

**UNIVERSITATEA BABEŞ-BOLYAI, CLUJ-NAPOCA FACULTY OF
THEATRE AND FILM
DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF THEATRE AND FILM**

A VAKSÁG SZÍNPADI ANATÓMIÁJA

Közelítések

Samuel Beckett: GODOT-T VÁRVA című drámai művéhez

Rendezői “kórtan”

THE STAGE ANATOMY OF BLINDNESS

Approach to

Samuel Beckett's dramatic work: WAITING FOR GODOT

Directorial “Pathology”

- Doctoral Thesis Summary-

Supervisor:
Prof. univ. dr. habil. ANDRÁS VISKY

PhD Student: STEFAN SZABO
(SZABÓ K. István)

2026

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1. Introduction

The theatre I am researching is attentive to the consequences of *hamartia* (Greek for *sin*), by simultaneously revealing the history of the origin of what has already happened – placing it in parallel with the history of its direct or indirect effects. Postmodernism, through its distrust of metanarratives, has thoroughly subverted art's relationship to its own sources. Ignorance as a strategic methodology carries within itself the creative narrative of countless interpretative possibilities, as well as the oppressive feeling of uncertainty, but none of them is as dangerous to the true assessment of our existential situation as relativization. This “gray cataract”, which settles on our eyes in more and more shades, is capable of obscuring myths, and if the origin stories cease to exist, we grope blindly *before creation*. The man of our time is terrified of confinement, and therefore allows himself to be guided by the Voices with his eyes blindfolded. We operate a claustrophobic theater for the thrill of shivering, but without the promise of light.

2. Nothing and Something

In my thesis – with reference to some of my previous practical works (especially *Oedipus the King*, *Endgame*) – I examine the cause of the loss of purpose through Samuel Beckett's opus *Waiting for Godot*. My thesis is based on the fact that the failure of the tragic figure can be traced back to incomplete vision, or even to his blindness. “For what is man in nature after all? Nothing in relation to infinity, everything in relation to nothing, a middle between nothing and everything. He is infinitely far from comprehending extremes, the ultimate goal and existence of things are irresistibly hidden to him in an impenetrable secret, because he is unable to see both the nothingness from which he was taken and the infinity in which he is immersed.”¹ Pascal's ideas periodically recur throughout the history of drama, as if marking the end of an era, be it Greek humanism, the European Renaissance, or the existential crisis following World War II: all of these refer to the endgames of cultural communities. The games of destruction (*Oedipus the King*, *King Lear*, *Endgame*) also illustrate the act of darkening, the failure of the story of creation, the mental and physical degradation of man, his transformation into a torso,

¹ Pascal, Blaise: *Gondolatok*, Ford. Pödör László Bp. Gondolat Kiadó, 1978. 28.

deprived of spirituality. In order to interpret Beckett's work, I must inevitably return to those regions of European cultural perception that the author himself explored. Even if only partially, I need to get closer to Beckett's drawing of the boundaries between "nothing" and "everything", which, in my intuition, can best be replaced by the concepts of "light" and "darkness", between which man is trapped with his entire miserable existence, and for a "moment", a day when he becomes mute, blind, deaf, born and dies, he searches in terror for an explanation for his existence.

Without getting too immersed in hamatology - theater has a hard time adapting to dogmatism anyway - but we could hardly understand the "sin" of being born into the world (into light) if we did not grasp it from the perspective of metaphysical meaning, so that it appears as a real stigma on the stage of the (post)modern mystery play. Gábor Mihályi's question that the word *hamartia* leads to the "question of whether it is necessary for the tragic hero to commit some morally reprehensible act, as a result of which he ultimately justifiably fails and is punished"² is automatically linked to the problem that tragedy can only be interpreted through tragic offense, in the form of crime and punishment, clear cause-and-effect relationships, and demonstrative moral satisfaction. But what happens when a tragic *Nobody*, deprived of the attributes of "heroism", faces his fate in a way that he understands little or nothing about the reason for his punishment, since he does not see the essence, the crime, the outcome of the drama? Misjudging his own situation cannot be considered a moral offense, yet he cannot avoid his fate. However, Beckett's clowns are unable to measure the coordinates of their own existence in space and time, they become confused in the moral system. In the first chapter of my thesis, *Nothing and Something*, I approach the exploration of the seemingly antagonistic relationship between *light* and *darkness* with the help of the thoughts of Sophocles, Lev Shestov, Sigmund Freud, Blaise Pascal, René Descartes, and Theodor Adorno.

3. Without Illusions

The rampage of 20th-century man, trapped in his own history, strives for the self-elimination of his identity, as if forced "forgetting" could be synonymous with "what did not happen", the "dismemberment of the tragic hero of Western dramatic history"

² Mihályi, Gábor: *A klasszikus görög dráma múlt és jelen ütközésében*, Akadémiai Kiadó Budapest, 1987,40.

(Erika Fischer-Lichte), is also a theatrical parable of the elimination of mythical consciousness, and this process is excellently illustrated by Beckett's theater, where the decay of memory and the mutilation of the body testify to an irreversible deterioration until its complete elimination into Nothingness, into the Dark. In the same way, the body of Western culture falls apart, torn from its own historicity, facing its roots, dismantling its classical architectural forms, falling into pieces, and its theorems, aphorisms and catchphrases referring to its former greatness, in the absence of context, become fragments, meaningless slogans. In the chapter entitled "Rien a faire", I discuss the atrophy of the Western view of myth and the independent individual, as well as the chronicization of the absurd sense of existence, citing the thoughts of William Shakespeare, F. Dostoevsky, Frederick J. Hoffmann, and Martin Esslin. To further expand my thesis, despite all the rebellion and subversion, I believe that the dramaturgy of *Waiting for Godot*, which focuses on absence in both form and content, is about the definite presence of something or someone, only the ability of searching vision has been lost, that of mystical vision, in which, as András Visky puts it, "time stops, condenses, the seer glimpses his own entire life as fulfilled and fulfilling."³ Doesn't the same thing happen in the case of Oedipus? In the ritual of his self-blinding, he continues his mission in possession of mystical vision, since he now sees what has been fulfilled and understands what is yet to be fulfilled.

Samuel Beckett's final play *Endgame* takes place in a bunker, and the gray room with its two windows evokes the inside of a human skull. If we look out the window, following Clov's gaze, the flood unfolds before us; if we lift Hamm's eyelids, his "completely white" eyeballs reveal a complete lack of vision.

"If, according to existentialist philosophy, hell resembles a tunnel, in the middle of which the light on the other side shines again, then Beckettian dialogue is a ripper of the rails of speech: the train does not reach where it becomes light," writes Th. W. Adorno, underlining the absurd mechanism of the game of inertia. The key to crossing is compassion, but for this, someone is needed on whom compassion can be exercised. But if this is how it works, what will happen to Clov, the last one, who has no one left? "The end is in the beginning" - we come into the world blind, just as we enter the stage blind.

³ Visky, András: *Mire való a színház? Útban a teátrum theologikum felé*, L'Harmattan Kiadó, Budapest, 2020. 39.

The ability to see is within us, but the question is whether we have compassion, since without it we can hardly appreciate our presence clearly.

Waiting for Godot is for me an apocryphal parable about hope, a myth that we have forgotten or are just hiding, lest our little faith be exposed. In this spirit, over the past decades I have also focused on the possibilities of interpretation, experiencing through my practical work how Beckett's parable is transformed, how it affects and unfolds in new layers of meaning in my own history of waiting. My research is actually a vision study, an attempt to discover a new dramatic context, in which my own artistic vision is also at stake. Accordingly, my present thesis is the theoretical foundation for the creation of a new *Waiting for Godot* performance, supplemented by its practical implementation, which can be found in the attached link (Samuel Beckett: *Waiting for Godot* (three-camera recording) September 27, 2024. https://youtu.be/kt23dTCox_Y).

4. The Prequels to *Waiting for Godot*

The antecedents of *Waiting for Godot* can be found in many places in Beckett's oeuvre, but especially in his first published novel, *Murphy*, and then in his first work written in French, *Mercier and Camier*, which is an imperfect sketch of his later masterpiece, *Godot*, in which the motifs of aimless wandering, time-consuming waiting, and the cycle appear. In 1970, the book by the then Nobel Prize-winning author was published simultaneously in three languages, French, English, and German. In a letter dated 20. 01. 1954 to the publisher Jérôme Lindon, director of Les Éditions de Minuit, Beckett writes about his work: “I really couldn’t bear it if this text were to appear in this quasi-life of mine. If you insist on it, it could perhaps be placed in a volume entitled: *Posthumous Shits*.” Despite his severe self-criticism, he bases perhaps the most influential dramatic work of the 20th century on this. For example, the tramp walking on both sides of the road introduces the phrases that become models of the dialogue between Vladimir and Estragon: “Please, said Mercier./ Only after you, said Camier./ I interrupted you, said Mercier. / I interrupted you, said Camier. / But no, said Mercier./ But yes, said Camier”, but we find such physical degenerations as prostatitis, the injured foot, or the deterioration

of vision, which become defining character-building elements in the later drama. “Everything is rather confused and blurry, as if we were going blind while seeing, ha, ha, ha, we were going blind while seeing.”⁴

Can the concept of parody be separated from that of myth? Hardly, “since both refer to the repetition and conscious reenactment of what has happened before, to its ritual, memory-evoking, and replaying”⁵ - writes literary historian Miklós Csűrös, and Beckett masterfully handled changes in proportion and distortions, and with a single turn he was able to make the most sublime image, the purest ideal ridiculous, and the most base formation sublime. With this procedure, he draws attention to the horror hidden behind *appearances*, to the misperception of non-present attention, to the false spectacle of the blinded mirror.

5. Beckett and the night - the noises of loneliness

In the biographical sketch that I entitled *Beckett and the Night - Noises of Solitude*, I outline the author's life journey. Samuel Beckett's confessional oeuvre is closely connected to the life journey that he took from his bourgeois family home in Foxrock, a suburb of Dublin, to his creative "bunker" in Ussy-sur-Marne, a neighborhood of Paris. The period of troubled youth balancing on the Dublin-Paris-London-Berlin-Vienna axis, the years spent breathlessly in a war shelter in Roussillon in the Vaucluse region of France, and the Parisian window frame overlooking the courtyard of La Sante prison draw the face of a quiet, solitary, contemplative, but mostly inward-looking, introverted, melancholic man.

6. Beckett's iconography

“It is difficult to imagine a person with a more infallible artistic instinct than Samuel Beckett. His spirit was able to grasp the essence of any work of art from the very first moment. If he had wanted to be a painter, a composer or - like Breton - a leading figure of an art school, he would have been at least as successful.” - writes John Calder about him, and many of his contemporaries agree that Beckett can be classified among

⁴ Beckett, Samuel: *Mercier és Camier*; Ford. Romhányi Török Gábor, Holnap Kiadó, 1993, 130.

⁵ Csűrös, Miklós, *Samuel Beckett: Meglehetősen jó nőkről álmodom*, Vigilia - 67. évf. 9. sz. (2002. szeptember)

the leading visual artists of his time due to his powerful visual world and dramatic compositions. In the chapter entitled Beckett's iconography, I illustrate the author's sources of visual inspiration through some fine art examples, which return in his dramatic works in the form of visual quotations, paraphrases or completely sovereign works. His specific iconographic vision, which in icon painting has such characteristics as symbolic spatial representation, essence-centeredness or duality (material and transcendental reality), enables him to create devotional images, but at the same time he is not alien to iconoclasm (image destruction). Caravaggio, Tintoretto, Rembrandt, Caspar David Friedrich, Gerard David, Edward Munch, Giovanni Bellini, Andrea Mategna, Bosch, Peter Brueghel the Elder, Alberti Giacometti, Henri Hayden, Jack B. Yeats, Ewald Dülberg or Emil Nolde, Lyonel Feininger, and I could list many other painters who indirectly, as creative partners, compose with Beckett. "To set fire to the vast and thoughtless archive of tradition – this is the poetic basis for the birth of a new kind of theatre, wrapped in armour,"⁶ writes Romeo Castellucci in his manifesto, *The Iconoclasm of the Stage and the Return of the Body: The Carnal Power of Theater*, who, in his guerrilla action of imagery, fights for the abolition of the work's reputation and traditional authority. Is it not the same idolatry that Beckett commits when, as John Knowlson describes, upon viewing Perugino's *Pietá*, recently exhibited in the National Gallery in Dublin, he reports to MacGreevy: "Christ and the women are lovable. A well-shaven, potent Christ, whose loss they sob fiercely. The most mystical element of the picture is a medicine jar, perhaps painted by Raphael... a sweet, cheerful Christ, full of semen, and the women hold his thighs as they mourn his secrets."⁷ Beckett's images, like his verbal compositions, follow a continuous regressive trajectory. As he punctures the faith in language ("We must drill one hole after another into it"), silence and light filter through the gaps, definite, strong silences and pinpoints of light. Then the tension of the silence slowly dissolves into nothingness, the power of the light diminishes until it flickers hesitantly and goes out. Darkness.

7. Beckett Directs Beckett

Beckett first came into contact with theatre in the early 1950s. His first play, *Eleutheria*, was not well received, but *Waiting for Godot*, presented in 1953, conquered

⁶ Castellucci, Romeo: *Képrombolás a Színpadon és a Test visszatérése* Ford: Török Tamara Megjelent a Színház című kötetben. Szerk. Gennaro Carillo, Nápoly, 1997. Angolul: Theater, Yale School of Drama, 37:3 (2007).

⁷ Haynes, John, Knowlson, James, *Beckett képei*, Európa könyvkiadó, Budapest, 2006, 79.

the stages with revelatory power; moreover, after its theatrical premiere, it was performed in numerous prisons, by prisoners, for prisoners. From the performance at the Lüttringhausen prison in Germany to the performances in Wuppertal and then San Quentin prison in the US, Godot's absence resonated most among the wretched and vulnerable who had lost their freedom and were seeking it, as a drama of hope. In the chapter entitled *Beckett Directs Beckett*, I reflect on this period, the era inspired by the liberating influence of theatre, the development of Beckettian conscious theatre aesthetics, and also inspiring in its freshness and aspiration for essence.

8. Beckett on the Hungarian stage

– The reception of Beckett's Hungarian-language performances, based on the interview book by Anita Rákóczy

There have been few attempts to map Beckett's history of Hungarian-language theatre performances and reception. From this perspective, Anita Rákóczy's book *Beckett. Színház. Találkozások: Interjúk és interpretációk* (Beckett. Theatre. Encounters: Interviews and Interpretations) is a volume that fills a gap. In it, through ten conversations, the author interviews renowned directors, playwrights and composers⁸ and reveals the Hungarian "Beckett story" stretching back some sixty years. Its beginning can be dated to the summer of 1965. More precisely: in order for the first Hungarian-language performance of *Waiting for Godot* to be produced at the Thália Theatre, directed by Péter Lénér and Károly Kazimir, it was necessary for the magazine *Nagyvilág* to "dare" to publish the Beckett drama - which was otherwise published in 1952 - in Hungarian translation by Emil Grandpierre of Kolozsvári, a few months earlier than the summer of 1965.

9. In Praise of Waiting - Three Godots

The *Three Godots* are three interpretations of Beckett's work from different periods of my life and career. In 2005, during the ten-day marathon rehearsal period of the open workshop of the Atelier International Theatre Festival in Romania, from sunrise

⁸ "Anita Rákóczy, in her volume, conversed with Tamás Ascher, Tom Bishop, György Kurtág, Péter Lénér, István Szabó, Kriszta Székely, Gábor Tompa, András Visky, and Gábor Zsámbéki. The book titled *Beckett. Színház. Találkozások: Interjúk és interpretációk* was published in 2024 in Budapest by the L'Harmattan publishing house. In the following, I will refer to the page numbers of the quoted texts based on this edition."

to sunset, I "staged" *Waiting for Godot* for the first time. I led the rehearsal process under constant audience supervision and attention, often "speaking out" of the play and motivating the events. The immediate feedback, the constancy of the tension provided an inspired surface for the unfolding of the act of waiting. I think this was the first time I undertook to review my creative vision, theatrical tools and artistic motivation. It was not compulsion, but inspiration that prompted me to do so. Ten years later, I staged Beckett's masterpiece again, this time in a ordinary theatre setting, at the Szigligeti Theatre in Oradea, once again confronted with the inner need to assess the current coordinates of my history of expectation. My third, current work fits into the series like a program, a timely exploration of another station. In my research, I also address the theatrical aspects of heterotopia, and in my performance, space as a counter-structural place, the verb as creative speech, and time simultaneously as absence and presence create the kind of dramatic polyphony that leads back to the metanarrative of origin and at the same time conception in sin. My procedure is actually an examination of vision, an attempt to discover a new dramatic context, in which my own artistic vision is also at stake.

10. Rehearsal Diary

The *Rehearsal Diary*, which forms the backbone of my thesis, contains the practical proof of the thesis outlined. Beckett places the director in front of a meticulously constructed map. Prearranged dialogues, precise formal solutions, it is difficult to deviate from the tempo and style of play he dictates. What is more, he himself banned quite a few performances, resenting the director's interpretations. As closed (introverted) as this world is, it is also provocative, since on a mental level we can follow the manifestation of continuous ambiguity (doubt), and this parable, often based on silences and hiding personal and historical secrets, encourages interpretations. Although structurally closed, Beckett's work is open in its thoughtfulness and semantic diversity. To tell their story, to find some way of understanding their own lives, in order to discover its explanation, or perhaps its lesson. Beckett's (finite)beings are prisoners of their own bodies and minds, at the mercy of their miserable degradation, the instability of their memories, dependent on each other in the impossibility of dialogue.

I documented the rehearsal process that took place between July 30, 2024 and September 27, 2024 on a daily basis. The analyses, summarized in thirty entries (subchapters), focus on the topics, theoretical and practical questions that were waiting to

be answered in the process of creating the performance: *Who or what is Godot?* The question arises from the new title proposal, since the new translation I used, which was prepared by the ELTE translation group (Zsolt Beke, Péter Csímár, Flóra Donáti, Laura Gunyecz, Eszter Kállay, Éva Márkos, Mihály Sors, Bianka Szalai, Zsófia Szatmári, Vera Tordai) under the leadership of Professor Ágnes Horváth, used the title *Waiting for Godot*, clearly referring to the coming of a personal Someone.

Who are waiting? Beckett leaves the question unanswered, claiming that he knows no more about them than “what they themselves say, do, and what happens to them.” All this prompts numerous attempts at identification, and since humanity is created in pairs, their pair shows a correspondence with all the outcast and dependent pairs of history.

What do the two legs have to do with the two thieves in the Gospel? Do we need hope? The answer lies in the continuation of the fragmentary warning in Proverbs 13:12: “*Hope deferred makes the... (...heart sick: but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.)*” The heart still perceives it, the mind has already given up on it.

Is it possible to be actively bored? About the shaking effect of words and the plastic playground.

On the crisis of memory. The contingency of space-time perception is closely related to the crisis of memory. If our increasing knowledge of space also expands our concept of time, the reverse must also be true; our ever-shrinking knowledge of space also narrows our concept of time. The lack of story points to the loss of points of reference and the disintegration of myth, the distressing uncertainty of belonging paralyzes and leads to inaction.

About the game: hangman – like a puzzle that is impossible to solve correctly.

On body reductions and their meaning on stage. If we say that the renunciation of action is closely related to the degradation of the body's motor abilities, it seems like a logical, life-like conclusion, while on stage this happens differently, since the body, from the perspective of Beckettian performativity, creates “life-like” meanings in its direct relationship with space.

“To express that there is nothing to express.” In terms of linguistic performativity, Beckett's text reflects not only absence but also the struggle of human communication and the creation of meaning.

Dramatic farce (Farce dramatique) – or how Beckett's characteristic theatre language has been developed? What genre sources of inspiration lie behind it? In my analysis, I identify three main sources: the circus, silent movie and vaudeville.

On the neutralization of the means of effect. On the fact that the author calls the attention of creators to the exclusion of all kinds of spectacular parasitic elements, be they sound (music) or visual elements.

Morality - anti-morality. About Beckett's myth-destroying procedure, with which he turns the morality play upside down, thereby creating anti-morality, the negation of myth, where everything that was once organized into a moral order, losing its weight, emptied of its content, becomes a silly stand-up on the stage of the absurd.

About crying and laughing as the continuity of social balance, as well as emotional reactions that play a decisive role in maintaining life, about Lucky's monologue as a practical manifestation of the post-dramatic editing principle, which voices three themes, three voices in a single dramatic polyphonic tone.

Analyzing the nature of time in the tragicomedy *Waiting for Godot*, it is striking that each character lives in a different time. The interval between the present moment and death passes differently for each of them, by using different units of time measurement: while Vladimir tries to connect the past with the present through memory, thus being able to encompass a much longer span of time with his consciousness, Estragon vegetates impatiently in instinctive time. Pozzo's time exceeds the time of the play, since the time of his tour lasts from the time of his departure from his home (the Castle) to his return, while Lucky's time is, to quote John Calder's formulation, "the time of humanity". The Boy arrives from a region outside subjective times, or from "eternal time".

About the hat trick that Beckett saw one evening in the music hall, and about *whether it is possible to write poetry after Auschwitz?* In his angry outburst, Adorno considers writing poetry to be barbaric after one of the most horrific modern genocides of humanity. Writing poetry is necessary, even obligatory, just as remembering is, only in this way can we have some hope that our easily relativizing collective consciousness, freed from the burden of guilt, will once again give free rein to the murderous impulse. The absurd thematizes the fall of the individual, the historical defeat of the "dramatic hero". "Fascism and Stalinism completely collectivized, re-ideologized, massified, that is, eliminated the individuality of human life, and World War II, Auschwitz and

Hiroshima also deprived man of the possibility of individual death. The individual ceased to exist,”⁹ writes Erika Fischer-Lichte, and just as the individual ceased to exist, so individual life, and even individual death, became impossible. It is not by chance that Estragon says that the final solution is to be found in the method of destroying “the billions of others.”

An Appeal to Humanity - While in *Endgame*, staged at the Schillertheater in Berlin in 1967, the author-director tries to eliminate all “connection” with the audience by emphasizing the importance of the presence of the fourth wall (“The play must be performed as if there were a fourth wall in place of the stage”¹⁰) and identifies the viewer as a simple observer and not as a participant, in the case of *Waiting for Godot* I did not discover a clear boundary of this kind. Estragon rushes towards us head-on during his escape, whereupon his companion stops him by saying “there is nothing to do.” Vladimir's monologue, in which he states: " But at this place, at this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it or not. Let us make the most of it, before it is too late! Let us represent worthily for once the foul brood to which a cruel fate consigned us!" can be turned towards the audience, and they can feel just as “honored” that by being addressed, their status as spectators changes, the common fate, the togetherness brings with it responsibility, and the statement, evoking Brecht's technique, this time presents the spectators with a moral crossroads.

The representation of *the Boy* is a key issue in the symbolic system of the performance. In Gábor Tompa's staging in Sfântu Gheorghe, he appears on the television screen found in the industrial waste piled around the tree, communicating from another dimension. In Silviu Purcărete's performance in Sibiu, which literally takes place on the “board”, in the space of the theatre, the boy arrives as a businessman in his old age, from outside, outside the theatre. In my performance, the Boy opens from one of the infinite “boxes”, as if to suggest the presence of a parallel, transcendent dimension. *Pozzo's monologue* as the painful sight through blindness, the cruel rite of initiation into witnessing, and the shadow of the Angel, confirming my thesis that the tragicomedy *Waiting for Godot* can be read as a mystery play, the dialogue plot of which searches for traces of the myth of redemption, in the apocalyptic space of ABSENCE.

⁹ Fischer-Lichte, Erika: *A dráma története*, Ford. Kiss Gabriella, Jelenkor Kiadó, Pécs, 2001.667.

¹⁰ Fischer-Lichte, Erika: *A dráma története*, Ford. Kiss Gabriella, Jelenkor Kiadó, Pécs, 2001.666.

To summarize the basic propositions of my thesis:

- The tragic figure is born blind, his tragic crime is encoded in his birth, thus his tragic existence is a lifelong penance without absolution.

- *Waiting for Godot*, as a dramatic work thematizing this hopeless situation, paradoxically carries the message of hope, by offering the prospect of an encounter with Godot, who has the attribute of redemption. The condition for this is the ability to see mystically.

- *Waiting for Godot* is a postmodern mystery, which, unlike its genre source (medieval mysteries), changes the linear narrative to a fragmented structure, freely mixes sacred and profane elements, changes its archetypes from the acting symbolic pairs (angel - devil, good - evil) to pairs incapable of action (wanderers, clowns), and although it is built in a self-reflexive manner, it still opens up space for the viewer's emotional and associative attention.

My dissertation is essentially a theatrical performance, which I supplement with philological background material applied to the topic and thesis, as a justification for the fact that the artistic work created on the basis of empirical procedures is, on the one hand, an original work, and on the other hand, it is connected to all those background literary aspects without which this artistic landscape cannot be created. In my research, I focused on the literary and philosophical sources that I identified as the inspirational background of Samuel Beckett's dramatic work, emphasizing those biographical elements and earlier works that are closely related to the history of the work's creation and meaning.

From a methodological point of view, it is a heuristic dissertation, in which, contrary to the positivist approach, I tried to develop a unified concept of a new *Waiting for Godot* performance through creative intuition and discoveries.

11. What I see (Conclusion)

In my current presentation, compared to my previous elaborations, the emphasis has shifted to a completely different place. Although Beckett's tragicomedy contains all three forms of play of medieval liturgical drama: the morality, the miracle and the mystery, none of their forms is permanent, but rather, "desecrated" by the irrationality of the absurd and the formal culture of the grotesque, a case of double vision prevails: we see two different images of the same thing, the simultaneous expression of hope and hopelessness.

But as Meyerhold brilliantly highlights the concept of “contrast”: “Is the grotesque really only a means to create or emphasize contrasts? Isn’t the grotesque the goal itself? Like Gothic, for example. The bell tower reaching into the sky expresses the pathos of the praying man, and its protrusions, decorated with distorted, frightening figures, evoke the idea of hell.”¹¹ So, despite all the gestures of despair, *Waiting for Godot* really perceives the theater as a “God-question.” (András Visky) Thus, I consider the interpretation of the above-mentioned liturgical drama forms as possible.

This research intention led to the rereading of Beckett’s drama and the realization of the stage performance made from it. No matter how absurd, the situations outlined in the play are formulated on the edge of expressibility, they are conceived in a clear, unambiguous way of thinking, the primary level of interpretation is created through the concrete determination of the plot, which is further deepened by the viewer's imagination, adding their own associative abilities. Beckett's clowns balance on the border of space-time (on the horizon), swinging absurdly, clasping themselves in a grotesque dance, like Ingmar Bergman's iconic dance of death in his film *The Seventh Seal*.

12. What the viewer saw

“The play must be performed as if a fourth wall were standing in place of the stage,” says Beckett, “In this way, the role of the spectator in perception (*percipere*) is designated, whose mere presence assures the actor that he is being perceived (*percipi*).”¹² - Erika Fischer-Lichte adds.

I think that perception is not enough, just as the fourth wall has collapsed in the meantime, we have emerged from the existentialist pit following the Second World War, to trudge through new trenches through the turn of the millennium, the years of prosperity, the technical revolution, until we become lonely again in the company of our new counterpart, our telephone, and then under its guardianship. This is the same existential loneliness as the previous one, only the “order of the play” has changed, Hamm cannot cover his face with an old rag, because the facial recognition system does not allow this.

¹¹ Meyerhold, Vsevolod: *A vásári komédia*, Ford. Tompa Andrea, *A teatralitás dicsérete, Orosz színházelméletek a XX. Század elején*, Országos Színháztörténeti Múzeum és Intézet, 2006. 202.

¹² Fischer-Lichte, Erika: *A dráma története*, Ford. Kiss Gabriella, Jelenkor Kiadó, Pécs, 2001, 666.

What is it about this vulnerable, lonely post-postmodern human figure that can exalt, enslave, and liberate? I asked ChatGPT what the main problem of modern man is, since he will be sitting in the lecture pregnant with this or these problems.

I received the following answer:

- alienation from ourselves
- crisis of connection with others
- separation from nature
- overload and information noise

The first three symptoms also appear in Beckett's tragicomedy, the fourth is a new product of the post-millennium era. Perhaps this is also because Beckettian silence is no longer an anxiety about the possibility of continuation, but has become a resting (meditative) point for mental noise. It requires the viewer to be able to disconnect and reconnect, to lose and regain vision as a metaphysical exercise.

A group of university students watched the performance and reflected on what they saw. Their observations confirm my thesis 90% of the time, according to which Beckett's dramatic work can be read as a postmodern mystery, in which liturgical stage signs consistently point in the direction of the transcendent.

"The viewer always views the performance from the perspective of his own world, life, and problems." - notes the first-year student of political science, and confirms my conviction and intention that the key to understanding the performance is not in the didactic stage depiction, but in the associative power of stage signs, which bring the creative thought into effect through the spectator's thought. Watching is not the same as seeing. And the spectator "sees, feels and understands something when he creates his own poem, as actors, playwrights, directors or performers do, in their own way."¹³

¹³ Ranciere, Jaques: *Le spectateur émancipé*, Citation taken from Sepsi Enikő, Szabó Attila szerk.: *Mit lát a néző? Bevezetés a színházzociológiai kutatások módszertanába*, Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem, L'Harmattan Kiadó, Budapest, 2025. 24.

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