**Dr. S. CHOUCHANE**

**3rd Year Literature Module**

**Academic Year: 2024/2025**

**Modernist Aspects in Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* (1953)**

1. **The use of Myth**
   1. Myth of Sisyphus (who was a king/ Albert Camus essay 1942), he exposed the secrets of the gods.

* The gods were extremely unhappy with Sisyphus and sentenced him to a life of misery.
* His punishment was to push a rock up a hill, only for it to fall back down as soon as it reached the top
* Just like Sisyphus, Vlademir and Estragon are in **an endless task**. They are stuck waiting for a man named Godot to arrive, but they don’t know if he will come.
* If they leave they may miss his arrival, but if they stay he may never come, just like Sisyphus had to keep rolling the stone (no victory, no change, everything is static)
  1. Samuel Beckett may have denied the use of Christian mythology in Waiting for Godot, but the character of Lucky proves otherwise.  We can read Lucky as a symbolic figure of Christ, and, as such, his actions in the play carry a criticism of Christianity, suggesting that the merits of Christianity have decreased to the point where they no longer help man at all.
* The parallels between Christ and Lucky are strong. Lucky, chained with a rope, is the humiliated prisoner, much like Jesus was the prisoner of the Romans after Judas turned him in.  Estragon beats, curses, and spits on Lucky exactly as the Roman treated Jesus when preparing him for crucifixion.  Lucky carries the burden of Pozzo's bags like a perpetual cross, and he is being led to a public fair where he will be mocked and sold; the Romans paraded Jesus on the hill where for public scorn.  As Jesus fell three times under the weight of his burden, Lucky falls many times with the weight of the luggage, stool, coat, and picnic basket.  Furthermore, Estragon wipes Lucky's eyes—like Veronica wiped Jesus' face—so he will "feel less forsaken" (p. 21b), which alludes directly to Jesus' cry from the cross: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" [My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?] (Mark 15:34).  Lucky slowly chokes as the rope cuts into his neck; crucifixion suffocated Jesus.