**Dr. S. CHOUCHANE**

**3rd Year Literature Module**

**Academic Year: 2024/2025**

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

1. **Existentialism**

* The term "existentialism" refers to **a literary movement of the 20th century** which holds that **man has complete freedom to determine his own fate. The actions he chooses in fact determine his existence**. Rejection of authority, the only authority which any person has is himself (autonomy)
* Vladimir and Estrogen are just waiting for Godot, the savior. They are passive (no rejection of authority). They do not know whether they shall wait or leave. They decise to leave but they do not move

1. **Fragmentation**: broken and fragmented dialogues and characters. No real story, no actions since all actions are insignificant.
2. **Stream of Consciousness**

This can be found in moments such as Lucky’s speech, when a stream of consciousness takes the characters away from their monotonous lives for a moment. Unordinary consciousness can also be seen in Vladimir’s memory of events that stir no recollection for Estragon.

1. **Epiphany**

* There is a real change in Vladimir’s understanding of his experience (he learns precisely what "nothing to be done" means). Vladimir has his epiphany while Estragon sleeps.
* He thinks about the meaning of life and how can he end the suffering (waiting or death)
* Then, he realizes that he will never possess his deeds or know himself

1. **The role of the reader** (give meaning to the different ambiguities)
2. **No climax, no plot and no ending**
3. **Alienation and Pessimism** (no God, no hope/ waiting seems to show hope for the characters but, in fact, it is not)
4. **Imagery:**  tree, waiting … etc
5. **Irony:** leave but wait, repetitions, lack of memory, Lucky’s name … etc