

CORRESPONDENCES IN THE ABSURD: A BAUDELAIREAN READING OF SYMBOLISM IN WAITING FOR GODOT

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Abstract

This research shows the symbolic interpretation of Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot (1953), stands as one of the most influential play of the twentieth century and a defining text of the Theatre of the Absurd, through the Baudelairean lenses. This paper explores the profound symbolic and philosophical complexity through objects, actions, and spatial design to represents themes of waiting, despair, hope, and identity. It also shows that how Waiting for Godot rejects conventional plot, character development, and linear temporality, instead relying on symbolic minimalism and repetitive structures to represent the existential condition of modern humanity. In addition, this study applies a Baudelairean symbolic framework, drawing on Charles Baudelaire's concepts of correspondence, the flâneur, and the discovery of beauty within suffering, to reinterpret Beckett's symbols of barren tree, Estragon's boots, interchangeable hat, the burden-filled bag, Pozzo's rope, the road, and the absent figure of Godot. This analysis arguing that Beckett's use of ordinary objects and actions functions as the primary vehicle through which themes of waiting, futility, hope, alienation, power, and identity are articulated. Furthermore, the Pozzo-Lucky relationship is analyzed through a Marxist lens as a symbolic representation of power, exploitation, and dehumanization, with material burdens reflecting social and psychological oppression.

Keywords: Symbolism, Correspondence, Baudelairean, The flâneur, Discovery of beauty within suffering, Despair, Allocation

Introduction

Waiting for Godot (1953) as a significant figure of Theatre of Absurd explores the suffering of human existence. The play was initially considered a representation of the Absurdist philosophy, representing its denial of logical cause, effect, the cyclical and meaningless existence of human life. Moreover, later discourses in criticism have developed this understanding, relating Beckett's play to a multitude of approaches, that is, existentialism, semiotics, Marxism, psychoanalysis, and postmodernism. This indicates that Beckett's symbolism is dynamic and it is constantly revised according to different historical and cultural contexts.

Beckett's use of commonplace objects like the tree, the boots, the hats, bag, rope, road, and the absent presence of Godot, give deep meanings and significance beyond the use they were originally put to. These symbols consider as an extraordinary representation of human condition. The empty tree, the endless road, the ritual of the waiting act of Vladimir and Estragon take together the gist of a world in suspension, where movement and meaning are but illusions, a drama symbolical of the existential predicament of the modern man.

Recent work (2018-2025) has even added further layers of meaning to Beckett's symbolic code by relating these themes to their equivalents in a post-pandemic world. According to critics, "the cyclical nature of this work and its symbolism correlates perfectly well with what people are feeling today about isolation, loss of control, and dehumanization," adding that "this work has a way of capturing what everybody's going through in this post-pandemic world." The relationship between Pozzo and Lucky has been analyzed in a Marxist and social context as a "symbolic representation of imbalance in power relationships."

In addition to developing philosophical and socio-political views of Beckett, this article introduces a symbolic lens of Charles Baudelaire to further examine the dramatic imagery of Samuel Beckett's work. Through elements in Beckett's work that correspond to Baudelaire's concepts of "Correspondence", Flâneur, and the beauty found in suffering and decay, this

study interprets the symbols presented in Beckett's work as representing the emotion and spirituality of the human condition rather than as fixed allegories.

Statement of the Problem

The study presents the unique perspective about the absurdity in *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett using the lenses of of Baudelairean symbolism given by Charles Baudelaire specially focusing on correspondence, the Flâneur _the man who saunters around observing society_, and the beauty found in suffering and decay. This approach highlights the idea that minimal symbols can depict larger picture as ill-fitting boots, barren landscape and burdensome bags represents hard and ugly reality of life but on other hand Baudelairean analysis shows that how aesthetic meaning emerges from discomfort and despair.

Furthermore, the issue identified by this research is the absence of a unified, integrative approach towards analyzing symbols in *Waiting for Godot* from multiple existentialist, semiotic, socio-political, and Baudelairean viewpoints. This study will attempt to fill that void by looking at the way Beckett's symbols come together to convey meaning in the absence of straightforwardness, through recurring themes, and by using the element of not being there, which further illustrates why this particular piece of literature remains applicable to our day and how it portrays the contemporary human experience.

Significance of the Study

Through this study, we can better appreciate Beckett's minimalism in drama and apply that minimization to our own understanding of writings. This research and analysis will provide scholars with a theoretical framework through which they can engage in the integration of the existentialist and absurdist philosophies of the time, as well as semiotic theory, with a Baudelairean symbolic framework. For example, Charles Baudelaire's concepts of Correspondences, Flâneur, and the Beauty of Suffering and Decay, provide scholars with a unique perspective from which to view the works of Beckett and provide an alternative way to view Beckett's work. As obvious through the examples provided in this research, this perspective includes the emotional, sensory, and psychological aspects of the symbols Beckett used and also includes the idea that everyday objects—trees, boots, hats, bags, ropes, roads, and Godot—are not fixed allegories but are fluid signifiers.

Research Questions

1. How does ordinary objects like boots, road, hat and bag represents suffering of human life?
2. How Baudelairean analysis presents different signified through same signifiers, which expand the perspectives?
3. How does the Baudelairean symbolic framework _ particularly the ideas of correspondence, the flâneur, and beauty in suffering provide a deeper insight of Beckett's symbols use in *Waiting for Godot*?

Research Objectives

- To use a Baudelairean lens—the concepts of Correspondences, flâneur and the beauty that can emerge from suffering or decay—to interpret the play's symbols.
- To analyze the way power and exploitation are symbolically represented in the relationship among the characters.
- To understand what Godot's absence means symbolically in relation to the themes of hope, salvation and delayed meaning.

Literature Review

Historically, most early critics interpreted Beckett's seminal work via absurdism, while more recently, contemporary readers are interpreting Beckett's work through a postmodern or existential lens, placing Beckett's drama within a continuum of cultural and philosophical discourse. The body of research published from 2018 through 2025 has broadened the

interpretative scope of Beckett's symbols to include contemporary contexts including post-war trauma and nihilism, as well as the feelings of isolation and despair related to COVID-19 pandemic.

Symbolism and the Structure of Meaninglessness

Akhter and Al-Kadery (2025) describe *Waiting for Godot* as a drama of "ontological vacuum," in which objects like the barren tree and worn boots represent humanity's cyclical endurance in the face of absurdity. Their analysis thus far suggests that Beckett mirrors the philosophical despair articulated by Camus in *The Myth of Sisyphus*—The infinite repetition of useless acts constitutes life.

In addition, *Sajjad, Kaloi, and Mustaf* maintain that the play's physical objects—the bag, rope, and road—serve as signifiers of alienation and metaphysical burden. Drawing from Heidegger's notion of *Geworfenheit* ("thrownness"), they interpret the characters' futile waiting as "the human condition of being thrust into existence without purpose or direction.

Mir, Ahmed, and Ahme (2025) further elaborate on Beckett's minimalism, stating that it is a "semiotic vacuum," where repetition replaces progress and every symbol becomes an empty container of deferred meaning." In their comparative study of Harold Pinter's *Birthday Party*, the authors assert that Beckett's language transforms ordinary objects into paradoxical signs of both familiarity and estrangement. God, Hope, and the Absurd symbolic structures, Godot remains central to existential and theological interpretation.

God, Hope, and the Absurd:

Sah (2025) explains Godot as a nihilistic deity—a projection of humanity's yearning for purpose in a godless cosmos. According to Saha, Beckett subverts Salvadorian allegory by portraying salvation as perpetually deferred, rendering "waiting" itself the essence of existence.

Rony (2025) supplements her perspective by asserting that the play mingles absurdism and nihilism in such a way as to depict a world that is devoid of any kind of essential meaning. As far as he is concerned, the act of waiting becomes both humanity's and its only affirmation of being.

Adatiya (2025) adds a different dimension by interpreting food, like the recurring car-rot and turn-ip scenes, as symbols of scarcity and survival. She situates Beckett's symbolisms within material and psychological deprivation, aligning the absurdist struggle.

Together with the modern crises of poverty and lack of resources, such a reading extends Beckett's turns to metaphysical absurdity into a tangible social experience, and epitomizes how the search for Food parallels the search for meaning.

Companionship, Alienation, and the Post-War Psyche:

Recent works revisit the companionship of Vladimir and Estragon as a metaphor for interdependent despair.

Halidiya interprets their relationship as paradoxical. It speaks to the co-existence of dependency and isolation, harking back to Camus's idea of shared absurdity, *The Myth of Sisyphus*. *Nandy* (2025) expands this notion by looking at the "post-war psyche" Interpret the barren landscape of Beckett's work as symbolic of collective trauma and psychological limbo. Similarly, *Zamira* (2025) analyzes the symbolic instability of identity. Through the exchange of hats, suggesting that selfhood becomes fluid and fragmented within the repetitive cycles. These readings align with reactions that align Beckett's props—the hat and boots, for example—with shifting identity and helpless endurance.

Post-Pandemic and Contemporary Relevance

Newer research places *Waiting for Godot* within twenty-first-century existential crises.

Khan & Khattak interpret the endless waiting at the play's end as an allegory for post-pandemic alienation and the collective loss of control. They say that Beckett's minimalist

stage anticipates the emotional paralysis of modern humanity in conditions of isolation and uncertainty.

The connection between how individuals relate to Godot and the world in Beckett's theatre is explored by both *Akhter and Al-Kader (2025)* and *D'Souza (2025)*. They argue that since the play's first performance in 1953, the symbols within it—such as boots, the tree, hat, bag, and Godot himself—show an ongoing evolution as they continue to serve as a means of reflection on how humanity encounters every day and considers the absurd through various symbols, which can be seen as continuing to evolve based on society's needs. These objects are a means of investigating the metaphysical by employing what Esslin described as “visible metaphors of anguish.”

Research Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative, interpretive research design which is “analysis and interpretation of comprehensive narrative to gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest” (Gay et al., 2012, p.7). Research's main aim is analyzing the symbolic significance and philosophical depth and thematic complexity of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. A Qualitative Literary Research paradigm is an excellent way to investigate abstract philosophical themes like meaninglessness, waiting, alienation and identity which are very difficult to quantify but need a deep engagement with the literature and a critical approach toward their interpretation.

In the research, the interpretive paradigm is the guiding theory, which means that meaning is not definitive, but rather is constructed through language, signs, and the cultural environment. The interpretive paradigm closely links to what Beckett intended to do when writing his plays: to challenge conventional understandings of how meaning is created. Thus, the interpretive aspect of Beckett's work is the main focus of this thesis.

The research uses two primary data sources: Primary Data- The authoritative English text of *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett (1953) with an emphasis on the dialogue and all forms of written stage directions by way of consistent actions that are represented symbolically through onscreen properties, actions and events. Secondary Data -Journal articles, critical essays, books and recent academic works from (2018–2020) that relate to Beckett, the absurd theatre, the symbolism, the philosophy of existentialism, semiotics, and the poetic nature of Baudelaire's work. These sources help in contextualizing the study's interpretations and support claims of credence.

For the purpose of this study, I used a purposive sampling technique to identify key recurring symbols in the text, as well as aspects that helped develop its thematic framework. A few of the items selected include: The tree, boots, hats, bag, rope, road, Godot and the repetitive act of waiting. Rather than base the choices on representativeness of the entire text, these symbols were selected based on their frequency and density of symbolism as well as their critical importance to the text.

I utilized several different tools to analyze the text in a detailed manner to achieve the depth and quality of these analyses. A Close Reading approach was taken to examine the text's language, imagery, repetition, and stage directions. A Thematic Analysis was conducted to determine the recurring themes present in the text; and finally, a Semiotic Analysis was conducted to examine the signs, signifiers, and signifieds contained within the text.

For the purpose of ensuring credibility and trustworthiness in my interpretations, I triangulated my interpretations of the text through the use of multiple theoretical frameworks, along with the engagement of current scholarly literature. When supporting my analytical claims, I included quotations from the primary text so as to demonstrate transparency and to have the highest degree of academic integrity.

The studies conducted for this paper will be limited to textual analysis only; performance studies, audience reception and/or empirical data will not be included. Therefore, interpretations of this text can be considered open-ended due to the ambiguous nature of Beckett's work.

Theoretical Framework

The study draws on Existentialist Philosophy, most specifically the works of Jean-Paul Sartre and (to a lesser extent) Søren Kierkegaard's works, as a background against which to examine concepts such as Individual Freedom, Anxiety, Responsibility, and Meaning Searching. Existentialism states that people exist within a purposeless world and that we must face the anxiety of living it through the many choices we have. This philosophical outlook is depicted by the continuing indecision and paralysis seen throughout *Waiting for Godot* in the actions of Estragon, who says various times, "*Nothing to be done.*" Beckett (1953, p. 70), as an example of the acceptance of no control over one's life and an acknowledgment that one's limitations exist in the same place as human limitations. Another example is Vladimir's way of thinking, when he says, "*We are waiting for Godot*" Beckett (1953, p. 77) shows the tendency to shift responsibility and search for meaning externally rather than within oneself. A significant part of Sartre's work on existence is that we have freedom as human beings yet remain paralyzed by fear, or the result of excessive comfort or uncertainty. Beckett's view of freedom is one of Burden, as opposed to Liberation.

The research also represents the essence of Albert Camus' Absurd idea lies in the disparity between a human being's desire for meaningfulness and the indifference of the existing universe. Camus explains, "*The Absurd stems from the relationship of humanity's desire for meaningfulness and the response provided by the world's indifference.*" Many of Samuel Beckett's works illustrate this relationship through the utilisation of repetitive structures, circularity and finality. Repeating phrases including: "*Let's go*"; "*We can't*" and "*Why not*" as well as "*We are waiting for Godot*" (Beckett, 1953) demonstrate this cyclical quality and convey to readers that they are trapped in a cycle of wanting and never being able to attain their desire or ultimate purpose. This supports the Absurd meaning by illustrating that in the same way that the meaninglessness of Godot continues to put off "meaning" for another time, so too does Absurdism imply that the only logical answer to Absurdism is to continue seeking fulfillment until death or until a final end can be established.

The paper provides the detailed analysis of Semiotic Theory. We use a model of signs (signifier and signified) developed by Ferdinand de Saussure and concepts of myth and connotation created by Roland Barthes to evaluate upholstered furniture in Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*. The objects represent unstable signs according to Saussure because their meanings change over time and are based upon cultural perspective (Saussure). Beckett's example of the tree, boots and hats as signifiers in *Waiting for Godot* illustrates this changeability. The meaning of these items is ambiguous or ungrounded because they have no definitive reference. Saussure points out that in Act I, the tree represents a dead or dormant state yet in Act II it has leaves so Vladimir states, "*It must be Spring*" (Beckett, 1953). Thus while a seasonal cycle may provide a "symbolic" rebirth the reality of the objects does not change so the idea of stability is false.

Similarly, the dialogue in *Waiting for Godot* creates an arbitrary sign system. This sign system is characterized by the characters inability to remember what they have said thus supporting the point by Barthes that meaning is created based on cultural and situational context as opposed to being intrinsic (Barthes, 1972).

The study also purposes that how the meaning embedded within Charles Baudelaire's symbolic work. It is a fresh and fascinating view for comprehending Samuel Beckett's works, most notably the interpretation by Baudelaire's *Correspondences*. In his work *À l'Art* (1857),

Baudelaire offers an outline of how nature can be understood as the Temple of Nature, which allows the possibility of ambiguity and how Beckett uses symbols: "*Nature Is A Temple Of Pillars That Speak Confusingly At Times*." Baudelaire and Beckett both perceive emotional meanings to be expressed indirectly. The characters in Beckett's works reflect a pain, boredom and lack of spiritual connectedness through the use of various symbols such as boots, bags and ropes. Estragon's attempt to put on his boots is a representation of the physiological decline of the human condition and a demonstration of the sense of hopelessness experienced by a number of individuals in a world that can only be represented by the phrase "*they hurt me!*" (Beckett, 1953). Baudelaire believed that beauty could also be found in the decaying of items, and for that reason he expressed his understanding of decadence as an aesthetic truth, and this belief parallels Beckett's view that the patterns of life that can be read ugly or repetitively are also examples of aesthetic truth. Baudelaire referred to the flâneur as a person who takes to wandering about and observing the alienation of themselves in their surroundings. The way in which the characters walk aimlessly through the city illustrates the flâneur Characteristic.

The study also represents, Marx examines the power dynamics, class divisions, and exploitation embodied in the relationship between Pozzo and Lucky. Marx sees capitalism as a system wherein people are objectified into free agents of labor and commodified objects (Marx 1867) from the Marxist lens.

The paper also analyze, Freud's theory of "repetition compulsion," a basic theory of psychoanalysis, is the foundation on which to interpret the cyclical behaviour of the characters in *Waiting for Godot*. In Freud's view, people experience repeated occurrences of trauma, which are not resolved emotionally (Freud, 1920). The characters' continual struggle with the themes of waiting, amnesia, and suicidal contemplation expressed in the line, "*Shall we hang ourselves?*" (Beckett, 1953) is a representation of their state of both psychological paralysis and anxiety. A characters' sense of identity and a sense of self are disrupted by amnesia and become unachievable due to the inability to create a unified identity. The result of the characters' psychological paralysis and anxiety becomes evident in Samuel Beckett's account of their struggles.

In conclusion, this interpretative framework for analyzing *Waiting For Godot* synthesizes various ways of looking at the text, including Existentialism; Absurdism; Theories of Semiotics; Symbolism in Baudelaire, Marxist Theory; and Psychoanalysis. As a result, based on the analysis of waiting for Godot, we conclude Beckett has provided us many dynamically charged emotional symbols related to the depressed state of the human condition (philosophically); and the symbols form a critical basis for understanding contemporary society's social injustices concerning the nature of the human condition; furthermore, the dynamic and emotionally charged symbols found in his plays, as well as the representations of an individual's fragmented psyche, are used as coping mechanisms to adapt to despair and fragmentation; finally, we can conclude Beckett's work is relevant at every time, culture, and today; we will also conclude one can never fully attain meaning; and only be deferred.

Analysis and Discussion

Symbolism in Literature

The term symbol itself is derived from the Greek word symbolism, which means "sign," "mark," or "token." The literary function of symbols is a tool used by a writer to communicate more profound or abstract ideas by representational use of tangible objects or events in the writer's work. The philosophies of Charles Baudelaire will guide our examination of Samuel Beckett's symbols and provide insight into how Beckett's symbols correspond to Baudelairean symbols. According to Baudelaire, symbols act as conduits to express and depict moods, emotions, and philosophical states concerning daily life. Beckett's

symbols can also be viewed as Baudelairean; they exist as tangible objects (e.g., trees, boots, hats, bags, roads, Godot) with a presence outside of the physical world. The relationship between these objects and the philosopher's (and poets') innermost world can be understood through the "correspondences" of Baudelaire and his visual-symbolic works.

The "Correspondences" of Baudelaire:

Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers / Laissent parfois sortir de confuses paroles. La nature est un temple où des piliers / se laissent quelquefois échapper les paroles. Nature is a temple where living pillars / sometimes let out confusing words.

« L'Albatros » contemporain : Le Poète est semblable au prince des nuées / Qui hante la tempête et se rit de l'archer. (Le poète est comme le prince des cieux / qui s'envole dans l'orage, et se moque de l'archer)

1. The Tree

The Tree as a Symbol of Regeneration In Egyptian mythology, the idea of regeneration is represented through the life of a tree. As leaves fall from a tree in the fall and come back to life as new ones grow in the spring, this represents the same cycle of birth, death, and rebirth or renewal which is a belief in the afterlife for all people.

Tree as a Symbol of Hope In Act 2, the sprouting of the leaves from the tree represents a new beginning, thus showing hope for the future and renewal of life.

Tree as the Cross in Christianity The tree is also considered to represent the cross that Jesus Christ carried to the cross for crucifixion. As in the above example, the tree is made from the trunk of a tree which formed the cross for the crucifixion. The cross was a symbol of extreme suffering and pain experienced by men on Earth.

Tree as a Symbol of Confusion and Uncertainty Because the sudden appearance of the trees has caused confusion and lack of understanding of the setting and time frame for the story of Act 2.

Baudelairean reading:

Baudelaire's Correspondences argues for secret analogies between nature and spirit: the tree is not merely a physical object but a "living pillar" in the temple of being whose seasonal change mirrors inner cycles. The tree's sudden sprouting (Act II) is therefore a symbolic echo — a correspondence between temporal renewal and an irrational psychological hope. The tree acts like a "sign-post" in Baudelaire's temple, connecting sensory event (leaves) to spiritual mood (false hope, fleeting consolation). Use "*La nature est un temple...*" to argue the tree's growth produces "confused paroles" — the characters' contradictory reactions (hope + confusion) are precisely the kind of correspondences Baudelaire describes.

2. The Boots

Symbol of Struggles of Life: Estragon's boots symbolize the struggles of life which cannot be changed. The opening statement of the play shows that Estragon is apparently talking about his boots and his inability to take them off. It means that there is nothing man can do but exist, live from day to day. Throughout the play, he tries to take off his boots but he cannot. He tries to get rid of his boots, but the next day, he wears them again.

- Estragon says: "*Nothing to be done.*"

- Vladimir says: "*There is nothing to show.*"

He cannot change things, certainly all the important issues such as hunger, poverty, hypocrisy, etc. "All my life I have tried to put it from me."

Symbol of Oppression: Existentialists say that boots are also the symbol of oppression. The boots serve as a symbol of the oppression and exploitation inherent in slavery. Lucky's acceptance of Pozzo's boots and his willingness to wear them despite their discomfort represent forced submission and slavery.

Absurdity of Life: When we say that life is meaningless, we just want to get rid of this meaningless world. Similarly, Estragon cannot take off his boots; he gets tired of it. The next day, he starts again, exhausted. This is the absurdity of life.

Symbol of Helplessness: Boots show the helplessness and inability to cope with any problem of this meaningless world. "The more we want to get rid of it, the more it comes before us."

Baudelairean reading:

Baudelaire insisted that beauty can be found in sordidness and suffering. Estragon's boots — grotesque, painful, humdrum — become the locus where Beckett exposes modern suffering: boots correspond to social and bodily constraint. For Baudelaire the poet sees the marvelous in the mean; likewise Beckett forces us to perceive ethical and aesthetic meaning within the humiliating, ugly object of the boot. The repeated, humiliating actions around the boots create an atmosphere (sensation) rather than a logical moral lesson — which is Baudelaire's favored poetic move. Boots perform the Baudelairean function of revealing truth through an ugly object: they evoke an emotional, immediate recognition of oppression and exhaustion rather than an argument.

3. Godot

Religious Allegory: According to Christian mythology, Godot represents a religious allegory. The Biblical story of the two thieves led to many readings of Godot. This is hardly surprising.

Second Coming: Obviously, to any audience familiar with Christian theology, this must be an allusion to Christ's second coming; otherwise, the whole allusion makes no sense to a Jewish audience. The coming of their messiah would be clear.

Godot or Higher Power: Godot, in this case, represents a higher power or God. The characters that are waiting for him represent a human being looking for divine intervention. Godot's white beard represents the old man in the Bible who was portrayed as God.

Salvation or Rescue: Godot also stands for the hope of doing something about the situation caused by people leaving the faithful behind as they awaited salvation from his coming.

Symbol of Myth: Beckett stated, in discussing Godot, "*Godot is not a person. He is a presence, a force, and a myth.*"

Silence and Death: Some people think that Godot also represents death and silence of universe.

Search for Meaning: Characters in *Waiting for Godot* demonstrate how we all seek our places in life through the waiting process. Each one represents a way to be.

Symbol of Existentialism and Uncertainty: Godot's absence shows that characters do not know if Godot will come or if he exists at all. They even have no idea that what Godot represents.

The Futility of Waiting: Godot never appears; he represents nothingness, an empty promise, an empty hope, an idea that waits to be manifested. Hence it shows the emptiness of lifelong longing for something that likely does not exist.

Baudelairean reading:

Godot as an absent presence aligns with Baudelaire's idea that the world speaks indirectly. The characters expect a transcendent sign; Baudelaire would say that the sign is always mediated, partial, and ambiguous — a correspondence that may never fully manifest. Godot is a symbolic condensation of modern spiritual hunger: the poem/play shows that signs (like rituals, words) sometimes fail to deliver a clear transcendence, leaving only a mood — again, a Baudelairean territory where poetry must evoke the lack rather than fill it.

4. The Bag

Tendency of Enslavement and Burdens: The way we behave leads us to enslave ourselves by making our lives miserable with burdens, representing the human tendency to impose surrender onto themselves.

Meaninglessness and Absurdity: The idea of carrying a bag full of sand in Act 2 indicates that we carry unnecessary, frivolous bundles of burden that are pointless and silly. By representing life as one of meaningless and absurdity, it shows that we carry burdens with no meaning or value other than to amuse others.

Oppression and Exploitation: By having Lucky carry the bag for him, Pozzo ensures Lucky is oppressed and exploited by him, while Pozzo's exploitation (of Lucky) represents the relationship of the oppressor (the powerful) to the oppressed (the weak). As illustrators of the relationship of master and slave, Pozzo and Lucky represent a relationship of capital and labor.

Baudelairean reading:

The flâneur define as the detached, observing poet of the modern city, recognizes scenes of exploitation as part of the urban spectacle. In Beckett, the bag and Pozzo–Lucky relation are moments that the poetic gaze collects as correspondences: the physical burden (sand-filled bag) corresponds to social burden (class exploitation). Baudelaire's flâneur would register their suffering not to moralize but to map an emotional geography of modern life: the texture of labor, the dull weight of meaninglessness — exactly what the bag symbolizes.

5. The Road

Symbol of Journey of Life: Compared to the ups and downs of life, the twists and turns of life are very much like the bends and turns of a travel route.

Uncertainty and Ambiguity: We are told that no place can be named after yourself (i.e., American, African, British, etc.), but we have two facets of the journey: direction and destination. Therefore, as we move along our journey by car, we can never know the precise location of our actual destination (i.e., destination point).

Symbol of Transition (Evening): No specific date reference, so the/in-transition indicates a person at the moment of change who is between hope and despair and/or life and death.

Baudelairean reading:

Charles Baudelaire has said that aimlessly wandering through modern cities was a way for a person to experience everything that existed around him because he would not have to actively participate in anything, since everything was already predetermined by the cityscape. In an observation of W. W. Behn's work, he describes how people like Vladimir and Estragon and the Flâneur can move through their lives as lost souls. For Baudelaire, it was not about being physically lost; it was about being totally spiritually lost.

In the Correspondence essay, Baudelaire stated that nature speaks to us in secret signs. To the Flâneur, the barren road serves as a symbolic/natural connection between the characters and nature itself.

The road becomes a mirror of the characters' spiritual; the absence of a direction becomes a symbol for the loss of direction. In Baudelaire's view of nature being the tallest place, it is also the place of greatest beauty. Therefore, the journey of the современный фланёр becomes a journey to beauty through a process of endurance. Thus, for Baudelaire, boredom in Modern society is a "cursed" disease. Therefore, the road portrayed in *Waiting for Godot* depicts this modern boredom—the sense of having a journey with no end destination and also the feeling of living without purpose.

6. Pozzo's Rope

Symbol of Oppression and Slavery: Lucky wears a rope around his neck which he is being pulled by Pozzo in order for Pozzo to control him; therefore, Lucky has no ability to resist

and must go wherever Pozzo takes him by using that rope. When used as a tool to keep Lucky obedient to Pozzo, this tool becomes a clear example of how one person's dominion over another can lead to exploitation by that person forcing obedience onto Lucky instead of allowing Lucky free will. This tool of domination signifies a clear master-slave relationship between Pozzo and Lucky.

Symbol of Power Imbalance:

Pozzo possesses the rope that represents power. Lucky possesses the rope → represents subjugation. The manner in which Pozzo and Lucky move and react to each other demonstrates how one person can control another's actions, identity and thoughts.

Symbol of Human Beings as Burden-Carriers: Lucky's ability to follow Pozzo's orders and commands without question is symbolic of how people in general carry emotional burdens due to social pressures, and expectations placed upon them by society. The rope symbolizes the burdens associated with human nature, or the connections between each person in relation to their responsibility, or structure, instead of being "free."

Symbol of Dehumanization: It is a symbol of the social construct that reduces human beings to an animal-like condition, where Lucky is treated as a mere object instead of as a person. This demonstrates the ways in which society has taken away the dignity of those who are less powerful than others.

Baudelairean reading:

Baudelaire contended that the external world was an expression of the inner (internal) truth of people and societies, as well as their social realities (i.e., social structures and institutions) or objects of oppression, psychic dominance and emotional enslavement. For example, the rope serves as more than just an implement; it also embodies or symbolizes something that is not visible or tangible – namely, those invisible chains of social oppression, psychic dominance and emotional enslavement that bind men to one another. This can be equated with the "sign," as described by Baudelaire in his writing on Correspondences, which represents human suffering. Baudelaire's flâneur is a poetic observer who observes the various forms of exploitation that exist in today's modern world. The example of Pozzo dragging Lucky signifies how the modern world reigns over the weak by means of force rather than choice. The result is a modern spectacle of oppression, which the poet must view with great unease and discomfort. Baudelaire believed that within that discomfort came beauty; in fact, the rope, while a tool, serves as a raw, truthful representation of the relationship between humans and the society in which they live. Baudelaire's concept of ennui, or heaviness and suffocating weight of today's modernity, mirrors the ever-present burden of ennui that is tied to each individual human.

7. The Hat

Symbol of Thinking: All the characters in the play wear hats. Hats in the play represent thinking. As in Act 1, when Lucky is asked to speak, he could not do that without his hat. As soon as he gets his hat, he starts delivering a speech and ends when he loses his hat.

Instability of Individual Identities: Vladimir ends up having Lucky's hat and thus starts behaving alike. They exchange hats in Act 2. This scene is the representation of the instability of individual identities, and exchanging represents the exchange of identities. They are constantly changing and losing them.

Symbol of Social Status Hierarchy: Hats also symbolize social status, as Pozzo's top hat represents his perceived superiority over the other characters.

Baudelairean reading:

The hat in *Waiting for Godot* reflects Baudelaire's idea that outward objects reveal hidden inner states, forming "correspondences" between the visible world and the mind: as he writes, "Nature is a temple... and sometimes we hear confused words." Lucky's inability to think or

speak without his hat shows thought functioning as a symbolic performance rather than a natural act. The exchange of hats between Vladimir and Lucky highlights the fluid, unstable identity of the modern individual, echoing Baudelaire's belief that the self constantly shifts behind masks. Pozzo's top hat similarly embodies Baudelaire's insight that society displays power through external signs; as he observes, "You gave me your mud, and I have turned it into gold," suggesting that even simple objects carry deeper emotional and social meaning. In this way, the hat becomes a Baudelairean emblem of thinking, identity, and hierarchy.

8. Character Classes

Vladimir is concerned with metaphysical life. On the other hand, Estragon is concerned with physical labor. These two characters belong to two different classes.

Baudelairean reading:

A Baudelairean reading of Vladimir's emphasis on the metaphysical and Estragon's emphasis on the physical would indicate a dualism in modern humanity as perceived by Baudelaire, whereby the two extremes of those who tend toward spiritual ideals versus those who are burdened by physical labor and oppression can be viewed as a dynamic, unbreakable tension. Accordingly, Vladimir, as one of Baudelaire's contemplative representatives, is a representative of those who seek to escape the physical and pursue the idealistic, whereas Estragon represents the painful yet necessary existence of laborers. Through opposing viewpoints, Vladimir and Estragon provide an opportunity for a Baudelairean correspondence wherein the experiences of each represent the oscillation of humanity between the ideal of the poetic and the brutal physicality of existence as captured in the following line from *The Spleen*: "The spirit rises, but the body drags it down."

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