

**Adaptation as a Tool for Connection**

by

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## Artistic Aims

For my senior project, I've created *Waiting for Antonio*: a short play, adapted from *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett, in which I've attempted to both update the world around the characters to a relatable form for my generation, and display the underlying dilemma of allowing time to pass while remaining idle, and waiting on a call to action. I have updated the setting from a country road to a bench in Washington Square Park, and changed the two middle aged tramps, Vladimir and Estragon, into two college students, Valerie and Eddie. What I did not want to change is the premise, the two waiting for someone who never shows. As college students we can be waiting for a number of things such as grades, the next break, or even pot dealers. In my play I decided to have my characters waiting on the latter, a situation I believe is widely relatable amongst college students. Although, I use Valerie and Eddie's discussion to show the audience it isn't just Antonio the pair are waiting for. I express this in the idea that two students believe this "one day" will come.

Ever since I could remember I have always been waiting for this "one day" to come. I put "one day" in quotes because this one day has come and gone multiple times. When I was a toddler I was waiting for that day when I would not have to sit in a car seat anymore; to my delight that day did come but it left me to wait for a new day to come. The "one day" I find myself waiting for currently is the day I am out of college, along with starting a career in some type of field involved in entertainment. That one day

has always come, but what I have realized is that as I grow older that date arrives sooner than I had expected. I am often left with the unfortunate feeling that I have fallen short of my mark, or perhaps desire more. It is not waiting for that one day that I need to endure, rather it is the consistent effort, and proper usage of time, that I must carefully deal with, in order to truly get to the “one day,” and have it bring all the things I wanted when I envisioned it. In my play I wanted to express the characters angst with this dilemma on how to handle their time to make sure they are happy when they have each reached their “one day”.

This dilemma, I believe, is a universal trouble, one that impacts college students the deepest. This time in our development is the portion of life in which carelessness, and the responsibility of architecting our future, co-exist in a wavering balance. During my time at college I always found myself struggling to maintain a healthy balance of the two. College had been the first time where I was given the freedom to do what I wanted when I wanted. The danger of that for me has been prioritizing the social aspect of college over the academic. This struggle has made my time at college stressful, and that is why I feel it is necessary, that us college students are assisted in our way of thinking, and maintain a proactive mentality, so we don't succumb to the pressures of the passing moment, and to keep the long term picture close. Therefore, my adaptation is intended to serve as a dual purpose. First, to show the gravity of allowing time to pass without action, and how it consequently brings nothing to fruition. Secondly, in contrast, to reassure the students in the audience that time is on their side, and small indulgences during youth bring no grave harm, as there is still more time to come. In

order to achieve this dual purpose, in my script I express my primary purpose by displaying Valerie and Eddie's interaction with one another. Neither of them throughout the play advances the other closer to their objective. As for the second purpose, I express it by adding a character, the Business Woman, who enlightens the duo on their fears and acts as a tranquilizer for them as well. She puts into perspective for them that they should not be in such of a rush to get out of school, rather embrace it while they have it. This is advice that I have received from anyone that had graduated from college.

My play should be something discussed now, as it presents both a universal and ongoing struggle that will continue generations forth. I want it to serve as a tool to remind college students of the value in time, without leading them to believe they have wasted it. We college students live in a time where distractions are everywhere, especially with the development of technology, which has now made it an accessible method of passing the time. In my play Valeria passes the time scrolling on her phone constantly, but often finds herself struggling to hear what Eddie has just said. This is a terrible habit that I myself am guilty of. There is danger within this habit, as constant stimulation and distraction can muffle the feeling of time, and add to its elusive escape. What I'm trying to make clear is that college students prefer their downtime, and rest, as it is necessary too, in both mental and physical health. Although we do get a little bit too comfortable in this downtime and when there is an imbalance, or an excessive amount of either, we find a dissatisfaction and feeling that we are wasting time. Therefore, to aid the proper development of self-discipline, and value of time I have my characters tackle

the common question: What are you waiting for? Is there something they can actively do to get closer to what they're waiting for? Or do they have to wait for it to come on its own time?

The biggest challenge I faced in writing this has been the same one Samuel Beckett must have faced: to encapsulate the passing of time without action, nor conflict, nor change of setting, while keeping the audience and/or reader intrigued and receptive to the message. The only way I could do so, was to tap into a certain truth shared among college students which is passively waiting for change to occur, and the hesitance in pulling the trigger on opportunity, due to the common fear, in mistakes of decisions. I was able to express this by presenting my characters with various opportunities to escape their situation, however I chose for them to remain passive in order to display this aimlessness. For example, Eddie provides a logical way for Valerie to escape her romantic troubles. But it is her fear of rejection that keeps her passive, and she never obtains what she wants; instead she is more comfortable in waiting for it to come to her. This hesitancy and contemplation is something I fall victim to all the time. Here is a brief story: after just getting over a break-up I was working at a bar. One day while I was working at that bar my childhood crush came in, I was excited but nervous more than anything. In fear that I would embarrass myself, I choose to avoid her completely, leaving me to wonder what could have happened if I took action. I have Valerie and Eddie act this way to show my audience the safest place is actually not in sitting back, and constantly dwelling on what to do, rather it is through action that we learn, and through that knowledge the path becomes more clear, and that leads to a

lucid vision success. I hope for the audience to see my characters act of passiveness in there waiting as a wake up call, and I hope they all start to question themselves: What am I waiting for?

What I care to do throughout my career is to be the catalyst for direct change, through entertainment and truth. Along with inserting my personal moment, humor, and style while allowing enough room for the viewer, or reader, to envision themselves as the character. That I believe, is the quickest way to engage, and strike the chord of the viewer. something I do in this play and all the work I pursue in the future. Therefore, this play serves as a dual purpose to myself as well: to practice my craft, in the style I tend to refine throughout my career, and to externalize the personal struggles and thoughts I've dealt with, and since changed.

That is all an artist can honestly do. Deliver the truth, within quality entertainment, to those that have struggled with what seems to be unsolvable problems, or worse, problems they aren't aware of. That is what i intend to do now, and throughout the duration of my career. Thus consider this paper in itself, of dual purpose as well. First to fulfill the requirement, and secondly, to serve as a promise, to never stray from the truth in my craft for all years to come.

# Waiting for Antonio

By: Drew Palmer

## Characters:

VALERIE, a college student

EDDIE, Val's friend, also a college student

THE PLUG, a drug dealer looking for a quick buck

HOMELESS MAN, a man in his own world

BUSINESS WOMAN, fresh out of college not even a year

## Scene 1

*(Lights up on a single park bench in Washington Square Park, with a cherry blossom tree right behind the bench. Eddie is lounging with his feet up on the bench. Valeria is pacing across the stage looking out into the distance for something. After a few paces she gives up and walks to the bench.)*

**VALERIE**

No use.

**EDDIE**

No sign?

**VALERIE**

**CON' T**

Nope.

**EDDIE**

Did you check by the fountain?

**VALERIE**

Yep

**EDDIE**

He said five minutes.

**VALERIE**

He did.

**EDDIE**

Hasn't it been five?

*(Valeria looks at her cell phone)*

**VALERIE**

Nope.

**EDDIE**

How long has it been?

**VALERIE**

Ten

**EDDIE**

Come on!

**VALERIE**

**CON' T**

Why are you surprised? This is typical Antonio.

**EDDIE**

I'm just tired of waiting.

**VALERIE**

We can leave if you want.

**EDDIE**

I'm not leaving this bench until I see Antonio.

**VALERIE**

Well then can you please be quiet you're killing my vibe.

**EDDIE**

I am?

**VALERIE**

Mhmmm.

**EDDIE**

Well Antonio's killing mine.

*(Eddie pats himself down)*

**EDDIE**

Where are my cigs?

*(Valerie is on her phone not paying any mind to Eddie, he stands up and checks to see if it fell under the bench.)*

**EDDIE**

**CON' T**

I know they're here somewhere. Val, do me a favor and check your  
pockets?

*(Still not paying any attention.)*

**EDDIE**

Is it in there?

**VALERIE**

In where?

**EDDIE**

Your pocket...

**VALERIA**

What about my pocket?

**EDDIE**

Is my pack in it?

**VALERIE**

*(Not checking)*

Nope.

**EDDIE**

Are you sure?

**VALERIE**

Sure as sure.

*(Eddie slides his hand into Valerie's jacket pocket and pulls a pack of cigarettes out.)*

**EDDIE**

Sure you're sure.

*(Eddie pulls a smoke from the pack and lights it he takes a long inhale and holds it for a few seconds. Followed by a loud and satisfying exhale.)*

**EDDIE**

This sure is good.

**VALERIE**

Stop saying sure

**EDDIE**

Sure thing.

*(Valeria pulls his cigarette out of his mouth, breaks it in half, and throws it on the floor.)*

**EDDIE**

Not cool.

**VALERIE**

You don't need that garbage.

**EDDIE**

It could've at least passed the time.

**VALERIE**

Keep smoking those and you won't have any time to pass.

**EDDIE**

That doesn't sound too bad to me.

*(Eddie pulls out another cigarette from his pack and lights it.)*

**EDDIE**

If it means less time waiting around with you.

**VALERIE**

You hit me up cause you needed another twenty to cop, so don't  
get it twisted.

**EDDIE**

Desperate time calls for desperate measures, I need to get this  
paper done by tonight.

**VALERIE**

How many pages do you have done?

*(Eddie makes a zero with his fingers)*

**VALERIE**

Do you have an outline?

**EDDIE**

A what?

**VALERIE**

**CON' T**

Yeah...good luck with that. I don't see why your here waiting for Antonio, when you have a paper you haven't even touched.

**EDDIE**

I always meet up with him before a big paper.

**VALERIE**

And I always see him after one, trust me it's much more relaxing.

**EDDIE**

I'm not trying to relax I'm trying to think.

**VALERIE**

Do you always need Antonio to think?

**EDDIE**

Do you always need Antonio to relax?

*(Moment of silence.)*

**VALERIE**

I see your point, but it doesn't mean you have to wait last minute to do your papers.

**EDDIE**

I'm like a diamond Val I thrive under pressure.

**VALERIE**

Nah you're just another college stoner procrastinator.

**EDDIE**

**CON' T**

Hey I deserve a bit more credit than that remember the time...

*(Beat.)* Oh my god look at that!

*(A mom or dad walking a child on a leash crosses the stage. The child drags the mother by the leash as the mother struggles to keep the child tamed. Eddie points at them)*

**EDDIE**

Kid on a leash.  
*(Val slaps Eddie's hand down.)*

**VALERIE**

Quit pointing the parent is gonna see you.

**EDDIE**

Good! Maybe they'll understand how ridiculous they look putting a  
five year old on a leash.

**VALERIE**

Ok first it's not ridiculous, second you don't know how old he is.

**EDDIE**

You don't think it's the slightest bit ridiculous seeing a child  
wearing the same thing you put on a dog.

**VALERIE**

**CON' T**

What's so ridiculous about preventing your child from doing something irrational like running away.

**EDDIE**

It may seem irrational to us but it's a good thing to be curious.

**VALERIE**

It's also a good thing to be safe by your parent's side.

**EDDIE**

I think you meant to say grip. Regardless that kid is waiting for the day he's let off that leash.

*(The kid breaks free of the moms grip and runs off stage she chases after him. Val gets a text message she checks it.)*

**VALERIE**

Just got a text from Antonio.

**EDDIE**

What he say? Wait don't tell me.

**VALERIE and EDDIE**

Five more minutes.

**EDDIE**

**CON' T**

Why he gotta lie though? We both know its not gonna be five minutes. Why do you think he says that? Probably some sick game he likes to play, to mess with our emotions.

**VALERIE**

Or its just a short time span to give, so customers won't bail.

**EDDIE**

Oh yeah that too.

**VALERIE**

It is annoying though I rather him just be honest with me instead of just getting my hopes up.

**EDDIE**

Why would he be honest. If he told you the truth you probably would just go and find another plug.

**THE PLUG** (OFF STAGE)

Did someone say plug?

*(The Plug a man in his late 40's comes running onto stage.)*

**THE PLUG**

You students need some herb?

**EDDIE**

**CON' T**

Umm no we're good man.

**THE PLUG**

Come on why wait for your guy when I'm here right now. I'm sure there are better things you could be doing then waiting for your man.

**EDDIE**

Woah Woah Woah how are you just gonna assume he's a dude.

**VALERIE**

Eddie you just said "he's".

**EDDIE**

Shit.

**THE PLUG**

Ok back to my point just take some of my fire sour and go about the rest of your day.

**VALERIE**

Wait I know you. you're the guy I gave 10 dollars to last month. You never came back with my gram.

**THE PLUG**

Oh come on now everyone has to learn that lesson, never hand over your cash until you get your product. You could say I was doing you a favor.

**VALERIE**

Oh thanks for the lesson professor. Same time next week?

**THE PLUG**

No need to catch an attitude kid. My lessons got more value in the real world than whatever lessons that college is teaching you.

**EDDIE**

He's got a point you know.

**VALERIE**

Yeah Eddie let's take pointers from the guy that sells drugs in a park.

**THE PLUG**

*(Pressing the two of them)*

Watch your fucking mouth with that sarcasm.

*(Silence)*

**THE PLUG**

You don't know why I gotta do what I gotta do. Not everyone can be in college like y'all. Matter of fact you dont even deserve this sour with your high and mighty asses.

*(The Plug leaves the bench as he exits you can hear him shouting "SOU")*

**EDDIE**

**CON' T**

I wonder if his sour really is fire?

**VALERIE**

Who cares?

**EDDIE**

I don't know. He seemed pretty confident. Plus he had some on deck we wouldn't have to wait anymore, and some sour is just what

I need.

**VALERIE**

Woah, we never agreed on getting a Sativa. I just had my mind workout for the day I don't need another.

**EDDIE**

Well we're sure as shit ain't getting an indica I need to write a paper not be glued to my futon watching bullshit on TV.

**VALERIE**

Oh that sounds dope your futon is hellah soft.

**EDDIE**

That futon will be used only for creative and academic purposes tonight. You're Netflix and chill session will have to take place somewhere else.

**VALERIE**

**CON' T**

I can't you know I don't have a subscription, can't you just do  
your essay in the library.

**EDDIE**

Yeah Val why don't I bring my bong with me too. While I'm at why  
don't I ask the librarian if she wants a bowl.

**VALERIE**

You know I think she has glaucoma so that might work out.

**EDDIE**

What ever happened to that dude you were chilling with, his  
netflix no good anymore?

**VALERIE**

I don't know I've been waiting for him to text me to hang out but  
he hasn't yet.

**EDDIE**

You know there's a simple solution to your dilemma there.

**VALERIE**

What's that?

**EDDIE**

Quit waiting around for him to text you and ask him yourself.

**VALERIE**

**CON' T**

Why should I have to ask? I'm dope as fuck he should want to ask me himself.

**EDDIE**

Meanwhile this dude is probably thinking the same thing about you.

**VALERIE**

No offense Eddie but you're the last person I would take relationship advice from.

**EDDIE**

And why is that?

**VALERIE**

Cause last time I checked all your relationships haven't lasted more than one night.

**EDDIE**

Good point, I just have a hard time seeing why everyone our age is so quick to jump into a relationship. I mean look at this, a relationship is only gonna end in two ways, you either get married, or you break up. Personally I think we are too young for commitment, we have no idea what's gonna happen in our life. I've seen too many people stop a positive change from happening because they didn't want to compromise their relationship. The

**CON' T**

fucked up thing is those relationships eventually end then both are stuck with regret with the opportunities they missed. A wise man once told me you don't truly know yourself until your twenty-seven but I digress ... what were we talking about again?

**VALERIE**

Netflix and chill guy?

**EDDIE**

OH YEAH! At the end of the day you're not chilling with him because you didn't reach out.

**VALERIE**

You know what maybe I will text him.

*(She pulls out her phone.)*

**EDDIE**

Right now?

**VALERIE**

Nah. *(She puts her phone away)* Maybe tomorrow.

*(Beat.)*

**EDDIE**

Do you ever think about how much time we've spent waiting on Antonio?

**VALERIE**

Ummm no thanks, I'm afraid to know how high that number is.

**EDDIE**

Yeah seriously we probably could've spent that time doing a lot more productive shit than just watching people in the park. I don't know like plan out what the hell were gonna do when we get out of here.

**VALERIE**

Eddie do you ever shut up?

**EDDIE**

Nah, I got too much on mind.

**VALERIE**

You know it's possible to keep your thoughts to yourself.

**EDDIE**

You know I thought about that. But then I realized my thoughts are so great that it would be selfish to keep them all to myself.

**VALERIE**

Believe me when I say no one would think your selfish. There's nothing I can't stand more than someone talking with no-

*(Val is interrupted by a homeless man.)*

**HOMELESS MAN**

**CON' T**

Well I don't care what they say I have just as much a right to be here than any of these goddamn tourists. Can you believe that fucking cop. Did you see the way he looked at me?

**EDDIE**

No we were over here

**HOMELESS MAN**

*(not listening)*

Exactly man why did they have to move me over HERE when I was minding my own damn business over THERE. They don't have nothing better to do than harass a guy trying to sleep. You gotta smoke man?

**EDDIE**

Ehh *(he looks into his pack)* You caught me on a good day here ya go.

**HOMELESS MAN**

Oh thank you my man, I don't got a dollar but BOY do I got a story.

**VALERIE**

That's ok you don't-

**HOMELESS MAN**

**CON' T**

This all went down a couple of nights ago in East Village. I like to move over there once the sun goes down cause that's where all you college kids go to snort ya beers and drink ya pots. Anyways I was at Tompkins laying down on a bench and I thought to myself boy I sure am thirsty. I walk over to the water fountain but I remember I saw Gary washing his pup in that same fountain the other night so I thought I better not I don't need no dog flu now. Now I gotta go and find myself a drink whether that be an actual drink or ask some people for some change til i got enough. It was a pretty slow night not too much foot traffic down Avenue A, I figured it must have been a Wednesday but I haven't checked a calendar or newspaper in the last 15 years so I'm kinda going off a limb here-

**VALERIE**

(interrupting)

WHAT'S THE POINT OF THIS STORY?

**HOMELESS MAN**

(shrugs)

I dunno, didn't know i needed one. Thanks for the cig.

*(He exits.)*

**EDDIE**

**CON' T**

Didn't your mother ever tell you it's rude to interrupt people?

**VALERIE**

Please that guy had no clue what he was saying he just enjoys  
hearing himself speak.

**EDDIE**

So what he could've killed some time for us.

**VALERIE**

We don't need to kill time our five minutes are just about up  
*(Pulls out her phone to check the time but is greeted with  
another text message from Antonio.)*

**VALERIE**

You gotta be fucking kidding me.

**EDDIE**

Let's add another five minutes to the clock.

**VALERIE**

Let's not, I've felt like we been here all day. Not to mention  
I'm starting to get hungry, do you think we got time to run to  
the deli real quick?

**EDDIE**

No way, with our luck he'll show up the second we leave this  
bench.

**VALERIE**

Well we both don't have to leave. I'll run to the store for five minutes get us some snacks and be right back. Waiting for him won't be so bad with some flaming hots to munch on. Am I right?

**EDDIE**

Tempting very tempting...but I think I'll miss you too much. You better stay right where you are.

**VALERIE**

I AM NOT SITTING ON THIS BENCH ANY LONGER!

**EDDIE**

Relax I was only kidding geez. What's crawled up your butt?

**VALERIE**

Stress!

**EDDIE**

Have you tried breathing?

*(Valerie shoots Eddie a dirty look.)*

**EDDIE**

Relax don't go blowing up again I was just trying to be funny.

**VALERIE**

Eddie word of advice, never tell me to relax, it'll just do the opposite.

**EDDIE**

**CON' T**

Are you gonna tell me what's got you on edge.

**VALERIE**

Life.

**EDDIE**

Wanna be a bit more specific?

**VALERIE**

Life after all this.

**EDDIE**

What college?

**VALERIE**

Mhmm.

**EDDIE**

You're the last person that's gotta be worried about that.

**VALERIE**

Oh yeah and why's that?

**EDDIE**

Cause you're always on top of your shit.

**VALERIE**

You think there gonna care that I was on top of my shit out there? Look at all our friends that graduated who had done the same as me, if not better. They're still out there applying for

**CON' T**

jobs and waiting for an offer. My cousin can't even get a job in his field he's working at a mall kiosk putting unwanted lotions on strangers hands. All I'm saying is I don't know what's gonna happen after all this, I walk across a stage grab a piece of paper then I'm tossed into the real word fighting to secure a job that'll secure me. And even when I get that job I'll just go right into waiting to retire, and after that waiting to die...

**EDDIE**

Well that's not depressing.

*(Valerie gives him another dirty look for a second followed by a burst of laughter, Eddie joins in. They keep laughing until their out of breath. A young looking woman in a business business attire walks onto stage carrying tray of coffees talking on her cellphone.)*

**BUSINESS WOMAN**

This is the fifth coffee run they sent me on today, I'm trying to understand how these pricks expect me to get these script coverages in by the end of the day when half my time is spent in a Star-

*(The business woman stumbles and drops the tray of coffee on the ground.)*

**BUSINESS WOMAN**

FUCK! Oh nothing I just dropped all of their coffees everywhere.

Now I need to go.. I need to.. need to...sit down for a second.

I'll call you back.

*(While she hangs up her phone Valerie and Eddie both get up from the bench and cross to the business woman.)*

**VALERIE**

Here take the bench we've been glued there for awhile we could use the stretch.

**BUSINESS WOMAN**

Oh thanks you guys. I really appreciate this if I don't cool down for a minute I might just go do something stupid and quit my job.

*(They all cross back to the bench)*

**EDDIE**

What do you do if you don't mind my asking?

**BUSINESS WOMAN**

*(sitting down)*

I'm working as an assistant for Abrams Artist Agencies.

**VALERIE**

That sounds dope. How you manage to get that gig you don't look older than us and we haven't even graduated yet.

**BUSINESS WOMAN**

**CON' T**

Oh I'm not. I'm not even a year out of college. And honestly it's all about who you know sometimes.

**VALERIE**

I just can't wait to get a job and get out of here. I think I'll feel much better when that's all said and done.

**BUSINESS WOMAN**

Honestly, you shouldn't be in such a rush to get out. I don't know if you can tell but I spend majority of my day in a Starbucks. Sometimes when I'm in line I'm just wishing all I had to do was go to my classes and do my assignments then I could spend the rest of the day bullshitting with my friends. You may think it's stressful now but I hate to break it to ya it doesn't get less stressful once you're out.

*(The business woman's phone begins to ring she checks to see who's calling)*

**BUSINESS WOMAN**

And looks like my little break is over. My boss needs her caffeine fix pronto. Anyway's nice chatting with you too thanks for the seat.

*(answering the phone as she leaves)*

**BUSINESS WOMAN**

**CON' T**

Linda you will not believe what happened the Starbucks burnt down, it was horrifying I'm on my way back now. YES WITHOUT COFFEE!

**EDDIE**

Hey do you remember the first time we picked up from Antonio?

**VALERIE**

How can i forget. You had us waiting in the wrong spot the whole night.

**EDDIE**

Hey you can't blame it was still my first day in this city. I honestly believe some credit is due, I found a great bud dealer my first day here that's pretty impressive.

**VALERIE**

Yeah you're pretty resourceful when you actually want to be. Imagine if you used that talent in your classes instead of only when you're trying to get high.

**EDDIE**

I don't think it would be fair to my peers around me. I never liked upstaging anyone.

**VALERIE**

Everything is a joke to you.

**EDDIE**

Yeah it's great to laugh at everything

**VALERIE**

I wish you would take yourself seriously sometimes Eddie, cause  
if you don't no one will.

*(Silence. The silence is broken by a low battery tone from  
Valerie's phone. She checks the message.)*

**EDDIE**

Let me guess another 5 minutes

**VALERIE**

Nope.

**EDDIE**

He's here?

**VALERIE**

No low battery. Do you have your phone on you in case mine dies?

**EDDIE**

My shit has been dead since we got here. You got a charger?

**VALERIE**

Nope.

**EDDIE**

What percent you got?

**VALERIE**

**CON' T**

5.

**EDDIE**

Shit thats low, you think it'll make it by the time he gets here?

**VALERIE**

At the rate Antonio's going no way.

**EDDIE**

FUCK! There is no way I'm getting this essay done. We should've copped from the plug when we had the chance.

**VALERIE**

I mean we could always dip.

**EDDIE**

We could.

**VALERIE**

Do you wanna?

*(Pause for a few moments.)*

**EDDIE**

Yeah let's dip.

*(They do not move, Fade to Black)*

**THE END**

## Adapting the Hero's Journey in *Waiting for Godot*

Both “Waiting for Antonio” and *Waiting for Godot* show a couple on a hero's journey, which has stagnated. As in all adaptations, *Waiting for Antonio* eclectically selects which aspects of the original work to keep, re-interpret, or throw away entirely. Bearing in mind that *Waiting for Antonio* is a student work, I have come to acknowledge that such adaptations are necessary and vital exercises that play their part in aiding and advancing the progress of the professional theatrical field and the academic study thereof. In order to perform an effective comparative analysis on my play and the source material I must follow two strains of logic. They are rudimentary: what is the same and what is different? And furthermore, why are they thus? First, we must acknowledge that one of these works is written by one of the best, most influential dramatists of all time and the other playwright is a student. The point of this essay is not to compare playwriting skill or technique, but rather to try and understand Beckett's and my play, through a deeper and more intimate level of comprehension and understanding.

The sheer difference in length means that *Waiting for Antonio* simply cannot cover the same amount of material as *Waiting for Godot* (a play which is over twice the size as its adaptation). That being said, the common theme is a codependent couple in limbo and waiting. What are they waiting for? In the original work by Beckett, Vladimir and Estragon are waiting for Godot (who is, in my estimation, a substitute word for

God); in *Waiting for Antonio*, Eddie and Val are waiting for their pot dealer to show up. Upon first look, we might conclude that the situation of the two tramps and the undergraduates are totally different, but in reality the pairs are essentially waiting for the same thing: a chance to redefine themselves and how they view the world around them. Both pairs of couples believe that the arrival of an outside entity will kickstart their lives into beginning; in that, they are the same. Both couples are tempted to and consider the option to abandon their savior but ultimately reject that course of action.

In his acclaimed work *Theatre of the Absurd*, Martin Esslin states, “*Waiting for Godot* does not tell a story; it explores a static situation” (Esslin 25). So does *Waiting for Antonio*. In fact, the two works are almost structured verbatim. We, the audience, are constantly focused on our primary couple and do not deviate from their story lines. As a result, the other characters simply intrude on our primary couple but do not influence them. Esslin posits that our heroes are in a “static situation,” but how can that be defined?

But if we have to be cautious in our approach to Beckett’s plays, to avoid the pitfalls of trying to provide an oversimplified explanation of their meaning, this does not imply that we cannot subject them to careful scrutiny by isolating sets of images and themes and by attempting to discern their structural groundwork. (Esslin 25)

The above statement makes a point which I am in total agreement with. We cannot begin to comprehend the complexities of this piece in a ten-page paper but we can begin to explore the groundwork upon which this genius work was built.

A trusted and often-used tool implemented by Disney creative executives and acting and playwrighting students alike is Mr. Joseph Campbell's work on what we now know as "The Hero's Journey." This is a progression of roughly seventeen steps that are not in strict order (meaning that often the sections will overlap or happen concurrently to each other). They are as follows: The Call to Adventure; Refusal of Call; Supernatural Aid; Crossing the First Threshold; Crossing the Second Threshold; Belly of the Whale; Road of Trials; Meeting with the Goddess; Temptation; Atonement with the Father; Apostasies; The Ultimate Boon; Refusal of Return; Magic Flight; Rescue from Without; Crossing the Return Threshold; Master of Two Worlds; Freedom to Live. There are other names and titles for these various stages used by various academics, but for the purposes of this essay I will be using the above-mentioned titles. The fact that Esslin states that our heroes are in a static situation is undoubtedly true. However, where on the road does our journey delay and why?

Joseph Campbell has done extensive work on developing the concept of the monomyth and the way we as a society tell stories. He states that all myths have the same structure that can be broken up into three parts- the departure, the initiation and the return.

“A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.” (Campbell 23)

Eddie and Val, as well as Vladimir and Estragon, are stuck in between two of these phases. Either they have yet to go on the quest and are waiting for an impetus to begin the quest (more likely in the case of Val and Eddie, because they are far younger than their original counterparts, Vladimir and Estragon), or they have completed their journey and refuse to return and bestow their boons on their fellow man (more likely in the case of the original pair as they are older and at the end of their lives). This stagnation in their journey is a common theme, and it should be noted that while other characters come onstage and break the monotony, the main duo does not seek out the change and even resists it. Eddie and Val do not leave to go to the deli or buy pot from another source. I admit this is a very subjective form of analysis, and while it is a very useful tool, this metric cannot nor should not be followed as gospel.

A major difference in the two pairs is the certainty of what they're waiting for and its existence. Antonio surely exists; he texts Eddie and they have presumably been with him before, whereas in *Waiting for Godot* we are at various times lead to believe in or doubt Godot's existence. However, just because we “know” Antonio exists does not mean he shall arrive. This doubt, which is also prevalent in the original work from which our adaptation found inspiration, is what makes the play function. Everybody is infected

with this doubt: the characters and the audience. Vladimir seems to have doubt about his eternal soul (see his constant reference to the two thieves who were executed with Christ); presumably the two tramps are to be substituted for the two thieves. The gospels tell us only one of the two thieves is forgiven. Does this mean if Godot comes he will only take one of our duo? Will only Eddie or only Val meet with their plug? Doubt is what stops characters in plays and ourselves in reality from taking the next step and continuing on their journey. It is doubt that cripples us. It cripples Eddie into only being able to write or create while under the influence; it cripples Val from going to get food and texting that boy.

To quote Beckett himself “Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it’s awful” (Beckett 41). This stagnation, which is prevalent in both of these works, is the central theme of the whole piece. A central tenet of acting is that we (the character) always want something and we are always trying to get something. We are constantly in a state of want, never in a state of satisfaction. If this general rule of the theater is assumed then I am left with the question of “what do our heroes want” and then “what do they do to get it”. Admitting our heroes want very different things, it is hard to discern what Vladimir and Estragon want, but it could be strongly argued that they want to die. They clearly state their intentions; in the first act they suggest hanging themselves as a way to pass the time. This is where our adaptation allows room for creative license. Eddie and Val are at the beginning of their lives and Vladimir and Estragon at the end. That being said, the subject of suicide is not discussed in *Waiting for Antonio* while it is,

arguably, a primary theme in *Waiting for Godot*. In my adaptation, the release of one's soul is equated and transformed into the release of one's sobriety .

There are other, significant logistic and dramaturgical changes For example, the transposition of Vladimir to Val, from male to female as well as the change in age. While the change in sex doesn't effect the Hero's journey, it most certainly affects what archetype we sort these characters into, and leads us to question the reasoning and meaning of their former state and why it was changed. Firstly we must unpack Vladimir's venereal illness (presumably from unhealthy and poorly selected sexual partners) and Val's sexual promiscuity. In current social jargon, "Netflix and chill" is a code for sex; it can be inferred that Val participates in these rendezvous often and so perhaps she acts as the before, and Vladimir the after. This is also a good point to note that artistic re-interpretation can be tricky, and Beckett himself was very strictly opposed to changing the sex of Vladimir and Estragon. Famously, in the 1980's he took formal legal action against a European company because they had cast women in the roles. Admittedly, this was about changing the gender of the character, not creating a new character with a different gender.

In my understanding of the monomyth and archetypes, they are fluid. We, as an audience, are only privy to the lives of the characters from the time when the curtain opens to when it closes. That is to say, we may only see a character embody one archetype in the course of a play, but that only means they are fulfilling the specific function intended by that particular playwright. The before and after lives of those characters presumably consist of many more journeys and learning experiences, where

they may be acting in completely different capacities. Just as in our own lives we will be forced to venture upon the road of trials, so are these literary inventions. Archetypes, too, are fluid, and just as we play many roles in our real lives so do characters in their pre-composed lives onstage.

Carl Jung lived from 1875-1961 and in that time he reorganized how we look at storytelling and myth. His methodology on the organization and analysis of characters in myth and story is taught in conservatories and writing workshops throughout the world. Jung argued against the philosophical Tabula Rosa theory of his peers. That is the philosophical principle that man is a blank slate and his environment and conditions in life shape his psyche. Jung believed that while we are obviously shaped by our environment and experiences, we are also apart of the fabric that is the human extended family, and in our genes we possess thousands of years of human experience. Thus, innate in all of us, and in the characters that represent us, is the basic and primitive aspect of our personalities. In his early work, Carl Jung outlines twelve basic archetypes for characters that have re-occurred in human history since the time of the cave paintings. These roles are so deeply etched in our subconscious (much like the steps to the hero's journey) that we often take their inclusion into artistic works for granted. They are as follows: The Ego Types: The Innocent- The Orphan (or everyman)- The Hero- The Caregiver The Soul Types: The Explorer- The Rebel- The Lover- The Creator The Self Types: The Jester (or Fool)- The Sage- The Magician- The Ruler.

A required reading for many acting classes is a book titled *Auditions* by Michael Shurtleff. He posits a main principle for all actors to remember when embodying a character or navigating a scene, succinctly stating that “For each situation, we play a different role because it is a different game...Every relationship we have demands a different role, in order to be successfully fulfilled. Every situation we are in is a game with different rules” (Shurtleff 86). So the question must now be asked: what are the ‘games’ our characters are playing and what roles do they take on? On the surface, Val and Eddie are in a transaction game; they are waiting to purchase something. They take on the role of Customer. But let's delve deeper: what archetypes do they take on? Certainly they are the protagonists of *Waiting for Antonio*, so what portion of their journey are we privy to?

At times characters (and ourselves) play the ruler, and at other times the fool. (Pozzo for example, in *Waiting for Godot*, often switches to and fro; the same holds true for Lucky, who transitions just once from the innocent to the sage.) It is important for us to clock when we switch, and more importantly, what the impetus for the transition is. Those are called beats in the jargon of actors, and where, when and how these transitions take place is very important to giving insights into the workings of the characters, and ultimately the whole play itself. In Vladimir and Estragon's hero's journey, they are stagnant at the end of their lives, and in Val and Eddie's it is the beginning of their lives that they refuse to start. The duo in both works show a very interesting inter-personal dichotomy in their relationships. We know that the duo are not romantic partners; aside from the occasional academic inquiry to produce enough

articles for a tenure review, no real evidence suggests that Vladimir and Estragon are a gay couple. However, they, like Val and Eddie, take on the caregiver role to complement the other when necessary. I do not think any of these characters ever take on the role of hero, as that indicates a strong desire and moral confidence that just isn't displayed by these characters. They strike me as the orphan or the everyman. The hero indicates the change; the orphan waits for it. The fact that these two pairs are so far apart in age indicates to me that this is perhaps Eddie and Val's first time on the road of trials without the constraints of childhood (indicated by the fact that they are both undergrads); paradoxically, Vladimir and Estragon, obviously older and in poor health, are perhaps upon their last journey, given the world in which they live. They are starving, as evidenced by Estragons interaction with Pozzo and Lucky and the chicken bone.

While we are on the topic of Pozzo, this is a good time to note that this play, aside from this mysterious Pozzo who wears many hats (or archetypes), is totally devoid of a true antagonist. The same holds true of *Waiting for Antonio*. The alternative drug dealer cannot be argued to be the antagonist because he actually offers the duo a solution to their dilemma that they do not take advantage of. If anything, the other plug, as he is known in *Waiting for Antonio*, is the goddess who is willing to help the two move on in their journeys, only to be rebuked in favor of the comfort of waiting in the known and not advancing into the unknown. Our dual protagonists act as their own antagonist. They are the dragon they must conquer. The laziness and sloth that plague them is self-manufactured!

Adaptation is a useful device to further understand and synthesize great and complex works such as *Waiting for Godot*. Then implementing the works and theories of Joseph Campbell and Carl Young to analyze and compare the works allows us to survey why we write characters and stories the way we do. If we can look into the seeds of time to say which stories shall be told and written, we would see these same journeys play out the way Campbell describes, and the same archetypes appear that Jung introduced. Since the pre-recorded time of Homer, this is how we as a human family have told stories. Even with the technological advancements of the past ten thousand years, we have not detoured much from this route. That says something about us and leads me to believe that perhaps Jung was correct. We are not blank slates born into a world that colors in our personalities. Perhaps, as he suggests, we are already colored by the thousands of years of human collective experience and belief. If this is true (which I believe it is), then in both *Waiting for Godot* and *Waiting for Antonio* we see a warning and a dialogue between these two works and the audience. The warning is from Beckett via Vladimir and Estragon. They are telling us to act. In the words of Stephen Sondheim in his musical *Sunday in the Park with George*, "You have to move on. The choice may have been mistaken the choosing was not. You have to move on." Estragon and Vladimir are what we become when we are rendered incapable of making a step to the next level. Vladimir and Estragon serve as the ghosts of Marley and Christmas past, present and future to Val and Eddie (Scrooge). Change your ways or you too will suffer the same fate. In turn, Val and Eddie are in dialogue with their older counterparts; they have incorporated our modern society into the same dilemma. The

same stagnation of the hero's journey; the same archetypal modes; the same opaqueness of the denouement. These are the same because our crisis as an audience is the same now as it was for Beckett. It is an eternal and human crisis: why we inhibit ourselves with the excuse that it is outside factors that oppose our momentum forward, when we know on a subconscious level that it is our own selves standing in our own way. We fear moving forward because that means drawing our conclusion nearer; the closer we are to that, the closer we are to our end and being forgotten. Perhaps this is the crux of our condition. As Vladimir says, "To every man his little cross. Till he dies. And is forgotten" (Beckett 40).

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## The Journey

The idea for *Waiting For Antonio* first came to me in my Intro to Theatre and Performance course here at Purchase College. Cobina Gillitt was my professor, and in this course we were introduced to some of the most influential people of the theatre; one of those was Samuel Beckett. In class we discussed him and his magnum opus *Waiting for Godot*. I had previously read this play back in high school; however at the time I did not connect to the text. I initially thought it was dry and boring and ultimately did not understand what was going on. My feelings about the text changed once reintroduced to it about 3 years later. Professor Gillitt gave a lesson on Beckett and *Godot*, as well as the Theatre of the Absurd. The lesson gave me a better understanding of why Beckett formatted the play in this style. With this new understanding of the Theatre of the Absurd, I connected to the text on a more personal

level. Unfortunately I couldn't say the same for my peers. Even after the lesson, many dismissed the work as boring, pointless, and something they couldn't relate to. I found that hard to believe since right off the bat we as college students are all waiting for the day we graduate. It may not be the same exact scenario as Vladimir and Estragon's, but the act of waiting is still there nonetheless. For the final in this course Professor Gillitt asked us to create a performance scholarship. We had to take any topic we learned over the semester and turn it into a creative performance. I decided on *Waiting for Godot* and thought that this would be a perfect opportunity to make the story relatable to my peers. I wrote a 5 page adaptation titled "Waiting for the Weedman" and read it as a stage reading for my final. My classmates enjoyed this satirical adaptation so I was able to prove to them that they actually can relate to Beckett's original text. However after this course my journey with Beckett and *Godot* was put on hold, and it wasn't until Junior Seminar when the journey picked up again.

I was planning on taking Junior Seminar and choosing my concentration as an actor not as a playwright. Unfortunately I did not meet the required prerequisites in order to choose acting. I did however meet all of the requirements for playwriting so I chose that instead. I had been taking acting classes and performing in shows since I was in the second grade. I had yet to write a play that would be performed in front of a live audience. I felt that choosing playwriting as my concentration came with opportunities. For one, an opportunity to build on my writing skills (an area where I don't have as much practice), and another to see theatre be created from a different point of view. Always

standing in the shoes of the performer I was excited to be stepping into the shoes of the playwright.

Tina Curcio was also in my Junior Seminar class which was taught by Professor Gillitt. Tina was choosing directing as her concentration so Professor Gillitt thought it would be a wise idea for us to pair up and propose a project together. I was open to the idea as well as Tina, so that was the start of our collaboration. Coming up with an idea for the play was my next challenge. I had a family story I wanted to adapt but after asking my family for their blessing, they felt uncomfortable with me doing so. I respected their decision and went back to the drawing board. I was able to come up with a story about a bartender whose lover leaves him for his best friend and it tackled the question of “are you happy or are you just comfortable?” I wasn’t in love with that story though. Cleaning out my documents one day I found the script to “Waiting for the Weedman.” After reading it back to myself two years later, I couldn’t help but think how awful it was, and how I could do such a better job. I told Tina about the idea of adapting *Waiting for Godot* and she was on board. Tina and I proposed our ideas to the board, with Rob Reddington and Sydney Gottesman attached to play our main characters. We had been approved for both ideas as festival pieces but decided to move forward with *Waiting for Antonio*.

It was time to get started on the first draft. Nothing to me is harder than getting yourself to sit down and start writing. That is not how I went about this. Initially I started by going to Washington Square Park with my moleskin and jotting down: conversations I overheard, interactions between friends and strangers, and sporadic noises. To get a

better understanding of what people wait for today, I asked some strangers what they were waiting for. Some would say their friend, others would say for their lunch break to end, and some would simply say nothing. I got a couple of others who told me to mind my own business, and you bet I did.

Now that I collected the initial research of my play's setting, I moved on to doing a close reading of the original text. I would take the script with me to Washington Square Park and read away. With a pen I would underline whenever I saw a change in beat, recurred themes, or repeated phrases. The one important thing I wanted to capture truly in my adaptation is the rhythm of the piece. Vladimir and Estragon are quick with their words and play off one another as if they were a jazz band. I wanted to make sure I captured that essence in the way Valerie and Eddie spoke to each other.

Comparing the first draft to the final draft, the first had more of the rhythm that I was going for. Most of the lines are either a sentence no more than a few sentences long. I had changed the rhythm after the first meeting I had with the director and actors. The actors had wondered why I gave the only monologue in the play to a supporting character, the Homeless Man. I had done this to achieve a similar scenario as to Lucky's long rambling monologue in *Waiting for Godot*. The actors stressed that this was their senior project and wanted to have monologues of their own, which I understood completely. Another note the actors gave on the first draft was to get rid of the homeless man, they found him unnecessary and arbitrary to the story. That had been my exact intention of the character so I stood my ground and told them that he will remain. That note did get me thinking though; to my estimation it seemed they felt the

homeless man and the plug were too similar. They suggested having another character in the play that held a higher status than Valerie and Eddie, I found this note helpful and it led to the birth of the Business Woman.

I took the notes from our initial meeting they gave me from the first draft and applied it to second. After our initial meeting however I felt the notes that the actors gave were a bit too specific. I felt they were trying to tell me how to write the play rather than making suggestions I could try out. I voiced my concern to Tina, and we decided that it would be best if only playwright and director were present at the initial sessions. From that point on the process flowed much smoother. Tina had been supportive of my vision since the first draft and through her notes I could sense she understood exactly what my goals of the script were. Those goals being: making a faithful adaptation, and making it relatable to the college student's experience.

For the rehearsal progress Tina and I came to the agreement that I would distance myself during the first stages. Throughout the development and writing process there was a strong trust built between us. I did not mind handing my script over to Tina because I knew that it would be translated to the stage accurately. I started attending rehearsals in the later phases. I was excited and anxious to see all the work Tina, Rob, Sydney, and the rest of the team had done to bring my script to life. I was not disappointed from the first run through I watched. Rob and Sydney, had made Eddie and Val into their own all while becoming what I wanted the characters to be, spiritually lost college students. They embodied the idleness and passiveness I felt consumed by during my time at college, and it really struck a chord to see it honestly done by the two.

The same goes to all of the other performers: Sean, Logan, and Alyssa. As a playwright it was an amazing feeling to see a character played out differently than you had imagined it in your head. Especially when the performer's vision prevails your own.

I was completely blown away with all that everyone had accomplished: they had turned my script into a living and breathing piece. I was ready to have this presented to my peers and faculty, proud of all that we had accomplish as a team. I was able to see only one performance of the work due to family circumstances, but I was ecstatic with the results of the one performance I did see . I have never been to a show where I was the playwright; being present and seeing a full house react to what your team and you had created was a feeling I never felt before. And the one consensus note that my peers had told me is that it was relatable. Thus I felt that I had achieved my goal

Although I had achieved my initial goal, working a part time job and having other courses to attend was definitely a challenge during this process. Time management can become a struggle when there is so much to fit into twenty four hours. In hindsight I admit it would have been beneficial to my process if I was present earlier on in the rehearsal process. I'm not saying that I didn't enjoy what my team created. What I am saying is that I did see many moments in the play that I would have like to rewrite. Although I was completely satisfied with my final draft, you never really know what you've got until you see it up in front of you. The downfall of going to rehearsals in the later stage is that you are no longer able to make any changes because it could throw off the production. For future productions I will make it my duty to be present at

the initial stages of the rehearsal process, so that I am able to give myself the maximum space for creativity.

*Waiting for Antonio* was a piece written by a college student for college students. That had been my overall goal in this process to make a relatable piece and I had succeeded. Although I can't take the all the credit. I want to take a moment to show my veneration for Samuel Beckett and his master work *Waiting for Godot*. Without Beckett there would be no play for everyone to see. I have always believed in the power of adaptation. It can be used as a bridge to connect a timeless message that is disconnected by outdated circumstances. It is a tool that we have seen been used to preserve the works of Shakespeare, Austen, and Hawthorne. These modernized adaptations have been able to connect these stories with a contemporary audience, thus giving more life to the original authors. So once again thank you Mr. Beckett.