-driver. Here they are supposed to be authors of theological works. And in his incoherence of "Quaquaquaqu," theological jargon is mimicked.

When Lucky speaks of "divine apathia, divine athambia divine aphasia loves us dearly with some exceptions for reasons unknown," . . . he highlights a God who is insensitive to human suffering, God whose existence too is questioned.

Beckett, it seems, is being ironical when he refers to God's heights of divine apathia: which means freedom from or insensibility to suffering, or athambia, that is, 'imperturbability' or unsurprisability; or, aphasia, which means muteness, or inability to communicate. In addition, the unsympathetic universe is conveyed by the stage decor, and the futility of life through the sand that Lucky carries.

Acacacademy of Anthropopometry: Academy of man measurement.

Anthropometry is measurement of the human body, distortion of spellings by adding 'caca' and 'popo' to academy and anthropometry respectively.

caca and popo: Childish words for excrement and chamberpot respectively.

Crowned: awarded (a prize).

Essy-in-Possy: Lat. esse, to be, and posse, to be able, being able, potential existence: are terms from medieval scholastic jargon, here conveying parody of university training in philosophy and theology.

Testew, Cunard: Names coined after private human parts. Testicle: male reproductive gland. Cunt: a very rude and offensive word that refers to a woman's vagina.

Fartov, Belcher: Names of vulgar origin. Fartov: derived from 'to fart', 'Belcher'-- from 'to belch.'

In Lucky's speech, Beckett wishes to underline that in spite of the shrinking and dwindling over ages and the knowledge of the decline of man and his unmitigated suffering, the labours of Testew and Cunard (i.e. procreation) continue.

Fletcher calls Lucky, "senile professor, decayed scholar and degraded man of reason," who makes a kind of statement that in spite of the existence of a loving God (of sorts) and progress of various kinds, man is in full decline." Science offers no more consolation than does theology.

Human activity is summarized, in brief, as alimentation and defecation.

Does Beckett, through Lucky's surface gibberish, demonstrate his irreverence for logically connected thought?

It is interesting to note that Wellworth in *The Theatre of Protest and Paradox*, identifies this parody of stream of consciousness monologue as the clearest statement of Beckett's belief in the uselessness of thought.

Feckham: Invented name of a fictitious London district.

Peckham, Fulham: Possibly two places where the poet Blake had visions.

Clapham: an area in London district.

Per caput: per head

Bishop Berkeley: The French version reads Voltaire; an earlier English version reads Samuel Johnson. All these thinkers are of the 18th century, called the age of Reason and Enlightenment. Berkeley, an Irish philosopher (1685-1753), was one of the great empiricists and a leading representative of the brand of philosophy known as idealism. According to Berkeley, things which cannot be perceived cannot be supposed to exist; since God perceives everything, this, thus ensures its existence. Perhaps Beckett introduced Berkeley into Lucky's speech to link with Estragon's question: 'Do you think God sees me?' (Fletcher, p. 76) i.e. Estragon while seeking reassurance of God's existence seeks his own.

Lucky's thinking aloud is a "command performance". The torrent of his incoherent speech is a parody of stream of consciousness monologue and is clearest statement of Beckett's belief in the uselessness of thought. Lucky's thought can be terminated by taking his hat off his head.

Thinking thus, becomes a mechanical process, as do the subsequent movements of Lucky, who appears completely exhausted.

To ensure that there is no possibility of Lucky going into his 'fit' of thinking again, Pozzo crushes Lucky's hat under his feet.

Pozzo who had earlier lost his dudder and, vapourizer, finally loses his watch too. It remains a mystery as to how and where they are gone!

Half-hunter: Hunter: a watch whose face is protected with a metal case (a half-hunter, if that case has a small circle of glass let in).

Dead-beat: Quite overcome, exhausted, tired.

Escapement: An escape: part of a time piece connecting the wheel work with the pendulum or balance, and allowing a tooth to escape at each vibration. The 'dead-beat escapement', connects up with the theme of exhaustedness of the tramps, Pozzo and Lucky.

Instead of searching his fob (a small watch pocket in the waistband of trousers) for watch, Pozzo doubles up, and tries to apply his ear to his stomach, to hear its (watch's) tick-tock rather than feel it and see whether it is there or not. The play is full of such clowning or comic actions, which in the present case is made funnier by Estragon and Vladimir's joining Pozzo to hear the watch's ticking.

When told that tick-tock is not of the watch but of his beating heart, Pozzo's response is: "(disappointed) Damnation!" His response raises many questions: Is Pozzo disappointed with life ticking away? Or, with life continuing like this? Or, with not being able to locate his watch? Does his response not take the play off to existentialist level? The comic situation is carried further as Pozzo's interest right now seems to be more in his watch than in his heart. Pozzo who got ready to depart on a couple of occasions but did not, appears to feel tied down to the situation as do Estragon and Vladimir.

Further, Estragon's response: 'Such is life', shows that it is difficult to depart both from the 'situation' one is in, and also from 'life'; as has been shown by the failed attempts of the tramps to commit 'suicide' and thus depart from it. Finally, the two of them leave and Vladimir, with a sense of satisfaction remarks: "That passed the time". Estragon's reaction to it that "It would have passed in any case" brings into sharp focus a sense of inevitability, and acceptance of the reality of life.

Vladimir and Estragon's talk about the change, both, Pozzo and Lucky have undergone, shows that they have met them before.

For Vladimir, this encounter has happened before and will happen again, in Act II, when the two have "changed"--Pozzo having gone blind and Lucky dumb. Estragon seems to have forgotten about their earlier meeting, but he questions Vladimir why did they not recognize them? Vladimir with a sense of self-importance says: "I too pretended not to recognize them" It shows not only the hurt 'self-esteem' of the tramp, but simultaneously such reactions, comic in nature, evoke laughter too.

The appearance of the Boy (Godot's messenger's) towards the end of Act I does many things simultaneously. In the first instance his words assure us that Godot exists. The Boy's appearance brings hope and terminates it in the same breath. He, however, regenerates hope when he holds out promise for Godot's arrival the next day. He introduces some mystery, and also establishes connection between Godot and the God of the Bible by disclosing the work which he and his brother are engaged in: looking after the sheep and the goats, a familiar biblical image. And, finally, the word "again" in Vladimir's "Off we go again", shows that the boy has been here before.

The Boy addresses Vladimir as Mr. Albert and Vladimir responds to it. He is kind and more humane towards the Boy, whereas, Estragon is harsh in tone, and behaves like a bully.

Vladimir attempts to pacify Estragon by indirectly reminding him of his [Estragon's] own plight at the hands of his tormentors. Estragon's attitude towards the Boy shows that the victimized don't hesitate in victimizing others, as is seen in Lucky's kicking of Estragon earlier in the play. In the course of their conversation we are informed that Godot beats the Boy's brother; and thus the play's leitmotif, "one thief was saved, the other damned" is repeated. One brother is beaten, the other is not.

When the Boy states that he does not know whether he is happy or unhappy living with Godot, Vladimir includes: You are as bad as myself. Suddenly the light fails and in a moment it is night which brings a sense of relief to him, as that will put an end to their futile wait for Godot, and will, possibly, bring rest and sleep to them. This also provokes Estragon, the poet, to quote from P.B. Shelley's poem "To the Moon": "Art thou pale for weariness/Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth."

Estragon leaves his boots at the edge of the stage and intends to leave barefoot. To Vladimir's suggestion that he can't go barefoot, Estragon, who has all his life compared himself to Christ, replies: Christ did.

Estragon wishes to be reminded to bring a bit of rope to commit suicide the next day, and also recalls an abortive attempt at suicide he had made earlier in his life by jumping into the Rhone. He was, then, fished out by Vladimir. Twice did he try to 'depart' from life, but could not. Having stayed together for about fifty years Estragon, wonders if they wouldn't have been better off alone. The two are different in character and in action, yet at some level they are so very similar, and complementary that they realize that separating now from each other is not worth its while. Together they decide to leave but do not move, and remain frozen in their situation.

The fact that they do not move after suggesting so underscores the disjunction between language and its meaning, besides highlighting the static nature of the play.