

***Interpreting Waiting for Godot :
of Headaches, Rorschach Tests and Peter Sellers***

1. biographical notes and Sam Beckett
2. a PLAY: "almost"; action, plot, character, setting...
3. a brief summary
4. what does all this mean?
 - * fundamental sounds - overtones - headaches (migraine)
 - * Rorschach (ink-blot) test
 - * "do-it-yourself" **meaning** of the play
5. some reactions to the play
6. Peter Sellers and "**Being-There**"

7. now the headache begins in earnest! towards an interpretation and statement of the ETHOS of the play:
 - (a) **direct presentation; distillation of the very essence of life**
 1. "The only fertile research is excavatory, immersive, a contracting of the spirit, a descent. The artist is active, but negatively, shrinking from the nullity of extracircumferential phenomena, drawn into the core of the eddy."
 2. Plato's *Cave* and Dante's *Hell* (et al.)
 3. beware intellectual reductionism of complex concreteness of life
 - (b) man as "**thrown-into**" the world
 1. no God, society, humanistic values
 2. in the beginning (*Genesis*) SOLITUDE (Malraux)
 3. no fellowship, empathy, communication (the **impotence** of language)
 4. the essence of life is ANGUISH: meaningless mortality
 5. MONOTONY: levelling of value: no hierarchy
 6. the threat of NOTHINGNESS: absolute annihilation (silences)
 7. the ABSURD
 - (c) **human response**
 1. Shakespeare, Dostoevsky, Malraux, Sartre, Camus...
 2. commitment, authenticity, choice, responsibility, absolute freedom, rebel-creator (promethean-faustean)
 3. Beckett: the WAITING is all!
 4. stasis: PARALYSIS, equilibrium
 5. the complete AGNOSTIC
 6. metaphysical (ontological) - functional - theoretical
 7. **tragicomedy: life**
 8. Freud, Thucydides and Sophocles...
 9. ethos of **the failure of the gods**
 10. Godot: anything the expectation of which keeps man living (waiting)
 11. **minimal** HOPE

8. of wars and carrots, of conferences and kings; a Beckettian analysis of current events

THE HEADACHE LIVES!