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THE FRIENDSHIP OF DIDI AND GOGO
IN SAMUEL BECKETT'S
WAITING FOR GODOT

A Thesis Project

Presented to the

Department of Dramatic Arts

and the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

David Lewis Zinck

August 1994

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THESIS PROJECT ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College,
University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree Master of Arts, University of
Nebraska at Omaha.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis project examines the theme of friendship in Samuel Beckett's play, *Waiting for Godot*. In the introduction, background information is presented with two sources for defining the term "friendship." Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* offers three different kinds of friendships, and John M. Reisman, a contemporary sociologist, transmutes Aristotle's theories into three kinds of friendships as well -- the friendships of reciprocity, receptivity, and association.

A brief biographical sketch of Beckett's life, which includes his relationship with Lucia Joyce, opens the first chapter. The relationship with his wife Suzanne offers insight into his conception of *Godot*. The first chapter also includes reviews of the play as a dramatic text and reviews of various stage productions. The last part of the chapter encompasses interviews with four of Beckett's close friends and their views about *Godot* and the playwright himself.

The second chapter of this study explores the play's critical theory, delving into various formal and sociohistorical interpretations of the friendship between the play's two main characters, Didi and Gogo. Reisman's definitions are applied throughout to help determine how the interpretations view the nature of the Didi-Gogo friendship.

Personal observations of the UNO production of *Godot* begin

the last chapter. These observations cover the entire the audition and rehearsal process, documenting the development of the Didi-Gogo friendship. Reisman's definitions are used as afterthoughts in commenting on specific moments in the play during the rehearsals. The last part of the chapter presents the student and thesis committee responses to the UNO production as well as my own personal commentary on the nature of the Didi-Gogo friendship.

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INTRODUCTION

The introduction provides two background sources for defining the word "friendship." Sociologist John M. Reisman's three definitions of friendship (association, receptivity, and reciprocity) are based upon Aristotle's three purposes (utility, pleasure, and virtue) to which friendship serves. All three friendships consist of varying degrees of loyalty and affection.

The rest of the introduction presents in greater detail the three definitions of friendship, drawing upon a classic source, Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*, and a contemporary source, John M. Reisman's *Anatomy of Friendship*. These sources were chosen as a historical guide to help define the friendship of Didi and Gogo in Beckett's play. Much of the information about the three kinds of friendships applies to Beckett's own life, the critical theory of the play, and the 1994 UNO production of *Godot*.

Aristotle's Three Friendships

In Book Eight/Chapter Three of the *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle states there are three different kinds of friendships -- one of utility, one of pleasure, and the other of virtue. He goes on to explain the friendships of utility and pleasure:

People who love each other wish each other's good up to

the point on which their love is fixed. Accordingly, those who love each other for reasons of utility do not love each other for themselves, but only as far as they get some benefit from one another. So with those who love for pleasure's sake. They are fond of witty people, not for their character, but because they are pleasant to them. People then who love for utility's sake are moved to affection by what is good for themselves, and people who love for pleasure, by what is pleasant to themselves. They love a person not for what he is in himself, but only for being useful or pleasant to them. Such friendships then are friendships incidentally only; for the person loved is not loved for being what he is, but merely for being a source of some good or pleasure. Such friendships accordingly are easily dissolved, if the parties do not continue always the same; for they cease loving once they cease to be pleasant or useful to each other (Aristotle 64).

The friendship of utility is based on one's self-interests. Close companionship and congeniality, for Aristotle, are not desired at all unless one gains some benefit from them (Aristotle 65). Therefore, when benefits are no longer gained, the friendship ends. The friendship of pleasure is based on one's inclination to obtain pleasure moment by moment. Close companionship and congeniality, for Aristotle, are desired if they satisfy only one's amusement and emotions (Aristotle 65). Therefore, pleasure shifts from person to person when one's amusement and emotions are no longer satisfied by what was to be thought as being pleasurable.

Aristotle also describes the friendship of virtue:

Perfect friendship is the friendship of people who are good and alike in virtue; for they are alike in wishing

each other's good, inasmuch as they are good and good in themselves. Those who wish the good of their friends for their friend's sake are in the truest sense friends, since their friendship is the consequence of their own character, and not an accident. Their friendship therefore lasts as long as their goodness, and goodness is a permanent quality. So each of them is good in an absolute sense, and good in relation to his friend. For good men are not only good in an absolute sense, but helpful to each other. They are pleasant too; for the good are pleasant in an absolute sense, and pleasant to one another. For everybody finds pleasure in actions proper to him and in others like him, and all good people act alike or nearly alike (Aristotle 65).

What Aristotle is saying here is a friendship of virtue includes both utility and pleasure, but they do not not outweigh the trust and loyalty which "arouse a reciprocal affection between two persons" (Aristotle 64).

Reisman's Three Friendships

In *Anatomy of Friendship*, John M. Reisman introduces the term "reciprocal" in what he calls as the first chapter of his book, "Three Friendships." Reisman transmutes Aristotle's theories of friendship into, once again, three different kinds of friendships -- one of reciprocity, one of receptivity, and the other of association.

The following citation is Reisman's definition for the friendship of reciprocity:

A friendship of reciprocity exists when both parties feel

love and loyalty to one another. It is their affection and loyalty that enable them to be honest, without experiencing their honesty as cruel and threatening. They feel a freedom to be critical, secure that their friendship provides a firm base for frankness. A reciprocal relationship of this kind, between persons who view each other as equals, has been, and is, regarded by authorities and people in general as the most ideal and desirable form of human association (Reisman 19).

Mutuality and equality are the basic characteristics of a reciprocal friendship, according to Reisman. Other attributes of this friendship include loyalty, affection, generosity, honesty, self-sacrifice, and respect. Reisman bases these attributes to the story of Damon and Pythias as told by the Roman philosopher, Cicero.

Reisman offers the following definition for the friendship of receptivity:

The second type of friendship that we have considered, the friendship of receptivity, is distinguished by imbalance, by inequality, by perhaps one friend loving and giving to the other, who feels gratitude, though little affection in return. . . . While a receptive friendship hardly seems an equitable arrangement, and we might well wonder what the giver expects, there are times when the giver appears to be of so generous a sort that nothing of any consequence is expected. Frequently such friendships exist among persons who differ so greatly in status it is clear the receiver would be presumptuous to give anything more than appreciation. It might also be argued that the giver in these situations derives satisfactions from being appreciated and from the acts of giving and that these pleasures are compensations enough (Reisman 21).

To Reisman, imbalance and inequality are the basic characteristics of a receptive friendship. Another essential attribute includes the status of superior-inferior positions in which one person gives to the other but does not necessarily receive anything later in return. Reisman bases this attribute to the story of Jonathan and David in the First and Second Samuel Books of The Old Testament in The Bible.

The next passage is Reisman's analysis of the friendship of association:

We have all had associative friendships. The classmates in a school, the neighbors on a street, the members of a committee, the congregants of a church, the staff of an office, a faculty, fraternity brothers, the list could go on and on. These people generally regard their associates as friends, or at least friendly. Some of these relationships may grow into receptive or reciprocal friendships. Or there may be no deep feeling of fondness, no loyalty, and only half-hearted attempts, if any, to prolong the relationship when their immediate purpose is served or the reason for being thrown together ends. . . . The transitory nature of associative friendships has needlessly created the impression that many friends are disloyal, or that their loyalty is maintained only so long as no demands are made upon it. . . . Friendships of association are, by their very nature, circumscribed and of limited duration (Reisman 23-25).

The attributes which comprise an associative friendship, then, are habit, convenience, exploitation, expedience, and even cynicism and dishonesty. Superficiality, according to Reisman, is the basic characteristic of friendly relations. Reisman bases his analysis on the relationship between Brutus and Cassius in William Shakespeare's

play, *Julius Caesar*.

Reisman also summarizes his ideas about the three kinds of friendships, concluding:

When both parties give their love and loyalty to one another, the friendship is reciprocal. If one person gives love and loyalty to another who does not similarly return it, the friendship is receptive. If neither party feels loyalty or deep fondness for the other, the friendship is associative (Reisman 26).

In looking back at Aristotle's three friendships and Reisman's three friendships, one can see the parallels between each kind of friendship. The friendships of utility and association correspond to one another in that "some choose as friends those who will be useful to them, who might serve as sources of influence, or who might give them something of value" (Reisman 105). The friendships of pleasure and receptivity parallel each other because "some select for friends those whose company will give them enjoyment by being entertaining or by providing them with play activities" (Reisman 105). The friendships of virtue and reciprocity correspond since "some pick a friend who has qualities they admire and respect and their admiration and affection are reciprocated" (Reisman 105). Thus, to Aristotle, friendship serves three purposes, and to Reisman, these three purposes embody friendships of three kinds.

The end of the introduction, then, poses the question: What is the nature of the friendship between Didi and Gogo in Samuel

Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*? Moreover, can the friendship be defined as being reciprocal, receptive, or associative? Can it include all three aspects? The ensuing chapters explore these questions, focusing particularly on the playwright himself, the critical theory of various interpretations of the Didi-Gogo friendship, and the writer's observations of the UNO production.

CHAPTER ONE

The first chapter contains three parts: (1) a biographical sketch of Samuel Beckett's life which includes insight into his conception of *Waiting for Godot*; (2) reviews of the play as dramatic literature and of various stage productions; and (3) interviews with four of Beckett's close friends.

Biography of Beckett / Conception of *Godot*

The first part of the chapter briefly describes Beckett's childhood and education and then shifts into his relationships with Lucia Joyce and Suzanne Deschevaux-Dumesnil. Beckett's life with Suzanne also provides a background to the writing of *Godot*.

Samuel Barclay Beckett was born in Dublin, Ireland, in the spring of 1906. His father, William Beckett, was a surveyor, and his mother, Mary, was a nurse. Beckett had a conventional Dublin Protestant upbringing, and he studied romance languages in high school, eventually graduating from Trinity College in 1931 with a Master of Arts degree in French. However, Beckett did not want an academic career. So he settled permanently in Paris, where he became a friend and drinking companion of Irish novelist James Joyce.

At this time, Beckett "was thirty-one and already the veteran

of a string of unhappy romantic liaisons" (Bergreen 90). The relationship which epitomized this was the one with Lucia, Joyce's mentally unstable daughter. Beckett took Lucia out for dinners and to movies, but Lucia wanted to marry Beckett from the start. Beckett kept his distance from her. He did not want to hurt her feelings, but he also did not want to alienate her father, who was also his friend. Beckett "wanted only Joyce's inspiration, not Lucia's lunatic love, and he was forced to reject her outright" (Bergreen 90).

After his relationship with Lucia ended, Beckett met another woman, one who would stay with him for the rest of his life. In 1938, Beckett was stabbed by a Parisian who wanted his money. Fortunately, Suzanne Deschevaux-Dumesnil happened along and took Beckett to a nearby hospital. The two of them became friends when she started to visit him in the hospital as he regained his health. After Beckett got out, he and Suzanne began living together. Employed as a seamstress, Suzanne supported the two of them financially as Beckett worked on his writing.

The hardships continued for Beckett and Suzanne when Paris was invaded by the Nazis during World War II. The couple headed to the southern part of France as members of the French Resistance, but the journey was an unpleasant experience for both of them. They hid during the day and traveled by night. According to Alan Schneider, *Godot's* first Broadway director, Beckett and Suzanne's journey, "especially the footsore conversation along the way, probably inspired the futile wandering in *Waiting for Godot* " (Henry

69). Similarly, to Barney Rosset, Beckett's American publisher and agent, *Godot* was about the couple's experience during the war: "Like the tramps, they were desexualized and bored out of their minds, just waiting for the fucking war to end" (Bergreen 92). Deidre Bair, in her biography of Samuel Beckett, emphasizes how Beckett put much of the conversation he had with Suzanne during the war into the dialogue of *Godot*: "It was as if Beckett had transported wholesale the teasing, whining, loving, caring, and sometimes bitter conversation his friends occasionally overheard" (Bair 385).

Nevertheless, Beckett and Suzanne became lifelong companions. They eventually married in 1961 and stayed together until Suzanne died in the summer of 1989. Not long afterward, in December of that same year, Beckett succumbed to respiratory failure (Bemrose 47). Interestingly enough, Beckett lived only five months without his wife before he died.

The first part of Chapter One has described Beckett's relationships with Lucia Joyce and his wife Suzanne. His relationships with these two women illustrate two different kinds of friendships. His relationship with Lucia was "receptive." Lucia wanted Beckett's complete loyalty and affection, but he did not return it to her. Beckett's relationship with Suzanne, though, on the whole, was a friendship of reciprocity. Yet it is interesting that the beginning of their friendship was receptive, since Suzanne came to his aid and supported him financially. It is also important to note

that the couple also had adjoining apartments for much of their married life (Bergreen 92), but does this fact help to emphasize a reciprocal or receptive friendship? Even though the couple supported one another, is it possible they antagonized one another as well? If there was antagonism between them, how much of it did Beckett translate it into the writing of *Godot*? It is impossible to know for sure, but an examination of the reviews of the play may provide further insight into these questions.

Reviews of *Godot* in Text and in Production

The second portion of the chapter includes the reviews of the play as a text in literature and in production. Each review comments on the friendship between the play's two main characters, Didi and Gogo. If antagonism existed, as mentioned earlier, between Beckett and his wife, it certainly exists between Didi and Gogo. J.C. Trewin describes the pair's friendship as "a living ganglion of irreconcilable antagonisms" (Trewin 582) in the first London production directed by Peter Hall in 1955.

On the other hand, Henry Hewes states Didi and Gogo's friendship is not concerned with antagonism but rather "with the basic human problem of dualism" (Hewes 32). Hewes bases his view on the first American production directed by Alan Schneider in 1956, saying friendship for human beings is that each person knows one can function better separately without the other, but at the same

time find themselves bound together by both choice and circumstance.

Unlike Hewes and Trewin, Philip H. Bagby argues the only clear and unchanging aspect in the text of *Godot* is "the mutual affection of Vladimir and Estragon" (Bagby 181). Indeed, mutual affection does characterize a reciprocal friendship. Eric Bentley, in his book *What is Theatre?*, also supports Bagby's notion of mutual affection by calling it a "constant communion" in which "ordinary human attitudes to God, Nature, and Death on the one hand, and, on the other, to the 'trivialities,' such as clothes, defecation, smells" (Bentley 155), embody the friendship between Didi and Gogo. Mutual affection, according to Warren Lee, is evident in the text of the play when the pair argues with each other: "They love each other, can't stand each other, and can't do without each other -- like people" (Lee 82). Lee's contention, however, contradicts itself since it reverts back to the notions of antagonism and dualism, which makes the ability to define the Didi-Gogo friendship by Reisman's definitions a difficult task. Moreover, Reisman himself does not preclude the complex dynamics of strictly defining friendship in three ways.

There are moments, nevertheless, in other productions of *Godot*, in which the friendship of Didi and Gogo is defined under one of Reisman's definitions. In the 1964-65 Royal Court London production directed by Anthony Page, the most moving moments, according to Malcolm Rutherford, occurred when Didi and Gogo "kept the dialogue going for any length of time, they fondly congratulate[d]

each other" (Rutherford 42). This observation supports the definition of a reciprocal friendship. The next one, though, supports the definition of a receptive friendship. Irving Wardle says of the Abbey Theatre's 1971 production at the Nottingham Playhouse that the Didi-Gogo friendship was primarily displayed by Didi's offerings of comfort to Gogo in which Gogo did not similarly return to Didi (Wardle 8).

Once again, defining the couple's friendship becomes difficult when Andrew Traister, director of the 1974 Oregon Shakespeare Festival's production, comments: "'The pathos and dignity of the two friends waiting out their purgatory in an unchanging present is the moving burden of the play. There is humor in Gogo's apparent dependence on Didi, in his concern with tight boots and carrots, but it is awe-inspiring and unnerving'" (Paolucci 118). According to Reisman, dignity certainly is part of a reciprocal friendship, but can such a friendship in this particular production be labelled a "purgatory"? Purgatory describes their situation rather than their friendship.

Possibly the answer to this question lies within the actors who play the roles of the two tramps. The two actors "retain a derelict dignity," comments Michael Billington on the 1976 West Berlin Schiller Theatre production (which was directed by Beckett himself) at the Royal Court, "and the gentleness with which Didi drapes his coat round Gogo's shoulders speaks volumes" (Billington 22). Even though Stefan Wigger's Didi, according to Henry Popkin, was "more

loyal to his friend, more mindful of the need to wait for Godot" (Popkin 798), Wigger's relationship with his fellow actor was noticed more to other critics. Mel Gussow notes: "These are friends for life. Mr. Bollmann [Gogo] and Mr. Wigger act as if they had an antenna to each other's soul" (Gussow 61). To further emphasize the friendship between the actors in the Schiller Theatre production, Benedict Nightingale observes the physical actions of Bollmann and Wigger, saying they "sometimes actually move in unison, as if to remind us of their symbiotic dependence on each other" (Nightingale 583). All of these critics' views contend the actor to actor relationship in this particular production of *Godot* was a reciprocal friendship. Does this mean Didi and Gogo, as characters in Beckett's play, have a reciprocal friendship? This question will be explored later in the second chapter.

The second part of Chapter One has presented various reviews of *Waiting for Godot* as a dramatic text and as a stage production. The critics mentioned described the Didi-Gogo friendship in the premiere productions as antagonistic and dualistic, whereas other critics regarded the friendship in the text itself as rooted in mutual affection. In other productions, the friendship could be labelled under one of Reisman's definitions, but in others, the friendship could not be so easily defined. In the Schiller Theatre production, the personal friendship between the two actors was indeed reciprocal.

Beckett's Friends

The third part of the chapter focuses on the interviews with four of Beckett's close friends -- Walter Asmus, Jay A. Levy, Roger Blin, and Jack MacGowran -- and each one's involvement with *Waiting for Godot*. The first person discussed is Walter Asmus, who was Beckett's assistant on the Schiller Theatre production in Berlin. Like critic Mel Gussow, Asmus was struck by the close friendship between the two main actors:

Gogo and Didi had their own friendship. And they played these games in private, too, to a certain extent. You know, all the ping-pong, ball-throwing, and teasing between them -- they did that. Being colleagues for decades, they had this personal relationship, and also a feeling of irony and sarcasm. They knew exactly when they were hurting one another, while pinching, torturing, and teasing in private, too (Kalb 175).

Asmus also wrote down the following conversation between Beckett and Stefan Wigger in an interview in the *Theatre Quarterly*, concerning a basic explanation of the play and the action at the beginning of the play:

- Wigger: 'But in spite of everything, it [the action of the play] is at odd moments quite a cheerful game.'
- Beckett: 'Yes, of course, but that should be done very accurately. The splitting up of Vladimir and Estragon is such a point: they are, in fact, inseparable.'
- Wigger: 'Like a rubber band, they come together time

after time.'
 Beckett: 'The principle is: they have to come together
 step by step.' (Asmus 23)

From Asmus' passage, Beckett's view of the Didi-Gogo friendship stems from a purely physical metaphor. The friendship is a step by step game, emphasizing what Beckett himself called "the balletic side of the story" (Asmus 23).

From the two sources of interviews with Asmus, it would seem the friendship between Asmus and Beckett was reciprocal, because Beckett personally asked Asmus to be his assistant for the Schiller Theatre production. Likewise, Asmus was more than willing to devote his time and energy to the production.

In the article entitled, "Conversations with Samuel Beckett," Jay A. Levy goes into much detail about how he and Beckett treated one another in their friendship. First of all, Levy describes Beckett as "a warm, receptive, and generous man" (Levy 128). In June of 1989, Levy said his friendship with Beckett lasted nearly forty years because they had a common interest in the theatre. Levy also admired Beckett's work, and Beckett admired Levy's: "Sam saw me in a different field of study -- medicine -- and in many ways followed my career's development and the evolution of my family with a warm interest" (Levy 132). Beckett was very open to Levy, too, and told him in 1988 that one of the reasons James Joyce did not confide himself fully to Beckett was because Beckett did not marry his daughter (Levy 130). Beckett's friendship with Levy seemed reciprocal, for Beckett had originally named Didi's counterpart Levy,

but where the two men met eye to eye was on a parallel between theatre and science. In regard to *Godot*, Beckett and Levy agreed theatre was like science, because, as Beckett noted, "the scientist is the director and the test tubes are the players. You may predict what will happen, but you do not know exactly how it is going to turn out" (Levy 126).

Another gentleman who saw eye to eye with Beckett was a scientist of the theatre, director Roger Blin. Beckett first met Blin in 1949 at the Gaité Montparnasse Theatre in southern Paris where Blin was directing a production of August Strindberg's *The Ghost Sonata*. Beckett wanted Blin to direct his newly-written play, for he felt Blin was faithful to a script and its playwright's intentions. Fortunately, Blin loved reading the play and was won over at the chance to direct it (Fletcher 406). However, Blin did not quite understand the theme of the play but admired its characterizations and dialogue:

'I read it at once without understanding it very well, but I felt a kind of mysterious voice which shook my natural laziness, which said it must be put on and I must direct it, I absolutely must. I proposed it to associates who didn't want to do it. I took it to a number of theatre managers in Paris -- they laughed in my face' (Benson 53).

Blin, nevertheless, found friends willing to work with him on the play, and Beckett gave Blin permission to choose actors whom Blin knew liked the play and who would rehearse and perform it without being paid. Blin did just that and such actors were found to do the play. Throughout the rehearsal process, Blin stressed three

points to his actors: (1) the two tramps should represent the entire human race (Benson 54); (2) the play should be balanced by both comic and tragic moments; and (3) the play should have moments of tenderness -- especially when Gogo finds refuge in Didi's arms. Blin felt, according to Mary Benson, "the possibility of lending someone a helping hand" (Benson 57) was what *Waiting for Godot* was all about. Blin explained Beckett had intended *Godot* to "be taken a little against the grain and, at the end of the evening, one is left with a feeling of tenderness" (Benson 57) rather than a feeling of despair.

From these sources, Beckett's friendship with Blin appeared reciprocal, for Blin had been willing to produce the *Godot* text. As a similar act of loyalty and admiration, Beckett dedicated the writing of his next play, *Endgame*, solely to Blin. Throughout his career, Beckett did write and dedicate many of his dramatic works to several theatre artists. One of them included a man who had perhaps as close a friendship as any actor could possibly have with a playwright. The actor was Jack MacGowran. MacGowran, like Beckett, was born in Dublin. In an interview with Kathleen McGrory and John Unterecker, MacGowran comments on his friendship with Beckett:

It's a wonderful marriage to this degree -- that one is born in a generation as an actor where a living writer of the calibre of Beckett can work hand in hand with that actor and so bring out the best in both. It rarely happens. And I feel lucky to have lived with him, and to have known him so long and deeply (McGrory & Unterecker 177).

Knowing Beckett very closely, MacGowran wanted others to understand "that survival under any conditions for mankind" (Toscan 21) was the key facet of Beckett's work. Such conditions included human physical problems. For example, MacGowran tells Richard Toscan that Beckett once had a job in a mental home in London and had seen many physically disabled people. According to MacGowran, Beckett put people with physical problems in his plays because "the sensitive chords in Beckett's nature were attuned to the unhappiness in human kind rather than the happiness" (Toscan 21). Yet Beckett's view of humanity did not stop him from being kind toward others. Beckett had helped James Joyce read when Joyce had been going blind (McGrory & Unterecker 173). Beckett was a loyal friend to Joyce, even though the friendship between the two appeared to be receptive.

Beckett was also extremely loyal to and supported many young painters in Paris, as MacGowran notes: "Any one of his friends who's in trouble has only to call on Beckett and will be helped in every way possible. Helping human nature [beings] is one of his greatest virtues. . . . He's kind -- so kind, that you would not expect it from him" (McGrory & Unterecker 174). To MacGowran, Beckett was the kind of man who was very generous and would help out anyone with a problem. Beckett was the kind of man who would do anything to help others without discussing or taking any credit in offering his help (Toscan 22).

Beckett certainly did much for MacGowran as well. MacGowran

enjoyed working with Beckett on his plays, because Beckett would spend hours upon hours helping MacGowran with a role. This friendship seemed truly reciprocal: If MacGowran devoted himself to working on a Beckett play, Beckett would equally devote himself entirely to helping the actor. For instance, MacGowran comments on what Beckett told him about approaching the role of Didi: "'Treat it as a movable force meeting an immovable object' (Vladimir being the movable force and Estragon being the immovable object). But, he [Beckett] said, 'They are interdependent; one needs the other'" (Toscan 17). For MacGowran, Beckett stressed an underlying simplicity to the nature of the Didi-Gogo friendship.

Most importantly, MacGowran finds in Beckett's plays, the following theme -- a need for friendship in a world in which friendships become difficult to maintain. MacGowran emphasizes the human search is a search for other human beings: "Man alone cannot exist. He needs his fellow men" (McGrory & Unterecker 181). In a Beckett play, according to MacGowran, the characters live in a desolate world, deciding to reside in it by sometimes making jokes in order to survive the desolation. As it is with Didi and Gogo, "without any illusions whatever, they go on" (McGrory & Unterecker 182) in life with each other, for each other is all they have.

The third part of Chapter One has focused on four of Beckett's close friends. Walter Asmus' friendship with Beckett was primarily based on a production endeavor in which Asmus offered much insight into the personal friendship between the production's two

main actors. Jay Levy's friendship with Beckett was based on a common interest in the theatre, and each one followed the other's career with a keen interest. Roger Blin's friendship with Beckett was important for both of their careers since Blin was initially interested in the *Godot* script, and Beckett felt Blin was the director to bring the script to life on stage. Jack MacGowran's friendship with Beckett was very close. The actor was responsible for physically bringing to life many of Beckett's characters, and Beckett offered MacGowran much insight and help in working on the plays. Thus, all four of these friendships could perhaps be defined by Reisman's friendship of reciprocity, since each person in each friendship offered equal amounts of affection and loyalty to one another.

Although Beckett himself may have had reciprocal friendships, did he intend for his characters in his plays to have them as well? In looking back at the first chapter, two concluding statements can be made: (1) The four personal friendships Beckett had with individuals involved in the theatre in some aspect seemed reciprocal. His friendships with Lucia and James Joyce appeared receptive. His friendship with his wife may have been reciprocal but also could have been receptive at times as well. (2) The critics' reviews of *Godot* as dramatic literature and reviews of various stage productions either strictly define the Didi-Gogo friendship or leave it undefinable. If Beckett did intend the friendship of Didi and Gogo to be reciprocal, could he have intended it to encompass the receptive

or associative realms as well? In the second chapter of the thesis project, an exploration of the critical theory about the friendship will hopefully shed some light on its true nature.

CHAPTER TWO

The second chapter delves into the critical theory which has been written about *Waiting for Godot*. Primary focus concerns the theme of friendship as manifested in several of the formal and sociohistorical interpretations of the play. Other areas of critical theory not included here are, for example, the mythic, psychological, and poststructuralist/deconstructionist interpretations (which are outlined in Kevin J.H. Dettmar's essay "*Waiting for Godot* and Critical Theory"). Since it would be impossible to cover all the areas in a single chapter, the writer examines specific essays in only the two areas mentioned -- the formal and sociohistorical areas -- in order to compare and contrast two kinds of interpretations. The formal interpretations encompass, for example, the semiotic, structuralist, and hermeneutic methodologies and provide an overview of the friendship theme. The sociohistorical interpretations include, for instance, the reception theory and speech-act theory methodologies (Dettmar 108), and relate directly to Reisman's definitions of friendship on a sociological basis.

The first section of the chapter offers several formal analyses of the *Godot* text in regard to the friendship of Didi and Gogo. The second part shifts into the sociohistorical analyses, and the third part shifts back into the formal area again. The aim of this chapter is to see how various essays and articles of critical theory about *Godot*

interpret the Didi-Gogo friendship.

Formal Interpretations of the Didi-Gogo Friendship

A citation from Edith Kern in *Yale French Studies* serves as an appropriate introduction to the formal interpretation section. In her essay Kern describes the nature of the relationship between Didi and Gogo:

The human relationships dramatized in *Waiting for Godot* are those between master and servant and between friend and friend. . . . Estragon and Vladimir, on the other hand, although apparently free each to go his own way, are tied together by a strong invisible bond: the bond of friendship. While their conversation is fundamentally a monologue, it is a monologue which cannot be spoken without the presence of the other, although he may not even listen. Each needs the other as a comrade, a sounding board, an echo of his complaints, his dreams, his thoughts and his fears. And while each finds the other's presence, at times, unbearable, and resents his interference and even his physical closeness, neither can get along for any length of time without the other's tenderness which is alone capable of breaching momentarily the gap of loneliness that separates man from man (Kern 45).

It seems Kern believes the core of the friendship is reciprocal but is periodically receptive. Kern highlights four major points about the friendship which are discussed below individually. The first point is the conversation between Didi and Gogo. The second is the selfishness which occasionally exists between them. The third is the

tenderness and hope which keeps the pair together. The last point concerns the need for support between them. Other points brought out near the end of the formal interpretation section include self-sacrifice, assertion of the friendship, and the symbols of the tree and the rope.

Before exploring Kern's four points further, it is important to explain first what Didi and Gogo do in the play. Simply put, they wait. Waiting is their sole activity and provides a basis for interpreting their friendship. Raymond Williams describes Didi and Gogo as "at once loving, doubtful and resentful, wanting to to break away yet still anxiously returning to each other; a voluntary relationship, but with natural binding ties" (Williams 302). He states that from the outset of the play, Didi waits for Godot and Gogo for death, and the fact the two are "tied" together tells each is waiting for Godot and death, but the reason for waiting for each character is different. What Williams takes from the text to support his contention is Gogo's proposal of suicide and Didi's distrust in suicide:

VLADIMIR: What do we do now?
 ESTRAGON: Wait.
 VLADIMIR: Yes, but while waiting.
 ESTRAGON: What about hanging ourselves?
 VLADIMIR: Hmm. . . . From a bough? (*They go
 towards the tree.*) I wouldn't trust it.
 ESTRAGON: We can always try. (Beckett 12)

Williams concludes the friendship is defined by the couple's "waiting for what are defined as alternative ends but are the same end: not

moving, coming back to each other" (Williams 303). Williams defines the friendship as one which shifts back and forth through the degrees of reciprocity, receptivity, and even association but is rooted in their activity of waiting.

So what does the activity of "waiting" consist of with Didi and Gogo? According to Konrad Schoell, "this play contains no single action, but a series of activities" (Schoell 51). These activities include the eating of vegetables, the exchange of hats, the asking of questions and the attempts to reply. The list goes on and on, but much of their activity involves conversation. This is Kern's first point. In an article of *Modern Drama*, Richard Schechner explains how the conversation is divided between Didi and Gogo. He uses the following dialogue from the script to highlight the "rhythm" of their friendship:

ESTRAGON: His name is Godot?
 VLADIMIR: I think so.
 ESTRAGON: Fancy that. (*He raises what remains of the carrot by the stub of leaf, twirls it before his eyes.*) Funny, the more you eat the worse it gets.
 VLADIMIR: With me it's just the opposite.
 ESTRAGON: In other words?
 VLADIMIR: I get used to the muck as I go along.
 ESTRAGON: (*after prolonged reflection*) Is that the opposite?
 VLADIMIR: Question of temperament.
 ESTRAGON: Of character.
 VLADIMIR: Nothing you can do about it.
 ESTRAGON: No use struggling.
 VLADIMIR: One is what one is.
 ESTRAGON: No use wriggling.
 VLADIMIR: The essential doesn't change.
 ESTRAGON: Nothing to be done. (*He proffers the*

remains of the carrot to Vladimir.) Like to finish it? (Beckett 14)

In conclusion, Schechner states: "These are opposite contentions, that's why they harmonize so well" (Schechner 274). A reciprocal friendship is defined by their conversation.

Their conversation does not completely determine, however, the nature of their friendship. Bernard F. Dukore argues the friendship includes selfishness as well. This is Kern's second point. An example of selfishness occurs when, in Act Two, Didi says to the boy: "Tell him [Godot]...(*he hesitates*)...tell him you saw me and that...(*he hesitates*)...that you saw me" (Beckett 59). In Act One, though, Didi says to the boy: "Tell him...(*he hesitates*)...tell him you saw us. (*Pause.*) You did see us, didn't you?" (Beckett 34) Dukore goes on to say Didi's selfishness may be only momentary, but in Act Two, Didi urges Gogo to play with him in acting like Pozzo and Lucky. Gogo refuses to play. In this instance, the friendship may gradually become a master-slave relationship, according to Dukore, and he concludes: "This deterioration of friendship into brutality, exploitation, and selfishness may be one of the 'essentials' suggested by Vladimir's remark at the beginning of the play -- that is one of the basic characteristics of the human condition" (Dukore 136). Selfishness, for Dukore, makes the Didi-Gogo friendship receptive and even associative.

On the other hand, there exists the tenderness and hope in the friendship. This is Kern's third point. For example, in Act One, when

Didi will not listen to Gogo's nightmares, they subside their selfish anger with an embrace. At the beginning of Act Two, Didi wants to embrace Gogo because they have been apart again overnight. Gogo refuses for he has been beaten again, but nevertheless, the two embrace. Didi assures Gogo Godot will come, but when Gogo asks Didi if Godot does not come, Didi replies, "We'll see when the time comes" (Beckett 39). Seymour Reiter contends for Didi, there is nothing to do but wait, and waiting causes a loss of hope in him. What takes place in the friendship is a change from hopefulness to a loss of hope, and the change is evident, as Reiter formulates, in Didi:

The beginning of change: Vladimir, with strong conviction, begins to doubt.

The middle: He is told that Godot will come the next day.

To be settled by the end: Will he go on waiting?

Climax: He tests the rope with Estragon, and it breaks.

(Reiter 227)

Though Reiter emphasizes a lack of hope in the friendship, he still asserts the mutual tenderness endures between Didi and Gogo. The mutual tenderness is a strong sign of their friendship's reciprocity.

What surpasses the couple's conversation, selfishness, and tenderness is their need to support each other as a pair -- as friends. This is Kern's fourth point. Throughout the play, Gogo tries to escape from reality by falling asleep, and Didi awakens him, trying constantly to indulge in some momentary distraction. At the opening of the play, for instance, Gogo's need for Didi's support is quite apparent when Gogo is trying to take off his boots. When Didi does

not help him but instead insists, ironically, Gogo could not survive without his help, Gogo ignores Didi. Didi then retorts that life's problems are "too much for one man" (Beckett 7). The "one" in Didi's phrase implies a mutual need for each other even though they both ignore one another at times. As the play progresses, the pair continually shifts from ignoring each other to helping out each other. Likewise, their friendship constantly shifts from being reciprocal to being receptive.

Though the nature of the Didi-Gogo friendship shifts, the pair does learn they can be each other's support. As A. Banerjee explains, the friendship does not have the negative qualities of Pozzo and Lucky's master-slave relationship, but Didi and Gogo "often threaten each other with leaving but remain together, because deep down they know that they need each other's company and help in their journey through life" (Banerjee 525). At the end of Act One, the couple's recognition of their need to stay together supports Banerjee's statement:

VLADIMIR: We can still part, if you think it would
be better.
ESTRAGON: It's not worth while now.
Silence.
VLADIMIR: No, it's not worth while now.
Silence.
ESTRAGON: Well, shall we go?
VLADIMIR: Yes, let's go.
They do not move . (Beckett 35)

In essence, staying together offers Didi and Gogo a mutual need for

comfort and support regardless of how much they get on each other's nerves. Banerjee adds that *Godot* shows two characters who are incapable of doing anything, but she argues the two do "do" a lot with their time. Since their time waiting seems eternal, their "doing" something reinforces their ability to act as friends (Banerjee 528). At the end of Act One, their friendship is clearly reciprocal.

At the end of Act One there is also Gogo's attempt of self-sacrifice in giving up his boots:

VLADIMIR: Your boots, what are you doing with your boots?
 ESTRAGON: (*turning to look at the boots*) I'm leaving them there. (*Pause.*) Another will come, just as...as...as me, but with smaller feet, and they'll make him happy.
 VLADIMIR: But you can't go barefoot!
 ESTRAGON: Christ did.
 VLADIMIR: Christ! What has Christ got to do with it? You're not going to compare yourself to Christ!
 ESTRAGON: All my life I've compared myself to him.
 VLADIMIR: But where he lived it was warm, it was dry!
 ESTRAGON: Yes. And they crucified quick.
 (Beckett 34)

Gogo's sacrifice, what John R. Moore calls "tenderly humorous" (Moore 56), and Didi's concern for Gogo represent a two-fold irony: Gogo wants to give up his boots for someone else and not his friend. Didi's concern for Gogo becomes almost bitter and sarcastic. At this point in the play, their friendship is receptive, for the sacrifice and

the concern are not equally exchanged.

At the beginning of Act Two, as Wolfgang Iser mentions, Didi and Gogo simply want to assert the reality of their friendship (Iser 255). Didi involuntarily creates a game for Gogo to mimick in the assertion:

VLADIMIR: You must be happy too, deep down, if
you only knew it.
ESTRAGON: Happy about what?
VLADIMIR: To be back with me again.
ESTRAGON: Would you say so?
VLADIMIR: Say you are, even if it's not true.
ESTRAGON: What am I to say?
VLADIMIR: Say, I am happy.
ESTRAGON: I am happy.
VLADIMIR: So am I.
ESTRAGON: So am I.
VLADIMIR: We are happy.
ESTRAGON: We are happy. (*Silence.*) What do we
do now, now that we are happy?
VLADIMIR: Wait for Godot. (*Estragon groans.*
Silence.) (Beckett 38-39)

Almost as quickly as the assertions began about their happiness they end with Didi's assertion of their need to wait for Godot. Once again, the friendship shifts out of its reciprocity as the two go on to converse, ignoring one another -- Didi questioning their location and Gogo groaning about their condition of waiting.

In most of the second act, the couple tries desperately to make sense of their location and their condition. According to Richard Lee Francis, the more Didi and Gogo understand the absurdity of their situation, the more difficult it becomes for them to maintain a

reciprocal friendship (Francis 260). They often turn their concerns toward the tree. The tree offers the couple a place for contemplation, for remembering the past. It is also a place of refuge, a place where they can determine their location. The tree is a symbol of their friendship when Didi remarks, "Everything's dead but the tree" (Beckett 59). At the end of the play, Didi and Gogo have the choice of either hanging themselves from the tree or going on waiting together. They use a rope which holds up Gogo's trousers to hang themselves, but the rope breaks. The attempted suicide fails. Francis describes how the pair then decides to continue to wait for Godot, which becomes, what he calls, an "affirmation of life" itself:

The servitude of their mutual existence is symbolically severed by the broken cord. In their new freedom beyond death they find a natural bondage to one another as human beings. What saves the ending from being a mere assertion of human interdependence is the ritual of waiting, the unstated conviction that out of the depths of despair, life goes on (Francis 261).

It is true, then, according to Francis, Didi and Gogo find their natural bondage to one another, but do they fully comprehend Francis' "ideal" state of their bondage -- the level of reciprocity which is represented symbolically by the tree? Unfortunately, they do not, and they continue to wait.

The first section of Chapter Two has provided several of the formal interpretations of the Didi-Gogo friendship. The activities of waiting, which includes all of their conversation, reinforces the

aspects of their friendship -- their need for support of one another, their momentary selfishness, their physical tenderness, and their assertions of the happiness of their friendship. Intermingled with these aspects are their offerings of self-sacrifice and concern of one another as well as their reliance on the tree, a symbol of their friendship in which the couple is not fully aware of their friendship's ideal level of reciprocity. The essays in this section still cannot completely determine whether the nature of the Didi-Gogo friendship can be defined under just one or all of Reisman's three friendships. Thus far, the formal interpretations conclude that defining the friendship corresponds to the state in which the friendship resides -- whether it is in tenderness, selfishness, and so on.

Sociohistorical Interpretations of the Didi-Gogo Friendship

The second part of the chapter focuses on the sociohistorical interpretations of the Didi-Gogo friendship by expanding on the aspects of the friendship mentioned earlier and introducing new factors as well. The new factors to be discussed include obligation, commitment, responsibility, and the basic human need for social interaction.

As mentioned in the formal interpretation section, Beckett depicts the action in *Godot* in the form of "waiting," which includes their conversation. In an essay entitled, "*Waiting for Godot* and Man's Search for Community," Dan O. Via highlights the name-calling

contest Didi and Gogo have in Act Two:

VLADIMIR: Ceremonious ape!
 ESTRAGON: Punctilious pig!
 VLADIMIR: Finish your phrase, I tell you!
 ESTRAGON: Finish your own!
Silence. They draw closer, halt.
 VLADIMIR: Moron!
 ESTRAGON: That's the idea, let's abuse each other.
They turn, move apart, turn again and face each other.
 VLADIMIR: Moron!
 ESTRAGON: Vermin!
 VLADIMIR: Abortion!
 ESTRAGON: Morpion!
 VLADIMIR: Sewer-rat!
 ESTRAGON: Curate!
 VLADIMIR: Cretin!
 ESTRAGON: *(with finality)* Crritic!
 VLADIMIR: Oh!
He wilts, vanquished, and turns away.
 ESTRAGON: Now let's make up. (Beckett 48)

As one can interpret, the game the couple plays is reciprocal, since they both are enjoying "abusing" one another only to then make up for it shortly afterwards by dancing with one another.

Not all of what Didi and Gogo do together are games, though. Via says the meaning of their friendship is summed up in several brief scenes throughout the play (Via 33). The first scene occurs when Didi wakes Gogo from sleep. Didi tells Gogo he is lonely. Gogo becomes angry at Didi but then wants to tell Didi about his nightmare. Didi gets angry at Gogo and tells Gogo not to tell him about the dream. The second scene is similar to the first one, for

after Didi puts his coat over the sleeping Gogo, Gogo wakes again, wanting to tell Didi about his dream, but Didi insists he does not want to listen to it. The third scene takes place when Didi wants to embrace Gogo after spending another night apart, but Gogo demands, "Don't touch me! Don't question me! Don't speak to me! Stay with me!" (Beckett 37) The lack of obligation in these scenes, according to Via, is what defines the friendship between them. He states:

The two men feel the need for true community and want it; yet they are unwilling or unable to pay the price for it. It is really too painful to be open and available to others. Genuine involvement in other people's private nightmares is too hard to bear. But in spite of the failure there is something of friendship between the two figures. They always come back together even though they do not know just why (Via 34).

Via advocates, then, the friendship is receptive, since one or the other is not fully obliged to return his help or concern for the other. One must remember that obligation is found, according to Reisman's assumptions, only in a reciprocal friendship.

The lack of obligation in the Didi-Gogo friendship is also noted in Robert Zaller's statement:

This instability [lack of obligation] derives from the fact that each man seeks approbation from his fellows without the obligation to reciprocate it, but there is a more fundamental cause. Each man, . . . is in a state of absolute freedom with respect to every other man, and so the most necessary bond of friendship -- obligation as such -- is lacking (Zaller 162).

If obligation is lacking in the friendship, commitment and responsibility are lacking as well, as Zaller argues. Little commitment is apparent in the couple despite the notion they possibly have been together nearly fifty years. For example, Gogo often says to Didi, "I sometimes wonder if we wouldn't have been better off alone, each one for himself." Didi replies, "It's not certain" (Beckett 35). To Zaller, Didi and Gogo take little responsibility for each other, since they are incapable of taking responsibility for their own actions for more than a brief period of time. Their friendship is based on what Zaller describes as particular verbal distractions and frequent moments of shared remembrances (Zaller 162). Their skirted responsibility to each other is summed up, for instance, by the following exchange at the beginning of Act Two:

VLADIMIR: Did I ever leave you?
 ESTRAGON: You let me go. (Beckett 38)

Even though Gogo wanders away from Didi from time to time, Gogo may not be the one responsible for his going away. Zaller explains:

That Didi has never left Gogo is beside the fact that he has never been able to keep him from going. At best, moreover, Didi's constancy is a negative virtue. He cannot claim fidelity to the relationship, merely that he has never been the first to desert it. Gogo's reproach is precisely that if Didi were faithful, he would have stayed with him; hence, he is responsible for his going (Zaller 162).

Like Via, Zaller advocates a receptive friendship between Didi and

Gogo, one in which obligation, commitment, and responsibility are not exchanged equally by the couple.

In the next four essays discussed in the sociohistorical interpretation section, the basic human need for social interaction defines the Didi-Gogo friendship. In an article of *Modern Drama*, Gabor Mihalyi proclaims in the play the pair's instinct for human interaction cannot be suppressed, because the play lends itself to displaying the meeting of the two friends over and over again (Mihalyi 278). Since their meeting over and over again is the reality of the play, Toni O'Brien Johnson says this reality is what causes the couple's impulse to talk to each other (Johnson 94). Such an impulse is part of the basic human need for interaction. In the play, most of the couple's conversation is made up of contradictions and questions. For example, after Lucky has kicked Gogo, Gogo cries he will never be able to walk again. Didi says to Gogo tenderly, "I'll carry you. (*Pause.*) If necessary" (Beckett 22). Another example is when Gogo asks Didi why Lucky does not put down the bags he carries, Didi asks, "How would I know?" (Beckett 17) Gunther Anders declares the way Didi and Gogo overcome the tedium of their existence is by taking advantage of their every moment of being together. Anders concludes: "If they did not cling to each other desperately, if they could not rely on the never ceasing to and fro of their conversation, if they had not their quarrels, if they did not leave each other or reunite. . . . they would actually be lost" (Anders 147).

Robert N. Wilson's essay, "Samuel Beckett: The Social

Psychology of Emptiness," interprets that in *Godot* the characters will maintain their need for social interaction no matter how much the desolation of "waiting" frustrates them (Wilson 68). In Act Two, Didi and Gogo's following exchange reaffirms Wilson's statement:

ESTRAGON: We always find something, eh Didi, to give us the impression we exist?
 VLADIMIR: (*impatiently*) Yes yes, we're magicians. But let us persevere in what we have resolved before we forget. (Beckett 44)

In effect, the pair is concerned to preserve the friendship between them. They are also concerned with helping others. For example, in Act Two, Pozzo and Lucky have fallen to the ground. Didi and Gogo debate whether they should help them up or not. Didi then affirms his, what Wilson calls, "mock-heroic" speech:

VLADIMIR: Let us do something, while we have the chance! It is not every day that we are needed. Not indeed that we personally are needed. Others would meet the case equally well, if not better. To all mankind they were addressed, those cries for help still ringing in our ears! 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! (Beckett 51)

To Wilson, Didi and Gogo's momentary tenderness for others is a sign of their own reciprocal interaction, for the couple's occasional bantering, cursing, and unconcern with each other "do not entirely

conceal the very human bondage these men feel. . . . The few strands of hope and friendship are thin and fragile" (Wilson 70) when the couple does attempt to get Pozzo off the ground, but they collapse themselves. It is only after much bantering and cursing, though, that Didi and Gogo get back on their feet and then help Pozzo up as well (Beckett 52-54). What Wilson, along with Anders, Johnson, and Mihalyi, are contending is the Didi-Gogo friendship is not definable under just one of Reisman's definitions. It shifts from one kind to the other. The reason for this shifting is since Didi and Gogo live in a mutual existence of desolation, their strong need for a reciprocal friendship is constantly fragmented into different degrees by their own frequent contradictory dialogue and actions.

The second section of Chapter Two has presented several of the sociohistorical interpretations of the Didi-Gogo friendship. Via and Zaller proclaim the friendship is receptive, because the obligation, commitment, and responsibility between the couple is unbalanced. The other four writers explain the friendship shifts from one kind of friendship to the other, but the couple's need for social interaction, a need for a reciprocal friendship, is what keeps them together.

Other Formal Interpretations

The third part of the chapter goes back to the formal interpretations of the Didi-Gogo friendship. In the other two sections, conversation has been mentioned as an important factor in

exploring the nature of the friendship. Ewa Hryniewicz says conversation "lets Vladimir and Estragon affirm their existence" (Hryniewicz 265). At the same time, the pair is also imprisoned by their conversation. According to Phyllis Toy, all Didi and Gogo have is their friendship, for they are "trapped within an endless economy of habit and repetitions, tortured by unanswerable questions resulting neither in death nor oblivion, neither fulfillment nor release" (Toy 103). It is clear, then, what does remain strong between Didi and Gogo is their need to stay together, their need to maintain a reciprocal friendship in the midst of their bickering and bantering.

Despite the pair's bickering and bantering, as pointed out by Konstantin Kolenda, there are positive factors about the friendship which must be taken into consideration, such as happiness, protection, and loyalty. According To Kolenda, Gogo's dependence on Didi is, on the surface, much greater than that of Didi's dependence on Gogo, but Didi recognizes and respects this fact despite his occasional impatience with Gogo. Yet Didi is always happy to see his friend, especially after they have spent a night apart (Kolenda 154). At the beginning of Act Two, Didi says to Gogo, "I missed you...and at the same time I was happy" (Beckett 38). Didi also protects his friend, especially when he puts his coat over the sleeping Gogo and then takes him in his arms when Gogo awakens from a nightmare (Beckett 45). The couple even protects one another when they sense they are "surrounded." Their friendship becomes reciprocal here

when Didi offers protection for the both of them in hiding in the audience or behind the tree. When those options fail, Gogo suggests the two of them keep a look-out on opposite ends of the stage (Beckett 47-48). In this instance, ideas for protection are equally exchanged. This particular scene also emphasizes the couple's inherent need for one another. This need is what Kolenda believes to be the most important insight into the play:

In their desperate condition Vladimir and Estragon have each other. The waiting is their *common* project. It joins their spirits and lends them whatever minimum of security and comfort are still possible. They can go on hoping against hope because they derive a modicum of support from their mutual participation in this pure spiritual striving Beckett describes as waiting (Kolenda 161).

To Kolenda, waiting is what constitutes the need for friendship between Didi and Gogo.

In addition to the happiness, protection, and the ever-present waiting, there is the loyalty which exists in the friendship. Kolenda describes the reciprocal loyalty of the pair in which Didi provides "sympathy, kindness, and goodwill" for Gogo and Gogo places his "blind, stubborn" trust in Didi's support. Kolenda also describes Didi's receptive loyalty to Gogo in which Didi is aware of Gogo's tendency to get easily discouraged but shows Gogo tolerance (Kolenda 162). For example, in Act One, Didi takes great care in providing nourishment for Gogo by giving him a carrot to eat:

ESTRAGON: *(violently)* I'm hungry!
 VLADIMIR: Do you want a carrot?
 ESTRAGON: Is that all there is?
 VLADIMIR: I might have some turnips.
 ESTRAGON: Give me a carrot. *(Vladimir rummages in his pockets, takes out a turnip and gives it to Estragon who takes a bite out of it. Angrily.)* It's a turnip!
 VLADIMIR: Oh pardon! I could have sworn it was a carrot. *(He rummages again in his pockets, finds nothing but turnips.)* All that's turnips. *(He rummages.)* You must have eaten the last. *(He rummages.)* Wait, I have it. *(He brings out a carrot and gives it to Estragon.)* There, dear fellow. *(Estragon wipes the carrot on his sleeve and begins to eat it.)* Make it last, that's the end of them.
 (Beckett 13-14)

Ironically, near the end of the play, the giving of the carrot takes on a more poignant display when Didi wants Gogo to continue sleeping, so that Gogo will not realize how hopeless their existence may be:

VLADIMIR: He'll know nothing. He'll tell me about the blows he received and I'll give him a carrot. . . . At me too someone is looking, of me too someone is saying, He is sleeping, he knows nothing, let him sleep on. (Beckett 58)

To Kolenda, Didi's receptive loyalty to Gogo at this moment is "made bearable because he has Estragon to care for, and to stand with him through the inconclusive waiting (Kolenda 163)." Thus, Didi and Gogo are two social beings who need each other's affection and loyalty but

may not necessarily receive or give it equally at times.

The third part of Chapter Two has focused once again on the formal interpretations of the Didi-Gogo friendship. The essays and articles in this section contend the friendship exists when the pair possesses a strong need to stay together. Kolenda expounds on the positive traits of the friendship -- happiness, protection, and loyalty. Even though the loyalty is sometimes receptive, their need for these positive traits of the friendship in order to survive the "waiting" is reciprocal.

In looking back at the second chapter as a whole, two concluding statements can be made: (1) The formal interpretations of the Didi-Gogo friendship say the friendship shifts from one kind to the other depending in which aspect the friendship momentarily resides. Even though these aspects of their friendship -- such as selfishness, tenderness, and so forth -- may reside in the receptive or associative realms, the couple's very need to remain together resides in the reciprocal realm. (2) The sociohistorical interpretations say the friendship is either receptive because of a unbalanced amount of obligation, commitment, and responsibility, or the friendship shifts from one kind to the other regardless of how much Didi and Gogo need to interact with one another on a reciprocal basis. Where the formal and sociohistorical interpretations do agree, concerning whether the friendship can be defined by one or more of Reisman's definitions, is that the couple's need to stay together is clearly a

reciprocal one. In the following chapter, the couple's need to stay together is explored further by the writer's experience of playing the role of Didi in the UNO production.

CHAPTER THREE

The third chapter of the thesis project offers the following: (1) my personal observations of the rehearsal process during the UNO production of *Waiting for Godot*; (2) the responses to the production; and (3) my analysis of the nature of the Didi-Gogo friendship. It is important to note that since this chapter involves my personal experiences, the first-person tense is used.

Rehearsal Process

The first portion of the chapter focuses on the personal observations I made during the rehearsal process. Each paragraph gives a brief summary of what transpired during each rehearsal session followed by comments about how the Didi-Gogo friendship was explored through the rehearsal sessions. Specific directorial notes in regard to Didi and Gogo are examined as well. It is also important to note that Reisman's definitions were taken into consideration after the entire rehearsal process was over.

Before commenting on the rehearsal sessions, several observations of the audition process should be mentioned. During the first night of auditions, I felt only two people out of the twenty-two who auditioned would be considered for the role of Gogo -- Aaron Zavitz and Shawna Mefferd. Both of them possessed a strong

amount of physical energy in their audition pieces, but both differed in how they presented their physical energy. Aaron was very quirky, unpredictable, and spontaneous, whereas Shawna was more controlled, honest, and had an "earthy" presence. At the end of the night, I thought it would be very interesting to have the Didi-Gogo friendship be a male-female one.

At the second night of auditions, once again, both Aaron and Shawna had the best cold readings from the script. Aaron was very comical. He tried to find every nuance of humor in Gogo's lines. Shawna's readings were also humorous but also had a touch of vulnerability in them. Moreover, Shawna had an acute sense of the rhythm of Didi-Gogo one-line exchanges. At this point, I felt Shawna might be the one to play Gogo.

The last evening of auditions were the call-backs. The entire session lasted less than an hour. James Larson, the director, had a dozen of us do a "paratheatrical" exercise together. His intention was to see how the group could interact with one another by using only sound and movement to communicate. He also wanted to see who could keep up a consistent level of energy and improvisation during a long period of time. The exercise lasted nearly forty-five minutes. As before, I interacted with Aaron and Shawna the most, trying to establish whatever form of physical affection I could with them. Aaron responded to me in a hysterical manner, putting a garbage can over his head and ignoring me. Shawna, on the other hand, reacted to me both indifferently and compassionately. I knew from that

moment Shawna and I would be able to explore the Didi-Gogo friendship at different levels, which later became the reciprocal and receptive aspects of the friendship. Even though Aaron's level of interaction was consistent, it was consistent at only one level. Shawna's had two different levels -- one in which she could be easily agitated and the other in which she became very vulnerable. After the exercise was over, the production was quickly cast. Shawna would play Gogo.

During the first rehearsal, James walked through the basic blocking of the first Didi-Gogo scenes in Act One with Shawna and me. Throughout the rehearsal James told us to look for the constant mood changes in the dialogue and to exaggerate them at a loud volume so he could then tone us down later. He also told us to find which character at which moments had the control of the other and where the control shifted between the couple. Fortunately, there was already a pleasant chemistry of the characters' verbal exchanges occurring between Shawna and me, and we were beginning to explore the "shifting" nature of the Didi-Gogo friendship.

At the second night of rehearsals, the Pozzo-Lucky scenes in Act One and Act Two were blocked. Once again, James told us to exaggerate our voices. He pointed out, too, that Didi and Gogo's condescension of Lucky after they first observe and comment on him should be a "shared" experience. Near the end of the play, though, the couple does not have a shared experience. The example of this was when I read out loud for the first time Didi's "discovery speech"

after Pozzo and Lucky exit in Act Two. James said it sounded like one of Hamlet's soliloquies. He told me to direct the speech to Gogo as if Didi was trying to talk to her even though Gogo is not listening. At this point in the play, Shawna and I portrayed the receptive side of the friendship.

The third rehearsal consisted of blocking the Boy scenes and the closing scenes with Didi and Gogo in Acts One and Two. After that, Shawna and I worked the first scene in Act One off book. James told us to extend the vowel sounds in our exaggerated voices in order to "relish" the language of the text, but not to let the text dominate our acting. He said there should be no pauses in between cues, that they should occasionally overlap. He mentioned the antagonism between the couple is constant, for the two of them rarely rest. James also pointed out the area right around the tree represented "reflection" and the areas farther away from it "solitude."

During the fourth rehearsal period, we worked the Pozzo-Lucky scene in Act One off book. Shawna and I discovered Didi and Gogo are frightened by Pozzo at first but later become confident enough to be unaware of him. This feeling was mutual between the characters. We also discovered a mutual feeling of enjoyment happens when Didi and Gogo try to "top" one another's comments as they describe Lucky's appearance. At this point in the play, we played the reciprocal side of the friendship.

At the fifth rehearsal period we worked the Boy scenes and the closing scenes of each act. James wanted me to use three-

dimensional attitudes toward the Boy -- sarcasm, anger, frustration. The highlight of the night was James' names for Shawna and me: Gogo is Bitchy, and Didi is Blunt. Whenever Gogo complains about something, especially her boots, Didi always has a blunt remark: "There's mankind all over for you, blaming on one's boots the faults of one's feet." Most of the time, Shawna and I played the receptive aspects of the friendship -- being selfish and ignoring one another. We also worked the verbal game in Act Two after the "dead voices" section. This was the most difficult section to rehearse, since James had us improvise as many different kinds of voices for each separate line in order to show the audience Didi and Gogo are trying to drown out the "dead voices" with their own improvised "voice" game. At this point in the play, we emphasized the couple's reciprocal need to interact and support one another.

The sixth rehearsal period was spent working on the Didi-Gogo scenes in both acts. James toned down our exaggerated, loud voices in order to give us another level of the relationship on which to work, a level of honesty and spontaneity. Those were the key words for the night. James said that since Shawna and I were fairly comfortable with our lines, we had to listen to one another very carefully. There had to be a strong need to simply talk to one another. This was the reciprocal core of the Didi-Gogo friendship. James also told me to express the extremes of vulnerability and boldness during Didi's "dog song" at the beginning of Act Two.

During the seventh evening of rehearsals, we worked the

Pozzo-Lucky scene in Act One. James noted that my voice was becoming "phony" and recitative. At this point in time, it was difficult for me to keep the voice honest because of Didi's tendency to speak rhetorically.

At the eighth evening of rehearsals, the Boy scenes were worked as well as all of the other Didi-Gogo scenes. James added the word "brilliance" as the third key term to remember along with honesty and spontaneity. He continued to stress the importance of the couple's need to talk to another, telling us, "You must listen to each other's 'hearts.' Since you two are in your own world, you can feel completely free to do whatever you want to with each other." Unfortunately, under this assumption, our pacing and tempo during the scenes got frantic. James wanted us to slow down within the lines but to keep up the pace between the cues.

The following day Shawna and I had a brief interview with Steve Adair at the KVNO radio station on the UNO campus. Steve asked us why we were doing the show, and I told him I was doing it as part of my thesis project, and that *Godot* expressed a view of the human condition in the 20th-century through the friendship between the two main characters. I also read the passage from Edith Kern's essay which is mentioned in Chapter Two. Shortly afterward, another man who worked at the radio station came in the studio and told us he had played Gogo with a professional company back in 1975. He said, "What kept the production fresh for over fifty performances was the spontaneity of the friendship between Didi

and Gogo." Shawna and I then did a "spontaneous" photo shoot out in Elmwood Park. It was nearly thirty below zero with the windchill factor!

The ninth evening of rehearsals was spent working the Pozzo-Lucky scene in Act One. James was pleased with the tempo of that scene. During the tenth rehearsal period, we worked the Pozzo-Lucky scene in Act Two. All of the actors and even James got to laughing too much when we kept running the "fart" section in which Didi, Pozzo, and Lucky are all lying on the ground. We all got a bit carried away with the "farting" that night.

We ran all of the Didi-Gogo scenes and Boy scenes at the eleventh rehearsal period. Once again, James told us to relax within the lines but to make sure the cues were on top of one another. We searched for the high contrasts of mood changes in the dialogue, but James said not to search too much. He told us to keep the energy and vitality within the lines extended in a 360-degree resonance, since we were performing in the round. He added, "Live the play in the present. It's your world. It's your friendship." At this point in time, Shawna and I alternated the friendship between receptivity and reciprocity.

During the twelfth rehearsal we ran the Pozzo-Lucky scene in Act One. Since the lines were being delivered smoothly, James started to give specific notes to each of us. Several of the notes for me pertained specifically to the Didi-Gogo friendship. Included are my afterthoughts on the nature of the friendship for each particular

moment:

Make Gogo jealous on your line to Lucky: "He's not bad looking." (Associative - Didi shows no affection for Gogo when marvelling over Lucky's appearance.)

Include Gogo in your excited anticipation: "Make a note of this." (Reciprocal - Didi and Gogo both share their eagerness to hear Pozzo explain why Lucky does not put down the bags.)

Build up your frustration of Pozzo with Gogo during the "get rid of him" section. (Receptive - Gogo eggs Didi on to question Pozzo but does not do so himself.)

Find the laughter with Gogo sooner after chastising Pozzo. (Reciprocal - Didi and Gogo find mutual pleasure in making fun of Pozzo after he breaks down and cries.)

Then the same scene was run a second time:

Sit back to back with Gogo in concern for one another after Pozzo's "bitch of an earth" line. (Reciprocal - Didi and Gogo share the realization of their need to stay together and wait for Godot.)

The following evening we had our first run-thru. The only important note James had for Shawna and me was for us to settle into the opening scene of the play more quickly. After the second run-thru, more notes were given:

Act One

Turn your back to Gogo on your line, "You're merciless."
(Associative - Gogo shows no respect for Didi when

he constantly interrupts him.)

Keep glancing uneasily at Gogo the first time she's sleeping. (Receptive - Didi knows he cannot survive alone without Gogo's company.)

Turn sooner to Gogo on your line, "Calm yourself."
(Receptive - Didi is concerned for Gogo's well-being and their need to remain together even though Gogo is talking about parting.)

The embrace should be hesitant and awkward.
(Receptive/reciprocal - Didi and Gogo are unsure about committing themselves to each other but the moment of physical contact is mutual.)

Crouch with Gogo after Pozzo yells, "Stand back."
(Reciprocal - Didi and Gogo protect each other.)

Motion Gogo to get back when you say to the Boy,
"Approach, my child." (Receptive - Didi tries to protect Gogo from an outside intruder and feels Gogo is not confident enough to approach one.)

Act Two

Pause with concern for Gogo before your "if you want to go on living" line. (Receptive - Didi assures Gogo, who is ignoring Didi, that what they do together is just as important as them being together.)

Question Gogo strongly on your line, "What other?"
(Receptive - Didi is concerned about Gogo wanting to die again, and Gogo shows no concern for Didi in saying so.)

Make the "voice game" with Gogo a "joust" of desperation.
(Reciprocal - Didi and Gogo display a mutual need to support one another in drowning out the "dead voices.")

- Put the responsibility of what to do next on Gogo with your line, "you have to decide." (Receptive - Didi shows no loyalty to Gogo in making him decide what they should do to pass the time.)
- Take all the time you want to put your vest over Gogo when she is sleeping. (Receptive - Didi shows great care for Gogo but does not expect Gogo to similarly return it, for he knows at this moment Gogo cannot.)
- Get in Gogo's face on your reply, "Waiting for Godot." (Associative - Didi is fed up with Gogo's whining.)
- The hat switching should be a gleeful shopping spree for you. (Reciprocal/Associative - Didi and Gogo exchange hats with mutual enthusiasm, but then Gogo does not give Didi the hat Didi wants to wear.)
- Take a short, offended pause before saying, "Ceremonious ape!" (Reciprocal - Didi and Gogo start a mutual "name-calling" game.)
- Look up at God with Gogo during your "tree" stance. (Associative - Gogo wants God to look only on him and not Didi, and Didi protests.)
- Shift Gogo to the other side of the stage on your "no longer alone" line. (Reciprocal - Didi and Gogo share the joy of realizing Godot may have come to them.)
- Protect yourself on your last "don't tell me" to Gogo. (Receptive/Associative - Gogo wants to tell Didi about her nightmare in order to relieve her suffering but Didi refuses to commit himself to listen to it.)
- Look through the tree at Gogo during your last monologue before getting up to leave. (Associative - Didi finally decides to leave Gogo when he comes to

understand the absurdity and hopelessness of their existence.)

Make your "we'll be saved" line triumphant. (Reciprocal - Didi and Gogo stand back to back, mutually concerned about their need to stay together and wait for Godot.)

After the third run-thru James told us the opening scene was too fast and needed to slow down: "Keep the honesty and spontaneity but take your time with it." The notes that night included:

Encourage Pozzo in his first attempt to sit on the stool. (Reciprocal - Didi and Gogo find mutual enjoyment in mocking Pozzo.)

Make a shadow game out of the "I am happy/we are happy" section with Gogo. (Receptive - Didi wants Gogo to assert their happiness together, but Gogo only mocks him.)

James also thought the Boy scene in Act Two was very real and moving.

During the fourth run-thru we had all of the edible props. The pace of the opening scene was much slower. Our audience, the technical crew, thought the form of the show was very tight. James did not give the cast notes, but for the fifth run-thru James did have specific notes:

Act One

Mimick Gogo on your line, "You want to know if it hurts."

(Associative - Gogo shows no compassion for Didi's prostrate problem.)

Breath on Gogo and turn away after your line, "It's for the kidneys." (Associative - Gogo shows no compassion for Didi's bad breath.)

Joke with Gogo on your "give me an erection" line. (Reciprocal - Didi and Gogo find mutual amusement in talking about hanging themselves.)

Cross slower to Gogo after Pozzo's "bitch of an earth" line. (Receptive/Reciprocal - Didi and Gogo show hesitancy in acknowledging their mutual need to support and comfort one another after Pozzo and Gogo have made fun of Didi.)

Act Two

Don't be too harsh with Gogo on your line, "Will you look at me." (Receptive - Didi is concerned for Gogo's safety, and Gogo refuses to look at him.)

Make your line to Gogo -- "Here, hold that" -- more urgent. (Reciprocal - Didi wants to include Gogo in the hat exchange, and Gogo eagerly follows Didi's command.)

Share the exasperation and despair with Gogo in the last scene. (Reciprocal - Didi and Gogo realize the only choice they have, after attempting to hang themselves and failing, is to continue waiting together for Godot.)

After the sixth run-thru, James had only a few specific notes for me:

Act One

Crawl to Gogo on your last "Gogo" when she is sleeping.
(Receptive - Didi is frightened about being alone
without Gogo and tries to wake her.)

Act Two

Make the "bye bye" song to Gogo as loud as your "dog"
song. (Receptive/Associative - Didi tries to comfort
Gogo but only annoys her with his loud singing.)

Emphasize greatly to Gogo your line "We have to come
back tomorrow." (Reciprocal - Didi stresses to Gogo
their mutual need to wait for Godot and Gogo
acknowledges it.)

At this point in the chapter it is not important to discuss in detail the performances of the production, since they would repeat all of the previously mentioned observations during the rehearsal process. However, it is important to note that during the performances, Shawna and I tried to "live the play" in the present as best we could, thus leaving a "spontaneous" representation of the Didi-Gogo friendship for the audiences to view. Shawna and I did not discuss our character motivations prior to a performance. We simply tried to "live" them on stage moment by moment.

Responses to the Production

The second part of Chapter Three offers the responses and comments of the UNO production of *Godot*. The following week after the production ended, a critique session was held in the Directing Lab of the UNO Fine Arts Building. Here were some of the comments

from students about the Didi-Gogo friendship:

The relationship between the two was effective but simple -- simple in that they were two friends struggling through life together.

The communication between them was a definite symbiosis of their need for each other.

The pair was well-developed, and their dialogue was understandable. It had a logical pattern to it.

Their relationship was visually as well as physically stunning.

For the most part, the two were very warm and positive with each other. Most *Godots* are morose.

Doing the show in the round allowed for better intimacy between the two.

The relationship was very intense at times, well-explored and strong.

I felt for Didi and Gogo's "waiting." I got a lot of good from it.

The pair was full of energy, even laughable, too.

The couple related to one another in a life-affirming, positive way. Their vocal and physical comedy was lucid.

There were also comments about individual performances:

David had a lot of energy and charisma.

David displayed a physical and mental fastness on stage.

I think why Didi was so excited all the time was because

his underlying energy was his need to wait for Godot with his friend.

Shawna was definitely the horizontal contrast to David's verticality. Her physicality was oriented toward the ground.

Finally, there were comments from Shawna, James, and myself:

Shawna: I didn't think too much about playing a male part, or trying to be a female playing a male part, or just trying to play the part as a female. I simply played the part.

James: I loved working with the actors. Even though the rehearsal process was very structured and anti-abstract, the actors showed a mental and physical toughness in repeating certain sections of the script over and over. They had a great sense of professionalism.

David: What helped the show the most was James not sitting down with us and delving into deep philosophical and analytical discussions of the play. We approached the text in a very simple way: These characters interact in the "here and now," speaking their words, doing their movements, and expressing the ups and downs of their existence while they wait with each other.

Then my thesis committee held a meeting to discuss the production:

Bruce Baker, one of the UNO English professors, said he was a little hesitant on the casting of Shawna as Gogo. He attributed his comment to himself being a traditionalist, but was nevertheless

impressed by the affectionate aspects of the Didi-Gogo relationship, especially when Didi placed his vest over the sleeping Gogo.

Doug Paterson, the chairman of my committee, remarked on how the sexuality of the pair, especially Gogo, was "levelled out" and ambiguous as the ungenerated two-by-four tree was. He said the friendship was charming but was one of incontinence.

James added the casting of a male-female pair brought a new dimension to the play, one in which Didi and Gogo were like a married couple who needed a divorce. The sexuality, according to James, was ambiguous, and in order to see this the text itself had to be, as he put it, "destroyed" so that the actors would not be dominated by the text. James briefly mentioned the existential and theological significance of Didi's last monologue, wondering how I approached it. I told him, "Like you told me in rehearsals, I had to just talk to Gogo even though she is not listening." Finally, James said the Didi-Gogo friendship is one of "confinement," one in which you have two complementary characters whose fights and reconciliations comprise a neverending state of inertia.

I also had various responses to the production. First of all, the greatest challenge for me as an actor in doing the play was in keeping disciplined concentration in the vocal and physical interplay between myself and Shawna. Secondly, the casting of a female Gogo brought a "warmer, positive" dimension to the play, but did not delve into any of the possible sexual dimensions of the Didi-Gogo relationship. Thirdly, the strengths in this production were the

moments when clear choices were made in the action of the play. The best example of a clear choice was when I put my vest over Shawna -- a strong symbol of the Didi-Gogo friendship. Fourthly, the weaknesses in this production were the moments when the action of the play was not clear. The prime example of this was when I moaned offstage as Didi. Many people could not tell whether Didi was actually urinating or possibly masturbating. Finally, I felt the production was successful because of the cast's willingness to "live" the roles rather than "play" them.

Personal Analysis

The third section of Chapter Three presents my personal commentary on the Didi-Gogo friendship after having acted in the UNO production. Here are some of my reflections of the experience:

It would seem the Didi-Gogo friendship is expressed in terms of their affection and loyalty for one another. In a world of senselessness and menace, their friendship is stable, despite frequent frictions, for they are always in the same place with each other. What binds their friendship, though, is their dissimilarities. Their conversation is comprised of a chant in which the two attract and repel, possess or elude, one another. For me, Didi and Gogo are a pair who represent a fundamental struggle in mankind's existence.

They represent mankind desperately trying to get out of solitude, sometimes succeeding, but most of the time failing to share

their suffering or even their deaths. Whatever or whoever Godot is, it is clear Didi and Gogo can get out of their solitude through each other, for togetherness is a human experience. Unfortunately, the couple is in a state of continuous agitation, because they cannot face up to the solitude which threatens them. They may know or not know the cause of their agitation, but they go on, for there is nothing else for them to do. They cannot commit suicide, because they have not resolved their contradictions. At the end of the play, for example, when they try to hang themselves, the rope breaks. Didi says they will hang themselves the following day. That is unlikely, though. Gogo's trousers have fallen and he cannot move. He pulls them up, and the two say they will go but do not. Their apathy and natural aptitude to wait are against leaving and thereby against the solitude. Above all, the hope that Godot might come, is never entirely given up as well.

The image of man Beckett presents in *Waiting for Godot*, for me, is that man is a being in relationship. The quality of this relationship depends on how the individuals in the relationship respond to the situation in which they find themselves. Didi and Gogo maintain friendship while waiting, but maintaining their friendship is at times desperate since they must wait. Does this mean the friendship is never fully satisfying to them? The answer may be the dignity one finds in one's faithfulness to his friend must be considered satisfying. There is always doubt about this, though, because of the necessity of waiting together. Are Didi and Gogo

really free to commit themselves to a friendship or withdraw from it? Friendships are a part of the human condition, and there are no absolute guidelines for how a friendship should be defined. They can be demonic, like Pozzo and Lucky's, or compassionate, like Didi and Gogo's. Beckett seemed to favor the latter, but one must remember we are dealing with an image in the theatre, and thus the question is always left open as to what Beckett's ultimate convictions were in writing this play. Certainly, Reisman's three friendships do not necessarily define the nature of the Didi-Gogo friendship. The definitions are useful in examining the friendship, but do not entirely encompass such a complex human relationship as friendship.

In *Waiting for Godot*, I believe the Didi-Gogo friendship can be viewed as a metaphor for human beings needfully playing rather than hopelessly waiting. Beckett created these two characters from the familiar music-hall tradition of the vaudeville comedy pair, for the play is full of physical playing involving the exchange of hats, fallen pants, sudden collapses, and so forth. Nevertheless, both characters develop as human beings throughout the play. Didi becomes more responsible and concerned for his friend, and Gogo becomes more sophisticated in his protests and vindictiveness toward Didi. For both of them, however, I think they come to realize in the course of the play that they are destitute of everything except each other. It is true Didi has always had an analytical mind, but he finds himself at the end of play not far behind his friend on the road to uncertainty and oblivion. They need to stay together, no matter

how comforting or annoying their friendship may be.

In looking back now over the last chapter, three concluding statements can be made: (1) The Didi-Gogo friendship in the UNO production did portray all three kinds of Reisman's friendships, shifting constantly from one to the other within brief scenes and even within separate lines and actions of the text. (2) The students who saw the production commented about the positive strength of the Didi-Gogo friendship. The thesis committee saw this strength as well but primarily defined the friendship as one of ambiguity and confinement. (3) My personal analysis of the Didi-Gogo friendship states the friendship embodies a fundamental aspect of the human condition -- mankind seeking refuge from solitude -- as well as a general metaphor for the human condition in which friendship may not be well-defined but is important in the basic human need to survive in an indifferent world.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis project was to explore the nature of the Didi-Gogo friendship in Samuel Beckett's play, *Waiting for Godot*, through the research and rehearsal phases.

The introduction provided two background sources for defining the word "friendship." John Reisman's three definitions of friendship (association, receptivity, and reciprocity) are based upon Aristotle's three purposes (utility, pleasure, and virtue) to which friendship serves. All three friendships consist of varying degrees of loyalty and affection. A reciprocal friendship has an equal balance of affection and loyalty. A receptive friendship has an unequal balance in which one does not similarly return the affection and loyalty to the other. An associative friendship has little or no affection and loyalty whatsoever.

Chapter One presented a biographical sketch of Beckett's life and his conception for writing *Godot*. The friendships he had with Lucia and James Joyce seemed to be receptive. The one with his wife Suzanne was reciprocal. The reviews of *Godot* as a dramatic text and in various stage productions either define the Didi-Gogo friendship under one of Reisman's definitions or leave it undefinable. The friendships Beckett had with people involved with the theatre in some aspect all appeared to be reciprocal.

Chapter Two examined the play's critical theory. The formal

interpretations of the Didi-Gogo friendship state the friendship shifts from one kind of Reisman's friendships to the other, depending in which condition (selfishness, tenderness, and so on) the friendship resides. The couple's need to stay together, though, is reciprocal. Some of the sociohistorical interpretations contend the friendship is receptive because of an unbalanced amount of obligation and commitment. The other sociohistorical ones contend it shifts from one kind of friendship to the other regardless of how much Didi and Gogo need a reciprocal friendship. Where both areas do agree is the couple's reciprocal need to stay together even though the friendship may be definable under one or more of Reisman's definitions.

Chapter Three offered my personal observations of the UNO production of *Godot*. The Didi-Gogo friendship in this production portrayed all three of Reisman's friendships moment to moment and line by line throughout the rehearsal process. The student responses to the production noted the positive strength of the Didi-Gogo friendship, and the thesis committee added the friendship was based on ambiguity and confinement. My personal commentary on the friendship was that it embodied the basic human need to escape solitude as well as the broader metaphor for the undefinability of the friendship and its importance in the need for human interaction.

Finally, can the question be answered about the nature of the Didi-Gogo friendship? From the research presented about Beckett and the critical response to his play, it is extremely difficult to define the Didi-Gogo friendship under just one or even all of Reisman's

definitions. From my own experience of acting in the play, it is still difficult to define the nature of the friendship on the whole, but it can be interpreted line by line by the director and the actors who do the play in production. Where the research and rehearsal processes of this project do come together is in the statement that the friendship of Didi and Gogo is rooted in their reciprocal need to stay together. Even though their friendship appears ambiguous or shifts from one kind to the other in what they do with and say to each other, it is their need to remain together with mutual affection and loyalty which is a strong sign of a reciprocal friendship. Maybe in an "absurd" world, Beckett wanted Didi and Gogo to yearn for an ideal relationship which demands definition, one they may never be able to attain. So Didi and Gogo must go on waiting...together.

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