

Drama

Waiting for Godot

Questions for discussion

1. In what world is the play set? What are the features or rules of that world?
2. How does Beckett make use of the form of the drama? That is, how is drama an appropriate genre for what the text does, as opposed to essay, on one hand, or poem, on the other?
3. How does the play speak to the issues of its time? What does the play have to do with the first half of the 20th century? More specifically, the Holocaust? WWII in general?
4. Read the play as a critique of secularism. How does that interpretation go?
5. Read the play as a critique of antifoundationalist epistemologies. If time is unstable, identity is unstable, memory (history) is unstable, what are the implications?
6. Beckett himself is expansive in his treatment of “the mess” of modern life: “[T]here will be a new form; and ... this form will be of such a type that it admits the chaos and does not try to say that the chaos is really something else ... To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now.” How does *Godot* fit into this idea?
7. How does *Godot* treat the meaning of life? If waiting for Godot is fruitless, what is fruitful?
8. How is death treated in the play? How is *Godot* an existentialist work? That is, if the encounter with death throws life into stark relief, how does that affect the purpose of life? Is this view satisfying?
9. We have made a list of themes. Which themes feel most prominent, now that we have finished the play? What does the play say about the themes?
10. Why do you think this play considered an important work of world literature?
11. What questions do you have about the staging of the play?
12. As an actor, how do you regard characters who have some humanity but about whom less is known and who seem in ways to represent philosophical concepts or to set up a theme in the text?
13. How do you regard the characters? As children? As tools of the play to get at idea? In some other way?