

I, "I" AND "NOT I" -- SELF-REFERENTIAL ELEMENTS
IN THE DRAMATIC WORKS OF SAMUEL BECKETT

Shimon Levy

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of English
McGill University

June 1978

It's myself I hear, howling behind my dissertation
(*Italics mine*).

- Samuel Beckett, The Unnamable

ABSTRACT

This dissertation argues that self-reference is a central element in Samuel Beckett's dramatic works and serves in them both as subject matter and as built-in criterion of evaluation. Self-reference is examined, specifically, in the two dramatic media of theatre and radio, according to three distinguishable modes of artistic self-consciousness, i.e., the self-referential work itself, the appeal to an audience and the self-reference of the implied author. The two last modes are derived from the first. Chapter I defines some key concepts used in the context of this essay such as reflexiveness, self-reference and performative speech-act, and establishes the theoretical (mostly philosophical) background for the discussion to follow. Chapter II analyzes Beckett's plays, emphasizing theatrical elements and the playwright's unique treatment of them. The chapter is sub-divided into sections dedicated to space and movement, off-stage, properties, costume and make-up and stage lighting. Chapter III deals with the radioplays and with the radiophonic mode of expression. Adopting a different perspective from the previous chapter, this one is sub-divided according to the radioplays and not according to the elements of the medium for which they were written. Chapter IV is concerned with the notion of audience as it can be detected from the high awareness for the medium as well as from direct and indirect references made in the

text to the actual or implied audience. The last chapter closes the hermeneutic circle of interpretation by dealing with the implied playwright, his "representatives" on stage -- the actors, and the mode in which Beckett can be described as the initiator of the hermeneutical circle.

R E S U M E

Cette thèse soutient que la notion de référence à soi (self-reference) joue un rôle central dans les oeuvres dramatiques de Samuel Beckett où elle est à la fois traitée comme sujet et utilisée comme critère d'évaluation. La référence à soi est examinée spécifiquement dans les oeuvres dramatiques du théâtre et de la radio, en fonction de trois modes distincts de la conscience de soi artistique, à savoir : le travail de référence à soi en lui-même, l'appel qui en est fait au public et la référence à soi implicite faite par l'auteur. Les deux derniers modes dérivent du premier. Le chapitre I définit quelques concepts clé utilisés dans le contexte de cet essai tels que la réflexion (reflexiveness), la référence à soi (self-reference) et l'acte du discours en représentation (performative speech-act); il assure la base théorique (essentiellement philosophique) de la discussion qui suit. Le chapitre II analyse les pièces de Beckett en mettant l'accent sur leurs éléments théâtraux et sur la façon unique dont l'auteur s'en sert. Le chapitre se divise en sections consacrées à l'espace et au mouvement, à l'emploi de la coulisse (off-stage), aux accessoires, aux costumes, au maquillage et à l'éclairage. Le chapitre III traite des pièces radiophoniques et du mode radiophonique d'expression. Adoptant une perspective différente de celle du chapitre précédent, celui-ci se subdivise d'après les pièces radiophoniques et non selon les éléments du médium pour lequel elles ont été écrites. Le chapitre IV s'intéresse à la notion de public, telle que révélée par le fait que l'auteur a une haute conscience des possibilités du médium employé ainsi que par les références directes et indirectes, dans le texte, à un public réel ou implicite. Le dernier chapitre clôt le cercle herméneutique d'interprétation en traitant de l'auteur tel qu'il s'implique dans l'oeuvre, de ses "représentants" sur scène - les acteurs, et de la façon dont on peut dire que Beckett est l'initiateur du cercle herméneutique.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapters

I	INTRODUCTION	1
II	THE PLAYS	33
	Space and Movement	37
	Off-Stage	93
	Stage-Properties (Props)	103
	Costume and Makeup	123
	Light	130
III	THE RADIOPLAYS	153
	<u>All That Fall</u>	160
	<u>Embers</u>	174
	<u>Words and Music</u>	183
	<u>Cascando</u>	193
	<u>Radio I</u>	200
	<u>Radio II</u>	205
	Conclusion	211
IV	THE AUDIENCE	222
	Introduction	222
	Direct and Indirect Appeals	234
	Actors as Audience	239
	Theatricalized Theatre -- Self-Referential Situations	249
V	THE PLAYWRIGHT (CONCLUSION)	265
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	302
	APPENDIX	309

FOREWORD

By the year 2000 Beckett criticism will equal that of Wagner and Napoleon, who were the most written about personae in history. In 1970 the Beckett scholar, Melvin Friedman, published a selection of articles on Samuel Beckett's works. In his introduction he comments on the quality rather than the quantity of the critical studies dedicated to Beckett: "Beckett criticism has reached such an enviable and almost unbelievable level of sophistication that any kind of overview of his life and works is at least ten years out of date."¹ Five years later another famous Beckett expert, Ruby Cohn, published another collection of articles. In her introduction titled "Inexhaustible Beckett" she too says that the "Beckett canon has elicited highly sensitive criticism."² In fact, each and every piece Beckett has ever published -- as well as a number of yet unpublished works -- received detailed textual analysis and interpretative evaluation. Beckett's works have often been compared among themselves³ and, certainly, with works of other authors, ranging from Euripides to a relatively less known Israeli playwright by the name of Hanoch Levin.

Given the intimidating social, artistic and literary context of scholars, directors, actors, translators, readers and audiences who have been involved, in varying degrees of intensity, dedication and commitment in Beckett's works, it is not easy even to presume to contribute any

totally original or new idea in the exploration of "Beckettology". In such an exploration of what has been sometimes called "Beckettland" there also exists the risk of the highly appreciated but heartbreaking experience of literary Captain Scotts who find Amundsen's flag waving on the south -- or any pole -- of that land. I still venture to offer some new ideas, believing that the following essay presents a point of view that has not been sufficiently examined. Also, I find the very process of exploring Beckett's works to be intellectually and emotionally highly rewarding and enriching.

The dissertation discusses self-referential elements in Beckett's dramatic works from three different points of view: (a) the medium (theatre and radio); (b) the audience; (c) the playwright. These three aspects, though partially overlapping in the works, are methodically distinguished in the paper. The self-references of the medium deals with the various ways in which theatrical means such as light and organization of stage-space draw attention to themselves, sometimes flaunting their own artifice. The self-reference of the audience, explains the notions of both the implied audience in the text and that of the actual audience in the auditorium. The mode of existence of the playwright and his self-reflexiveness can only be detected through the self-reference of the medium and the audience. The main argument

of this dissertation is the attempt to prove the centrality of self-reference in Beckett's works, and to show that self-reference is not only a literary or dramatic technique but, at the same time, the subject matter of the work.

The approach is basically hermeneutical, which, with a number of necessary adaptations, follows theories developed by Paul Ricoeur, Wolfgang Iser and others. Rather than resorting to overall already existing theories such as structuralism, Marxism and various versions thereof, the dissertation engages in a close reading of the text. It attempts to re-apply critical notions that ensue from the text and show that a number of critical measures are built into it. The dissertation will show, moreover, how the very act of performance of a given play is an intrinsic part of whatever it is supposed to mean and communicate. In order to do that, and not repeat the obvious understanding that theatre is most efficient when produced rather than read, a brief discussion of J. L. Austin's "performative" acts follows, so as to substantiate the importance of the actual performance on a logical rather than impressionistic basis.

The introduction presents the key concepts of the dissertation such as self-reference, self-reflexion and self-consciousness, and defines them in the framework in which they are used. Secondly, the introduction surveys some of the literary and philosophical discussions on

self-reflexiveness in the field. Thirdly, the methodology of the dissertation is made clear by developing Beckett's own distinction between the "expressive means" of the artist and his concerns for the artistic "vehicle" as well as for "humanity".

The second chapter deals with some of the main components of theatre, such as light and movement. Special attention is given to Beckett's unique treatment of "off-stage", a relatively neglected area not only in the research of Beckett's dramatic art, but in drama in general.

The third chapter concentrates on the radioplays and the particular ways, characteristic to the medium of radio, in which they are revealed by the self-referring quality of the text. This chapter examines the specific modes in which self-reference is enhanced by the nature of radio, in counter distinction to the plays.

In the fourth chapter the focus of the examination shifts from the self-referential elements of the media chosen for the presentation and performance to the recipients, the audience. The notion of audience is briefly compared with that of the reader and examined in terms of the implied audience in the texts, the actual audience in the auditorium of a (model) performance and the possible links between them.

The fifth and last chapter concludes the suggested "hermeneutical circle" that began with the self-reference of

the work, moved onto the self-referential notions of the audience and now ends with a discussion of the "initiator", the playwright. The implied playwright is discussed by following theories on the implied author like Booth's as well as hermeneutical theories on the relationships between author and reader (or playwright and audience) as found in works by Schmid and Ricoeur.

The conclusion sums up the argument of self-reference and maintains that despite the solipsistic semblance, Beckett's works may have, they are -- and logically so -- a true and courageous attempt at communication, achieved through the very act of performance.

Notes

¹Melvin J. Friedman (ed.), Samuel Beckett Now (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 3.

²Ruby Cohn, Samuel Beckett (New York: McGraw Hill, 1975), p. 13.

³John Fletcher, Samuel Beckett's Art (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967), p. 146. Fletcher notes: "His works refer the reader, for a full understanding, to each other He cannot be expected to write his productions down to the level of his newest readers." By the same token, I make cross references between a number of Beckett's works, in the attempt to indicate certain lines of development.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

His writing is not about something; it is that something itself.

- Samuel Beckett, on Joyce

"Among those we call great artists," says Beckett on the painter, Van Velde, "I can think of none whose concern was not predominantly with his expressive possibilities, those of his vehicle, those of humanity."¹ In his article on James Joyce, Beckett says that "his writing is not about something; it is that something itself."² Beckett also quotes Marcel Proust in saying "Man is the creature that cannot come forth from himself, who knows others only in himself, and who, if he asserts the contrary, lies."³ Beckett's quotation from Proust is a confirmation of his own self-consciousness which discovers the self-consciousness of others only through itself. His remark on Bram Van Velde, the painter, is an assertion of the way in which the self-consciousness of an artist's mind reveals itself in the work of art. Beckett's remark on Joyce focuses on the work of art itself as not being about something but "that something itself." If this is so, then works of art can be regarded in terms of self-referential elements. All of Beckett's

remarks quoted above can consequently be regarded as referring to himself and his works as much as they refer to Joyce, Van Velde or Proust.

A number of critics see an analogy between Beckett's critical essays on other artists and his own literary and dramatic practice.⁴ The main common denominator of the analogy is the strong emphasis on various aspects of self-consciousness and, more specifically, the self-consciousness of an expressive artist. It is the unique artistic self-consciousness reflected in Beckett's plays that is the focus of this paper.

The hypothesis, while allowing for methodological considerations pertaining to the critical approach and the character of the material dealt with, is that self-reference, reflexivity, medium-awareness and notions of an implied author, as well as audience, are all manifestations of a unified artistic course, ensuing from Beckett's expressed artistic self-consciousness. If examined as such, these manifestations of self-consciousness provide a useful tool for the analysis of Beckett's plays and prove to be of major, if not ultimate, importance in understanding Beckett's entire work.

In this discussion of self-conscious elements in Beckett's plays, a basically hermeneutical approach will be used, following mainly Paul Ricoeur and Wolfgang Iser's critical methods and insights, though a number of

modifications will be made, due to the fact that the works in question belong to the performing arts, whereas the respective critics are concerned mostly with texts and readers.

The reason for choosing this rather than any other critical approach is that an overall theory, such as psychoanalysis, Marxism, structuralism, etc., and many combinations thereof, presents the problem of the relation of the universal and the particular. A singular work of art, such as a Beckett play or radioplay, will hence be interpreted according to the abstract and extra-artistic assumptions of the theory. When dealing with artistic self-consciousness, a close reading of the text and the attempt to interpret it with critical tools, generously supplied by the author himself, is a more appropriate approach.

Still, there exists the evident question about the difference between the following version of the hermeneutic interpretation and that offered by other "overall" critical approaches, since, by being an interpretation at all, any critical approach necessitates a certain distance from the work criticized. In a hermeneutic understanding, the problem of the universal and the particular is reversed: "It grasps individual life experience in its entire breadth but has to adapt a set of intentions centred around an individual ego to the general categories ..." ⁵ Due to the inevitable circularity of the hermeneutic approach, it is suitable for

Beckett's own literary devices, often just as circular by nature of structure and style.

According to hermeneutic tradition,

Interpretation has subjective implication such as the involvement of a reader in the process of understanding and the reciprocity between text-interpretation and self-interpretation.⁶

In Beckett's case the problem is not only the well-known hermeneutic circle⁷ that presents itself as an applicable method of criticism, but the subject matter too, which is highly self-reflective and often deals within the given work with various possible interpretations of a situation. The assumption is that the evaluating criteria of the work correspond, and in fact ensue, at least in part, from the self-conscious work itself. Such an understanding leads, inevitably, to an important, implied, methodological consideration. Basically, this paper follows a particular mode of interpretation in which there exists a certain similarity between the described subject matter (Beckett's plays and radioplays) and the way in which the argument about it develops. Unlike Beckett's own work, this paper cannot, and does not, claim that "it is that something itself",⁸ but rather that it tries to render an explication of the works by applying interpretative tools supplied or hinted at by Beckett himself. It is an attempt, figuratively speaking, to help him who tries to pull himself up by his own bootstraps. This is also one of the main artistic purposes of the works themselves.

However, the difference between the implied Beckettian artistic method⁹ and the explicit methodology of this paper lies primarily in the structure of the latter. The notions of the self (of author, work, audience) is presented in Beckett's works in a unified way. Here, due to obvious methodological considerations, these notions are presented and discussed separately.

Beckett's novels have been quite thoroughly analysed from the point of view of their self-consciousness and, though to a lesser extent, the texts of his plays too. This essay focuses on Beckett's plays (and radioplays) in the attempt to emphasize the uniquely theatrical mode in which self-consciousness presents itself to an audience rather than a reader. It is the all-important factor of the direct and immediate presence of the live, performed act of presenting self-consciousness on stage that is the centre here.

In this discussion self-consciousness is defined as "an awareness of oneself by oneself, and an awareness of oneself as an object of someone else's observation."¹⁰ Artistic self-consciousness is the more specified self-consciousness which reveals itself in the style, content and various devices of the particular work concerned. Self-reference is here perceived as a quality of either an utterance (such as "this sentence has five words") or, by extension, a theatrical means of expression (such as lights, sets, etc.) that draws attention to itself.

Self-reflectiveness refers to a situation or a process of reflection of a self, be it the author's self, the character's, the actor's, or even the self of the spectator or listener. Reflexivity (or "reflexiveness", depending on the critic or philosopher who uses the term) refers to the mirror-like double image a feeling, thought, or pattern of behaviour may have. In some philosophical texts it is used for what here is called self-reference.

Critics, in general, agree that Beckett, like "no other modern writer, has integrated the act of creation so consistently and ironically into his own creation."¹¹ Wolfgang Iser says that Beckett's "anatomy of fiction" (and, for that matter, of his drama as well) "is itself conducted through a fictional medium. The attempt to reveal the basis of fiction through fiction itself means that the process of revelation can never end."¹² Hanna Copeland, in her excellent book on self-consciousness in Beckett's novels, says that "Beckett's art culminates in rigorously self-conscious, and, hence, self-reflective works, works in which the creator and the act of creation are of ultimate importance in the thing created."¹³ There is, in fact, hardly a serious critic who has not observed the high degree of self-consciousness in Beckett's works, though some critics find this quality to be a flaw. On the other hand, very few critics took pains to turn this obvious trait in Beckett's work into a main criterion of analysis. This paper will show

that self-referentiality is among the leading motifs in the entirety of Beckett's work.

The self-conscious elements in Beckett's plays can conveniently be divided into three aspects of consciousness which, though closely woven together and practically overlapping, are still clearly discernible. Beckett's own distinction between "the expressive possibilities", the "vehicle" and "humanity"¹⁴ implies that the former deals mainly with the author, and the notion of humanity can be treated in a more specific manner as the particular group of people who form the audience of any given, actual production of a Beckett play. Both playwright and audience ought to be found in the text of the play as implied figures, as well as in its production. The concern for "humanity" in Beckett's works will be dealt with under the heading of "audience". A discussion of the awareness of the actual audience in the auditorium and the various notions of audience in the play will clarify this issue. The concern for the "vehicle" deals with the awareness Beckett has of the medium of art in which the work is presented, namely the specifically theatrical (or radiophonic) modes and means of expression in which self-consciousness manifests itself in the performing arts. For "expressive possibilities" one has to look for notions of the implied playwright,¹⁵ and consider the ways in which the playwright's "presence" makes itself known.

"If self-consciousness is to become true

self-consciousness ... it must find ... another self-consciousness that is willing to be for it,"¹⁶ Gadamer says, and this holds true, in a uniquely theatrical way, in Beckett's plays as well. Characteristically, in all of Beckett's plays, the basic situation is that of appealing to "another self-consciousness" in order for the speaker, the dramatic character, to assert his own self-consciousness. Furthermore, it is through the dramatic character, the situation, and the whole theatrical vehicle, that Beckett appeals to the audience, so to speak, to give him "the impression he exists."¹⁷ The dialogue between characters in the plays is often a double-monologue, whereas monologues sometimes tend to be a dialogue between two phases of the same self (Krapp in Krapp's Last Tape, for example). In either case the attempt is made to "reach out" for the necessary self-consciousness of another. The dialogue on-stage, namely that dialogue that takes place in the "vehicle", reflects a desired dialogue between playwright and audience, and hence expresses a concern for humanity. Since the playwright has already done his share in the "dialogue" by the very act of writing and presenting the play, it is now left for the audience and the individual people that constitute it to do their share. The invitation, as it will be shown, is extended. In this paper, the notions of the author and the audience will be detected through that of the medium, the "vehicle".

Beckett's highly self-conscious writing belongs to an old tradition which may go back as far as "the bard within the epic of the Odyssey and Euripides' parody of the conventions of Greek tragedy."¹⁸ Whereas literature "practises" self-consciousness, philosophy has been trying for a long time now to cope with some of the problems linked with the paradoxality entangled in self-consciousness and its characteristic self-referential or reflexive manifestations.¹⁹ While belonging primarily to the literary tradition, Beckett still makes constant and deliberate use of philosophical notions concerning self-reference, and can hence be regarded as an author and playwright in whose works one finds an interesting, fully aware, blend of two traditions: one starting with Descartes, the other with Cervantes. Both people, within a difference of about 50 years, were the first ones to deal with self-consciousness in the modern sense. The literary -- or rather the dramatic -- aspects of Beckett's self-consciousness will be discussed later on in detail, but some introductory remarks pertaining to the philosophical aspects will follow at this point.

As Cohn (and Kenner) have shown, there are many allusions to Descartes in Beckett's works, many of them quite ironic. The reason for Beckett's fascination with Descartes is not merely the well known split between body and soul (even though Beckett makes reference to this point, as Ruby Cohn shows²⁰) but mainly to Descartes' major interest

in reflectiveness. Both Beckett and Descartes are, each in his own way, obsessed with self-reflectiveness, but whereas Descartes finds philosophical refuge in the (dubious) ontological proof of the existence of God, Beckett never tries to evade ever-increasing indulgence in self-reflectiveness;²¹ if he seeks refuge at all, rather than facing things head-on, he does it by the very act of performance. For him doubt is not a method but an inescapable reality from which a non-existent God cannot relieve man. Beckett's doubt, no doubt, is not methodical in the Cartesian sense. In fact, it is both the method and the subject matter, as any rigorous self-reflective proposition is -- that he is at the heart of Beckett's quest in comparison with that of Descartes.

In her article on Beckett and Philosophy, Ruby Cohn writes:

Both logical Positivism and Existentialism -- perhaps the two dominant contemporary philosophies -- attempt to resolve Cartesian dualism by rejecting classical metaphysics, but they do so in very different ways. Heidegger declares that Aristotle's rational animal is necessarily a metaphysical animal as well, because reason and metaphysics both lead me away from Being, which is or should be the central concern of philosophy. The Positivists, on the other hand (who acknowledge their debt to Wittgenstein) insist upon reason and empiricism as effective tools; they rule out metaphysical consideration as nonsense. For the early Wittgenstein the work of philosophy was to reduce common language to elementary propositions that reflect atomic facts. Since the forms of language cloak the structure of the world, the propositional ladder must be used in order to reach the simplest statement of experience, whereupon the ladder may be thrown away.²²

Agreeing with Ruby Cohn concerning the two dominant

philosophies, attention will be given to Cartesian reflexivity and to the way in which contemporary philosophers from the two schools can be approached for help in the attempt to clarify the problem in regard to Beckett. While not committed to either logical positivism or existentialism, Beckett's reflexivity can be partially explained by both. Jaaco Hintikka's article shows that the Cogito, Ergo Sum is of a performative nature, and not an inference. By discussing Hintikka's arguments against the famous Cartesian dictum, much can be learned about Beckett's technique as well.

Hintikka claims that the Cogito, Ergo Sum is an existentially inconsistent statement.

The function of the word Cogito in Descartes' dictum is to refer to the thought-act through which the existential self-verifiability of "I exist" manifests itself.²³

And elsewhere, the existential inconsistency of sentences "serves to express the performatory character of Descartes' insight ... the function of the Cogito ... is to call our attention to something everyone of us can ascertain when he gazes within himself".²⁴ Descartes' cogito-insight therefore depends on "knowing oneself" in the same literal sense in which the insight into the self-defeating character of the statement "De Gaulle does not exist" when uttered by De Gaulle depends on De Gaulle's knowing De Gaulle.

Beckett's self-reflective sentences are totally aware of their performatory character. Thus, each and every one of

Beckett's implied or explicit self-reflective sentences (emotionally charged self-reflective utterances such as I cry, I suffer, etc. -- ergo I am; or medium-aware, artistic and self-reflective utterances such as I speak [on radio] -- ergo I am; I "mime" -- ergo I am, etc.) are also of performatory quality rather than proofs of existence. They are merely attempts at showing the nonsensicality of the very attempt at proving existence. No adjective or verbal construction could make existence more "existing" than it is. Such performative utterances do not describe a situation: they create one.²⁵ In this sense one ought to relate to Beckett's line, "it is not about something, it is that something itself"²⁶ as a statement related to his own work.

The "indubitability" of the Cogito, the "I express" (since Beckett is an artist and not a philosopher) is due to a thought-act which each man has to "perform himself" after having witnessed such an act being performed by an actor.

Descartes could replace the word Cogito by other words in the Cogito, Ergo Sum, but he could not replace the performance which for him revealed the indubitability of any such sentence. This performance could be described only by a "verb of intellection" like Cogitare.²⁷

(and, of course as uttered, as Hintikka says, in the first person singular!). Beckett, on the other hand, is interested in the reflexive aspects of the I, and can therefore replace "I think" with almost any other activity ascribable to the I. Besides, and perhaps even more important, Beckett's attitude

to the intellect contains far fewer demands for exclusivity than Descartes. For Descartes it was crucial not to err logically in his methodical doubt. Beckett's deliberate, almost methodical, lack-of-method uses self-reflective sentences in order to show the inaccessibility of language to emotion,²⁸ while using the Cartesian doubt as a conclusion rather than a method to overcome doubt.

Another approach to reflexiveness can be found in Sartre's works. In his article on Descartes, he emphasizes human freedom in connection with the Cogito: Sartre believes that Descartes wishes to save man's autonomy in its encounter ... and that his spontaneous response is to assert man's responsibility in face of the True.²⁹

With Beckett, again, we find a gap between the tautology of the thought thinking itself³⁰ and the emotion that goes with this process, and causes its intensity. In Irony, says Sartre:

A man annihilates what he posits within one and the same act; he leads us to believe in order not to believe; he affirms to deny and denies to affirm ...³¹

One sees that Sartre's words can be referred to reflexiveness inasmuch as they apply to irony. This absolute consciousness, Sartre concludes, being purified of the self, contains nothing of the subject anymore. It is no more a collection of images; it is, very simply, a first condition and an absolute source of existence. It is necessary to see whether Beckett's protagonists are, in fact, such "purified

of the subject" beings, or rather, people -- though fictitious -- reduced to a constant attempt at avoiding self-deceit: "That which affects itself with self-deception must be conscious of its self-deception since the being of consciousness is consciousness of being."³² Here too, one sees an affinity between Sartre's theory and Beckett's literary practice. One witnesses also the links between reflexiveness, paradox, and literary creation. Beckett uses self-reflectiveness as a main tool to avoid self-deception, but since this reflexive process is of a solipsistic nature, and very likely to be self-nourishing, the very use of literary self-reflectiveness is paradoxical.

Beckett is moving between what Sartre calls "conscience positionnelle" and "conscience réfléchie". But since pure reflexiveness is empty, he is in constant search of something to be reflected. It is therefore the act of performance that extricates Beckett from complete silence or empty self-reflectiveness, like two mirrors with nothing in the middle to serve as the object of reflection.

In answering the questions "what does Reflection signify?, what does the self of self-reflection signify?", Paul Ricoeur presents reflection as a positing of the self:

The positing of the self is a truth which posits itself; it can be neither verified nor deduced; it is at once the positing of a being and of an act; the positing of an existence and of an operation of thought: I am, I think; to exist, for me, is to think; I exist inasmuch as I think. Since this truth cannot be verified like a fact, nor deduced like a conclusion, it has to posit itself in reflection.³³

The second trait of reflection is the effort to recapture the Ego of the Ego Cogito in the mirror of its objects, its works, its acts.

Ricoeur especially emphasizes that which has previously been claimed about Beckett: the positing of the Ego must be recaptured through its acts. Hence, one can treat Beckett's "obligation" to express in a Ricoeurian way: reflection is a task, an Aufgabe -- the task of making my concrete experience equal to the positing of "I am". If there is any author who takes this notion of reflection as task seriously, it is Beckett.³⁴

Beckett's equivocal language, mainly paradoxes and tautologies (ensuing from contradictions and repetitions) is the expression of reflection in the sense that reflection is the "appropriation of our effort to exist ... I cannot grasp the act of existing except in signs scattered in the world."³⁵

Reflection with Beckett proves sincerity and emptiness. Beckett encounters what Ricoeur calls "the factual existence of symbolic logic" together with the "indigence of reflection which calls for interpretation. In positing itself, reflection understands its own inability to transcend the vain and empty abstraction of the I think and the necessity to recover itself by deciphering its own signs lost in the world of culture".³⁶

Beckett supplies grist for the reflective mill. It

is the attempt he makes -- and the only one he or anyone can make -- to exist. Those "signs" he picks up in his cultural environment -- anything from the two thieves of the New Testament³⁷ to ironical allusions to Spinoza's *connarium*³⁸ -- are not only an accumulation of worn-out semi-truths to be inserted in plays about 'nothingness in action' but quite the contrary. By the same token, the act of writing fiction is a mode of existing by creating existence and not less real than any other everyday reality. In putting plays on stage, reality becomes even more intense. Reflection, then, is not just an achievement, and, hence, a tautological or paradoxical petrification of mental-activity,³⁹ but a positive series of acts, a process, an effort to do rather than indulge in self-pity (in the face of a not-so-happy world), a desire for knowledge and love for people. It is, finally, a (performative) creation of an act rather than a description of one.

As a task, a process, Beckett uses self-reflectiveness against solipsism since there is a constant demand to equate experience with the affirmation "I am".

Beckett's sophisticated technique of flaunting his artifice while remaining absolutely faithful to intellectual and emotional integrity is that of resorting to tautologies, paradoxes, contradictions and metaphors, all of which are self-reflective in nature. Tautologies, metaphors, contradictions and paradoxes contain a double meaning. On an

everyday level, a tautology repeats the same thing twice and thus, intuitively, the speaker intends to emphasize the identity of the object in question, yet probably from a slightly different point of view (such as "A rose is a rose", "Even nostalgia is not what it used to be", etc.). Sometimes the two similar objects are metaphorically linked, whereby the first "rose" is the vehicle of the second rose's "tenor". In a contradiction the opposite happens: two objects are presented as mutually exclusive. Logically, either tautologies or contradictions are "senseless". Only if a circumstance non-reducible to logic is added, does one understand what a speaker can possibly mean when he says, i.e., "A day is a day". The logical attempt to guarantee the non-ambiguity of arguments is likely to be proven empty, though it may be true according to that given logic's truth value table.⁴⁰

Beckett's self-reflective phrases make logic clash with itself, mocking it by dialectically affirming and negating the same thing at the same time. This again ensues from a tension between what Beckett calls the inability to express and the self-imposed obligation to do so.⁴¹ Philosophers who try to solve the logical difficulty of self-reflective phrases may succeed in their task, yet fail in releasing the motivating emotional reason to use them in the first place. When read in the proper context, a phrase like:

What shall I do, what should I do, in my situation, how proceed? By aporia pure and simple? Or by affirmations and negations invalidated as uttered or sooner or later?⁴²

cannot be answered (though the question is obviously a rhetorical one) by logic alone. Ricoeur suggests:

To seek in the very nature of reflective thought the principle of a logic of double, a logic that is complex but not arbitrary, rigorous in its articulation but irreducible to the linearity of symbolic logic.⁴³

Ricoeur develops his arguments in regard to "transcendental reflection" but his conclusions are valid in regard to Beckett, even without resorting to "transcendence."⁴⁴

Beckett's self-reflective, self-referring utterances, as expressed by tautology, metaphor, contradiction and paradox ought to be regarded as sheer nonsense when considered by rigorous, formal and symbolic logic. Even Roland Barthes who is closer to literature than symbolic logic, says that "in tautology, there is a double murder: one kills rationality because it resists one; one kills language because it betrays one."⁴⁵ This is definitely true for Beckett, whose uncompromising integrity does not allow him not to define "like by like". In his attack on tautology, Barthes sees the intrinsic self-sufficiency and reflexiveness of tautology: it is,

A magical act ashamed of itself which verbally makes the gesture of rationality, but immediately abandons the latter, and believes itself to be even with causality because it has uttered the word which introduces it. Tautology testifies to a profound distrust of language, which is rejected because it has failed.⁴⁶

This again is true for Beckett. He does not refuse language in the strict sense, since, though writing against it, Beckett does keep writing in language, by playing the two similar elements of tautology very dynamically against each other. This structure of tautology is similar to that of self-reflecting utterances in which the "I" plays itself against itself.

In regard to paradoxes (or "extended contradictions"), one can actually detect two major paradoxes, paradoxically interlinked: (1) the paradox of expression ("there is nothing to express"), and (2) the very attempts at expressing paradox. Beckett's self-consciousness uses both -- and does so not only in order to prove two members of a contradiction to be mutually exclusive and logically incongruous, but also in order to indicate that the very use of a self-reflective paradox is in itself paradoxical and reflexive. How, then, is one to escape this seemingly hermetic and perhaps nonsensical circle? Raymond Federman says:

Too often we are guilty of reading paradoxes into Beckett's fiction because we cannot accept that which destroys itself as it creates itself -- that which is contrary to common sense, or that which points to itself, even though ironically, as paradoxical. And yet, the primary meaning of the paradox is, as defined by the most basic dictionary: "a tenet contrary to received opinion; ... an assertion or sentiment seemingly contradictory, or opposed to common sense, but yet may be true in fact." This definition can indeed apply to the whole Beckett cannon ...⁴⁷

Though basically right in his assumption, Mr. Federman

does not go far enough with his conclusions. Agreeing in principle with Alter, he maintains that "Beckett's fiction becomes a denunciation of the illusory aspect of fiction -- stories which pretend to pass as reality."⁴⁸ When reality (or a real author) tells about reality, there is fiction. With Beckett, one finds fiction telling about fiction, and the result is a different kind of reality, such that denounces fiction through its own means, but finally, and paradoxically, becomes real through the process of the audience's active participation (this will be clarified later). This happens, thanks to Beckett's self-reflective statements. They are utterly sincere,⁴⁹ and constantly yearning to be empty, in order to remain sincere. When an act of self-consciousness is externalized and expressed in narrative or play, it can be in itself the object of expression. This is the nature of Beckett's self-reflective manifestations. Sincerity and emptiness are inseparably linked. Since the self-reflective author makes his own consciousness the object of his writing, he usually avoids making clear-cut statements about the situation of man, society or the world. All those are supplied by the reader or member of an audience. The work itself makes no "commitment" and avoids evaluations except of itself. And since truth value can be ascribed only to arguments -- the work and its implied author remain sincere in the sense of having neither lied nor said the truth. If a statement has yet been made, it is immediately

put to the torture test of constant doubting reflexiveness which does nothing short of rendering it empty -- since basically nothing has been affirmed.

In Beckett, outer reality serves as grist for the reflexive mill. Constant shifts between affirmation and negation -- as in the character of paradox -- end with an asymptotic zig-yes zag-no plunge deep into yet another layer of his self-reflective consciousness. The contradictory, tautological and paradoxical nature of statements is:

- a) an attempt at achieving solipsism, while
- b) knowing that this is impossible, because
- c) he is trying to communicate his solipsism, otherwise he would not be a playwright who presents his works.⁵⁰

Self-reflectiveness is the sharpest tool a self-conscious artist has in his attempt to make his "telling" and saying coincide with his "showing". By reflexiveness, Beckett brings the two aspects of the described and the description to their closest, mutual proximity: "Philosophy and literary language both 'refer to' the world, but are in themselves the world they refer to."⁵¹

Circularity and reflexiveness are built into the above argument and into Beckett's works in the same way. The performatory-performing aspect (already implied as a possible solution by Wittgenstein) of Beckett's work redeems one from a comparison between Beckett and the boy who killed his parents and pleaded for mercy in court because he is an orphan.

Following Susan Langer, it is the inaccessibility of the emotional to the formal field of logic and language that "the real nature of feeling is something language as such -- as discursive symbolism -- cannot render." Self-reflectiveness and paradoxicality are hence both the means and the end of stating that "the form of language does not reflect the natural form of feeling."⁵²

Finally, the question is how the form of language in the theatre reflects itself. Due to the reflexive proof of logic's failure, both author (Beckett) and his implied and "built-in" audience, must seek odd consolation in the very knowledge that this is "all he could manage, more than he could."⁵³ It is beyond the power of language, according to Beckett's incessant reflexive statements, to reflect anything but the inability to reflect, thus reflecting inability in a very able way and indulging in yet another paradox in an escalation of reflexiveness ad infinitum.

Beckett's self-consciousness reveals itself in his plays through self-referential utterances, patterns of behaviour (verbal and non-verbal human expression) and through non-human elements such as sets, lights, etc. Prior to a closer examination of the specificity of self-reflection in Beckett's plays and its unique mode of expression in a medium of the performing arts (theatre, radio), it is necessary to clarify other notions which are closely linked with Beckett's use of self-reflection.

Beckett's texts, as noted before, have often been regarded as empty. Booth, for one, says:

Nobody seems to read these (Beckett's) empty works without an intense emotional and intellectual response and it may be that without too much absurdity, we can make for ourselves a small opening into interpretation by looking at that response.⁵⁴

Iser explains this emptiness. In developing Roman Ingarden's ideas of Unbestimmtheitsstellen, he claims that a greater degree of indeterminacy of a text calls for a greater participation on behalf of a reader who is invited to fill in the gaps:

The indeterminate elements of literary prose -- perhaps even of all literature -- represents the most important link between text and reader. It is the switch that activates the reader in using his own ideas in order to fulfill the intention of the text. This means that it is the basis of a textural structure in which the reader's part is already incorporated.⁵⁵

Iser also says that, "The works of Beckett are among those whose indeterminacy content is so high that they are often equated with a massive allegorization."⁵⁶ This remark is well proven by Iser's own analysis of some of Beckett's works, as well as by an ever-increasing number of critics who keep trying to fill in Beckett's gaps.⁵⁷ "Every favourable critic implies that somehow Beckett has found in him a rare kindred spirit," says Wayne Booth. However, few critics have succeeded in giving a satisfactory explanation to the indeterminacy of the plays, and the uniquely theatrical way in which an audience, rather than a reader, is invited to fill them in.

The high degree of indeterminacy in Beckett's works is enhanced by the self-reflective elements of the text and other theatrical means. Such self-reflective manifestations may seem to exclude the audience because they happen to and between fictitious, dramatic characters. Yet, the very act of performing them in front of an audience is in itself an implicit invitation for the audience to participate, at least vicariously, in someone else's self-reflection and self-reference. The strong inclination of turning inwards, of dealing mainly with itself, of self-sufficiency, a trait rightly felt in Beckett's works, is in fact a double-edged sword. On the one hand, such a development in modern theatre suggests: "Leave me alone. I (the particular character or an entire play) am perfectly self-contained," yet, on the other hand, it is doing it in public, and hence, by its very mode of existence, implies: "I need you, the other, the audience," so as to assert, as Gadamer says, the self-consciousness of the self, through the self-consciousness of the other. This need for the other is the connection between the self-reflective manifestations in Beckett's works and the many indeterminate gaps in them. The actual, always-present and performed-alive acts of self-consciousness invite the audience to "impose consistency, purpose and meaning But in doing so, the spectator becomes the only person in the play."⁵⁸ This is true not only in regard to Iser's original idea about indeterminacy,

but also in regard to the self-reflective patterns which often create indeterminacy, due to their paradoxical nature. By plunging with his real self into the fictitious self of a character, a member of an audience extracts the play from its theatricality and makes it real.

Despite all his lame, blind, and crippled protagonists, despite his "crippled" language and constant reference to impotence in every possible sense of the word, Beckett is still, in at least some minimal sense, a doer, a performer. Strangely, perhaps paradoxically, it is the very utterance of a reflexive paradox that is, in a psychological-artistic way, a momentary relief from the violent yoke of the rigid illogicality of paradox itself. It is the link between the performing, in the general sense of doing, and the performatory⁵⁹ that is the only way out of negative self-reflexiveness. As far as the author is concerned, in order to accept Beckett's works, the audience ought to internalize the work and "perform" it, all on its own.

Notes to Chapter I

¹Samuel Beckett, Proust and Three Dialogues With George Dathuit (London: John Calder, 1965), p. 120. (Henceforth -- Beckett, Proust).

²Samuel Beckett, Dante ... Bruno. Vico ... Joyce (In Our Exagmination, London: Faber, 1972), p. 14. (Henceforth -- Beckett, Dante).

³Beckett, Proust, p. 66.

⁴Martin Esslin (ed.), Samuel Beckett (N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1965), p. 6 ff.

⁵Jurgen Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), p. 162. (Henceforth -- Habermas, Knowledge).

⁶Paul Ricoeur, Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutic (A Presentation, translated by David Pellaner of St. Olaf's College, Northfield, Minn.), p. 95. (Henceforth -- Ricoeur, Metaphor).

⁷Compare also Habermas, Knowledge, p. 170, and Ricoeur, Metaphor, p. 106.

⁸Beckett, Dante, p. 14.

⁹Wolfgang Iser (in The Implied Reader, Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974, pp. 43 ff) says that reading and especially Beckett is "a process of revelation that can never end." Methodically, my own analysis is somewhat similar to what I believe to be Beckett's writing. It is an asymptotic approximation to those "inexpressible" essences Beckett constantly refers to. (Henceforth -- Iser, Reader).

¹⁰R. D. Laing, The Divided Self (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1974), p. 106.

¹¹Ruby Cohn, The Comic Gamut (N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1962), p. 296.

¹²Wolfgang Iser, The Implied Reader (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 262.

¹³Hanna C. Copeland, Art and the Artist in the Works of Samuel Beckett (The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1975), p. 20.

¹⁴Beckett, Proust, p. 120.

¹⁵Following Booth's "Implied Author" in Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 169 ff.

¹⁶Hans Georg Gadamer, Hegel's Dialectic (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976), pp. 61-62.

¹⁷Some of the countless examples for this argument will be dealt with in further detail later on. Yet, for the sake of illustration, the example from Waiting For Godot can be given: "Something to give us the impression we exist," in Samuel Beckett, Waiting For Godot (London: Faber, 1971), p. 69.

¹⁸Alter also notes that, "Philosophy and literature made their first steps in the modern phase of self-consciousness within fifty years of difference Modern philosophy can be said to begin with Descartes' methodological skepticism, his making ontology essentially problematic, a whole tradition of the novel, as the paradigmatically modern genre, is informed by that same critical-philosophical awareness, beginning almost half a century before Descartes with Cervantes."

¹⁹The emotive aspect is much more closely linked with the literary than with the philosophical. Few sensitive people would doubt the passion (though in itself an extra-philosophical drive) with which Wittgenstein, for one, pursued the writing of his tractate. On the other hand, quite a number of critics noticed the use Beckett makes of philosophy, whether an ironic use or not. But a logical solution of an emotionally charged self-reflexive statement in Beckett's works, even though intellectually rewarding when successful, still leaves the recipient (readers or audience) with an odd sense of frustration: the existential malaise that brought forth a self-referring paradox in the first place is not yet solved.

²⁰Ruby Cohn, Philosophical Fragments in the Works of Samuel Beckett, Martin Esslin (ed.) in Samuel Beckett, (N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965). In the same collection of articles, see also Hugh Kenner, The Cartesian Centaur.

²¹Cohn is right again in saying: "The unnamable reminds one not only of the Cartesian Geulincx but of Descartes himself, for his monologue is a virtual discourse on Lack of Method, on the impossibility of method, given the human mind -- 'let us not be over-nice' -- working in words." Ibid., p. 172.

²²Ibid., pp. 174-5.

²³Jaaco Hintikka, Cogito, Ergo Sum, Inference or Performance, in Meta-Meditations (ed.) Alexander Sesonke and Noel Fleming (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1965), p. 58. (Henceforth -- Hintikka, Cogito).

²⁴Ibid., pp. 62-3.

²⁵Betting, apologizing, naming, etc. -- "in all these cases it would be absurd to regard the thing that I say as a report on the performance of the action which is undoubtedly done We should say, rather, that in saying what I do, I actually perform the action". In J. L. Austin, Philosophical Papers (N. Y.: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 220 ff. (Henceforth -- Austin, Performatory). In regard to the links between speech-acts, their "performatory" function and literature -- Richard Ohmann, Speech Acts and the Definition of Literature (Philosophy and Rhetoric 4, 1971), pp. 1-19; J. R. Searle, What's a Speech-Act? in J. R. Searle (ed.), The Philosophy of Language (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 39 ff.; Ora Segal, The Theory of Speech Acts and Its Applicability to Literature (Hasifrut No. 18-19, Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, December 1974), pp. 113-119.

²⁶Beckett, Dante, p. 14.

²⁷Hintikka, Cogito, p. 75.

²⁸Based on Niklaus Gessner, Die Unzulänglichkeit der Sprache (Zurich: Juris, 1957) and on various works by Susan Langer.

²⁹J. P. Sartre, La Liberté cartesienne (Paris: Trois Colines, 1946).

³⁰Beckett uses quite a similar expression: "The laugh laughing at the laughter" (Samuel Beckett, Watt, N. Y.: Grove Press, 1959), p. 48, and many others.

³¹J. P. Sartre, Being and Nothingness (N. Y.: Washington Square Press, 1966), p. 57 ff.

³²Ibid., p. 59.

³³Paul Ricoeur, Freud (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 43. (Henceforth -- Ricoeur, Freud). See also, with direct reference to Beckett, though using a different approach. "When consciousness posits some transcendent object in the world, it is accompanied by the pre-reflective cogito, but when it posits itself, it becomes the reflective cogito. When consciousness reflects upon itself, it structures itself as reflecting and reflected The self is nothing other than itself, but it is itself as the reflecting-reflected dyad."

Hesla goes further and supplies a useful examination of consciousness on the one hand, and "that of which consciousness is conscious. The complications -- grammatical, intellectual, and existential -- arise from the fact that one of the beings of which consciousness may be conscious is itself." David H. Hesla, The Shape of Chaos (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1973), p. 187 ff.

³⁴If one accepts Ricoeur's words, and self-reflexiveness is not "immediate", one understands why Beckett is fully committed to present tense and to presence in the theatre.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid. (My emphasis).

³⁷In Waiting For Godot.

³⁸In Endgame.

³⁹Contradiction leads to paradox in the same way that tautology leads to metaphor. Two elements "yoked by violence" are presented in either a mutually exclusive structure or a seemingly complementary one.

⁴⁰ An extensive discussion on the topic took place on the pages of MIND, between Jørgensen, Kattsoff, Ushenko, Encarnacion, and others. See e.g. Mind, Nos. 247 (July 1953) and 253 (Jan. 1955); also R. L. Martin (ed.), The Paradox of a Liar (New Haven, 1970), e.g.: "The theory of types have, if tenable, shown how paradoxes can be avoided, but they have not shown how they could arise," says Jørgensen, whose argument against the paradox of reflexivity is based on claiming that "Knowing is a temporal process," and therefore, "we could not speak about an act of knowing that does not yet exist in the sense that it would be nothing at all." Whether we treat paradoxes, as Russell suggests, as "experiments of logics," or as Jørgenson, "traps of logic," the point remains that Beckett's self-reflexive sentences are definitely paradoxical in nature, but they are neither sheer "traps" nor just "experiments". They are, as previously argued, an act, a performance. They do not describe, they do. See also S. Shoemaker, "Self-Reference and Self-Awareness," Journal of Philosophy, XV (1968): 555-67.

⁴¹ Beckett, Proust, p. 125.

⁴² Samuel Beckett, The Unnamable (N. Y.: Grove Press, 1965), p. 291.

⁴³ Ricoeur, Freud, p. 37 ff.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 48. "The only thing that can come to the aid of equivocal expressions and truly ground a logic of double meaning is the problematic of reflection. The only thing that can justify equivocal expressions is their a priori role in the movement of self-appropriation by self which constitutes reflective activity. This a priori function pertains not to a formal but to a transcendental logic, if by transcendental logic is meant the establishing of the conditions of possibility of a domain of objectivity in general. The task of such a logic is to extricate by a regressive method the notions presupposed in the constitution of a type of experience and a corresponding type of reality. Transcendental logic is not exhausted in the Kantian a priori. The connection we have established between reflection upon the "I think", "I am, qua I act", and the signs scattered in the various cultures of that act of existing, opens up a new field of experience, objectivity, and reality. This is the field to which the logic of double meaning pertains -- a logic we have qualified above as complex but not arbitrary, and rigorous in its articulations. The principle of a limitation to the demands of symbolic logic lies in the structure of reflection itself These

reasons which seemed to us to be left hanging in air for want of foundation are as follows:

- 1) The requirement of univocity holds only for discourse itself as argument: but reflection does not argue, it draws no conclusion, it neither deduces, nor induces; it states the conditions of possibility whereby empirical consciousness can be made equal to thetic consciousness. Hence, "equivocal" applies only to those expressions that ought to be univocal in the course of a single "argument" but are not; in the reflective use of multiple-meaning symbols there is no fallacy of ambiguity: to reflect upon these symbols and to interpret them is one and the same act.
- 2) The understanding developed by reflection upon symbols is not a weak substitute for definition, for reflection is not a type of thinking that defines and thinks according to "classes" ...
- 3) Let us go back to the very first alternative considered above: a statement that does not give factual information, we said, expresses only the emotions or attitudes of a subject. Reflection, however, falls outside this alternative; that which makes possible the appropriation of the I Think, I Am is neither the empirical statement nor the emotive statement, but something other than either of these.

⁴⁵Roland Barthes, Mythologies (Frogmore, St. Albans: Paladin, 1973), p. 152.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Raymond Federman, "Beckettian Paradox: Who Is Telling the Truth?" Melvin J. Friedman (ed.), Samuel Beckett Now (Chicago and London: University of Chicago, 1975), pp. 103-17.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Following notions developed by Henri Peyre, Literature and Sincerity (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967).

⁵⁰"What the solipsist means is correct only it cannot be said; it shows itself. What the solipsist means is that the world is my world. This inexpressible truth shows itself in the fact that 'the limits of language' (of that language which I alone understand) means the limits of world." P. M. S. Hacker, Insight and Illusion (London, Oxford, N. Y.: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 188 ff.

⁵¹As in Richard Kuhns, Structure of Experience (N. Y.: Harper & Row, 1970), rather than Booth's too general remark for this purpose: "The showing power of language is realized and explored in performance; the saying power of language is realized and explored in argument and in experiment." (p. 240).

⁵²Susan Langer, Philosophical Sketches (Mentor, N. Y., 1964), p. 79 ff.

⁵³Samuel Beckett to Alan Schneider.

⁵⁴Wayne Booth, Rhetoric of Irony (Chicago and London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 259. (Henceforth -- Booth, Irony).

⁵⁵Iser, Reader, p. 43.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 41.

⁵⁷Booth, Irony, p. 252.

⁵⁸Iser, Reader, p. 272. See also George H. Szanto, "Samuel Beckett, Dramatic Possibilities," Massachusetts Review (Autumn 1974). "There is nothing in Beckett's work except form. Therefore any interpretation is available to one seeking out his own meaning of the context" (pp. 735-763). Obviously critics like Booth, Szanto and others rely not only on a general assumption. They enlist, quite justifiably, Beckett's own words: "To find a form that accommodates the mess. That is the task of the artist now."

⁵⁹Austin, Performatory, p. 44.

CHAPTER II

THE PLAYS

Me -- (he yawns) -- to play.

- Samuel Beckett, Endgame

In all of his plays Beckett exhibits the highest degree of medium awareness. It is through this awareness that his innumerable self-referential phrases, in the text and in the stage-directions alike, are designed to come across to both audiences and readers. In this chapter the particularly theatrical elements are scrutinized, in order to substantiate the argument that the plays cannot be understood without paying due attention to self-referentiality in them, and that each of the plays contributes its own point of view, or focus of emphasis, in the matter of self-reference.

Further theoretical considerations, based on secondary literature on Beckett and on drama in general, are found in Chapter III, where the findings presented in this chapter will be woven into a more comprehensive theory.

It is now necessary to examine precisely how the different components of the medium in which the plays are presented are, separately and together, themselves

self-reflective. These components are a variety of typically theatrical means and devices, such as lighting, costume, make-up, and movement, as well as the overall notions of stage-space and the uniquely Beckett-like off-stage.

In his plays Beckett explores these theatrical means from two points of view. The first is the normal, perhaps deliberately conventional use; the second is the self-reflective use. The plays naturally resort to theatrical means of expression. Yet, the unique dramatic development, leading from the relative theatrical richness of Waiting for Godot (1954) to the poverty of Footfalls (1976), raises a question concerning the second point of view in regard to the exact function of the theatrical means. Evidently Beckett has tried to condense and concentrate his message into a medium that is gradually and thoroughly stripped to a bare minimum.

In the following discussion of Beckett's use of theatrical means, an attempt will be made to examine how theatrical means are being examined by Beckett and in what way they are self-reflective. All of Beckett's usage of theatrical means is, to a great extent, an attempt to flaunt his "artifice" of theatre and theatricality. Beckett eliminates the conventional borders between stage and audience by exposing his own devices, and rather than developing the metaphor, "All the world's a stage", he destroys it. Instead of presenting the theatrum mundi image,

he presents the idea that there is actual life going on on stage. Beckett's art is hence that of poesis rather than mimesis.¹

The notion of self-reflectiveness in the use of theatrical means is strongly supported by the fact that nearly every one of Beckett's plays is dedicated to either one or two major theatrical means of expression. The impression conveyed is that of a composer who writes solo pieces or duets for various instruments. Beckett is therefore engaged in a series of exercises, whose aim is to survey the tools and means of his art. This is so, even though it should be borne in mind that content and form are one and the same thing in his plays. They are not about something, they are the things themselves -- as, exactly is the case with music as an art form. One ought not be misled by the relatively conventional use Beckett makes of his theatrical means. Only a conventional use of light, for example, will eventually bring about the idea that a play like Play is not simply lit by light, but is "about" light. In none of the plays does light serve only to illuminate the scene and expose to the audience whatever the playwright wants to show.² Light is always presented in the play in a manner suggesting its symbolic function, symbolizing, alternately, life and death. Finally, Beckett makes light the protagonist of a play; and the conventionally symbolic, as well as practical, aspects of theatre lighting merge into the self-reflective function

of the spotlight in Play. Similarly, other theatrical means, too, are both a device and a theme in the respective plays. Many of the theatrical means that Beckett uses in his plays can be traced back to Waiting for Godot, his first and richest³ play. In Waiting for Godot, one finds more characters, more props, more movement, and so on; and a delicate balance between these components probably makes Waiting for Godot Beckett's most easily understandable play. His mode of presentation here is relatively generous in the usage of theatrical means. In later plays his demands from the audience are greater regarding the concentration focused on single theatrical means while yet commensurate with his own exploration of his expressive means. Being a play "about" waiting, or even waiting itself ("waiting for ... waiting" [WFG 727])⁴ the play enlists a wide spectrum of theatrical means to reinforce the feeling that there is nothing to be done. But this "nothing" had better be "done" in as interesting a way as possible.

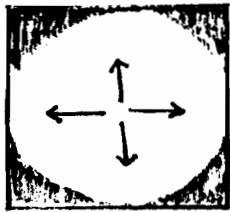
The play shows an obsession with passing time and the passing of time.⁵ Hence, there is no need to focus attention on either one of the predominantly visual theatrical means. Lights, costumes, props, etc. are therefore balanced, more or less equally distributed and used, and none of them is emphasized to the point of overshadowing other theatrical means. In later plays, Beckett keeps shifting the focus from one theatrical means to another, repeating the message of a

bleak, hopeless, absurd, yet playful life to which people still ardently cling. In all his plays he varies greatly the ways in which this message is theatrically expressed. It is the form and modes of expression that count as well as makes the content. As Beckett himself says: "To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now."⁶

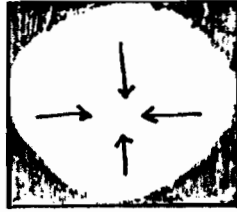
The following sections of this chapter deal with the notions of space, movement, props, costumes, make-up and light, and then end with a discussion of off-stage as "negative" space. The self-reflective quality of the theatrical means will be emphasized without neglecting their regular functions, namely, the functions of both device and theme.⁷

Space and Movement

The treatment of space, the major patterns of movement, and the position of actors in Beckett's published plays⁸ can conveniently be compared in the following sketches:



WFG ('54)



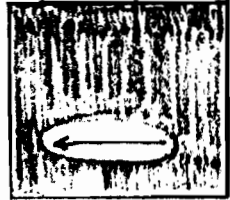
EG ('56)



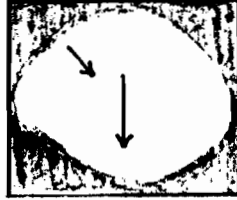
AWW I ('58)



KLT ('58)



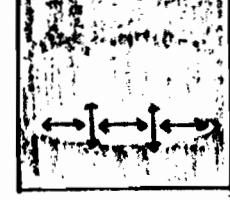
AWW II ('59)



HD ('61)



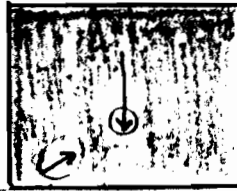
PL ('62)



CG ('65)



BR ('66)



NI ('69)



TT ('74)



FP ('76)

(The squares represent the stage; the circle -- the lighted area on stage. Arrows indicate the main positions. These diagrams will be helpful in exploring Beckett's treatment of movement and space).

Beckett, like any playwright, yet in a way uniquely his own, creates stage-space in which the sets, on the one hand, and the ways in which actors move within them on the other, are interrelated.

Scenery itself, as well as the way it is activated, creates the feeling of the specific space of each of his plays. In them, one ought also to look into the ways in which space is verbally referred to. In a conversation with Michael Haerdtes, Beckett said:

That's the value of theatre for me. You place on stage a little world with its own laws Theatre for me is a relaxation from work on the novel. You have a definite space and people in this space. That's relaxing.⁹

Evidently Beckett regards space as a uniquely theatrical element.

Space and movement on stage are closely linked. It is through movement, or the deliberate lack of it, that Beckett's characters can relate to their surroundings. At the crux of his approach to movement is the fact that simple action in the plays is not taken for granted. Many of Beckett's characters are invalids who yearn for some ideal situation in which they would not have to move at all. In the eyes of some of them, movement is superfluous, unwanted, 'existential' need, a primary difficulty.

In one of the rare publicized discussions in which Beckett elaborates on his artistic techniques, he says to Charles Marowitz:

Producers don't seem to have any sense of form in movement. This kind of form one finds in music, for instance, where themes keep recurring. When, in a text, actions are repeated, they ought to be made unusual the first time, so that when they happen again -- in exactly the same way -- an audience will recognize them from before. In the revival of Godot (in Paris) I tried to get at something of that stylized movement that's in the plays.¹⁰

Beckett is interested ... "not so much in pantomime but in the stratum of movement which underlies the written word."¹¹

The spatial structure of theatre performances is determined (from a sociological point of view¹²) by two axes, originating in the relationships between the "prominents" and the crowd, or, between actors and audience. On the one hand, one finds that the "crowd" wants to achieve intimacy and

proximity with the "prominents"; on the other hand, there also exists the wish to maintain a distance, and, in extreme cases, the "crowd" even mystifies its heroes on stage. Certainly, as Southern has shown, "there may arise the need to cross that line [between stage and audience] for a curious psychological embarrassment is called up which sets many people against this idea."¹³

The original form of theatrical events is the circle.¹⁴ The circle is a form which closes the inside and cuts off the outside. In the mythological-ritualistic sense, the theatrical circle is the architectonic embodiment of the Imago Mundi of the people who take part in the events. In a more specifically theatrical, medium-oriented sense, the architectonic space of stage opens up or closes, defines and delineates the borders of life on stage. Also, the structure of space determines the degree of illusion with which an audience perceives the performance.

As the diagrams show (see p. 38), Beckett's stages, for quite a number of his plays, are clearly designed to be round, at least elliptic. It therefore creates a feeling for an enclosed character who is still being seen, as though the privacy of the character's acts is deliberately disturbed by his on-lookers, the audience.

The following discussion surveys Beckett's plays and some typical modes which the playwright uses in activating stage space. In the last chapter of this essay the notion

of space will be more closely linked with the expected part the audience is supposed to play. The implicit argument, though, is that "theatre is a reactive art"¹⁵ in general, and a self-reflective means is used in Beckett's plays in order to bring it across.

In Waiting for Godot, stage-space is created mainly through movement. The actors move constantly, quite restlessly so, and use their bodies occupying space in almost every conceivable way. They walk, run, jump, stagger, limp, fall, sit, lie, etc. Yet what is seemingly chaotic confusion is actually a highly stylized and well composed orchestration of different sorts of movement. Waiting for Godot includes a number of silent movements: "Estragon, sitting on a low mound, is trying to take off his boot. He pulls at it with both hands, panting. He gives up, exhausted, rests, tries again. As before" (WFG 9). Beckett uses Estragon's boot as the musical motif. The disproportionate effort exhibited by Estragon in his undertaking underlines the stylization, and emphasizes the motif. The same technique is used in relation to Vladimir's hat, specially, and to hats in general. Significance of the hat business accumulates with repetition, and reaches a peak in Lucky's speech: he can only think while his hat rests on his head.

Also, there exists a "dialogue" between text and movement. Text and movement can be parallel, complementary, or opposing. In Pozzo's speech (WFG 24-25) some examples of

the mutual relationships possible between text and movement can be found:

<u>Movement</u>	<u>Text</u>
(1) With magnanimous gesture Movement is exaggerated and a gap exists between text and movement. The effect is ironic.	(1) Let's say no more about it
(2) He jerks the rope One-to-one relationship between text and movement. Repeated three times. Meanwhile, Lucky gets up and the tension mounts.	(2) Up Pig
(3) ... Before their incred- ulous expressions Opposing relationship: Movement is rude while text is polite. There are also opposing relationships established between Pozzo and Lucky, and between Didi and Godo. Lucky, who does not speak here, expresses himself through pantomime:	(3) Yes, yes, sincerely happy
(4) He puts his glasses on and looks at the two likes. ¹⁶	(4) Yes gentlemen, I cannot go for long without the society of my likes.

Movement complements the text.

Certainly the main motif of the play is presented in the form of a clash between text and movement: "Yes, let's go. (They do not move)" (WFG 54, 94).

However, movement in the play does more than provide for interesting stage-activity and gap-fillers. In Waiting for Godot, in which playing (with) nothingness is the subject matter, movement complements the theme, since moving in space implies time. Were Waiting for Godot to have no text at all, its silent movement could still conceivably make some sense as an independent play, or, at least, an interesting number for mimes.

The relationship between text and stylized movement underlines the fact that the body is earthbound, while words shoot skyward.¹⁷ The two elements, movement and words, meet and testify to Beckett's sharp theatrical consciousness in the following dialogue:

Vladimir: It's only the beginning.

Estragon: It's awful.

Vladimir: Worse than the pantomime.

Estragon: A circus.

Vladimir: The music hall.

Estragon: A circus. (WFG 35-)

The music hall and circus activities, which are the most important characteristics of movement in Waiting for Godot,¹⁸ are linked with space on stage no less than they are linked with the text.

The movement in the play is distributed along three main axes, of which centre-stage is the intersection. The first axis is the sideways, stage-left stage-right one. The second, upstage (backdrop, offstage) -- downstage (toward audience). The third, is the height axis of sky-ground.

All three dimensions of the stage -- length, width, and height -- are carefully dealt with. In Waiting for Godot each dimension has a different function.

Most of the movement takes place on centre-stage, but other than being its natural location, it also has its own rationale in the context of the play. The setting of the

play is described as a "country road" (WFG 7) and is, therefore, like any other road, open-ended. The wandering tramps, Vladimir and Estragon, are never sure whether they wait for Godot at the right spot on that road. In psychological terms they lack a sense of centre. This lack is acted out in a centrifugal movement from the centre to all other directions. The characters often ask themselves questions about their location:

Vladimir: What are you insinuating? That we've come
to the wrong place? (WFG 14)

When Vladimir asks Estragon if he recognizes the place, Estragon first says, "I didn't say that", and then that it "makes no difference" (WFG 15). The stage is described as scenery (WFG 16), as "there's no lack of void" (WFG 21), and as "the midst of nothingness" (WFG 81). All these references are made to a "road" on stage. Such a road, it is suggested, stretches far beyond stage left and right. It is, as though by sheer coincidence that the place chosen as playing area happens to be in front of an audience.

The road is the main axis along which the characters move. As the arrows in Fig. 1 indicate, the sideways movement is the most dominant in the play.¹⁹ It reinforces the feeling of having no centre: Pozzo and Lucky appear from the wings. Lucky is the first to appear, followed by the rope which is "long enough to allow him to reach the middle of the stage before Pozzo appears" (WFG 21). This effect lengthens yet a little more a road already suggested to be,

figuratively and literally, quite long. The wings are where real 'action'²⁰ is expected to come from. Pozzo and Lucky arrive from there as well as Godot's messenger, the little boy. As soon as expected action, and thus change and development with it, is dragged toward centre-stage, it dwindles into deliberate directionless and aimless activity of passing time. Hope and fear, and the implied chance for real change is located at the wings, whereas passing time is located in the centre. In other words, waiting is performed in the centre, and the object, of waiting in the wings. A fascinating usage of spatial, verbal and movement elements concerning the road is in this scene:

Estragon: We weren't made for the same road.

Vladimir: (without anger) It's not certain.

Estragon: No, nothing is certain.

(Vladimir slowly crosses the stage and sits down beside Estragon). (WFG 53)

In a highly self-reflective manner Beckett makes Vladimir use the same road for which, perhaps, he and Estragon were not made. Crossing the stage, or the road, to Estragon, Vladimir apparently tries out whether it is or isn't "certain". A little later in the play (WFG 70-71) Vladimir first paces alone, then takes Estragon, to walk off the latter's nightmare, and finally continues walking to and fro on his own. This sideways axis of movement connotes openness of a frightening kind, at least to Vladimir and Estragon.

The second axis, that of upstage-downstage movement, reflects enclosure. The characters are trapped between back-drop and audience. The first is referred to like this: "Imbecile! There's no way out there." And the second, both as "charming spot" (ironically) and "that bog" (WFG 15).

The two poles of this axis are definite and fixed. As will be shown later, Beckett uses this axis more and more and almost gives up the sideways movement and the openness it suggests (see sketches). This axis of front-back suggests a direct confrontation between stage and audience.

The third axis, and the third dimension of stage, is skyward-earthward, or in stage terms, flies versus ground. All four actors constantly raise their eyes to the sky (or "zenith") on the one hand, and roll, lie, fall, sit, or slouch, on the other.²¹ Vladimir's hat and Estragon's boot are also a reminder of this axis. Beckett makes all characters follow the famous Bergsonian formula of the comic effect.

A number of times in the play, the two main characters go through a whole routine of orienting themselves on stage; they examine all directions very meticulously: "Estragon (goes limping to extreme left, halts, gazes into the distance ... turns, goes to extreme right, gazes, Estragon moves to centre, halts with his back to auditorium). Charming spot. (He turns, advances to front, halts, facing auditorium). Inspiring prospects. (He turns to Vladimir). Let's go."

(WFG 13). The second act opens with the same routine (WFG 57) and immediately after, repeats it yet once more.

Here, one clearly sees the two first axes and the centrifugal tendency of the famous "Let's go" which is always blocked with "We're waiting for Godot". The centre, the meeting point of the three axes of movement, is therefore the location to which the characters return, because they are pulled or thrown back there. (As Beckett makes utterly clear in Act Without Words I). Centre stage is where the characters act out confusion ensuing from the openness of the sideways axis, the enclosure of the upstage-downstage axis, and the half-open (sky) and half-closed (ground) third axis. After having tried all other means of escape (WFG 74) Vladimir says to Estragon, "Your only hope left is to disappear behind the tree," and truly, the tree and the mound are more or less the centre. Other than using the central area for acting out clownery and confusion, it is also to where they turn, reluctantly or gleefully, when tired or desperate. The tree is always an implicit invitation for suicide, and the mound is the only relatively comfortable spot to sit on an otherwise bare stage. The centre of the stage is not only the centre of the road, but also a cross-road between three roads, none of which promises any redemption from the "thereness" of the characters in both time and space.

In Waiting for Godot, Beckett establishes the notion

of stage space as an inescapable location. Vladimir and Estragon are quite conscious of their situation. Thus they deprive the audience of any sort of pity they may eventually feel towards two aimless tramps, which is sometimes meted out to the "poor" of the stage. Since they balance their misery with humour and clownery in a highly self-reflective manner, the audience can only be expected to look into themselves. The characters know they are playing in a space which is at once really there and at the same time a playground of theatre, a stage. The very universality of "a road, a tree" enables each member of the audience to furnish the bare scene with sets dug up from one's own mental storehouse. Space itself is an abstract notion that cannot draw attention to itself. Movement and text make it known to both actors and audience.

The insecurity concerning time and space in the play is still the only thing Vladimir and Estragon can boast of. "We have kept our appointment" (WFG 80), says Vladimir. The audience, too, has come, and are hence some of those "billions" who also keep appointments without being sure of when and where.

The main spatial image of Waiting for Godot is inescapability from the centre, lack of inner-centre and the need to play there, and the tendency is centrifugal; Endgame employs space in an opposite way. Here Clov's movement is still Waiting for Godot-like, and in fact he does go out for

a while, but most of the other movement suggests a centripetal tendency. Whereas the characters in Waiting for Godot are almost forced to use the centre, Hamm is already very much there, and extremely keen on being in the very middle of the centre, a highly "self-centred" figure. While in Waiting for Godot the key line is "Let's go -- we're waiting," etc., the key line in Endgame is, no doubt, at least as far as space is concerned, "I'll leave you -- you can't." In Endgame, for the impossibility of going away is substituted the impossibility of leaving, since "there's nowhere else." In Waiting for Godot, the dominant axis of movement is a sideways, open movement -- suggesting an open void.

Endgame is an exploration, mainly, of closed space. It examines indoor and outdoor spaces, "inner" spaces (in the psychological sense), small spaces²² and, generally speaking, the notion of void-in-enclosure. Rather than dealing with the waiting-oriented element of time which is more appropriately associated with the vast expanse of a road, Beckett, in Endgame explores how impossible it is for the characters to escape from their closed, claustrophobic and finally, personal inner space.

Although both Endgame and Waiting for Godot include many allusions to both time and space, the number of time-oriented references is greater in Waiting for Godot, whereas space-oriented references are more frequent in Endgame. More time-oriented references in Endgame are subservient to

the notion of space (as is the image of "grain upon grain", for example) and vice-versa: the place to meet Godot is a minor point in the very act of waiting. The whole notion of waiting is time-oriented, and therefore the play can easily be conceived as going on forever. The second act of Waiting for Godot can be regarded as the following day's show. In Endgame, the spatial notion of "there's nowhere else" is dominant. The idea of leaving and going away does not materialize, and even in the very end Clov does not go. Where time is the main issue and space is at least open on one of its axes, the characters can and do fool around. When the issue is space itself, lack of movement and confinement to closed spaces seem very convincing dramatic solutions.

Characteristically, the opening moments of Endgame present a sharp clash between the temporal and spatial aspects. While making a series of movements of opening up spaces, windows, ash bins, etc., Clov's first words contradict his actions: "Finished, it's finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished" (EG 12). This is a contradiction. A non-sequitur ensues from the four time emphasis on the word "finished" at the beginning of the play. Were he aware of the consequences, he (Clov or Beckett) should not have begun at all. One also gets a sense of beginning from the opening and the sense of ending from the words. Endgame, in a typically Beckettian mix of irony and the literal, and as the name of the play suggests -- it begins in the end, and

folds backwards therefrom.

The clownery and the vividness of movement in Waiting for Godot are here replaced with three escalating degrees of immobility. These three degrees parallel the three gradually and equally limiting spaces. Clov (the youngest character) can move, though with difficulty. He confines himself, as best he can, to his relatively big kitchen space of 10' x 10' x 10'. Hamm is confined by paralysis and blindness to his wheel chair, but can be moved in it. Nagg and Nell are not even moved, yet at least can raise their heads out of the ash bins. In addition to the gradually increasing enclosure and confinement, there exists also a parallel between the characters when divided into couples. Nagg and Nell versus Hamm and Clov. Beckett makes a point of stressing the "I'll leave you -- you can't" relationship by having the old couple use it too (EG 20). All characters, each in his own space, each having his own sort of mobility, are yet confined to the greater enclosure of the whole stage space. The effect of this space-within-a-space image is taken further, like a Russian babushka doll, so as to suggest a potentially infinite peeling off of space after space.

Whether or not one accepts the interpretation that stage space in Endgame represents a huge skull, a chess game, an atomic shelter, an actor on stage, Noah's Ark or even a satellite and a star,²³ it is still very much the nature of movement in space, other than the text, that creates these

notions of various enclosures and relationships between the two main figures. In no way can Clov leave Hamm. Yet Clov, as noted before, can move with relatively greater ease and serve as Hamm's extension. One character's yearning to leave the stage is balanced with the other's inability, as well as lack of will, to do so. Furthermore, the space of Endgame, enclosed as it is, is made yet more claustrophobic by constant references to the outside: Beckett keeps juxtaposing the notion of the room with the notion of whatever is outside it.

The room itself is bare and has high walls, a window on each side facing the outside (EG 11) and a door leading further inside into the kitchen. Inside the room there are a number of objects, all of which are closed and covered at the beginning: the ash bins, Hamm's face, his body, the windows, etc., as the stage directions say.

In the text one finds many further references to closed spaces. Hamm talks about himself, saying, "the bigger a man is, the fuller he is ... and the emptier" (EG 12); "last night I saw the inside of my breast" (EG 26); "here we're down in a hole" (EG 30); and, "put me in my coffin" (EG 49). Outside-space is equally often referred to. Clov and Hamm talk about the outside in terms of "earth", "sea", "hills", "nature", "flora", "pomona", etc. One would associate the outside with life, and the boxed in, coffin-like inside with death. But Beckett says quite clearly that

"outside of here it's death" (EG 15, 45) and meticulously adds attributes such as "corpsed", "extinguished", "zero", "ashes", and "grey". Despite the almost total deprivation of the characters of life signs (pap, pain killer, biscuit, wheels, etc.) they still manage to remain alive and maintain a sense of humour. Reversing the classical picture of Creation, in which Light, Earth, and Water were the beginning of all, Beckett here reduces life to a blood-stained "old stancher" which alone remains. The room, grim as it is, remains the last source of life. In order to avoid a new beginning, a re-creation of the world, the rat will die outside and the little boy (imaginary?) is not allowed in. The once colourful and lively scene of fishing on open seas is replaced with a report of a sea which is not even as much as being heard through an open window. The green lushness of the earth becomes a grey and ashy desert. Nature -- "no more nature" (EG 16) -- continues to work its way, but only negatively: "we lose our hair, our teeth! Our bloom! Our ideals!" (EG 40).

Beckett does more than juxtapose the open-dead-outside, talked-about space with the closed-live-inside, and seen one. He provides his characters (and the audience) with eyes, a telescope, glasses, sheets, and curtains -- all of which are "lids" with which one can see through walls, eye-auxiliaries of sorts. Although Hamm's eyes are blind, he still needs glasses. Opening the window-curtains reveals

death, the telescope detects nothing but extinction, the sheets, once discovered, reveal Hamm. Either way, all these enable momentary glimpses into closed and open spaces. Such is the very stage of Endgame which is visually closed, from what one hears outside. In an accurate manipulation of space in the play, Beckett implies that the onstage spatial relationships correspond to the relationship of the stage to the audience. Inasmuch as Clov brings Hamm information from the outside, he brings that same information to the audience. Also, opening lids, uncovering sheets, etc. parallels both a person looking inside himself, and a stage being opened and exposed to the audience. There is a deliberate connection between the two windows and two eyes. Hamm asks Clov: "Did you ever have the curiosity, while I was sleeping, to take off my glasses and look at my eyes?" and the answer is -- "pulling back the lids?" (EG 13).

Clov's opening moves in the play are, simultaneously, an establishing of stage space and its thorough examination (as in Waiting for Godot). While stiffly staggering in the room Clov is showing the shape and size of the playing area by moving in all directions: sideways, upstage-downstage and climbing up to the windows. His moves are related to both the inside and the outside worlds, as well as to the different "lids" through which contact between the two worlds is achieved. He ends his trip in stage-space by dryly mentioning his own 10' x 10' x 10' room: "Nice dimensions, nice

proportions" (EG 12).

Clove is obviously physically more active than Hamm. Hamm being blind, cannot see this activity. Throughout the play his gaze is directed inwards, whereas Clov looks outwards -- sometimes with the help of a telescope -- and mutters vague remarks as to what he observes, without the audience or Hamm being convinced of the reality of the objects he describes. Does he invent them? Does he talk of them in order to aggravate Hamm, console him, or both? The audience, with Hamm, is forced to depend on Clov's eyes, on his repeated walks to the windows, on his reports about "offstage".

The natural distribution of stage activity is as follows: Hamm talks, since he can't move due to blindness and paralysis, whereas Clov is doomed to painful movement, imposed observation to the outside, and self-imposed silence. Clov is dependent on Hamm for words, saying pathetically at one point: "I use the words you taught me. They don't mean anything anymore. Teach me others. Or let me be silent" (EG 37).

As in Happy Days, Waiting for Godot, and in a way as in Krapp's Last Tape as well, the unmoving, sometimes blind talker is the dominant character, whereas the more moving character is passive. This notion strengthens the assumption that one actually deals with inner spaces and events in Beckett's plays. One may ask whether Clov's silent activity

is more meaningful than those words which "don't mean anything anymore". The answer is evidently negative, but at least movement does not demand the same level of explicitness that words do. Movement is self-evident and more minimalistic; it does not claim significance in the same way that words are supposed to. In movement Clov simply avoids the implicit need to mean which is often associated with utterance of words. All four characters in Endgame are obsessed, each with his own notion of space. Stuck in their bins, Nagg and Nell often resort to stories of far places -- and open ones. They talk about the Ardennes, and the road to Sedan (EG 19) where, perhaps, their accident took place; and about Lake Como (EG 21). Hamm is obsessed with being precisely in the centre (EG 23). Being a little more mobile than his parents, he is interested also in the direct outside of his room, rather than in far away places of long ago. Clov, who can move best, is obsessively going to a closed-space kitchen. He also says: "I love order. It's my dream. A world where all would be silent and still and each thing in it's last place, under the last dust" (EG 39). Typically of Beckett, he endows his most deprived-of-mobility people with the farthest reaching compensation, of memory and imagination of far places, whereas his more mobile characters yearn for close and closed spaces.

Finally, all space in Endgame is reducible to inner space of which the stage is a self-reflective metaphor.

Hamm, being blind, can only feel his way around his room, noticing that even the wall bricks are hollow. He then wants to be back in his centre. Being blind, his perception of space, if any, is already interior.²⁴ Hamm can see inside his breast (EG 26). In Waiting for Godot, Pozzo remarks (also in a highly self-reflective way): "The blind have no notion of time. The things of time are hidden from them too" (WFG 86). But the blind do have a sense of space, be it only their own inner one. Hamm's trip around his room (EG 23-24) is therefore, together with references previously made, highly suggestive of a trip in his own inner space.

Endgame is a play which quite consciously takes place in space, is about space, and is self-reflective.²⁵ The play brings us closer to the whole notion of inner spaces in Beckett's drama, a notion for which Beckett sacrifices more and more the external characterization of space -- from Act Without Words II on, until Footfalls. Endgame is his first step in this direction.

Do the two pantomimes, Act Without Words I and II stand alone in their own right, or must they be classified in the broader context of Beckett's other plays?

In Waiting for Godot, one finds the expression: "To have lived is not enough for them. They have to talk about it" (WFG 63). Does Beckett try in his pantomimes to examine what happens when his characters simply try to "live?" Does he try to express the inexpressible and examine what can be

"said" without words, with actions only?²⁶

Ruby Cohn sees Act Without Words I and II as a birth: she counts the mime's seven falls after his "birth". The actor tries to return to the place whence he came, but is thrust, time and again, into existence:

As in Godot stage business summarizes our lives. When the clown is flung back from the wings he turns his attention to the stage to which he is condemned and he explores its space.²⁷

Whereas Act Without Words I is marked by falling, Act Without Words II is marked by rhythmic timing. John Spurling sees the two pantomimes as:

Punishments from the underworld. The first is that of Tantalus, who was condemned to stand in a stream which receded whenever he bent down to drink, while the fruit-laden branches overhead whisked out of his reach; the second, that of Sisyphus, who had to trudge up a hill pushing a boulder which fell to the bottom every time he reached the top.²⁸

Spurling thinks that Act Without Words I "is by comparison overexplicit, overemphasized, and even, unless redeemed by its performer, so unparticularized as to verge on the banal."²⁹ He adds that, like Vladimir and Estragon, the two types in Act Without Words II (the slow one and the brisk one) are two aspects of the same person.

Eugene Webb advances on an expansive interpretation with respect to the two pantomimes: "Beckett presents in very simple stylized form, pictures of certain aspects of the human condition."³⁰ In Webb's opinion, Act Without Words I emphasizes the relation of man to the external world which

frustrates him, whereas Act Without Words II focuses on man's relation to the internal focus of man's reach or control. In Act Without Words I, man is despairing and is not even tempted to hope, having learnt from experience that his hopes are futile, barren. Webb, like Ruby Cohn, discusses this act of "Geworfenheit", relying on Martin Heidegger.³¹ This, says Webb, is man's basic existential situation. Whereas Ruby Cohn emphasizes the spiritual element, and man's "stage-like" surroundings, Webb notes the consciousness which is followed by the situation of "geworfenheit". There is no escape from this situation in Act Without Words I, despite the suicide attempt of the character. Unlike the monkeys -- Webb compares a certain psychological experiment to the pantomime under discussion -- man cannot finally enjoy the fruit of his efforts. Like Spurling, Webb also refers to Tantalus-like tortures. He emphasizes the difference between the two characters in Act Without Words II. A's action is slow, hesitant and reflective. B's is brisk, energetic and well-coordinated in time (watch) and space (compass and map). However, Webb does not answer the question implied by the type of discussion he himself engages in. Are A and B one and the same character at different ages in different situations, or are they two mimic abstractions of two distinct persons?

John Fletcher links the three basic forms of action: "Circus clownery, music hall cross talk, and dramatic mime" with the Beckettian hero. "But unlike the real clown, he

seeks not to amuse others, but to cheat his own boredom; he is acting, but for himself."³² Fletcher, like Spurling, agrees that Act Without Words I is embarrassingly obvious, particularly as regards the suicide attempts. He admits, however, that the two acts shed light on the author's other plays.

The above critics (and others) agree on most of the important points, namely, the cyclical pattern of Act Without Words II and the various forces that function in the two pantomimes; only the labels of the various forces and their patterns differ with the respective critics.

Pantomime is based on the most meticulous of conventions. Style, so necessary to any pantomime, is the attempt to mould a group of movements into a meaningful continuum. Whole behavioural patterns, such as can be seen in Marcel Marceau's shows, are crystallized via precise stylization. The shrug of a shoulder or the nod of a head on the part of a good mime, can unify an entire series of movements. Classical pantomime, as developed in the French schools of Decroux, Lecoque, Marceau and Jean-Louis Berrault, was known to Beckett from shows and films. Beckett deviates from strictly classical pantomime.³³ In that sort of pantomime the stage is usually empty and the mimist generally alone, creating his own world by means of pose and movement. The glass in Marcel Marceau's number, titled "Cocktail Party" exists only in the spectator's imagination, yet the food for

that imagination is directly and specifically provided by the actor's hands; the spectator is invited to build the glass into spatial contours formed by the mimist.

The performer in classical, "propless"-pantomime, builds the imaginary world in which the spectators participate. In Beckett's pantomime, however, objects really exist (watch, compass, etc.) and the spectator is invited to supply the meaning for the objects. The vagueries of classical pantomime are concrete, pseudo designated objects; the imagination of the audience is thus controlled and directed. The vagueries of Beckett's pantomime is its concrete meaning.

The existence of props on Beckett's stage is important in this connection because it is with them, and not just with the space they occupy, that the two characters play. Whereas classical pantomime seems to say, See how I, the artist, can create worlds with my body, Beckett's pantomime seems to pose the question, what if anything, can be communicated without saying anything? While using some conventions of pantomime, Beckett mocks the need for such conventional communicativeness. From this perspective, one can discern a relationship between the way in which Beckett uses words, ("Il n'y a rien d'autre, monsieur") and the way in which he presents movements and actions. The common factor is the lack of a preferable alternative.

The absence of words in Act Without Words I and II

draws full attention to the visual and the spatial. Beckett does not simply try another medium, another mode of expression; rather, he examines the possible expressiveness of movement and props within the framework of his attempts at reducing the different components of theatre to their minimum. Perceptually precise, Beckett poses questions as to the nature of the various media of the performing arts. "What happens to a stage show", he seems to ask, "when there are movements without sounds or words?" Beckett seems to search for pure and minimalistic modes of expression. His radioplays demand that the listener complete the visual images; the pantomimes invite the viewer to interpret the visual images verbally. The overall picture with respect to both modes of performance, must be formed in the minds of the listeners or spectators.

Thus radio-play critics, according to their fancies, augment the radioplays with visual images; pantomime critics may overlay movements with their various verbal interpretations. Beckett's medium-oriented variety gives rise to endless discussion among critics. Due to the communicative paucity of his chosen media, the critics' interpretations are extremely personal.

Jan Kott's description of Act Without Words I as a Book of Job without a happy ending, Spurling's references to Tantalus and Sisyphus,³⁴ or Barnard's interpretations ("as flies to wanton boys are we to the gods")³⁵ link

Beckett to the cultural background which is common to critics and authors alike. As such, these critics present the interpretations and paraphrases which account only for the conventional level of Beckett's pantomime. According to the conventions of pantomime, one may replace words by actions and movement: Again, a position on stage and the arrangement of stage props are perceived, conventionally, to symbolize a given human condition.

However, one must bear in mind that if one wonders about the function of words (and certainly Beckett himself never ceases to wonder about this), one must in the same way doubt the function of pantomime. The characters in Beckett's pantomime give the impression as though they fail to understand that Beckett uses this theatrical means of expression as tentatively as he does the verbal.

The 'act' of the suicide attempt in Act Without Words I is therefore not embarrassing in its banality but doubly impressive, because Beckett consciously worked with banality.

Beckett's first pantomime takes place in the desert, under dazzling light. Only one person acts in it. In comparison with Act Without Words II, it has more elements of classical pantomime, such as "reflections", "dusting", "body poses", etc. But here again, the pantomime essentially plays with objects instead of words, rather than creating objects through movement.

The pantomime itself is a pseudo-metaphysical comment on the conditioning of man. The backstage functions as the goal of Act Without Words I, sending the man hints and objects, and whistling to him. After being thrown onto the desert-stage,³⁶ the man tries to exit, but learns, being twice thrown back, that he should best not attempt to flee. At the very outset, and throughout the play, the man's basic condition consists of falling and reflecting. He always arises from the fall, save at the end when he lays himself down, resigned. His reflections serve as intervals separating the actions and his inactivity is dramatically as convincing.

From the point of view of characterization, this man is a cross between A and B of Act Without Words II. The first series of "acts" ends with an aside-type of reflection which conventionally connotes introversion. Then the tree descends and casts its shadow in the desert.³⁷ The whistle goads the man, drawing his attention to the tree; he sits in its shadow looking at his hands. It is to his hands that he will return at the close of the mime.

The next series of events does not seem to be logically cohesive; cohesion must be affected by the spectators' efforts to ascribe intentions to the backstage forces: A pair of scissors descends, the palms of the tree close, a pitcher labelled water descends, and the man reaches for it. The spectator is unable, together with the stage figure, to

discern any causality to events which in themselves are related only by time sequence. Presumably, propter hoc should not be derived from post hoc. Ascribing significance arises from a need to ascribe meaning rather than from the objective development of the events.

The same lack of causality and significance applies to the descent of the blocks, three in number, which the man busily and futilely organizes. He works hard to arrange them properly, as he did in order to reach the pitcher too. One must doubt the functionality of the objects of his labour, since the label "water," which he is trying to reach climbing on the blocks, is perhaps nothing but the name of the label, and bears no necessary logical connection to the contents of the pitcher.

The whistle helps the man in his attempt to reach the water and to draw his attention to another stage prop on his way to the water; but at the same time, it disturbs his internal reflections. Nothing is known about the rope with the help of which he tries to climb to the pitcher. Its function, significance, symbolism and rope-ness -- all that is tied up with the man's deeds.

The offstage forces which manipulate the flies can be described as emanations of the power of Godot who rides again. The man must have forgotten that, and, like Vladimir and Estragon, he tries to leave the stage-desert only to be flung back. It is another pseudo-metaphysical reinforcement

on behalf of offstage, making it utterly clear that man, at least as actor, has no existence backstage. The impersonal, spurring goad in Act Without Words II is presented as many little goads, which are not even seen. Unlike Act Without Words II, the action here is not cyclical but linear, ending with the look the man casts at his hands. This look finally means man's acceptance of "being there", in the same way that the descending props are simply stating themselves as "being there". This kind of look freezes Vladimir and Estragon at the end of Waiting for Godot, Winnie and Willie at the end of Happy Days and Krapp at the end of Krapp's Last Tape.

Since one cannot live with the help of various objects, one can at least try to commit suicide with them. The character tries to cut his throat with the scissors he had earlier used to trim his nail, perhaps as an act of defiance. He assembles the three, blocks and rope in an effort to hang himself.

Through mime and the use of movement, Beckett teaches his actor and the audience by way of conditioning; and shows that movement, too, is unnecessary. The act without words ends as an act without movement, and without props, as though negating the principle on which it was based.

The main axis of movement, as shown in sketch 3 is towards upstage -- where the actor turns his face -- to backstage, with his back to the audience. Only in the end, and very intentionally so, he turns to face the audience. (This

issue will be discussed in further detail in the section dealing with off-stage).

In the two mimes the subject matter of movement is movement itself. The actor's last movement in turning to his hands suggests a resignation of movement. In Act Without Words II movement is used in an altogether different way.

Act Without Words II

Two people, A and B, take part in the pantomime.

A is slow, strange and distracted. B is brisk, fast and precise. There is also a non-human participant, a goad, an embodiment of movement. The pantomime opens with a freeze-effect. A's and B's sacks and a small goad enter and the goad spurs A into action. The goad is active, pushing forward, retreating, and coming on again. Insofar as it points up A's non-reactiveness, the goad serves as an indirect characterization of A and B, their movement measured against its own unchanging rhythm.

Primarily the goad is a catalyst for action. Secondly, one can interpret it as 'external powers', consciousness, nature, or god. The two actors, significantly, never see the goad; it disappears before they emerge from their sacks, and they are unaware of who, or what, woke them from their inactive state, of sleep or womb or death. As soon as the goad achieves its purpose -- to create movement -- it disappears. The series of actions then undertaken by the two human characters are independent. The "intention" hinted

at by the goad's actions, is thus, illusory; its actions are as arbitrary as the series of actions performed by A and B.

The differences between the two characters are immediately evident, but ultimately superficial. A needs two spurs to awake. His deeds are slow; in between each of his deeds, he indulges in reflection. In order for A to deal with his life (or a new day), he uses pills and prayers. He exhibits a severe lack of energy, even in eating the carrot.

B awakens at first spur. He checks his watch ten times(!) during the play, exercises in the place of prayer, brushes his teeth rather than pop a pill. He takes good care of himself and consumes the carrot with relish. He turns to the compass and the map and seems to be well-oriented in time and space. At the end of his day (or a stage in his life, or his entire life), he, like A, returns to his sack.

The level of sympathy each of the characters gains from an audience depends in large measure upon the individual spectator. A is reflective and demonstrates an absence of will to act. B is compulsive, driven by a mania to expend energy, to do, to act. What seems to be a courageous, though objectively unjustified, activity based upon challenge to life by B, could easily be interpreted as much ado about nothing. A's sleepiness, which seems to be weakness, is perhaps better adapted to his or anyone's circumstances than B's activity. The contrast between the two behavioural patterns turns the pantomime into a dramatic affair, but no

one character can be definitively said to be morally or otherwise superior to the other. One can also regard the two characters as Beckettian archetypes -- representing other active-passive couples like Vladimir and Estragon, Hamm and Clov, Winnie and Willie, etc.

The neutral, detached goad renders both A and B characters who are mechanically conditioned to respond to stimulus. Each acts according to his own pre-conditioned nature; the two are equal as human beings. Interpretative evaluations of the two characters can only refer back to the projections of the individual spectator. Lack of words here functions as a play by means of which Beckett insists that interpretation depends on the spectators' own attitude to life.

Movement in the pantomime falls into three categories: (1) that of the goad; (2) the human response to the goad; (3) movement from right to left. (See Beckett's own chart in which the goad enters first without wheels, then on one wheel, then on two). In the pantomime, linear time clashes with cyclical time. Linear time is expressed by the movement to the right, in the sense that the left means beginning and right means end; whereas cyclical time is signified by A's second awakening -- as though the whole pantomime is supposed to be acted again and again and only the author's pity for his audience saves them from the endless repetition. As in Waiting for Godot, Act Without Words II

concentrates on a sideways movement. Unlike Waiting for Godot, which is directional from the point of view of time (day after day of waiting), Beckett here translates time to a spatial and directional image of a left-right axis. The treatment of space in Act Without Words II is generally quite similar to Waiting for Godot: the two characters are on a road that runs through stage. They come from offstage-left and will very soon disappear offstage-right, probably doing the same forever, on stage as well as offstage.

Act Without Words I also deals with small or inner spaces -- the sacks -- here suggesting womb and tomb³⁸ -- from and into which man returns after having performed in life and on stage a number of trite actions.

The goad is perhaps the inside interpreter inasmuch as it spurs the actors on. Its neutrality puts an end to any other attempts at interpretation. The characters simply act and the goad simply awakens them for a while and pushes them to stage-right.

Krapp's Last Tape

The opening moves of Krapp's Last Tape present Krapp as first seated, then fumbling, standing, stooping, advancing to the edge of the stage, staring vacuously before him, etc. As previously shown in the beginnings of his plays, Beckett, in his usual manner, introduces the actor as well as the audience to stage-space, before the first words are spoken.

Krapp, like the characters in Waiting for Godot and Endgame, goes through a procedure of examining his space, which is the lighted area, "table, and immediately adjacent area in strong light, rest of stage in darkness" (KLT 49). Having remained motionless for a moment, he then thoroughly checks the small spaces of his pockets, the drawers, etc., and the large stage-space in which he is now about to move.³⁹ By first pushing the banana peel into the pit, and then intentionally tossing it into the audience, Krapp is shown to be conscious of the spectators, to despise them, and to decide to turn in on himself. He also paces to and fro, testing the right-left axis of movement, after which he gives it up never to return to that pattern again. "Finally he has an idea" (KLT 10) and goes backstage. Having tried a number of possible positions, he chooses the front-back axis of movement, to which he resorts three more times in the play -- at the cost of almost all other directional movement.

In Waiting for Godot and in Endgame, Beckett uses the whole of the stage. In Krapp's Last Tape he restricts the protagonist to a narrowly lit centre-stage playing-area. Krapp's exits from this area are not only dramatically well prepared but also create the desired attitude to the space on stage. Krapp says:

With all this darkness around me I feel less alone
(pause) In a way (pause) I love to get up and move
about in it, then back to ... (hesitates) ... me
(pause) Krapp. (KLT 12)

His exits are escapes whenever he feels that the encounter

with himself is too hard to take. This is a direct way of saying that Krapp is identified with a certain space on stage. Losing himself in a drink is much easier. Being a heavy drinker, Krapp has a "purple nose" (KLT 9) and has consumed "seventeen hundred hours, out of the preceding eight thousand odd ... on licensed premises alone" (KLT 13). His retreats to backstage are the visual and spatial counterparts of the otherwise audial indulgence into his own past.

Krapp's Last Tape can be regarded as a dialogue between the actual presence of a live, visual, and spatial Krapp and the recorded, audial and temporal presence of a long-past Krapp. Beckett presents different lifetimes of the characters and juxtaposes them in the ever present stage-space. The play takes place on a "late evening in the future" (KLT 9), as Beckett says at the very beginning. Recorded Krapp goes back two stages in time. Hence, one finds at least two past stages, one suggested future tense, and all are present on stage.⁴⁰ Whenever live Krapp exists on the stage his recorded self is also being switched off. The effect is a presentation of the questionable identity of the person. Krapp's relatively long exits⁴¹ leave the stage empty and exposed to the audience's scrutiny, drawing attention to that space which is Krapp's self ("then back to ... me") (KLT 12).

If Waiting for Godot is about time and Endgame is about space, then Krapp's Last Tape lets these two modes

contend each other, and struggle in their dramatic form, taking the shape of Krapp's different life-phases.

The seen Krapp talks relatively little. He moves a lot and mumbles, and except for his recording (KLT 17-19), which can be conceived as yielding to his old attempts to externalize himself, vocally Krapp is mainly simply there. In an interview, Beckett said that he is interested not so much in pantomime but in the stratum of movement which underlines the written word. In Krapp's Last Tape he seems to be interested in extrapolating the tension between these two dramatic elements to the extent that the two Krapps appear to be not only modally different but almost two different personalities. The struggle between them ends with the necessary victory of the visual and present Krapp. The end of the play is both audially silent and visually motionless, but "visual-theatrical" Krapp is nevertheless seen whereas "radiophonic"-recorded Krapp dwindles into the nothingness of silence.

Beckett does not deal with Krapp's stories, as such, but with the impact they have on the live Krapp, and the way they are evoked in the man's close and physical surrounding. The story about the love affair in the punt is dealt with in terms of movement:

I lay down across her with my face in her breasts and my hand on her. We lay there without moving. But under us all moved, and moved us, gently, up and down, and from side to side. (KLT 16, 17, 20)

Live Krapp plays this passage three times on his

tape-recorder, a fact testifying to its importance. Inside and outside are switched: live Krapp is seemingly unmoved like the time when they lay without moving, but everything inside him, at the moment of listening to this chapter in his biography, is moving up and down and from side to side.

The notion of movement ensuing from the tape is played against the externally unmoving, but internally moved, live Krapp.

Krapp's Last Tape is the first of Beckett's two plays in which there is only one actor present. In That Time, too, there is a split person: Voice and Face are dealt with separately, though in That Time Beckett's treatment of his subject is more radical, and the split complete. However, neither one of the two plays can rightfully be called a monologue. Since Krapp's Last Tape takes place in "a late evening in the future", it includes a potentially endless imposition, self-reflective in nature, of one self on top of the other, each reflecting its former existence. The only space proper for such a process is the inner space of the protagonist. Through a process of exteriorizing and then giving up his older self, Krapp is called back to his present "pastless" self and is doomed, like so many other Beckett characters, to an everlasting present.

Krapp's Last Tape takes place in Krapp's room, but as it was in Endgame, this room is an exteriorized and dramatized inner space.

The unique quality of space in Happy Days is, again, a result of a juxtaposition between open space, as in Waiting for Godot, and the enclosure of Endgame, together with a certain notion of inner space as in Krapp's Last Tape and Endgame. In Waiting for Godot movement takes place in the centre and along three axes, and is centrifugal in nature. In Endgame space is closed, and movement is correspondingly centripetal. In Krapp's Last Tape stage-space is narrowed to a lit circle, and is hence physically more limiting than in the other two plays, where the whole stage was lit. The only fully developed axis of movement in Krapp's Last Tape is upstage-downstage.

The playing area of Winnie in Happy Days is extremely limited, especially in the second act when she is "embedded up to the neck" (HD 37), yet the surrounding area of the rest of the stage is fully lit ("Blazing light") (HD 9) and surprisingly large in comparison with the narrowness of the area given to the protagonist to act in. This large area is described as an expanse and has a very "trompe l'oeil backcloth to represent unbroken plain and sky receding to meet in far distance" (HD 9). Setting the actress in a mound in the middle of a deliberately theatrical background establishes the three main spatial notions with which the play is engaged: (a) the feeling of enclosure versus openness; (b) the axis of earth versus sky, and (c) the realism of the situation of being stuck versus the illusion of what lies

outside that situation.

In Happy Days, Beckett brings the outside openness of space in Endgame right on to the stage. It is there, not an assumed, talked-about openness, but present and constantly clashing with the physical pain of Winnie's enclosure, sitting in a mound. In order to emphasize the sense of "the earth is very tight today" (HD 23), and her actual "sucked-down" situation, Winnie's mound is placed in the exact centre of the stage, in the middle of a desert. The main spatial references in the play are tailored to Winnie's situation of gradually sinking deeper into her hole. As in Endgame, in which expectations were reversed and the enclosure, rather than the openness, suggested some life, here too Winnie is made to feel that she is sucked-up.

Is gravity what it was, Willie, I fancy not. Yes, the feeling more and more that if I were not held -- (gesture) -- in this way, I would simply float up into the blue and that perhaps some day the earth will yield and let me go, the pull so great, yes, crack all around me and let me out. Don't you ever have that feeling, Willie, of being sucked up? (HD 26)

In Act II, when Winnie is sucked down even more, she repeats the motif: "Do you think the earth has lost it's atmosphere, Willie?" (HD 39). This is the point, also, at which Winnie expresses the main axis of movement in words: "The earth, of course, and the sky". Beckett allows his character to be conscious of what he himself has instructed at the beginning -- "unbroken plain and sky receding to meet in far distance" (HD 9, my italics). Very often in the play Winnie talks

about the sky in earth-oriented terms and vice versa.

This up to the sky/down-to-earth movement is suggested right at the beginning of the play when Winnie "gazes at zenith" (HD 9), and it is maintained throughout the play by a large number of lines and movements.

Being sucked-down yet feeling "sucked-up" is actually what the whole play is "about", namely, Winnie's invincible sense of livelihood. Instead of using general terminology pertaining to man's existential malaise, Beckett delivers the message in spatial terms.

The surrounding space is presented as deliberately theatrical: maximum simplicity and symmetry. Blazing light. It is an en-face view suggesting direct appeal to the audience, hiding nothing, and making no pretense at the dramatic realism and verisimilitude which are suggested by a more slanted position. The very pompier trompe l'oeil backcloth is there to represent theatre sets, and not as an attempt to create the illusion of being real. Both background and foreground are equally theatrical. A figurative, as well as a concrete, situation of being stuck is a realization of a metaphor. The background, by flaunting its artifice and presenting itself as "trompe l'oeil", underlines the acute theatricality of the first. The overall effect of the sets is a straightforward head on exposure. By looking at a person who can hardly move, and later, cannot even turn her head, greater attention is required to concentrate on the

mound itself, and to every little movement that Winnie does make despite her situation.

Willie, the other character in the play, is also boxed in, but to a lesser extent. Willie is free to move. He is sprawled out, sometimes in and out of his hole. "Weary of your hole dear?", he is being asked, and Beckett makes Winnie add in a self-reflective manner, "Well, I can understand that" (HD 34-35). As in Endgame, there exists here, too, a double relationship of parallel and contrast between the spaces allotted to Winnie and Willie. In a number of lines Winnie makes this quite clear. She says, "What a curse, mobility" (HD 34); and when Willie, as usual, does not answer, "Well, I don't blame you, no it would ill become me, who cannot move, to blame my Willie because he cannot speak" (HD 28).

Winnie is not just "stuck". She speaks it, acts it out, knows it, knows that others know it, and knows they know she knows, etc. etc.

Although Winnie is stuck and almost motionless, Beckett succeeds in rendering her as one of the most lively and active characters in his plays through her constant talking, fidgeting and fumbling. Expressing her attitude to life, Winnie checks her existence not only against the pre-supposed self-consciousness of another self (Willie), but equally so, against the selflessness of objects. Winnie's verbal and movement patterns constitute a monologue about the

relative theatricality of words and movement in a way very similar to the juxtaposition of time and space in Krapp's Last Tape. Winnie finds equal relief and consolation not only in the words she utters, corrects and re-utters, but in the contents of her bag. She gropes through her bag and fishes out various objects with which she plays. Objects, unlike words, have a concrete, sensual and continuous existence, which she, in her situation, can at least appreciate, if not simply play with in order to overcome her pain. This, paradoxically, is emphasized by the parasol going on fire.

From the point of view of the quantitative relationship between words and movement -- as well as their respective dramatic functions -- movement quite surprisingly is the dominant element in the play.

Winnie's activity convinces the spectator that something is really "happening" in the play. She talks about, and to, the objects, saying: "So much to be thankful for. There will always be the bag" (HD 18). In her mouth, words become objects, and she turns them about as she does the pistol or the toothbrush. She uses them, examines them and returns them to what could metaphorically be equated with her bag. She redeposits words in a bag of words after fondling them, like the mirror and the comb, and tries to endow them with the concreteness of objects.

Is not that so Willie? When even words fail at times?
(Pause, Back. Front) What is one to do then, until
they come again? Brush and comb the hair (HD 20)

or

Cast your mind forward, Winnie, to the time when words must fail. (She closes eyes, pause, opens eyes) and do not overdo the bag. (HD 24)

Winnie makes words of objects, and objects of words. For example, immediately following her resolution to brush her hair, she addresses the pistol, saying:

You'd think that the weight of this thing would bring it down among the ... last round. But no. It doesn't. Ever uppermost, like Browning. (Pause) Brownie ... (turning a little towards Willie) Remember Brownie Willie? (HD 26)

Here the pistol becomes a word, a name.

The way in which a word becomes a movement, an object, (or a pistol) follows a pattern of mutual reflection of words on objects and objects on words.

Fortunately I'm in tongue again. (Pause) That is what I find so wonderful, my two lamps. When one goes out, the other burns brighter. (HD 28)

The two lamps are movement and words; both reduced to a bare minimum. When Winnie can't use one, she uses the other.

Oh yes, great mercies, (maximum pause) the parasol goes on fire. (HD 33)

The parasol, an object, is one lamp that goes out.

Towards the end of Act I, Winnie says:

Sometimes all is over, for a day, all done, all said. (HD 34)

"All done" refers to movement; "all said", to words. She then tidies up her belongings.

I suppose this might seem strange -- this -- what shall I say? This what I have said -- yes -- (she takes up revolver). (HD 28)

She shifts from words to deeds, words having failed her, and acts without words, continuing:

-- Strange -- (she turns to put revolver in bag) like she did with the word revolver, were it not -- (about to put revolver in bag, she arrests gesture and turns back front) -- were it not -- (she lays down revolver to her right, stops tidying, head up) -- that all seems strange. (HD 30)

Winnie voices, and acts out, the direct parallelism that is operative between words and movement. Beckett, through Winnie, makes the audience aware of this self-reflective usage of words and deeds, a usage in which there exists a deliberate fusion between props and movement, on the one hand, and words on the other. She notes:

(Pause) Most strange. (Pause) Never any change.
(Pause) (She bends to mound again, takes up last object, that is, toothbrush, and turns to put it in bag when her attention is drawn to disturbance from Willie)... --

Play marks the beginning of a new pattern in Beckett's exploration of stage-space. Even minimal specifications such as "road", "room", and desert are eliminated. Instead of the deliberate theatricality of the sets in Happy Days, Beckett lets the stage-space remain empty and dark. He shifts from using spaces in the play to a notion of the undefined space of the play. The contours of the stage itself are not seen; and Beckett presents his audience, in Play, with an unflinching, direct confrontation with faces in a space that seems a

direct continuation of the auditorium.

In Play, the three figures are placed in urns. "They face undeviatingly front throughout ... faces impassive" (Pl 45). The stage is dark, and only the faces are lit whenever each in his turn, is solicited to speak. The so far smallest space of Krapp's Last Tape has, here, been contracted a step further. It is the head of a Winnie with Krapp's Last Tape way of lighting split in three. The three characters, Man, Woman I and Woman 2, play and replay their roles from an almost completely static position. For them and for the audience -- and the light -- nothing exists except their urns and the light (or audience) to which they talk.

The three are yet another variation of people being more and more stuck. First on a road, then in a room, in an ash bin, in a wheel chair, or in a kitchen, in a small room, in a mound, and now, in an urn. Except for the light, and these people's lips, nothing moves. Textual references to long past, outside, space and movement replace actual movement and concrete space on stage.

Beckett, in Play, shifts the theatrical means from the perceived to the perceiver. The actually moving element in the play is the light, representing anything that can possibly be associated with a perceiving capacity; and such is the way the characters respond to it. Whether the spotlight stands for God's providence, the audience's scrutinizing eye, any eye of "the other", a voice of conscience, or

simply for what it is, a spotlight; the common denominator for all these associations is that of a perceiver rather than a perceived. The characters are put next to each other, "urns touching one another" (Pl 45), and it is the light that replaces the sideways movement they may be expected to perform. The final "mix" of their stories, as well as the sense of their space, is achieved by the light, and by the audience that sits behind the light.

By avoiding the sideways movement of the characters, and by yet putting them so close to one another, the play stresses their feeling of solitude and isolation. The effect, enhanced by the treatment of space in Play, is like that of three Krapps or three Winnies. Certainly the love-triangle in which the three are involved is the direct textual reason for this image of mutual solitude. But the spatial arrangement of undeviatingly facing front, and being utterly oblivious of the other two partners while still being programmed to function with them, renders the play quite powerful. In his spatial arrangement, Beckett succeeds in having a three-in-one, one-in-three unit. In Play, Beckett seems to suggest the darkness that surrounds the characters is part of their situation. In spatial terms this means that off-stage is actively taking part in delineating the playing-area. Also, this playing-area is made to feel like an extension of the auditorium, since the border-lines of stage cannot be seen.

The dramaticule Come and Go opens with three characters. They are women, "age undeterminable ... sitting centre, side by side very erect, facing front" (Pl 67). Only the playing area is lit -- "rest of stage as dark as possible". The women sit on a "narrow benchlike seat, without back, just long enough to accommodate the figures almost touching. As little visible as possible. It should not be clear what they are sitting on" (Pl 70).

As opposed to Play, this time the figures are able to move quite freely and suffer no apparent physical pain. Characteristically though, since they are able to move, Beckett denies them the ability to verbally express themselves freely. From the point of view of comparison between text and movement, Beckett keeps trying more and more radically, to separate these two elements. Hence, if Play is a stylized obsession with orchestrated talk, Come and Go is a stylized arrangement of movement on stage as well as in and out of it.

In Play, Beckett temporarily eliminates the non-speaking figure by denying it the eliciting light. Instead, in Come and Go, a single figure ought to consciously and theatrically perform an exit. It is another way of exploring emotional attitudes between people through metaphorized stage-space.

No wonder that Beckett's stage instructions in this play are so precise. The whole text has only 121 words.⁴²

Without carrying out these instructions meticulously, the play does not make much sense.

Come and Go is neatly divided into five acts -- or 7 positions, to follow Beckett's explanatory note (CG 71) -- separated by exits and entrances. All three characters are introduced in "Act I":

Vi: Ru

Ru: Yes

Vi: Flo

Flo: Yes

Vi: When did we three last meet?

Ru: Let us not speak.

Vi introduces the other two women and then exits. In Act II, Vi, who is not known by her name yet, is talked about. What precisely is the information that causes Ru to say "Oh", the audience as well as Vi, shall probably never know. In the middle of the act, Flo moves closer to Ru, and takes Vi's place. The same procedure occurs twice more, making two more acts, and the end is a virtual get-together between three women, each pair having talked about the other in her turn. They are finally physically united by holding hands.

A deliberate use of all four main directions of stage can be found here: front, back, left and right, repeated three times, resuming at the end, the initial frontal position of the beginning. More than any other characters in Beckett's plays they do not play a role of, say, three school

girls, as Hugh Kenner suggests,⁴³ but play playing. They just "come and go", and it is entrances and exits themselves with which the play is engaged. The three women's whole existence is nothing but stage existence.⁴⁴ They do not have enough substance -- dramatic, philosophical, or any other -- to symbolize anything but themselves, dull and bare womanly figures as they are. Their only role is to occupy stage space. This, they do successfully since their absence from stage is as effective -- if not more -- as their presence.

Breath is the most radical step Beckett takes in the direction of presenting theatricality itself. Trying to say more in less theatrical means, Beckett now presents naked theatre space with a stage richer with objects -- though garbage -- than in any other of his plays. But no actors on stage, and especially not two nude figures as Kenneth Tynan did.⁴⁵ Having reduced the number of actors in his plays from five, in Waiting for Godot, to one in Krapp's Last Tape -- through four in Endgame, three in Come and Go and Play, and two in Happy Days -- Beckett now tries to work with no actors at all seen on stage. This process of concentration and reduction to the barest minimum is seen as well in movement (none in Breath) and text -- vagitus-death rattle. What remains -- "A part remains ... That is what I find so wonderful, a part remains", Winnie says towards the end of Happy Days (HD 43) -- is the stage itself. Agreeing that "It would be -- I'll risk the word -- impossible for Beckett to carry

dramatic concentration further."⁴⁶ But one might add that the dramatic, rather than sheerly conceptual, impact of Breath is quite stunning in its mixture of humour and mobility. It is not a conceptual play⁴⁷ because the humour or horror of knowing what the play is about cannot substitute for the actual theatre experience of a whole lifetime squeezed into 35 seconds. Breath has been regarded as a text-less illustration to Pozzo's lines, "they give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more" (WFG 89). Another passage from Waiting for Godot may serve as the text missing in Breath: "at this place, at this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it or not". Breath is as general a theatrical statement as could possibly be, so it is left for the audience to simply add its own garbage to what is already there on stage.

Not I

Not I is at once a repetition and a summary of the previous nine plays, and a new and an incredibly original play. There are two characters:

Mouth, upstage audience right, about 8' above stage level, faintly lit from close-up and below, rest of face in shadow ..., and Auditor, downstage audience left, tall standing figure, sex undeterminable, enveloped from head to foot in loose black djellaba etc. (NI 6)

The movement in the play "consists in simple sideways raising of arms from sides and their falling back, in a gesture of helpless compassion. It lessens with each

recurrence till scarcely perceptible at third. There is just enough pause to contain it" (NI 16).

Given that the auditor is faintly lit and his (or her) movements are scarcely perceptible, one immediately sees that an immense amount of concentration is required in order not to miss the little movement that does exist in the play, since Mouth speaks rather rapidly.

Except for the auditor, the mouth too moves -- "as though on fire" -- text and movement finally becoming one and indivisible.

The spatial relationships between mouth and auditor are diagonal (see Figure 10) as they were in Happy Days (though Willie was on Winnie's back and right). In this sense, too, one can conceive of Not I as a continuation of sorts to Happy Days. Beckett here examines what happens if Willie were to become the auditor in Not I and Winnie would be condensed into a sheer mouth, sunk yet another step into her mound. Since only the mouth is seen, Beckett turns the mound from its upright position to a horizontal position, only the edge of which is turned towards the audience. Everything in the play becomes more condensed -- the speech, the speed⁴⁸ and the relationships in which first and second person appeals are eliminated, despite the very personal feeling with which tone and content are charged.⁴⁹ The shifting spotlight of Play, constantly lighting one figure, does not even stop for such a break in Not I. The whole

speech of the figure in Not I is delivered with uninterrupted intensity and ferocity. The figure in Not I does not have the relative ease of a Krapp talking to himself through a mechanized means of reproduction. This figure of a lady has neither the playful movements of Vladimir and Estragon nor the odd company of a Clov or a Vi.

What remains constitutes another phase in Beckett's dramaturgy. In this phase Beckett pushes his protagonists further backstage and explores what can and ought to be said on the very verge of off-stage.

Since talking is what Not I is obsessed with, Beckett needs no more than a mouth to be seen on stage. It is a disembodied mouth whose body -- "standing .. or sitting ... or kneeling ... or lying" (NI 7) -- is somewhere beyond, if existing at all.

In Not I Beckett achieves a superb balance between the two sides of the metaphoric equation of the world as a stage. "Out ... into this world ... this world ... tiny little thing", etc. (NI 6).

The frame of reference of the opening words is at once "the world", a womb out of which the little girl came, and the stage onto which the mouth spills her first words. Hence the first word could only be what it is -- "out". Space in Not I is "out".

In this play Beckett makes a most courageous attempt to show on stage how difficult it is for any person to get

out of one's inner space.

Not I is Beckett's first uncentred play. Unlike Happy Days, Mouth is situated upstage audience right. In the next two plays as well, Beckett moves the action from the centre to either left or right. Since all directions or axes can be said to be lost, and inner space takes over, there is no use in entering the action. In the three plays, Not I, That Time and Footfalls, the notion of space can be described as an inside space, like a sock turned inside out, whereas the previous plays proved an attempt to see "inside". Here Beckett deals with things Mouth has not even dared to say to itself, not to mention having an audience. Centered action is often associated, as it was in Endgame, Happy Days, etc., with the deliberate theatrical consciousness in the self-reflective style of "now I am acting". Not I is certainly self-reflective, but no more so through this centred notion of space. Inner space cannot be talked about by using directions such as up, down, left, right, centre, etc. Yet inner space is what Not I tries to get "out" into this world in the excruciating attempt to pour it on stage. Happy Days and Winnie are, so to speak, the mother play of Not I, and in quite a number of ways Winnie talks about the time she will talk to herself. Here "she" is just talking. Winnie is talking about Mildred or Milly (HD 41) which is her story. Mouth is an embodied story. She and her story are one.

That Time

In That Time, the focus lens of the spotlight is allowed to open a little more than in Not I, and a whole face is shown "about ten feet above stage level midstage, off centre". The "voices of ABC are his own, coming to him from both sides and above. They modulate back and forth without any break in general flow ..." (TT 9).

In That Time, Beckett reverses the function of Mouth in Not I. This time the auditor of Not I receives the main focus, yet remains, though lit, quite silent except for "His breath audible, slow and regular" (NI 9). His breathing, once in the beginning, twice in the middle and once in the end, substitutes for auditor's compassionate four movements in Not I. Instead of a mouth talking, we have here three different voices of the same person, completely disembodied voices which come, technically speaking, from the outside but figuratively from inside the man who listens to them. As in Krapp's Last Tape, Beckett splits his hero into perceiver and perceived, or rather, into three different consciousnesses. They are in the head of the listener, and Beckett continues his trip in inner space without the need to exteriorize it as in Endgame. The voices conjure up other times and other places -- all in relation to "that evasive time" they try to capture.

In both Not I and That Time, space is an inner space of a figure seen. Both plays complement each other. Woman

in one, man in the other, voices and listeners change places, and inner space is more heard than shown. Space on stage has been squeezed into the man's head, and one really stops knowing which side of the "sock" is being referred to in the play.

In Footfalls, space becomes slightly more exteriorized and tangible. Here there is a narrow seven-steps long strip along which May, the only seen character, paces obsessively.

As though to illustrate the ending lines of The Unnamable, "you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on,"⁵⁰ May performs her pacing which, according to the stage directions lighting is "dim, strongest on foot level, less on body, least on head." It is the center of the action on a little "off-centre audience right".

In Footfalls, Beckett seems to sum up spatial notions inherent in That Time and Not I. Text is more or less equally distributed between the two figures -- May seen and heard, Mother (called V) just heard. They have a dialogue in the first third of the play. The second third is dedicated to V's monologue, the third, to May's. The two points of view of the two women, mother and daughter, are interlocking, and the audience is never given a chance to learn, as it did in Not I and That Time, whose point of view is dominant. Space is here linked with the point of view made relative, since one does not know whether May is an evocation of V's voice (as in That Time) or whether V's voice is a projection

of what happens in the mind of the pacing May (as it would have been in Not I).

Off Stage

The most interesting and perhaps most complicated theatrical means Beckett uses is that of offstage. Being deeply involved with this uniquely theatrical means of expression, and exploring their relative weight in the overall theatrical effectiveness of the play and its stage-space (the most important difference between a play and fiction), Beckett is equally interested in the notion of offstage. Offstage, it is suggested, is "anti-space" in theatre, yet closely linked with it, both technically and conceptually. Alain Robbe-Grillet was among the first to see the centrality of the notion of being there in the theatre of Beckett, and therefore was also the first to note the importance of offstage: "Everything that is, is here; off the stage there is nothing, non-being."⁵¹

Robbe-Grillet's insight certainly points at a major issue in Beckett's works. Focusing now on the notion of offstage, Robbe-Grillet calls it "non-being". By clarifying the special use Beckett makes of what is not there, that which is there will hopefully be clearer too. Also, a more inclusive, and uniquely theatrical quality of space with which this chapter began, will be achieved.

Inasmuch as movement, props, costumes, make-up and lighting are using and qualifying stage-space, they are also

manifestations of intentions or powers existing out of stage, of which Beckett is highly aware. If Beckett modifies the metaphor of the stage as the world, then the use he makes of offstage is a further step in this direction. Hence, if show-time in the plays "equal" man's life, then offstage (in spatial terms, or before-show and after-show in a temporal sense) stands for anything that is not right here and now. It is, generally, a notion of there (beyond) and then (future and past) -- which influences the here and now in many different ways. It can be any "other" -- other times, other places, other people, hopes for the future, regrets or nostalgia for the past, eternal life, external death, inner "space" or "external" space.

More concretely, offstage is the space stretching beyond the visually perceptible three dimensions of stage: length, width and height. The development from Waiting for Godot to Footfalls shows clearly that stage space is being constantly narrowed and limited, thus offstage becomes "greater", more felt, more imposing, perhaps more ominous. Beckett has tried all directions. Sideways movement can be seen in Waiting for Godot, in Act Without Words II and again in Footfalls. (Sideways movement, it is suggested, is an attempt to translate time into spatial terms). The axis of height is used in Waiting for Godot, in Happy Days and some in That Time. But the most definite development is that of upstage-downstage movement and position. The more a Beckett

character has to face the audience, the less of his body is left to do so -- as we can see in the progression from Waiting for Godot to Endgame to Krapp's Last Tape to Happy Days to Play to Not I -- and also, in a different way, in Act Without Words I and II, Breath, Come and Go, That Time and Footfalls. The bodies of the actors dwindle into off-stage until finally only a mouth is seen.

Offstage is a very active non-being, if this is exclusively what it is. Godot is the hoped for and feared creature, actually, the embodiment of offstage. It is he for whom the character waits. He sends a live messenger, in Waiting for Godot, in the form of a little boy. In Endgame he is the dead outside, the silent sea and the deserted earth. In Act Without Words I, Godot rides again, very actively so, tempting the actor with a Waiting for Godot-type tree, water, ropes, etc., all of which are props, rather than a little boy. The whole mime should be regarded as a dialogue in movement, instead of words, that the stage character leads with unknown forces in the flies who can be another Godot. As Figure 3 indicates, the man's basic position is with his back to the audience until in the end, he turns about, yearning, perhaps, for a more fruitful result frontally. In Krapp's Last Tape, Krapp goes offstage, away from himself. In Act Without Words II, offstage is represented with a goad. In Play and Come and Go, offstage is brought closer, and resides, so to speak, on stage. The ladies in Come and Go

do not go quite off; they disappear in the dark, which functions like offstage, just as lack of light in Play casts the unlit figure, momentarily, into offstage. In Breath, life and death take place there, and the effect is that of turning a sock inside out. In Not I, Mouth is sucked into offstage, and in That Time, the voices come from there. In Footfalls, as suggested, one does not know anymore who is in whose head. Offstage can therefore be regarded as an inner self, and as an active force, as such.

Offstage is inhabited by many people. There exists a whole class of little offstage boys and girls, ("As if the sex mattered") (EG 36) and only one of them is allowed on stage -- the one in Waiting for Godot. He, or one of his little potential progenitor class mates, will be killed if entering Hamm's room (EG 49). Also in Endgame, Hamm denies another little boy's father some corn. He would not "consent to take in the child" (EG 37). Hamm himself was a "tiny boy ... frightened in the dark" (EG 38) whose parents let him cry so they may sleep in peace, and was thus an offstage boy within the framework of his own story within the play itself. In Happy Days, Willie reads in one of his rare speeches, "wanted little boy" (HD 15). Winnie imagines herself? her real or imaginary daughter?) "a Mildred ... she will have memories, of the womb, before she dies, the mother's womb (pause) She is now four or five already," (HD 41). In Not I, there is a deliberate confusion between

giving birth and being born, "out ... into this world".

Another unseen, offstage baby is the one being born, as well as dying, in Breath. In Come and Go, the characters remember Miss Wade's playground. As though slowly switching from offstage children, who are not allowed on stage, to characterize themselves, remembering their childhood (a temporal aspect of offstage), Beckett keeps bringing up images of childhood in That Time -- the boy in the garden on the stone -- and in Footfalls -- where mother and daughter converse.

In Beckett's earlier plays offstage seems to be further away and well separated from the stage, though nonetheless felt. In the later plays, offstage sucks characters in while itself creeping out to replace stage space. A number of characters on stage can be said to live on the verge of off-stage. Whenever Vladimir or Estragon exit they return as though they were away for a long time: "Where were you? I thought you were gone forever" (WFG 73). Besides the humour of this overreaction, it is also implied that offstage kills identity. It follows other, or no, rules of continuity and memory. When Pozzo and Lucky return for the second time they ought to be re-introduced. They are taken for what they are in a second "now" rather than for what they used to be in Act I. Whoever comes back from the "over there" of offstage has to be reshaped into the "here" of stage. Hence, exits and entrances in Waiting for Godot as well as in Endgame and in Come and Go, are charged with a

sense of momentary, and total, elimination of identity, perhaps of existence. In Endgame, Clov lives at the verge of offstage, and goes to his kitchen whenever he can. This movement is counterbalanced by Hamm's obsession for always being there, onstage and right in the centre of it. Nagg and Nell, too, live in an offstage-area placed on stage. In Act Without Words I, a play in which offstage is exceptionally active, the character is not allowed the forgetfulness and partial luxury of the theatrical (at least) non-existence with which Clov, Nagg and Nell are sometimes endowed. He is flung back whenever he tries to escape from his life, thus showing "thereness". In Happy Days, Willie lives on the verge of offstage, sending visual or audial signs of life.

From Play on, the protagonists themselves, rather than the secondary characters, dwell on the border of offstage, parts of their selves, their bodies, being already "there" while other parts, the expressive ones, still being "here", as in Not I and That Time.

The later plays, with their minimalistic description of surroundings, brings offstage on stage in the form of a gradual increase of references to other times and other places. In Waiting for Godot, there are, relatively, very few remarks about anything that lies beyond the here and now. The tramps mention the Eiffel Tower, the Macon country, and the river Rhone. A few more references can be found in Endgame; the old couple mentions the Ardennes, Lake Como,

etc., and Hamm mentions a place called Kov "beyond the gulf" (EG 36). In Krapp's Last Tape, there are many references to other times (naturally so, since the play deals with the juxtaposition of different times) and other places, such as wine houses (KLT 11), the house on the canal (KLT 14), the seaside (KLT 16), the lovemaking in the punt (3 times), the Baltic (KLT 18), a railway station (KLT 13) and names like Connogh, Croghan and Kedar. In Waiting for Godot, Beckett tries to emphasize the hereness of stage versus the there-ness of Godot, and does not have to resort to an evocation of thereness (or otherness) through mentioning other places. In Endgame, it is important to underline the deadness associated with the outside, and in fact, the places mentioned are linked with accidents and death. (Nagg and Nell losing their legs there; the little boy is denied corn, a symbol of life, as in "There's all that rising corn and there") (EG 32).

In Krapp's Last Tape, due to an actual narrowing of stage-space into a lit circle, and a further implication of identifying space as inner space, Beckett needs to complete the picture and draw "other" places onto the stage in order for the past to be compared with the present. Happy Days is less ample than Krapp's Last Tape with references to other times and places. In Happy Days, they are summed up by the Mildred story, a very self-reflective one, one in which an early memory is evoked in the present. In Krapp's Last Tape, past is brought to the present, whereas in Happy Days, Winnie

returns, for a moment, to her past. From Happy Days on, the more closed and limited the present position of the characters is, the more they refer to other times and spaces, while, simultaneously, reflecting on their present staged time and space. This is especially true in Not I and That Time. Mouth, being verbally born, and giving verbal birth to words on stage, goes back, first to the womb, then to "buttoned up breeches", to home, to an orphanage, to a field, "stare into space", to an interrogation in a shopping centre, to a place called Crokers Acres -- a little mound there -- etc. All these spaces are figuratively united with the very spot from which Mouth is delivering the speech, on stage behind the curtain, a spot labelled a "god forsaken hole ... called ... no matter" (NI 6). In That Time, the play is called That Time while taking place this time. That Time, and those places mentioned by the three voices of the same person, are evoked and conjured up in the present. There was no That Time, other than the time of remembering it on stage. In both plays, Beckett is very specific in the choice of his other places. But what really counts is not whether the events actually took place, but whether they are spoken about here and now. It is the utter enclosure in some undefined space, which is the stage, that brings about other places.

Except for visual signs and textual references, off-stage also sends audial signs to the stage. There is a terrible cry in Waiting for Godot, a whistle in Act Without

Words I, a bell in Happy Days, a chime in Footfalls, breathing and cries in Breath and, finally, a full voice in Footfalls and three voices in That Time. (One can also include Krapp's tape and Hamm's whistle, although they are of a different nature). These audial signs are, so to speak, emanations of Godot, the "God" of offstage. But the human, offstage voices ought to be distinguished from the bell, chime and whistle. The second group of sound-effects is impersonal, domineering and arbitrary. The first group is the end of a process in which Beckett sends parts of a self to offstage and allows them to talk to their other parts-of-self which still reside on stage. Eventually they will all be sucked into offstage. The "terrible cry" (WFG 21) in the first play is never fully explained, but can, nevertheless, be associated with Pozzo and Lucky. In the same way, the boy in Waiting for Godot first calls "mister" and then enters. In Breath, the offstage voice is anything but individuation. It is a vagitus, a breath, a death-rattle. When the voices are cast out of stage, breathing can remain on it. This is the case in That Time, where the man's slow breathing functions in the same way the auditor's movements in Not I do. In That Time, the remembering selves have already joined offstage, and the same goes for Footfalls where the mother's voice is disembodied. In Footfalls, there are human offstage voices and non-human sound-effects. In his typically dialectical way, Beckett in his last play, has

two, seemingly contradictory, offstage audial signs, play a duet together. Whereas the first group of human voices suggests that this is the quintessential interiority -- voices of "inner" space -- that can be expressed on any "outside" space of stage, the second group of non-human voices suggests the most non-here, non-now notion a stage can resort to. It is through this almost mutually exclusive double notion that the concept and usage of offstage ought to be understood in Beckett's plays.

Being what it is -- an attempt to express -- theatre uses the stage and its space as its main means of expression. Yet Beckett cannot, in principle, really express all that he wants to express. He then turns for help to the concrete, though unseen, space of offstage. It is, at the same time, a "space" which lies in the inmost and at the outmost of man, and can hence be only sending signs, arousing notions, but can never -- and by definition so -- be actually reached.

Offstage, is a notion of that point in infinity where two parallel lines are said to meet. In Beckett's plays, it is established mainly along the upstage-downstage axis. The dramatic as well as theatrical effect of Beckett's last plays as a reading experience and especially a viewing experience will tell is such that the audience is forcefully sucked in on stage. If as will be shown in the following chapter, offstage is the metaphor for the space from which

the playwright himself is working, then the audience is invited into the inside of the author himself, while, simultaneously, it is offered this insight to the "inside".

Stage Properties (Props)

In many of his plays, Beckett makes a varied and intricate use of stage properties. (Hence -- props). In some they are eliminated altogether. Perhaps the most characteristic remark concerning props and their function in the play is the one noted by Winnie: "Ah yes, things have their life, that is what I always say, things have a life. Take my looking glass, it does not need me" (HD 40). The common denominator of the different functions of props and their treatment in the plays is the attempt Beckett makes to assert the self-consciousness of his characters "in opposition to dependency on existing things."⁵² Since, in the plays, these things have their own life, it ought to be examined now what sort of life it is and how it is being put to use.

Most of the props in Beckett's plays are simple, everyday objects which draw no special attention to themselves in their natural realistic surroundings. With a few exceptions, most of the props are things people wear, carry, or have around a house. Evidently it is the specific mode of using them in the context of a play and its situations that endows the props with their unique meaning.

This chapter will distinguish a number of the main --

and typically Beckettian -- functions of props. Finally, it will be shown how props, too, are used in a self-reflective way, throughout the plays, and specifically in one play in which they can be said to be the protagonist.

The general feeling one receives from the encounter with props in the plays is that there are very few of them, that the stage is almost empty, and whatever fills it is used very economically. In Waiting for Godot, the characters are tramps. Not knowing where they are and when, they carry with them all they need.⁵³ (The tree and the mound only emphasize the bareness of the stage). Lucky carries a bag, a stool, a basket containing a piece of chicken, some wine and a great coat. Pozzo has a rope and a whip with which he masters Lucky, who is addressed as a slave, a servant, a pig, and actually as Pozzo's human prop. A thing. Vladimir and Estragon carry nothing, and whatever they use as props they carry with them. Vladimir constantly plays with his hat, Estragon with his boots. Carrots, turnips, and all sorts of odds and ends are in their pockets. The rope they want to use for a noose is regularly used as a belt. Little as all this may seem, these props characterize the figures immediately. By constantly activating the little they have, each time in a slightly different way and according to a musical principle of motif and variation, the figures succeed in creating a feeling of abundance and variety, as well as giving vent to their idiosyncrasies through props. Rather

than having all they need, they thoroughly need what they have, to the extent that they are rendered self-maintained and self-contained. Besides, their off-stage life, as suggested before, may be interesting but quite irrelevant in this play.

Hats are referred to dozens of times in Waiting for Godot. Vladimir looks into his hat. Puts it on and off. Vladimir and Estragon exchange them in a long scene (WFG 71). Lucky can't think without his. Vladimir and Estragon find Lucky's hat. Vladimir's hat is at the same time Vladimir's mode of characterization and a common means of communication between all the characters.⁵⁴ In the same way one has to regard Lucky's hat, which on him serves yet a different purpose, that of thinking. Exchanging hats implies an exchange of personality, so hats become also a unifying element in the play since all four have bowler hats. The use of the same object creates the individual difference between them.

What Beckett makes of the chicken, for example, is also very detailed, and becomes an underlying, continuous focus of attention. It takes some time between introducing the basket and Lucky's entrance and then opening it, taking out the chicken, eating it, and finally finding a last rest for the bones in Estragon's pocket. During the scene all four characters reveal yet another phase of their personality. Pozzo is gnawing the meat, Lucky and Estragon

envying, and Vladimir thinking it a scandal. It is not only an individual, non-textual, indirect description of the different roles, but also a grouping together of Estragon and Lucky, made to behave more or less alike.

There exists a parallel relationship between the rope used by Vladimir and Estragon and the rope used by Pozzo and Lucky. The rope is the prop that ties them together, figuratively and concretely. Pozzo and Lucky lead each other, for different purposes, in Act I and in Act II, with the rope. Vladimir and Estragon too are tied by the common pact to commit suicide together.⁵⁵ The concreteness of the image in Pozzo's and Lucky's case is more moderate and subtler in the case of Vladimir and Estragon. Whereas a master treats his slave with a whip and a rope, one cannot conceivably commit suicide with one's pants dropped. The two ropes are presented so as to comment on each other and underline the motif of inseparability of the couples. In Act II, Pozzo uses Lucky as a blindman's dog, and the rope becomes a sign of his dependency rather than his dominance. In parallel, Vladimir's rope breaks.

The more like everyday a prop is, the more suspicion and trouble it may cause. Hence the boots never fit, but the whip is used quite casually. For the same reason, Pozzo's pipe (an underlying focus of activity which runs on for a number of pages) raises more comment ("Puffs' like a grampus") than his vaporizer. After having introduced the last prop --

Pozzo's watch (which he then loses) -- about a third of the way along in the play, there are no more new props. The old ones keep being used over and over again. The only prop in the play being used just once is Vladimir's coat. Due to rarity of usage, Beckett succeeds in rendering Vladimir's gesture towards Estragon in an exceptionally affectionate way when he covers his shoulders with it (WFG 70).

Waiting for Godot opens the way to yet another typically Beckettian mode of using props. Characters in Beckett's plays often use both themselves and each other as objects. Stage instructions such as "They remain motionless, arms dangling, heads sunk, sagging at the knees" (WFG 19) clarify the fact that the two protagonists behave like marionettes freed from their strings. Most of Vladimir's and Estragon's physical relationships, like their hugging, is not so much a result of warm feelings as of sheer clownery. In clownery, one of the tricks is to relate humanly to objects and show non-human attitudes to people. Waiting for Godot is replete with this circus routine, the highlight of which is Pozzo's attitude to Lucky whom he is about to sell. This "I-thou" versus "I-it" relationship is sarcastically presented when Pozzo turns to self-pitying after having declared that he was taking Lucky to the Market to be sold (WFG 33-34).

In Waiting for Godot, as in the later plays too, props are not just taking place on stage-space, but they are often used as "mini-spaces". Pockets, shoes, hats, bags, etc.,

are all closed-in little spaces. They are presented as relatively more manageable and controllable than the big space of the entire stage. By making his characters fumble, poke, examine, and draw out the "wrong" items from their personal little spaces, Beckett seems to comment on the entire space on stage. Vladimir must always check whether his hat is really empty before putting it on. Estragon can't get his shoes off. In a brilliant remark, Beckett makes even this point quite self-reflective: "There's man all over for you, blaming on his boots, the faults of his feet" (WFG 11). With props being nut-shell images of the stage, Beckett suggests that the entire world of objects is insecure and arbitrary, not to mention people. This notion of props as little-spaces is further developed and specified in the later plays, but the beginnings of this theatrical means can already be found, like many others, in Waiting for Godot.

In Endgame, the dominant principle of using the props is that they are either not there, or that they are constantly being diminished. Existence can go on, it is implied, without even the minimum of assistance offered by objects, and people are gradually stripped of their worldly possessions, meagre as they already are, down to their bare selves. There are no bicycle wheels, no pap, no painkiller (first, there is not the time for it, then there simply is not any more left), and no sawdust for Nagg and Nell (there is,

however, some sand instead). Hamm notes with his habitual streak of black humour: "no phone calls" and finally there are no more coffins either.

There is an interesting link between the dog and the gaff. Both props follow the pattern of contrasting and complementing each other. The dog is ("not even a real dog", but a toy, a prop) is Hamm's last resort for some affection. Clov beats him on the head with it, and receives the response: "If you must hit me, hit me with the axe or with the gaff, hit me with the gaff. Not with the dog. With the gaff or with the axe" (EG 49).

Hamm has the courage to end the play with an appeal to his blood-stained, physically closest, sign of his blindness and most intimate prop, the "old stancher" -- "You ... remain" (EG 53).

In Endgame, Beckett develops the use of a number of hats, this time in order to create the association between hats and lids. When Hamm plays with his toque, Clov takes yet another look under the lids of the ash bins (EG 41). Rather than reinforcing the confused insecurity, as in Waiting for Godot, the hat in Endgame emphasizes the notion of closed spaces and conveys the impression that Hamm uses it, as a lid, to cover his inside "space".

As in Waiting for Godot, here too, there is one prop which is used only once -- Hamm's picture hanging face to the wall. It is a textual joke, since the audience never

gets a chance to see whose picture it is. Clov puts the alarm clock on the wall instead of the picture, while adding that he is "winding up" (EG 46) thus figuratively comparing himself to a prop.

Again, Hamm often treats Clov as an object. He whistles to him, orders him around and only rarely acknowledges Clov's selfhood. When Clov suggests putting an end to "playing", Hamm says: "Never" (EG 49). In a game, people are allowed to treat each other as objects. Perhaps Clov wants to achieve a more humane relation by dropping the "game". The most self-reflective usage Beckett makes of props is found in the story about the tailor and the pair of trousers. The story is a humorous epitome of the gradual diminishing of materials which are found in the whole play. Yet Nagg admits that even his way of telling that story is getting "worse and worse" (EG 21).

In the two mimes, as opposed to classical pantomime in which objects are imaginary, there is an emphasis on real objects and the human treatment of them. In themselves, in Act Without Words I, these objects are arbitrary, descending on stage without reason. The attempt to assign significance or usefulness to them, on the part of the audience, characters and critics, is but the exercise of that prerogative.

The character discovers that just as the objects do not help him to live, so do they prevent his suicide. He is finally isolated from the objects surrounding him and left to

look at his hands, his "means" to handle the arbitrariness of objects.

The man understands that there is nothing to be done. (as in the language of Waiting for Godot). He learns not to respond to the temptations of props which continue to descend unreasonably on stage. We are not, finally, convinced that the objects are manipulated by some necessarily cruel fate. Only the fact that they are manipulated from backstage is clear. The man learns not to endow the selfless arbitrariness of the props with any significance. He cannot apply his abstract laws of "here" to the concreteness of what is being sent from "there."

Human self-containment is here expressed through the language of movement. Objects have become completely irrelevant to the human essence; if the world functions properly, one may assume no more than the occurrence of a happy coincidence. Theatrically, then, Beckett presents the courage of resisting temptation. His character, in need of water, lies quietly and gazes at his audience. Presumably perceiving that the audience holds forth no more promise of salvation than did the object, his gaze returns and rests on his own hands.

As noted before, Beckett dedicates some of his plays to one or two theatrical means. Act Without Words I no doubt focuses on props and off-stage. Here, more than in any

other of his plays, Beckett examines how props play with people. It is therefore less important to note which are the objects descending on stage, but that objects descend and how man is first tempted by them, then conditioned to mistrust them, and finally rejects them in an act of defiance. The play starts and ends without any props at all, so as to underline, unlike in Happy Days, that props are lifeless and senseless.

In Krapp's Last Tape, as in both Waiting for Godot and Endgame, small closed spaces are very important. Hats, pockets and boots from Waiting for Godot become drawers and pockets in which Krapp constantly fumbles for keys, bananas, etc. His past self too, is to be found in the reel-box. The space of Endgame has shrunk into a small circle of light outside of which "the earth might be uninhabited" (EG 17, 20). Beckett draws our attention more and more into Krapp's inner space, especially since he is, in fact, talking with his own memories.

In Krapp's Last Tape, Krapp goes through all his props in the beginning, and then, before recording, goes over them again (KLT 17). Hence the banana, envelope, keys, spools and spool boxes are put to use in two groups of activity, in between which, recorded Krapp speaks. In Krapp's Last Tape, there exists a relationship between live Krapp and recorded Krapp. This relationship is reflected in the use of props as well. The eating of the banana passes without comment

from live Krapp, yet recorded Krapp mentions his difficulties in refraining from a fourth banana (KLT 12). The gap between the real backstage drinking and the explicit mention of young Krapp's drinking habits is made quite clear. The black ball⁵⁶ is a conjured up prop which is never shown on stage. There are, especially in the later plays, many more such objects whose mode of existence is audial-temporal rather than spatial-visual. Such imaginary props, which are mentioned rather than seen, account for yet further internalization of the "plot".

The banana -- one of the more conspicuous props in the play -- has a number of qualities that help in understanding its function. It connotes a phallic symbol ("Plans for a less ... hesitates ... engrossing sexual life" KLT 31); it reminds one of a treatment people can give each other, throwing away the peel after having eaten and used the content,⁵⁷ and probably the most important feature, the banana has an inside and an outside similar to Krapp's two selves in the play. One can really find out which of the two selves is the peel and which the content, only at the end. Also, the banana helps Krapp in establishing his attitude to the audience, as well as portraying his little human weaknesses for the fruit. His affection for the banana (stroking it) is both humorous and pathetic for a man who is as alone as Krapp.

In a play in which two selves of the same person

converse with each other, live Krapp does not treat his recorded self quite as an object, although, in a sense, it is a self preserved mechanically-electronically. Still, he decides not to want the old years back. "Not with the fire in me now!" Whatever this fire may be, it is more alive than the past, mechanized self. Beckett opts for people rather than tapes.

In Act Without Words II, props are important because of the way they are used, and are moved, so as to substitute for the lack of words. They are less central than in Act Without Words I. Again, using everyday objects (except the map and the compass), Beckett seems to suggest that throughout their lives people manipulate objects, rather than being manipulated by them (as in Act Without Words I). Lack of speech reinforces the notion that the actors behave like mechanized dolls, being props themselves. Here, in contrast to Act Without Words I, the goad's action, arbitrary as it may be, has more purpose to it than what the two characters do. At least it is active, and pushes them from one side of the stage to the other.

Both Acts Without Words, other than being independent works, are also a preparation for Happy Days, Beckett's next play in regard to the usage of props.

In Happy Days, the use of props is the most elaborate. Having examined the arbitrariness of independent objects in Act Without Words I, Beckett now allows props to be compared

with people in a number of ways. As in Waiting for Godot, and in Endgame, the props of Happy Days are everyday objects. Since Winnie is stuck in her mound, all she can do in the first act is manipulate her props and talk about them. One can clearly see that the props in Happy Days establish unique relationships between themselves, with people -- Winnie and Willie -- and with words. More than in his other plays, Beckett examines the assertion of Winnie's self against both other people and the selflessness of objects.

The most important prop is Winnie's bag. Until the very end she keeps making references to it: "the bag is there, Willie, as good as ever" (HD 39). All along in the play she keeps bringing out things from the bag: "there is so little one can bring up, one brings up all" (HD 44), she says, while pointing out the metonymic function of the bag quite explicitly. Winnie herself is an old bag, but even without such a vulgar image, one can clearly see that she uses the bag as a person using his soul, memory or imagination. The bag connotes self-reliance, activity, variety and depth, and, like Winnie, it is an unmoving object. There is always something in the bag to take out and be happy with, think about and use for playing before sinking into the earth. Winnie is conscious of the similarity between herself and the bag:

Could I enumerate its contents? ... Could I, if some kind person were to come along and ask, 'what all have you got in that very big black bag Winnie?'

Give an exhaustive answer? ... No ... The depths in particular, who knows what treasures. (HD 25)

Being aware of the potential similarity she still says: "But something tells me, do not overdo the bag, Winnie, make use of it, of course, let it help you ... along, when stuck" (HD 25). The bag is a Winnie in a nut-shell, because there is always something there to enlighten what Winnie calls "another happy day".

Winnie is an incurable optimist and the whole notion of props in Happy Days is directly opposed to that of Endgame. Both plays are concerned with "what remains", yet Hamm treats the constant stripping of props with grim, highly self-conscious pessimism, whereas Winnie is happy with even the slightest attention she receives, or the minimal sign of life she can still produce.

In Happy Days, there is an intricate pattern of props relating to each other. Almost all the props in this play are activated on one another. After having thoroughly checked her toothbrush, Winnie makes it relate to her tooth and mouth. She looks at it with her glasses and then with the magnifying glass. She wipes it with the handkerchief. She comments on the "hog's setae" and on the handle. The Handkerchief is for wiping eyes, glasses, etc. Winnie takes out the revolver (HD 13) the killing instrument, then a red bottle of medicine, then a red lipstick; she then throws the bottle and hits Willie, whose red bloodstained head is shown for an instant. The pattern is that of combining a series of

props into a continuum of life and death, yoked together by the common denominator of red (blood, love, health) into a superb little "prop-scene", summed up with the words "ensign crimson" (HD 13). In that scene the revolver stands for death, the bottle -- for health and the lipstick -- for love. Interestingly, Winnie shoots Willie, her "beloved" with medicine that wounds him!

Another pattern is created with glassy instruments -- Winnie's glasses, the magnifying glass, the mirror, and, again, the bottle. In her situation Winnie is very interested in seeing things, herself and the world around her, for lack of many other things to do.

In the first part of the first act Winnie is very busy with her props. In the second part (HD 19-36) no more new objects are introduced, and Winnie is entirely given to looking and talking. Having established the initial attitude between the different props, Beckett can now be sure that any time a prop is referred to by Winnie's looks, or her words, the audience will recognize it from before. The revolver, for instance, has by now acquired the necessary charge of potential threat (to, say, Willie⁵⁸) it is known to be a possible way out for Winnie, like the rope in Waiting for Godot. The dirty postcard is a comic comment on the impossibility of love-making between Winnie and Willie (a point in their relationship which is verbally referred to later). As in Waiting for Godot, the filing of the finger

nails is the activity following a four page long speech (HD 31 ff).

By the end of Act I, Winnie has returned her props to her bags. Act II opens with the revolver, the bags and the parasol simply lying next to Winnie. She relates to her props -- now untouchables -- in words, and in a verbal way, keeps activating them as before. She had previously fumbled with them so much, all the necessary relationships between herself and her objects -- at the same time part of her and yet different from her -- Winnie's situation is made to look even worse. Even the trifling though intense usage of things is denied her. Thus, attention ought to be paid both to her and to her objects, though separately. She will sink; they will probably stay.

This intense use of props is constantly compared with Winnie's attitude, firstly to Willie, and secondly to herself. Winnie needs Willie to simply be there, so that she would know she is not talking to herself. "Just to know that in theory you can hear me though in fact you don't" (HD 22). Willie, until the end, is seen only in bits and pieces of hat, newspaper or hand. He is, in a way, just a prop. Winnie's attention is equally affectionate in regard to her real props and to Willie. As an old couple, they are used to each other more like objects than like people. Only in the end, when Willie comes to the front, is his human selfhood really asserted. At that stage props cannot be of much help.

Winnie sometimes treats herself as a prop. She talks about her scorched flesh, about her breasts whom nobody will have seen, and about the various parts of her face, which she enumerates with words and grimaces (HD 39).

The axis along which props are used and hence, naturally, the resulting movement as well as set, is the sky-earth axis. This vertical direction enhances the only development in the play, namely Winnie's slow sinking into the earth while feeling "sucked-up". The parasol is supposed to protect her from the heat and the light, but is not as heat-resistant as Winnie herself. It goes on fire. Her bag, again, is an earth image, bringing things up. The revolver can be regarded as both a sky image (soul?) and that object, with the help of which her body will immediately sink.

The last play in which Beckett uses props is Breath. Still faithful to the notion that props alone make little or no sense without a person relating to them, Beckett now writes a play which can be considered the essence of the interrelationships between props and humans. In Breath, it is as though Beckett had collected all the props he used in previous plays and then arranged them horizontally on stage, where they are described as garbage. But this garbage is still, though in a minimal and most condensed way activated by a vagitus, a breathing, a death rattle.⁵⁹

Having tried different patterns such as props activating people, people activating props, using props as an image

<u>Waiting for Godot</u>	<u>Endgame</u>	<u>Act Without Words I</u>	<u>Krapp's Last Tape</u>	<u>Act Without Words II</u>	<u>Happy Days</u>	<u>Breath</u>
hats	hats	-----	-----	hats	hats	
watch	clock	-----	watch	watch	----	
carrots turnips	biscuit	water	banana booze	carrot	----	
bag	kitchen	offstage	drawers	sacks	bag	
pockets	boxes, pocket	boxes	boxes, pocket	pockets	----	
vaporizer	painkiller	(water?)	(booze?)	pills	vaseline medicine	
rope	axe	rope scissors	(booze?)	-----	revolver	
glasses (P)	glasses (H)	-----	near-sighted	-----	glasses	
boots	barefoot slippers	-----	boots	boots	----	
tree	nature dead	tree	reeds	-----	desert	
mound (out)	chair ash bin, kit, room	-----	----- room	----- sacks	mound	

perhaps stresses the idea that man's needs are rather small. Biscuits and "pap" are running short in Endgame. Krapp has a craving for bananas and alcoholic drink. All these beverages and foods are epitomized by that most essential fluid, water, in Act Without Words I -- which may account for the difficulty of attaining the essential in the other plays too. In this sense, water, in Act Without Words I, can be labelled "medicine" in the way medical props are used in all seven plays: Pozzo uses a vaporizer; Hamm misses his painkiller; Krapp uses a drink as a remedy of sorts; and the slow man in Act Without Words II uses pills to help him cope with his day (or life). Winnie has a bottle of red medicine which she throws at Willie, injuring him. (The little scene is thematically similar to Hamm being struck by his beloved toy dog). Willie forgets his vaseline outside his hole. In contrast to remedial means, Beckett presents a variety of murderous instruments, though, characteristically, their potential is never actualized. The rope in Waiting for Godot snaps, and the axe in Endgame is not used to kill Hamm, although Clov considers this possibility. The rope and scissors in Act Without Words I are being tried for their initial purpose, yet they fail. Krapp, again with booze, poisons himself but finally stops drinking. Winnie does not use the revolver. Living on the verge of death, only a few of Beckett's characters (in Breath and in Endgame -- Nagg and Nell) die on stage. Instead of putting a dramatic end

to life, they slowly dwindle away.

Some of the objects are found in the characters' private little spaces -- in pockets, boxes, bags, or in the kitchen. In all seven plays there are special spaces from which props are taken out and put back in. In Waiting for Godot, the bag is Lucky and Pozzo's prop. Significantly, Lucky carries that which Pozzo uses. A different bag is used by Winnie. It is very much a part of the character's whole show, and of what Winnie represents. Krapp's "self" is found in a box, his non-self, the drink, is outside, back-stage. Returning from there he returns to himself. His important props are in drawers, or again, the dictionary and the ledger, signs of his old "creative" period, outside stage. In the two mimes one finds a pitcher -- is it "really" full of water? -- boxes and sacks.

Another common use is that of "seeing props". Pozzo, Hamm, and Winnie have spectacles. Clov uses a telescope; Winnie, a magnifying glass. Krapp is deliberately described as needing a pair of glasses, being very near-sighted. Hamm and Pozzo are blind (Pozzo only in Act II).

These as well as other props are used in different ways. The general pattern is to endow props with life, as Winnie says. They do not just serve to characterize a Pozzo by his whip, pipe, and vaporizer, or a Krapp by his bananas, keys and booze. In these plays props establish a strong sense of possession in general, and the attachment people

feel toward whatever is not endowed with self-consciousness. Through such a thorough exploration of props, Beckett compares the feelings people have for each other, their sense of self-image, and their attitude toward things. Vladimir and Estragon are usually suspicious of objects; Hamm is thankful for his old stancher which alone remains -- as is Winnie. Nevertheless, Winnie, at the end of Beckett's road of prop use, almost gets Willie, her husband, its stead. In Act Without Words I, props manipulate man, until man decides not to be tempted by their deceiving arbitrariness. In Act Without Words II, people are made to behave like props. In Breath, props -- all the ones listed above -- are animated by a human voice, and represent, in a way, the entire world which will remain when man dies. Garbage.

Costume and Makeup

There exists, of course, an affinity between props and costumes in the plays, being part of the overall visual set-up. Certain parts of a costume, such as hats, boots, and pockets, are used as props. In the following short discussion the emphasis will be laid on costume from a different point of view. Costume and makeup, whenever referred to, can be used as props, but they can also stand on their own and tacitly add to the general feeling of the play. The two theatrical means can be useful in identifying the characters' historic, geographic, social, and personal backgrounds. Beckett mostly uses personal background in a very functional and

economic way.

Beckett's characters are relatively unspecified. Geographically and historically, they could, generally speaking, belong in the so-called Western world. Their clothes or costume always fit their situation. If one could ascribe to their personal taste in the choice of their costumes, it would not prove to be a very good one.

Five of the twelve plays contain specific instructions for makeup. In Endgame, makeup is devised so as to create a sharp contrast between the white faces of Nagg and Nell and the red faces of both Hamm and Clov. There is no specific reason given for the red on these two characters, but one can assume that Hamm's face is red due to the "old stancher", blood-stained as it is. Red also connotes, if negatively so, liveliness. The white on Nagg and Nell renders them as death-masks. Krapp, too, has a very purple nose by which Beckett underlines his drinking habits. His white face clashes with the colour of his nose, as though Hamm's nose is placed on his own father's face. The Krapp-like face in That Time is also white, with flowing white hair.⁶⁰ The lady, May, in Footfalls has grey hair, suggesting her age (later spelled out anyway). In Play, the makeup is heavy, the faces are made to look "so lost to age and aspect as to seem almost part of urns" (Pl 45) -- a self-explanatory note. In all the other plays, there is neither mention nor need for makeup. In Not I, the very effect of a mouth-in-focus replaces the

need to make it up, though, for technical reasons, an actress may yet use some. In Come and Go, the three figures ought to look as much alike as possible, their "hands made up to be as visible as possible" (PL 70). Neither the characters in the mimes nor those in Waiting for Godot, should have any special makeup. As far as the mimes are concerned, lack of a classical mimist's makeup may come as a surprise. But it has already been shown that Beckett's mimes do not follow the conventional pattern set by classicists in the field, like Marceau or even Barrault, who, in their turn, took the white face from the traditions of Commedia del'Arte. Apparently Beckett was not interested in associating his characters in the mimes with classical clowns. This point is made even clearer because the mimes are "about" props rather than about sheer clownery. Lack of makeup in Waiting for Godot can be accounted for by Beckett's attempt to present the four main figures as individuals. A uniform makeup may lessen the effect. In Happy Days, lack of makeup enables the actress to express herself facially -- an extremely important quality in the play. Again, an actress may choose to use some light makeup, but Beckett gives no specific instructions.

In Waiting for Godot, costumes are all the two tramps have, problems with the costumes included. Significantly, Lucky carries an overcoat for Pozzo, and in the context of so little worldly goods, this overcoat sticks out as very luxurious. All four characters have bowler hats and, it can

be assumed, tramp clothes. (Rope instead of belts, etc.). The hats evidently belong in a different opera and are there to clash with the rest of Vladimir and Estragon's costumes. In Waiting for Godot, costume is made to clash not only with its own different parts, but with the whole pattern of the characters' behaviour, and their sometimes quite polished language. The contrast between costume and behaviour in Waiting for Godot is shifted to a different pattern in End-game. Here, there exists a parallel between Hamm and Clov, both in rags, and their situation. Hamm has a toque and a dressing gown. Only at the end, Clov appears "dressed for the road, Panama hat, tweed coat, raincoat over his arm, umbrella, bag" (EG 51) a costume that emphasizes the basic inescapability of the scene. Here, as in other plays (Happy Days, Act Without Words II) people dress differently indoors and outdoors, since clothes suggest a certain image cast outward.⁶¹ Hamm, at home, has a pair of socks which emphasize the fact that he cannot walk and hence needs no shoes. The two odd parents have night caps which can only be explained as a touch of black humour and the grotesque.

The character in Act Without Words I is not prescribed any specific outfit. In Act Without Words II, the two men wear a shirt inside their sacks, and an everyday pile of "coat and trousers surmounted by boots and hat" (AWWII 137) awaits them outside it. They share the same costume, a point by which Beckett emphasizes the mode of wearing the costume

rather than the costume itself. In Act Without Words II, costume reinforces the idea that the two men are mechanized dolls for whom clothes are an external "put-on".

Krapp is an old man whose outfit is fully described:

Rusty black narrow trousers too short for him. Rusty black sleeveless waistcoat, four capacious pockets. Heavy silver watch and chain. Grimy white shirt open at neck, no collar. Surprising pair of dirty white boots, size ten at least, very narrow and pointed. White face. Purple nose. Disordered grey hair. Unshaven. (KLT 9)

His costume, black and white, appears that of a decrepit old dandy. The effect is played against the utter solitude of his situation. Even the colours of his costume play against the dark-light effect of the stage.

Winnie is surprisingly normal, and the effect of her costume is that of contrast. She is made to look quite well, though in her situation she would be expected to look more like Nell. The leisure and heat, suggested by her exposed arms and shoulders, her hat and her necklace, as well as Willie's fancy hats and his being "dressed to kill" (HD 45) is obviously contrasted with her gradual sinking into the earth. Beckett uses two simple principles in his use of makeup and costume. He either contrasts them with the text and the situation, as in Waiting for Godot and Happy Days, or else he uses them to support the text, as in Endgame, Play, Footfalls and That Time.

In Play, the urns themselves are the costumes and the makeup. The most interesting play, as far as costume is

concerned, is Come and Go:

Full length coats, buttoned high, dull violet (Ru), dull red (Vi), dull yellow (Flo). Drab non-descript hats with enough brim to shade faces. Apart from colour differentiation three figures as like as possible. Light shoes with rubber soles ... no rings apparent. (CG 70)

Beckett makes it quite clear that the main individuating means is the colour of the costume (as well as the difference in the "ohs"). The costumes are, as Ruby Cohn notes, in turn-of-the-century style. To anyone who is not a costume expert, they are simply coats in three dull-warm colours, which have very little, if any, specific social or historic quality. They do suggest though, a conventional appeal to colour symbolism, such as yellow=envy, red=love, (or blood, etc.). These dull colours may be linked with the women's names -- dull violet for Ru, (Ruby Cohn suggests rue for Ru, vie for Vi, flow for Flo,⁶² dull red for Vi, and dull yellow for Flo). As in Waiting for Godot, one can detect here, too, an attempt to differentiate through colour, yet maintain uniformity by shape and shade. Also, the dullness of the colour clashes with the vividness of what had been the original tone of the robes, an idea hinting at some former vivacity (in Mrs. Wade's kindergarden?) which has now become dull.

The strange combination of shape and colour in the three robes in Come and Go does not quite prove the point, but there exists a discrepancy between the text and the movement, on the one hand, and the robes, on the other.

Hence Come and Go can perhaps be regarded as a play in which the costume plays the main role. The three women express nothing but general clichés. They walk in and out, coming and going as in a fashion show. Their collected texts -- abstract as they are -- contain 121 words which are not very informative. The words, therefore, function like a passing commentary over the third lady's dress. And all are basically the same, as Beckett is quite particular in noting. Whereas in Act Without Words II, clothes were shared by the two men and served to underline differences of behaviour; and whereas in Play all three looked alike (makeup and urns-as-costume) but uttered different texts; here costume itself is what the three women have become, figuratively speaking.

The tendency in Beckett's usage of makeup and costume is to always leave the human treatment of it in focus. With the exception of Act Without Words II and Come and Go, where Beckett examines the very notion of costume, the other plays in which either makeup or costume is being employed are emphasizing the interrelationships between the real person, his true self, and the clothes he or she is wearing. In Breath, Not I, That Time, Footfalls, costume either does not exist at all (Breath, That Time), or else is of little importance. The auditor of Not I wears a gown ("djellaba") which eliminates every possible distinction of age, sex, etc., and renders the figure as general as an "auditor" can be. The importance here is just to have another self to

refer to. In Footfalls, May wears a "worn grey wrap" (Fr' 9) suggesting poverty and neglect.

Costume and makeup are not the most important theatrical means in Beckett's plays, as so many productions in which Beckett's instructions were not strictly kept, prove. Beckett himself seems to think so, since his instructions as to fashion, colour, etc., are not as specific in some of the plays, as they could have been.

Light

Light, more than any other theatrical means, is both a device and, through self-reflective means, a theme. In all the twelve plays, light plays a major role by being referred to verbally, by actually lighting the playing area in a special way, or by both.

In discussing the theatrical means of light in the plays, a number of distinctions should be made. The spotlights of a theatre, from a purely technical point of view, can light areas of different sizes, the whole stage, parts of it, or just one limited point. Light can have different varieties of colours and intensities. Light can also be a symbol of life, and its lack would hence stand for death.⁶³ Too much light is associated with excessive heat and bareness. Light can stand for sight, insight and understanding. Finally, light can simply be regarded in terms of what it does in the theatre, namely, to light a scene, a stage and the characters. Beckett uses all of these notions of light

and lighting as well as a great variety of combinations thereof.⁶⁴

From a technical point of view, Waiting for Godot employs light in only one unique way. Twice in the play the evening light becomes night, and quite suddenly so. "The light suddenly falls. In a moment it is night. The moon rises at back" (WFG 52, 92). This technical, rather non-conventional mode of operating of light is well prepared for. The words "Will night never come", "night doesn't fall" or "waiting for night" are repeated very often by most of the characters.⁶⁵ In Waiting for Godot, Vladimir and Estragon also wait for night because at night they do not have to wait for Godot. They often scrutinize the sky for the sake of knowing both their time and their place. The lighting of the play, a light of dusk, half way between day and night, does not help them in knowing either one. In a preparatory speech, Pozzo foresees how, precisely, night will finally fall:

Tirelessly, torrents of red and white light it begins to lose its effulgence, to grow pale ... pale, even a little paler until ... ppfff! finished. It comes to rest ... but behind this veil of gentleness and peace night is charging ... and will burst upon us ... pop! Like that ... just when we least expect it.... That's how it is on this bitch of an earth. (WFG 38)

In Waiting for Godot, the central image of light is contrasted with night. The vehement repetition, "the light the light the light" in Lucky's speech (WFG 44), and all the associations with what light symbolizes, as well as what the

theatre lighting system is supposed to actually do, are linked with the line "the light gleams an instant then it's night once more" (WFG 89). The sudden, though clearly expected, fall of the light suggests sudden death. Yet the characters suffer from the sudden nightfall, but do not die. They come again, again at twilight, the next day. Only absolute darkness suggests absolute lack of life. In Waiting for Godot, the "moon" replaces the light of the evening sun, and therefore enables the characters to continue on the next day. Although "the sun will set, the moon will rise and we away ... from here" (WFG 35), they never go away. They are thrown on stage where there is only evening or night but never morning or day. They play in an extended situation of dusk, standing, as though between the birth and the grave, "the light gleams an instant" (WFG 89)

Night falls, when Vladimir and Estragon talk to Godot's messenger, the little boy. Godot can hence be easily linked with either eternal light, or with utter darkness. As soon as the boy vanishes, night falls, but the moon still rises and sheds pale light, yet light, nevertheless.

The suddenness of the sunset, and the speed in which the moon rises, is highly suggestive of the deliberate theatricality with which Beckett treats light in this play, and more so in the following ones. By this swift change of light Beckett also neutralizes the potential sentimentality that may arise as a side-effect of sudden darkness.

In Endgame, the light is grey inside, as we see, and outside the room, as we hear from Clov. A grey colour for the inside is quite feasible since the four characters in the play are constantly approaching their endgame. But it has to be grey outside as well, in order to make it possible for Clov to report on the desolation. If it were black, he couldn't have seen anything. Absolute death, Beckett seems to imply here, cannot be done when the perceiver is alive. This holds true for the stillness and lack of life "outside" as well.

Old Mother Pegg, in Endgame had died of darkness (EG 48), as Clov reminds Hamm who did not give her oil for her lamp. Now Hamm himself is craving for a ray of sunlight; he feels it on his head, but it is, as Clov tells him, only wishful thinking. The colourful picture of dusk, which Pozzo draws verbally, is replaced in Endgame with grey, a colour of light probably even harder to take than pitch black.⁶⁶

In Beckett's third play, Act Without Words I, light is dazzling, but for all that, no more comforting. It stands for the great heat of the desert, and is a way of saying that light does not necessarily mean life, or even good. The same negation of excessive light is found in Happy Days, but before further developing, and verbally reinforcing, this notion, Beckett plays with a half-lit stage.

In Krapp's Last Tape, Krapp feels less alone "with

all this darkness round me". For him light connotes an encounter with himself, since a return from the darkness into the lit center is a return "back here to ... me, Krapp". In Waiting for Godot, the characters repeatedly ask whether "night will never come" (WFG 33, 36, etc.). In Krapp's Last Tape, Krapp sings, in the dark backstage area:

Now the day is over
Night is drawing nigh-igh
shadows (KLT 13)

In other places in the play night and lack of light are associated with the other deadly element, that of silence. There is a repetition of this motif in Endgame (Light through the window, sound through the other window; in fact neither light nor sound really come through since in both Endgame and Krapp's Last Tape -- as in Waiting for Godot "the earth might be uninhabited" (KLT 20).

The grey light of Endgame, the fast shifts in Waiting for Godot, the dazzling light of Act Without Words I, and the juxtaposition of light and darkness in Krapp's Last Tape are replaced with the blazing light of Happy Days. "The blaze of hellish light" in the play is very bright and hot, and for all it is worth, no less torturing than the both yearned-for and feared -- of darkness. Winnie tries to protect herself by using her hat and the parasol. But the parasol is going ablaze and Winnie remains fully exposed. Hence light is not necessarily "good".

Here, Beckett develops the notion of "evil" light.

Throughout her "happy day" Winnie is preparing for night, which in her case means relief from the heat as well as death -- if "day" stands for life and "night" for death (as often implied in the plays). "It is," she still says, "a little soon -- to make ready -- for the night" (HD 33-34), being the optimist she is, preferring the scorching heat to night. She is afraid of a black night without end because it obviously connotes death.

"Hail holy light" are Winnie's opening words in Act II, where she has no protection whatsoever from light. It is probably not a sarcastic remark despite the otherwise violent terms used to describe light, such as "blaze", "fierce", etc. Winnie is aware of the deadening effect the heat and light have on her: "just little by little charred to a black cinder" (HD 29). Summing up a whole phrase to which light is related in all the plays, Winnie says: "did I ever know a temperate time?" (HD 29). And so the previous quote is better understood. One reaches final darkness through both a little light gradually disappearing and through a great light that will finally "melt" the "flesh" (HD 16) and turn it to a black cinder. Lighting in all the plays is either darker or brighter than regularly found in theatre. It even brings the moderation of grey to the extreme.

In Happy Days, light is also the light of sight and insight -- but this notion will be dealt with separately,

together with the idea that Winnie is highly conscious of her situation as an actress and under the merciless blaze of spotlights, in themselves, quite hot and unpleasant.

Winnie also warns Willie: "don't lie sprawling there in this hellish sun" (HD 20) -- a phrase, like many others, emphasizing her own difficulty. She comforts herself with the beginning of a verse in Psalms, which in this context is particularly ironic: "Fear no more", etc. (HD 21). The original psalm verse talks about fears of day versus fears of night.⁶⁷

In Beckett's five later plays, the difference between the lighting of the play and references to the light in the play is made. Even in Come and Go, short as it is, Beckett does not fail to make a reference to light:

Vi: How do you think Ru is looking?

Flo: One sees little in this light. (CG 89)

As the lighting in Come and Go is "soft, from above only and concentrated on playing area, rest of stage as dark as possible" (CG 70) it is no wonder that Flo cannot see much.

In Breath, light and sound are closely knit together coming up and going down simultaneously, making it quite clear that light + sound = life; darkness + silence = death. The gradual growing of both sound and light (except the two cries of birth and death, before and after which there is nothing but a stage strewn with trash) suggest that there

also exists some prime of life, when light is greatest.

The mouth in Not I speaks "about all that light" (NI 9) and "about all the time this ray or beam ... like moon beam". This ray or beam is first and foremost the very projector that cast light on mouth in the play. The light mentioned is metaphorically united with the light lighting the play.

In That Time the light is grey and so it is in Footfalls: "a faint tangle of pale grey tatters", as May says (TT 9). The lighting of Footfalls is "dim, strongest at foot level, less on body, least on head" (FF 9). Here again there is a one-to-one link between the visual effect her trailing feet create with the light, and what she says about it. In fact the whole play is a live presentation of the things talked about in it. In That Time, Beckett passes the function of light to voices.

The play that renders the most insight into the function of light is Play, written for and about light. Stage directions make this point:

Their speech is provoked by a spotlight projected on faces alone ... The transfer of light from one face to another is immediate. Not blackout ... the response to light is not quite immediate ... Faces impassive throughout. Voices toneless. (Pl 45)

The only moving element in the play is light itself, by which one can see that Beckett shifts the focus from the perceived to the perceiver. The perceiver, the audience, is a general notion of "the other", as well as the epitome of

perceiving, and takes the form of a searching theatrical spotlight.

In Play, the light is functional in two, finally united, respects. It is the activating force of the play, the structure-giving element, and it is the thing to and about which the three characters speak in the second part.

As the active force, the spotlight moves rapidly from one face to another, soliciting their short speeches. As scene-shifter, the light blacks out about half way through the play and becomes weaker -- half previous strength (Pl 52). And the three people are engaged in a slightly different kind of speech deliverance. Also, the light opens and closes the show, and creates the necessary feeling of perpetuum mobile, an important matter in the play.

In the first half, the less self-reflective part of the play, the light moves from one face to the other, creating exits and entrances, cutting speeches short, looking for, and at, the right person to inquire. It paces the time, and arranges this unique three-in-one or one-in-three space of Play.

In the second part light itself is drawn into the action, and is as much interrogated as it interrogates. The play, it is clearly suggested, is a non-stop repetition of mutual interrogation between all concerned, and more importantly, it involves a constant shift between implied self-reflectiveness and explicit self-reflectiveness.

The functions of light are all being referred to by the three characters themselves, each character in his or her particular way. M is mainly concerned with "being seen" (Pl 61). His attitude to the light is built up through lines like, "now all is going out" (Pl 52), in which he is the first to realize that they are all in a different situation. "Down, all going down, into the dark, peace is coming at last" (Pl 53).

M links darkness with peace. A little later he utters the wish that all this "will ... have been ... just play?" (Pl 54). He wonders whether he is "hiding something" (Pl 57) and has "lost the thing you the light want?" He does not want to be given up: "why not keep on glaring? I might bring it up for you" (Pl 58). What he does bring up is a hiccough. M is not sure whether he can ascribe any meaning to light. Is it "looking for something. In my face. Some truth" (Pl 61), or is it "mere eye. No mind?" Either way, M finally understands that he may be as much as being seen but before getting a chance to find the answer to this question, he, together with his two ladies, is made to repeat the whole play again.

The attitude of WI to light is a little different. She begins by asking for mercy -- "tongue still hanging out for mercy" (Pl 52) -- but her most vehement and repeated line is "get off me". She brings up the possibility that the light might be weary of her. Like Winnie, she calls it

"Hellish half-light," (Pl 53) and like M, she asks "is it that I do not tell the truth ... and then no more light at last, for truth?" Not having lost her mind -- "how the mind works, still" (Pl 54) -- she, too, says that "there is no sense in this" (Pl 56).

Reflexively, referring to the times when the light is not on her, and she is not made to talk, she says: "Silence and darkness were all I craved. Well, I get a certain amount of both. They being one" (Pl 59). She also expresses Beckett's typically ambivalent attitude to light: "Dying for dark -- and the darker the worse" (Pl 60). She knows the light is playing with her, in the same way that M thinks he is being seen.

W2 anticipated something better in that second, and very self-conscious part of the play. For W2, the present situation is confusing, but she prefers "this to ... the other thing. Definitely. There are endurable moments" (Pl 53). And the other thing is probably complete darkness. W2's lines express the ambivalent attitude to light. When it goes out she goes out (Pl 53). She brings up the possibility that the light might blaze her "clean out of my wits, but It would not be like you" (Pl 55). As the other two, she too is making a mistake by "looking for sense where possibly there is none" (Pl 53). She wonders what the light does when it goes out. "Sift?" W2 thinks, unlike W1 whose mind still works, that she is, perhaps, a "little unhinged"

already. Her wild laughter reinforces this idea of her gradually growing insanity.

All three characters shift, together with the scenic shift, from a state of responding to the light by telling about their love triangle, to a state of wondering about the very inquisition. It is as though they ask, in the second part, about the logic and validity of the confessions made in the first. The light in the first part is therefore only a means, which, in the second part, is brought to a situation of having to account for its action. In part one, it was a device, in part two, it is the object, and, in other words, it was a means that has become a theme.

All three people want to know what the light stands for, to explain it and make sense of it. Each character regards the light in terms applicable to his or her situation in the love affair. Woman 2, the "other" woman in the man's life is just about to go crazy. Woman 1 wants the light off her, while Man finally starts to realize that he is "as much being seen". The secrecy with which he thought he dealt his affair is no more there. The two women treat the light as though it were M. The man, for his part, wants peace and quiet from the ladies and from the light. All characters project, psychologically in the light what the light makes them project, by physically projecting on them.

The light in Play is, in fact, what the whole play is "about". Whereas in other plays light is a means of lighting

characters on stage (otherwise, no show), here Beckett seems to have dedicated a whole play in which light, rather than any one of the characters, is the protagonist. The shift, from a quite banal story to that of inquiring the inquisitive "solicitor" of that story itself, proves the point. The whole second part moves from the inquiring light to inquiring people. Neither the light nor the people can transcend the theatrical function. People can talk and be seen, the light can light. Yet Beckett succeeds in rendering this tautology⁶⁸ in the very refreshing light of self-reflexiveness, and unites the "content" of the story in Play with its modes of presentation.

Light, in Beckett's plays, is first and foremost simply a means to show what happens on stage. On a second level (less relevant to the argument presented here) it, naturally, acquires a great number of cultural associations with life, eternity, etc. On the third and most important level, light in Beckett's plays, and especially in Play, combines the first and the second functions and adds to them the unique self-reflective quality.

The most typical theatrical elements, i.e. stage-space, movement and off-stage; props, costumes and makeup and finally light, are each given what can be called a solo part in Beckett's plays. At the same time, these respective elements are well-balanced and orchestrated in the individual play. In a semiology-oriented article, Jidrich Honzl says:

"We are discovering that stage 'space' need not be spatial but that sound can be a stage and music can be a dramatic event and scenery can be a text."⁶⁹ One can see the plays' texts, and certainly the playwright's directions concerning non-textual theatrical elements as a transposition from one semiotic system ("text") to another ("production" or "performance"). In theatre, such a transposition is projected into stage-space, and constitutes the so-called dramatic space, a set of immaterial relations that constantly changes in time as these relations themselves change. Beckett, however, succeeds in both allotting a central role to each of the above-mentioned theatrical elements, and in orchestrating them in such a way that they are still well-harmonized. In this chapter, obviously, the theatrical, non-textual components are discussed as they appear in the text and in the stage directions. Seen from a semiological point of view, text and stage directions are of an entirely different nature, as two almost opposed systems. Yet in Beckett's plays, and due to frequent textual references to non-textual elements, they serve as mutually corrective systems, systems that often note and comment on each other, maintain the tension and still support each other. Being often self-referential, props and light, for example (as in AWWI and II and in P1) these theatrical elements, individually and together, draw attention to (a) themselves; (b) to the medium of which they are part and (c) to their author. All this is

done in the face of an audience.

Before discussing the audience and the author, we shall examine the specific modes of expression in another dramatic medium -- radio.

Notes to Chapter II

¹Ricoeur, Metaphor, p. 109.

²Obviously, light in modern theatre is never used merely to enable the audience to see. Yet Beckett, probably more than any other playwright, makes a self-referential of theatre lighting.

³The terms rich and poor are used following Jerzy Grotowski, Towards a Poor Theatre (N. Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1968).

⁴Henceforth, whenever a quotation from a Beckett play or radioplay is brought, the following abbreviations will be used, followed directly by the page number, according to the enclosed list of editions.

WFG	Waiting for Godot	Faber, London, 1971
EG	Endgame	Faber, London, 1958
AWWI	Act Without Words I	Grove Press, New York, 1958
KLT	Krapp's Last Tape	Faber, London, 1958
AWWII	Act Without Words II	Grove Press, New York, 1960
HD	Happy Days	Faber, London, 1961
PI	Play	Grove Press, New York, 1964
CG	Come and Go	Grove Press, New York, 1968
Br	Breath	Grove Press, New York, 1974
NI	Not I	Faber, London, 1977
TT	That Time	Faber, London, 1976
FF	Footfalls	Faber, London, 1976
TI	Theatre I	Grove Press, New York, 1976
TII	Theatre II	Grove Press, New York, 1976
ATF	All That Fall	Faber, London, 1969
EM	Embers	Faber, London, 1959
WM	Words and Music	Grove Press, New York, 1962
CAS	Cascando	Grove Press, New York, 1963
RI	Radio I	Grove Press, New York, 1976
RII	Radio II	Grove Press, New York, 1976

⁵Since Waiting for Godot is "waiting", it does not include a great amount of references to the time of day but it can, in fact, be called a play "about" time. This essay does not deal with the complicated issue of time in Beckett's plays, but a short note may still be useful. Time in the theatre is mostly experienced as suspended time. In theatre one often tries to do two contradictory things at the same time -- to stop the flowing of "objective" time; to be devoted to an independent fictitious time. In Beckett's plays this conventional treatment of time is turned upside

down. He makes the time of the show flow and time in the show stop. See Itamar Even Zohar, Correlative Positive and Correlative Negative Time, etc. (Hagifrut, Vol. I, No. 3-4), pp. 538-568; Uri Rapp, Sociology and Theatre (Tel Aviv: Sifriat, Poalim, 1973). Both items include an extensive bibliographical list on the topic of Time in Drama; see also Peter Putz, Die Zeit in Drama (Gottingen, 1970).

⁶Beckett, Proust, p. 84 (my emphasis).

⁷It is important to note that there is a partial overlapping between certain theatrical means and others. For instance, hats in Waiting for Godot can be discussed under both the label of props and under costume. In order to discuss the self-reflective quality of theatrical means, one ought, finally, to regard disparate theatrical means as following an overall, developing, self-reflective pattern. Also, this chapter deals mostly with non-textual elements, which are hence believed to be more representative of theatricality as such. However, references to text will be made so as to substantiate the treatment of theatrical means.

⁸Le Kid (1931) and Eleutria (1947) have not been published.

⁹In Ruby Cohn, Back to Beckett (N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1933), p. 129. (Henceforth -- Cohn, Beckett).

¹⁰Interview with Charles Marowitz.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Uri Rapp, Sociology and Theatre (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Poalim, 1973), p. 188 ff.

¹³Richard Southern, The Seven Ages of the Theatre (London: Faber, 1968), p. 277.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 29 ff.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁶Here, as in other places, Vladimir "uses his intelligence". The joke exists, of course, only in the script and does not come across as such in the production.

¹⁷Henri Bergson, Le Rire (Paris: Minuit, 1958), p. 31.

¹⁸Critics have noted the influence of silent films (Chaplin, Keaton, Laurel and Hardy) and circus clowns (Grock, Vikki) on Beckett. Styan, for instance, says: "This is particularly true of the business with bowler hats. The bowlers not only transform the actor, again like a comic mask, but also give him a second, a bizarre tongue -- as they have done for numerous comics from Chaplin, and Laurel and Hardy, to the buskers still seen in Piccadilly." J. L. Styan, The Dark Comedy, (Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 227. (Henceforth -- Styan, Comedy).

¹⁹WFG, see also pp. 13, 21, 35, 57, 58, 73, 89, 91.

²⁰Action as distinguished from Activity connotes a plot, development and change, to follow Aristotle's definition in his Poetics, see A. R. Thompson, Anatomy of Drama (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1976), p. 120 ff.

²¹WFG, see also pp. 29, 33, 36, 85, etc.

²²To be dealt with in connection with props.

²³Such interpretations and others can be found in Bell Gale Chevigny (ed.), Twentieth Century Interpretations of Endgame (N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1969) and in Cohn, Beckett, p. 144 ff.

²⁴Lack of sight is often associated with insight, as one sees all the way back in the figure of Thesias, the blind seer, in Sophocles' Oedipus Rex. In Endgame, Beckett seems to take the term insight literally.

²⁵Compare with the structural analysis of Hans-Peter Hasselbach, Endgame (Modern Drama, Vol. XIX, No. 1, March 1976), p. 33.

²⁶At this point, I deviate from an otherwise chronological order in the discussion of the plays because both pantomimes are generally close. Act Without Words I was written before Krapp's Last Tape, and Act Without Words II after. Yet both are concerned with sheer moving in space.

²⁷Cohn, Beckett, p. 157.

²⁸John Fletcher and John Spurling, Beckett (N. Y.: Hill & Wang, 1972), p. 118.

²⁹Ibid., p. 119.

³⁰Eugene Webb, Samuel Beckett (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), p. 86.

³¹Ibid., pp. 86-7.

³²Fletcher and Spurling, Beckett, p. 120.

³³Marcel Marceau (in an interview with Professor Barbara Lecker of Carleton University, Ottawa) defines his own mime mainly in terms of shylyzation.

³⁴Fletcher and Spurling, Beckett, p. 118.

³⁵G. C. Barnard, Samuel Beckett (N. Y.: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1970), p. 109.

³⁶As in Happy Days, though without the company of a Willie, and with a lot more movement.

³⁷The tree can certainly be seen as a heavily charged symbol of sin, knowledge, etc. In this context, it is more of an allusion to the tree in Waiting for Godot.

³⁸"La parable designé aussi bien la monotonie de la vie quotidienne (Le Sac comme lieu du sommeil) que celle de l'existence en general (le sac comme matrice et linceau)." In Gerard Durozi, Beckett (Paris: Bordas, 1972), p. 103.

³⁹A fascinating approach to space, and specifically to drawers, cupboards, etc. can be found in Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), p. 78 -- "... desks with their drawers ... are veritable organs of the secret psychological life."

⁴⁰There is little doubt that Beckett has read the famous opening lines of T. S. Eliot's Four Quarters: "Time present and time past/Are both present in time future,/And Time future contained in time past./If all time is eternally present/All time is unredeemable," etc. (Burnt Norton). Krapp's Last Tape can easily be seen as a dramatization of these lines though the views expressed in Beckett's plays are more bleak than Eliot's lines.

⁴¹ First exit (p. 10):	10 seconds + 15 seconds,	= 25
for drink		
second " (p. 13):	10 " + 10+10+10,	= 40
singing		
third " :	5 " dictionary	= 5
fourth " :	10 " + 10+10	= 30
		100
		seconds

⁴²Alec Reid, All I Can Manage, More Than I Could (N. Y.: Grove Press, 1968) says: "In the play there are 121 words, 23 speeches, 12 silences, and the piece runs for three minutes" (p. 94).

⁴³Hugh Kenner, Samuel Beckett (N. Y.: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1973); p. 174.

⁴⁴It is anyone's guess whether they are a concentrated replica of the three sisters of Chekhov, the three witches of Macbeth, etc. The text does not provide any substantial evidence.

⁴⁵Tynan did that in his London production of Oh Calcutta!

⁴⁶Cohn, Beckett, p. 212.

⁴⁷Examples of which can be found in Michael Kirby (ed.), Experimental Theatre (Wash.: Washington Square, 1969); e.g. The Sun by Ruth Krauss.

⁴⁸17 minutes in the London Production in 1973.

⁴⁹"Incomplete sentences reflect the incomplete stage presence -- a mouth -- and the story of a still incomplete life" -- Cohn, Beckett, p. 214.

⁵⁰Beckett, The Unnamable, p. 414; or variations thereof such as "I can do no more, say no more. But I must say more" (HD 49) or "I open. I'm afraid to open. But I must open. So I open" (CAS. 17).

⁵¹Alain Robbe-Grillet, Presence in the Theatre, in Martin Esslin (ed.), Samuel Beckett (N. J.: Prentice Hall, Twentieth Century Views 1965), p. 114.

⁵²Hans Georg Gadamer, Hegel's Dialectic (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1976, p. 62.

⁵³I suggest a comparison between the protagonists of Waiting for Godot and the Bricoleur in Claude Levi-Strauss's La Pensée Sauvage. They all do their best with what they have!

⁵⁴Styan writes: "The language of the bowlers is extensive. Their tilt can suggest amazement, indifference, amusement or disposal to sleep. With their aid, the tramps can meet and part. The bowlers can suggest derision at the mention of Godot, or strengthen the immobility of 'I'm going'. A gesture with a bowler embraces a reflection or a concentration or a comment to the audience. It marks a moment of self-satisfaction or a mutual agreement: 'That's the idea, let's contradict each other' or 'That's the idea, let's ask each other questions'. It can be used for knock-about as when Didi and Gogo juggle with their own and Lucky's 'thinking' hat." In Styan, Comedy, p. 228.

⁵⁵It can hardly be proved but perhaps Beckett was influenced by the powerful image in Genesis 22, where Abraham, the potential sacrificer of his son, carries the knife and the fire, and Isaac, the victim to be burnt, carries the firewood for the burning.

⁵⁶There is a white ball in Happy Days.

⁵⁷In Waiting for Godot, we find "After having sucked all the good out of him, you chuck him away like ... like a banana skin" (p. 34).

⁵⁸Throwing the bottle, the gun, the meaning of the tune from the Merry Widow, etc. -- all this, plus the constant nagging, would probably not make Winnie more likeable to Willie.

⁵⁹In my production of Breath the technician forgot one night to turn on the taped sound track, and the play went on in complete silence. It still worked, and the audience got the point. Breath was then given a second chance, this time with the sound track.

⁶⁰The white on white colour arrangement seems to be an old favourite with Beckett, probably even before Imagination Dead Imagine.

⁶¹Clov is obviously dressing up to finally leave Hamm. He does not, in the same way that Vladimir and Estragon don't leave the stage. But, perhaps, as I shall show later on, he puts on everyday clothes so as to show that Clov, the actor, has finished his role, and politely waits just a few more minutes for the actor who plays Hamm to finish his. It is the only change of costume (other than the mock change in Waiting for Godot) in the entire volume of Beckett's plays.

⁶²Cohn, Beckett, p. 211.

⁶³James Knowlson, Light and Darkness in the Theatre of Samuel Beckett (London: Turret Books, 1972), p. 11 ff.

⁶⁴"If there were only darkness, all would be clear. It is because there is not only darkness but also light that our situation becomes inexplicable." Samuel Beckett, Interview with Tom Driver (Columbia University Forum IV, Summer 1961).

⁶⁵WFG, pp. 30, 36, 77, 80, 89, etc.

⁶⁶Interpretation of Beckett's use of colours is a somewhat tricky business. Their values are not given once and for all but vary to some extent with the context. They cannot be reduced to a system of one to one correspondence." Lawrence E. Harvey, Samuel Beckett, Poet and Critic (N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 339.

⁶⁷Psalms, 91: 5-6. (Lo tira mipakhad laila/
Mekhetz ya'uf yomam; Mi'dever baofel ya'haloch/Mi'ketev
yashud tzohoraiim.

You shall not fear the hunters trap by night
Or the arrow that flies by day.
The pestilence that stalks in darkness
Or the plague raging at noon.

(New English Bible, Oxford University Press, 1970)
See also Cymbeline IV, 2: "Fear no more the heat of the sun/
Nor the furious winter's rage."

⁶⁸In Roland Barthes' Mythologies, "In tautology there is double murder: one kills rationality because it resists one; one kills language because it betrays one." In Beckett, this tautology is valid: rationality is dead anyhow (!) and it's true that language betrays ...". In rendering light self-reflective Beckett flunks even Barthes' accusation, since light "says" nothing.

⁶⁹Jiří Honzl, Dynamics of Sign in the Theatre,
in Ladislav Matejka and Irwin R. Titunik (ed.) Semiotics of
Art (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press),
p. 76 ff.

CHAPTER III

THE RADIOPLAYS

All is a question of voices In all these words,
all these strangers, this dust of words with no
ground for their setting.

- The Unnamable

Samuel Beckett has, so far, published six radioplays since 1957. Unlike his prose and stage plays, Beckett's radioplays have not been given adequate attention. Some critics have applied dramatic or literary criteria to the radioplays;¹ others have indeed paid attention to the specifically radiophonic elements,² but did not see the line of development leading from All That Fall (1957) to Radio II (1976), and the proper place the radioplays ought to occupy in the Beckett volume.

This chapter, in line with the argument presented in the entire paper, will focus on Beckett's awareness of the medium; and the modes in which the author's self-consciousness reveal themselves through broadcast words, musical sound effects and the silences of radio. It is implied that Beckett's art of radio parallels (inasmuch as it is part of) his art of writing stage plays. The following discussion of his radioplays is intended to draw attention to the uniqueness of Beckett's radioplays as both a genre

and a medium, as well as to prove that self-referential elements are an integral part of them, without which they (like his stage plays) cannot be fully understood.

A number of general notes on the nature and artistic characteristics of radio may be helpful as an introduction to the discussion of the individual radioplays. Radio is a "poor" medium because, physically, it engages only the sense of hearing. As a performing art it is minimalistic, unlike other media which may appeal to both the eye and the ear. Marshall McLuhan says that radio is a "hot" medium because of its power "to involve people in depth".³ Radioplays, as a specific form of the art of radio, often induce people to complete the audio-data projected from the receiver with visual images, tactile equivalents, tastes and odours which are all found in the imagination.⁴ The audio stimuli of radio serve not only as verbal or musical messages per se, but as hooks and catalysts for the non-auditive senses.

A radioplay is projected from the radio but "takes place" in the listener's head in an almost non-metaphoric sense. Radio emits voices into the listener's ear, usually from a very close distance and can therefore create an intimacy much greater than in any other of the performing arts.⁵ This intimacy reinforces the metaphor of radio as being the theatre within the skull.

While still using mediators (interpreters, actors)

who make radio a performing art, some of the "performance" ought to take place in the listener's minds and imagination. Whereas in reading a book the reader is the sole performer, and in watching a film most of the "performance" is executed on the screen, radio keeps a balance between the projected audio stimuli and the implicit demand made to complete them so as to have the whole "picture".

This balance between the projected stimuli and the expected completion and filling in the gaps serves to invite the listener to actively participate in creating the radioplay. This is Beckett's technique as well as part of the content. He uses the characteristics of radio and often turns them into the very subject matter of the radioplay. Radio's "space-less-ness", its capacity for illusion, intimacy and the invitation it extends to the listener to co-create the play are specifically important in Beckett's radioplays.⁶

In Beckett's radioplays, as well as in any conceivable radioplay, one can discern between radiophonic silence on the one hand, and three major types of noises on the other.

Silence, on radio, functions both as an acting "space", a neutral background and, particularly in Beckett's radioplays, as an active, though sometimes unknown and unspecified, dramatis persona. In that respect it can be compared with an empty stage or screen, which in the appropriate

theatrical context, can be made into a meaningful entity because it is empty.

Radiophonic silence is not absolute. Actually, no absolute silence exists. John Cage describes his experience with silence in an anechoic chamber:

Its six walls made of special material, a room without echoes. I entered ... and heard two sounds, one high and one low. When I described them to the engineer in charge he informed me that the high one was my nervous system in operation, the low one my blood in circulation. Until I die there will be sounds.⁷

Any receiver emits some hush (an onomatopoeic word for silence), such that no absolute silence is even technically possible. Yet all the noises we hear on radio are born from silence and die into that relative silence.

Silence is an:

auditory space having no point of favoured focus. It is a sphere without fixed boundaries, space made by the thing itself, not space containing the thing ... dynamic, always in flux, creating its own dimensions moment by moment ... the ear favours sound from any direction We can shut our visual field by simply closing our eyes, but we are always triggered to respond to sound The essential feature of sound, however, is not its location but that it be, that it fill space.⁸

Radio's space is silence, relative as it may be -- but silence unperceived, unknown, and limitless. John Cage says:

... a total sound-space, the limits of which are ear-determined only, the position of a particular sound in this space being the result of five determinants: frequency or pitch, amplitude or loudness, overtone structure or timbre, duration and morphology (how the sound begins, goes on and dies away).⁹

The main difference between radiophonic silence and "just" silence is that radiophonic silence is a specific

silence. It depends on a technical aspect (one has to turn the radio on), and on noises that can determine (limit, specify, qualify, etc.) the kind of silence the listeners conventionally expect.

Of the three "noisy" elements of radio, naturally, words, will be given most of the attention, due to the higher degree of explicitness they contain in relation to music and sound effects. One should, though, remember that on radio words have no visual counterpart which, psychologically at least, reduces their built-in irreversible nature in visual media. Hence they have to be treated with extra care on radio in regard to both their actual-technical rendering (pitch, speed, etc.) and to their "tone" (understatement, intimacy, etc.).

Also, radio's intimacy makes it possible to use words as though they were not really uttered out loud but rather just "thought" in the mind of the radiophonic character (such as Henri in Embers or both Words and Music and Cascando).¹⁰

Since audiospace is limited only by sound, one can establish location rather easily and expansively, by means of convention and medium. That is, the conventions of monologue allow the listener to accept the speech as directly reflective of the speaker's inward thoughts. Further, the medium (free as it is in audio-space), is close to the listener's ear, thus creating intimacy. In this way, the

location of the scene can actually seem to be within the speaker's psyche. The listener, then, overhears the inner going-on of the speaker. Credibility ensues from the way in which the words are uttered, while the listener is willing to suspend his disbelief as long as the actor sounds convincing.

Music, traditionally, functions in one or more of the following ways:

- a) illustrative function (atmosphere, background);
- b) structural function (as "scene" divider, "shifter", etc.);
- c) as an independent character (mostly in Beckett's own radioplays).

In many radioplays music functions as do sets in theatre. Background music relies heavily on the recognition of conventional music forms. It builds up the emotion required of the listener -- sweet for lovers, ominous for about-to-happen ghost appearances, etc. Whether as independent musical phrases or as background, its main function is to illustrate the verbal. Music can also serve as a scene-divider -- similar to the rise and fall of a curtain.

Both music and words work in time. The function of music in a radioplay is particularly important because, like radioplays, it works its art through time. The external similarity between the two, in terms of tempo, melody and harmony, can also be extended to an internal similarity, as in Beckett's radioplays. One can therefore discuss music in

the radioplay on the one hand, and as an art-form lending its rules to the radioplay, on the other.

Music can serve as a model for the art-form of the radioplay. The rules applicable to music can be applied to the radioplay, notwithstanding that music is one element within the play.

Sound effects are herein defined as all the radio-
phonic noises that are neither words nor music.¹¹ Included under the heading of sound effects, are also acoustic atmospheres such as "choked", "outdoors", "bedroom", "echo", etc. Sound effects are live or synthesized productions of the sound which are supposed to embrace the world described in the radioplay.

One usually distinguishes between background and spot effects. The first are mostly longish atmospheres such as echoes, for a tunnel (the by now ridiculous) cries of seagulls for a beach atmosphere, or the rattle of trains. The second sort of effects include slamming and creaking of doors, police sirens, bells, etc.

In most cases sound effects are identifiable only in context. Broadcast independently, they would probably not sound real at all ("Shall I tell them to set fire to studio number three so that we'll have the effect of cellophane paper?"). However, a sound effect in its right place can express far more than words and can be used on occasions when neither words nor music could carry the particular

message.¹²

Sound effects are at times described as the sets, sometimes as the costumes, or even as the lighting of radio-plays. They can be used, like words or music, realistically, figuratively, metaphorically or symbolically, and can serve to help in scenic changes and shifts.¹³

In turning now to a discussion of the individual radioplays, it should be noticed how Beckett uses not only the above-mentioned radiophonic elements, but also how he gradually makes them, in his highly developed medium-awareness way, into part of the very content of the particular play.

All That Fall

All That Fall (1957) is the first work Beckett designed for radio. Hugh Kenner remarks that "the plays for radio that succeed Endgame abolish the stage and explore the resources of a world created by voices,"¹⁴ whereas another critic, Hildegard Seipel, believes that "surprisingly, Beckett returns in this first radioplay to traditional dramaturgy."¹⁵ All That Fall is Beckett's first radioplay and as such it is certainly worth examining the links between All That Fall and the dramaturgy of his stage plays, and seeing whether it is "traditional," as Seipel claims, or do they, in fact, "abolish the stage."

In All That Fall, plot-time and broadcasting time overlap. All events in the described reality stand in a

one-to-one relationship with the sixty to seventy minutes it takes to broadcast the radioplay. The location is a small Irish town. The plot is old, fat Mrs. Rooney's walk to the railway station, and her return home with her husband who arrived on the delayed train.

The classical Aristotelian unities (which are the axe Seipel tries to grind in All That Fall) are almost rigidly kept, and indeed Seipel's argument would raise less controversy were it based on radiophonic rather than dramatic analysis.

In fact, it is time itself, and not the much debatable "unity" of time, that is a factor without which All That Fall is inconceivable. Time is not only a dimension in which all radioplays function, and exclusively so, but also the subject matter and theme of All That Fall in particular.

Music is temporal art not in the barren and empty sense that its tones succeed one another in time. It is temporal art in the concrete sense that it enlists the flux of time as a force to serve its ends Time happens; time is an event.¹⁶

This can easily apply to All That Fall. In radio, time is the only element.

All the voices in the radioplay are created in time, and dwindle into time. All That Fall is not only the name of the radioplay, but also a metaphor central to what happens in it. It is a description of a "lingering dissolution" conditional upon time. Had the attitude towards voices, noises and silences been different from the point of view of content,

one still would have to admit that they are objects maintained by time.

In this radioplay, there is a fusion between the existence of words, regarding their content against the function of passing the time. Many images in the radioplay can be referred to only metaphorically. The element (dimension, unity) of space can be perceived in a radioplay only in the sense that time is conceivable in a sculpture. A radioplay can allude to spatial phenomena and evoke spatial images in the listener, but no space, in the physical sense, is possible in a temporal medium.

On radio, space is either a metaphor or else relates to the listener's sense rather than the nature of the genre itself.

In All That Fall there are, of course, many references made to certain places where things occur. But these allusions, a "country road" or "railway station" are temporal-tonal by nature, and they exist in the imagination of the listener. The modal existence of such references on radio is tonal-temporal and it is the listener who is invited to translate audio-temporal language into visual-spatial images in his imagination.

The hypothesis -- I talk, ergo I am -- lies at the basis of both formal (or modal) and the content (or imaginative) aspects of the radioplay. These aspects are a hypostasis of the medium, and a typical self-referential

remark. Mrs. Rooney says: "Do not imagine, because I am silent, that I am not present and alive" (ATF 23). She voices her existence with words that function in time alone because the visual aspect does not exist, and the listeners may think that since she is quiet, she is "spatially" not there, and hence dead.

An experienced radio producer, Irving Wardle, says that "radio dialogue is obliged to compensate for the missing visual dimension and the lack of physically present spectators".¹⁷ In Mrs. Rooney's remark, Beckett goes one step further and develops the idea of space in radio in a pseudo-Cartesian manner as though maintaining "I emit noises ergo I am."

Through Mrs. Rooney's voice, Beckett focuses simultaneously on the psychological insecurity of his protagonist as well as on the nature of the medium. He reminds the listeners of Mrs. Rooney's desperate wish to assert herself and, at the same time, makes a joke about radio.

Unity of plot is a more complex matter. Plot implies both structure and story. Beckett's radioplays are stories in a special sense. He seems to be haunted by stories; he evinces the inability to tell a story while realizing the urgency of doing so. In All That Fall, there definitely exists a story, even in the most traditional sense: Mrs. Rooney goes to pick up her husband, meets him, goes back with him and finally finds out why he was delayed. He himself may

have been the murderer of the boy who fell under the wheels.

The structural aspect of plot is more difficult to deal with, especially when the approach is that of classical drama. Rather than using Seipel's analysis and division of structure, one should turn to McWhinnie's description:

The author specifies four animals; this corresponds exactly to the four in the bar metre of Mrs. Rooney's walk ... which is the percussive accompaniment to the play and which, in its larger stages becomes charged with emotional significance in itself.¹⁸

McWhinnie, in order to achieve the required rhythmical effect, used stylized sound effects rather than realistic ones. Later he wishes "to consolidate the underlying rhythm and to merge imperceptibly the musical and realistic elements of the play."¹⁹

Mrs. Rooney should slowly float into focus and so McWhinnie inserts a light gasping. The gramophone on which Schubert's "Death and the Maiden" is heard is old, and the record itself is creaky, as McWhinnie testifies. The tempo of the music is different from the tempo previously achieved. The steps stop; Mrs. Rooney listens to the record. Still the listeners have no exact notion of what is going on. Only then the first words of the radioplay are heard. So far one is an ear witness to sound effects, music and silence. McWhinnie stylizes the beginning of All That Fall in four-in-a-beat rhythm. The three radiophonic elements are heard together when Mrs. Rooney says:

Poor woman. All alone in that ruinous old house.
(Music and sound effects in the background. When
her words finish, music fades in, sound effects of
animals fade out). (ATF 7)

This heterogeneous structure of fade-ins and outs, of music, silence, sound effects and words, creates the nuclear dynamics of the whole radioplay. The radiophonic elements are interrelated and orchestrated so as to increase the feeling Beckett wants to convey: feelings of "lingering dissolution", of "all that fall", of sickness, fatigue and despair, along with a strong sense of still being alive.

An examination of yet another section of the radioplay may prove helpful in understanding how the four elements become meaningful. At the station:

Tommy (excitedly, in the distance) -- She's coming
(pause, nearer). She's at the level crossing!
(immediately exaggerated station sounds. Falling
signals. Bells. Whistles. Crescendo of train
whistle approaching. Sound of train rushing
through station). (ATF 26)

This is the very centre of the radioplay and it is made of sound effects only, brought in McWhinnie's version, to surrealist noise, very loud, almost chaotic, on top of which Mrs. Rooney screams, "The upmail! The upmail!" One train disappears "off mike" while the train on which Dan Rooney is supposed to be comes in. All the passengers disembark. Mrs. Rooney roars, looking for her husband. The train leaves and then, as Beckett indicates, "Silence". This silence follows a cascade of very loud and mixed noises, and is therefore more effective, being "emptier", heavily charged,

more horrible. The radioplay, so far, was built towards the arrival of Dan Rooney on the train. He cannot be found yet, and Maddy Rooney is horror-stricken. In her shouts she expresses both vulgarity and gentle care for her blind husband. The vulgarity is piercing through and above the loud station noises. The gentle care and anxiety are found in the words themselves. The combination of sound effects and words proves beneficial to both. Silence seems to be the unspoken counterpoint to Maddy's wild screams, "Dan, Dan ... Did you see my husband ..." (ATF 26), the way the previous tumult emphasized vulgarity. There are two gaps, both of which enrich and charge the situation. On the one hand, the tension between Maddy's tone and content; on the other, a gap between noise (words, sound effects) and silence. Then, Mrs. Rooney addresses the station manager, whose image she summoned up. His presence is felt although he does not answer, since he exists, radiophonically, through Maddy's address. Tommy answers next, and then, emerging from silence, we hear the thumps of Dan's stick. Tension is partially released when we hear Maddy's voice again. "Oh Dan, there you are!" (ATF 26). Then the sound of her dragging feet, and husband and wife meet vocally, when both shuffling and thumps come to a complete stop:

Where in the world were you?
Maddy (ATF 26)

The way home, or the second part of the radioplay, is now about to begin.

Dan's cold voice, his wife's warmth, her shuffle, his stick, are non-verbal characterizations. It is the orchestration of words with sound effects through which the full vocal portrait of the couple is achieved. The basis for the analysis of the radioplay is rhythm, melody and orchestration. The radioplay is worked up towards a rhythmic and melodic peak in the middle, where it gains momentum and then, slowly, comes the dénouement. "Acts" can be spoken of here only in terms of musical movements.

The way Beckett treats such movements, as well as motifs, is another important radiophonic element. In order to emphasize important clues, Beckett often repeats them in various contexts. In visual media, spatial elements exist constantly (such as the tree in Waiting for Godot). In radio, they are the way to draw attention to what the author believes to be focal points.

The musical motif of "Death and the Maiden" is the only music Beckett uses in the radioplay. It functions in various ways.

"Death and the Maiden" is heard twice in the radioplay: at the beginning and at the end. When it is heard for the second time the listener assumes, naturally, that the end is close. It thus serves as timekeeper, telling both broadcasting and fictional time. And it serves, simultaneously, as a milestone on the Rooneys' way home. When the musical phrase is first heard, Mrs. Rooney remarks: "... poor woman,

all alone in that ruinous old house" (ATF 7). When both Dan and Maddy hear it again on their way home, the music is charged with what happened to them during the play. Maddy remarks:

(Silence but for music playing. Music dies). All day the same old record. All alone in that great empty old house.

And Dan says: (Indistinctly) "Death and the Maiden" (ATF 39). The music has a highly metaphoric value and it sheds light on both Maddy and Dan. It does not only remind the listener of the long way they have gone together, but reflects on Maddy's situation in a subtle, indirect way. Dan mentions the name of Schubert's piece as though it were a direct comment on his wife. She is, in a way, as innocent as a maiden -- she can be compared with the lady in the ruinous old house -- her own death is not far away, etc.

Dragging Feet: Maddy's dragging feet is a very effective, again -- indirect, means of characterization. In musical terms, it functions like a basso ostinato. At the beginning, this motif is mainly a sound effect that describes Maddy's sickness and old age. Beckett starts off both by inserting the sound effect and having Maddy relate to it and complain. Later, and once the relation between the effect and explaining words is established, Beckett can abolish the words, and the sound effect holds meaning independently. In the middle, the sound effect is weighed against Dan's blind tappings, again functioning as a means of characterizing

dramatis personae. Towards the end, the dragging of feet gains significance and becomes a metaphor of the characters' condition humaine. People are doomed to an everlasting dragging of feet, and blindness, until finally they all fall, like Dan and Maddy.²⁰

Other Sound Effects: As shown, sound effects are very important in All That Fall. They serve as the carriers of meanings Beckett prefers to express in a non-verbal way.

Beckett seems, here, to be fascinated with sound effects and uses as many of them as possible. (There is a rapid decrease of sound effects in the later radioplays, as though Beckett were disposing, as in his stage plays, with decor). Yet their value is more than merely illustrative. Rural sounds, steps, cars, wind, rain and trains are only some of the sound effects used. They are used both realistically and metaphorically, as McWhinnie noted. They gain metaphorical value through juxtaposition with other sound effects and with words. They substitute for words, do what words cannot do, or not as precisely, and shorten the way to an intuitive, direct and non-verbal understanding. A "dialogue" of sound effects, such as the one between Maddy's dragging feet and Dan's tapping stick, achieve a sense of passing time which no verbal dialogue could achieve. The walking time of the couple is measured by the clock of blind eyes and sick feet. It comes across as a very tedious and painful walk. Dan's blindness is thus emphasized, and we are

confronted with the motif of the blind man who helps the lame to help him.²¹

Sound effects can also function as a comic relief:

Mrs. Rooney: Well, you know, it will be dead in time, just like our old Gaelic, there is that to be said.

Urgent Baa

Mr. Rooney: Good God! (ATF 35)

Sometimes sound effects are highly stylized:

Mrs. Rooney: All is still. No living soul in sight. There is no one to ask. The world is feeding. The wind ... (brief wind) scarcely stirs the leaves, and the birds ... (brief chirp), etc. (ATF 32)

Here sound effects are Beckett's means to avoid over-poeticism and possible sentimentality. The sound effects that Mrs. Rooney seems to elicit in the above passage return to slap her on the face in a manner both pathetic and ironical.

Beckett treats sound effects themselves ironically. They help him shift from the external reality to Mrs. Rooney's inner world and vice versa. When the bicycle bell sounds loud, it startles both Maddy and the listeners out of her skull, so to speak.

Words: Mrs. Rooney, the protagonist, belongs to a long list of obsessive talkers in Beckett's works (like Words in Words and Music, Henri in Embers, and others). In Mrs. Rooney's case, Beckett does not use conventional means to bridge over a possible gap of credibility. In theatre, an author would resort to asides, especially in the theatre of

certain styles and ages. On radio, in general, this is not necessary, and difficult to achieve. Maddy is portrayed as a person who usually talks to herself, and the effect is exceptionally strong on radio. Her talk draws the listener still nearer to the receiver, in order to hear better:

Mrs. Rooney: Oh cursed corset! If I could let it out without indecent exposure. Mr. Tyler! Mr. Tyler! Come back and unlace me behind the hedge! (She laughs wildly, ceases). What's wrong with me, what's wrong with me, never tranquil, seething out my dirty old pelt, out of my skull (!!), oh to be in atoms, in atoms! (Frenziedly) ATOMS! (Silence. Cooing. Faintly). Jesus! (Pause) Jesus! (ATF 13)

Beckett uses this auto-conversation on different levels. From the point of view of information, we learn about Maddy's personality, thoughts and feelings. From the point of view of her relations with other people, her monologues are most revealing. Nobody talks with her, she is rather talked at. She is the only person with whom she can really converse. Her attempts to communicate result in an even greater estrangement. Her loneliness becomes, therefore, both the cause and the consequence of her obsessive talking to herself.

The obsessive, compulsive need to talk, no matter what the topic is, is not as pronounced in Maddy as in other, later Beckett characters. One must remember that to talk, in a radioplay, means to exist. Understandably this also explains the close relationship between Maddy's character and

the medium in which her character is expressed.

Maddy's loneliness appeals to the listener. An actor on stage could certainly convince his audience that he is lonely; but here Maddy transmits her feelings from a distance of about twenty inches straight into the listener's ears. Actually, the listener is the closest person to Maddy. Even closer than her husband. A real and unconventional intimacy is thus established, since she is (or sounds) really alone -- whereas an actor on stage has to use the stage convention of loneliness, because on stage there is an audience to confront.

Dialogues in this radioplay are fast, broken and dynamic. They do not seem to really work from the point of view of the speakers' desired communications. (That is why Maddy talks to herself!). One sometimes has the feeling that mere utterance is the issue, rather than a true attempt to empathize. The figures are enclosed in their own worlds and find it extremely hard to escape by means of words. In a highly verbal medium, Beckett's language becomes more and more self-conscious, and his use of words more and more tentative. The following characteristic dialogue is a good example of Beckett's radiophonic dialogue. The silences indicated between lines thicken the darkness that embraces both speakers. They lead each other in words, as well as in walking.

(M = Maddy; D = Dan)

M: Why do you stop? Do you want to say something?
D: No.
M: Then why do you stop?
D: It is easier.
M: Are you very wet?
D: To the buff.
M: The buff?
D: The buff. From Buffalo.
M: Put your arm around me. (Pause) Be nice to me!
(Pause. Gratefully) Ah Dan ... (ATF 38)

There seems to be a live dialogue, not only between the speakers, but also between the spoken and unspoken words.

Here again, Beckett plays on various levels of significance:

- 1) Walking vs. talking;
- 2) Walking and talking vs. feelings;
- 3) Nonsense talk vs. walking and talking and feeling;
- 4) Silences vs. nonsense (talking) and walking and feelings.

In All That Fall, Beckett makes a "rich" use of radio. In comparison with his later radioplays, All That Fall is a perfect balance between the "richness" of the delivery and the ease with which the theme of the radioplay reaches the ears of listeners.

Its "richness" is due to the eleven people who participate (two main characters and nine secondary ones), to the numerous and rather easily perceivable sound effects, to the tinge of a thriller story, to the highly poetic and localized language and to the balance between sharp humour and deep compassion.

Waiting for Godot, Beckett's first produced and published stage play, is also richer than all of the successive

plays. Beckett now starts to strip down the fat layers of his first radioplay. He gradually focuses on radio, which is reduced in terms of the means of expression so that the listener's involvement (among other things) may increase in a diametrically opposed relationship to the means of expression.

Embers

Embers was first performed on the BBC in 1959, two years after All That Fall. Its uniqueness shows mainly in the use of words, mixture of inner and external realia, treatment of figures, structure and time, atmosphere and effects. Embers is even more a 'theatre in the skull' than All That Fall, as the central issue of the radioplay reflects man's enclosure in his own world, his inability to relate to anything outside of it.

Tindall described Embers as a "dream play, perhaps too intricate, interior, and obscure for radio".²²

In Embers, the listener is invited to crawl under Henri's, the main character's, skin. He is forced, as though to pass from the room where he listens, into the receiver. The route consists of voices and words. Ada, Henri's wife, says:

You will be quite alone with your voice, there will be no other voice in the world but yours. (Pause) Do you hear me? (EM 35)

The 'pause' gives Henri time to answer. He does not answer because he does not listen. The fact that he does not

answer is the assertion that Ada is right. He is soon to be left quite alone with his voice. Hayman says:

The time has already come when Henri is alone with his own voice And in this he's very much like the perceiving mind, as described in Proust which cannot admit the reality that it encounters except by imposing its own preconceived notions on it.²³

In Henri's world there are no voices except his own. He creates memories, images and vocal visages. He verbalizes his war against everlasting silence. He creates words in order to postpone the inevitable future, conjuring up past memories. Henri says: "... every syllable is a second gained" (EM 36). 'Second' can imply here both one-sixtieth of a minute and simply another syllable. Henri fights a hopeless war against time, since each second is not only a gain, but at the same time brings him closer to the final silence.

The radioplay ends with the words 'not a sound'; which occur all through the work. As long as one can say 'not a sound', one is quite alive and sound. Only when there is no sound, radiophonic death becomes certain and final. "Not a sound" equals death:

Underneath all quiet. Like a grave. Not a sound.
All day, all night, not a sound. (EM 39)

The very broadcasting event is some kind of life, and thus, again, we find an hypothesis on the main argument of Beckett's radioplays, namely, to sound is to be alive, although it is only a minimal form of living.

Beckett's irony shows throughout, since it is not only Henri who is doomed to prolong his existence with words. The listener, too, is thirty to forty minutes closer to death. This would evidently be the case even without listening to this particular radioplay, but listening drives the point home, and very consciously so.

The opening of the radioplay is realistic in style. A man is talking, although it is not quite clear yet about what he is talking. When Henri says, "Who is beside me now?" (EM 21), there is as yet nobody there, except for the listener. In the next phrase, "an old man, blind and foolish" (EM 21), it is unclear whether Henri refers to himself or to him who is supposed to be beside him. Only in the following phrase is another figure introduced: "My father, back from the dead, to be with me" (EM 21). The father's state of existence is one and the same for both Henri and the listeners. The father is conjured up in words and his existence is purely verbal. Actually, it is not just the father who is made only of words, but Henri as well. His radiophonic existence is the only existence allowed him. He is transitory like his words, and he and his words (since he is only words) vanish alike into nothingness.

The above may serve as a partial explanation of why many similar words are repeated in the radioplay, time and again. There is no need to renovate in order to merely exist. Talking, as such, is more than enough.

At this stage of Beckett's writing for radio, words still have a relatively high connotative value. The incessant repetition of words such as "hangings" or "no light", has more to it than the magic of poetic emphasis or the assertion of the speaker's obsessive talking. Phrases like "What happened was this, I put them on and then I took them off again and then I put them on again and then I took them off again and then I put them on again and then I ..." (EM 27) are clear indications that mere utterance can become, in places, a substitute for meaning. Henri says that he now turns around and around with the gramophone. Sometimes the grooves are stuck, but even that is better than silence.

What seems like a quasi-Cartesian proof of existence in All That Fall ("Do not imagine, because I am silent, that I am not present and alive ..." (ATF 23) becomes in parts of Embers, life itself. Verbalizing in Embers has two main functions. On the one hand, words are used in the conventional sense, as though they had some kind of an ontological backing. In this usage of words, it calls for the regular literary analysis of metaphors, themes, etc., namely, ways and means with which significance can be examined. Here, and in the other radioplays, one can almost hear the protagonist imploring words themselves to mean something. On the other hand, and often simultaneously, words are used to prolong life through vocal utterance, or actually, as life itself.²⁴ Esslin puts it: "... in fact his use of the dramatic medium

shows that he has tried to find means of expressions beyond the language."²⁵ Esslin is by no means wrong. Meaning is never in the sound, and Beckett doubts whether it exists even in a word. But his argument can be reduced to yet a simpler and more accurate formula: on radio, at least, mere words can substitute meaning, since sound is regarded as a minimal proof for life.

Beckett makes it very clear that he doubts whether words can possibly designate anything beyond words. He uses them tentatively, consciously, since there is nothing better. The question still remains whether Henri's words are supposed to express real memories or only memories of yet other words. There is no way of knowing, except by responding to Beckett's words on a non-verbal level, and carefully intuiting whether they make any sense.

In Beckett's radioplays the mere existence of voiced words has to be evaluated prior to discussing what they mean. The almost constant tension between meaningful words and words-as-words, turns Embers from an interesting work of literature into a masterpiece of radioplays, in which the main character is doomed to examine his story (Bolton, Halloway), his story-of-the-story and finally the very sense of utterance at all, thus drawing attention to radio itself, in a typically self-referential manner.

Time: Henri is an old man who remembers voices and images from his past. The sea, the sound of which opens the

radioplay, stands for the element of time with which Henri fights throughout the radioplay. The sea represents an element of patience, waiting for Henri to die (drown?). Henri tries to drown the incessant murmur of the sea with his own non-stop talking. The voice of the sea is the "voice" of time. Schematically, the following graphic description is applicable:

HENRI	SEA
Private time = life	Time (death? end of private time?) impersonal, ominous
Voiced words	Murmur
Memories of drowned father	Drowns father (another link with death)

Henri sits on the shore, does not tear himself loose from the mesmerizing, "scarcely audible" murmur of the sea, and yet cannot plunge into the sea and drown. He occupies a peculiar location between life and death, as though everything he says is an extended moment between his life and his death. Important life experiences flash in slow motion before his eye-lips.²⁶

There are many other vocal time-keepers in the radioplay, and Beckett uses them here in a more intense way than in All That Fall. Hooves,²⁷ pebbles, the music-teacher's ruler are only a few of the time-keepers used. They are

heard as sound effects, contextualized and juxtaposed with words and silences. A great portion of what Henri says is connected with time. The word "time" itself appears quite a number of times. Henri's own past and present are interwoven, to the extent that Henri himself, and consequently, the listener, cannot tell them apart.

Time has a double role in the radioplay. It is both an important motif in the work and a factor along which the whole play runs. The interrelation between these two functions gives rise to the equation: Time = Life = Words. Therefore words, too, are time-keepers, like grains of sand in an hourglass ("Every syllable is a second gained") (EM 28).

There are two main time patterns in the radioplay. The first is linear, single-directional, irreversible and inevitable. Time, through tones, becomes concrete experiential content; the experience of musical rhythm is an experience of time made possible through tones. At the end of this kind of time stands the unknown (for Henri, the fictitious character in the play) and the end of the program for the listeners. Henri tries his utmost to escape the inevitable, and digress into quite a number of cyclical time-patterns, jumping between past and present, mixing various points of linear time as though to camouflage them. Yet even when Henri painfully remembers his daughter and her music lesson, in his attempts to avoid the future, linear time laughs in his face in the form of the teacher beating time with his

ruler. The final remark of this scene is almost farcical, and anti-sentimental, yet enlightening: "It was not enough to drag her into the world, now she must play the piano" (EM 30).

Internal and External Realia: Henri elicits memories and images, voices and people from the past: the scene in the room, Holloway, his daughter and her riding and music lessons, his father, his wife, etc. These scenes take place in Henri's head, into which the listeners are brought through the intimacy of the medium. The main, or perhaps the only way, to judge the realism of Henri's monologue is to accept his way of seeing and hearing. Almost all the scenes have Henri in them and use the form of the first person singular. Henri is actually the filter through which the other relatively more objective scenes are heard.²⁸ Even when Ada (his wife: living? imaginary? in the past? present?) appears, Beckett remarks that she sounds distant. Distance on radio can easily mean 'less real', since angle and distance from the microphone are the simplest technical means with which to establish vagueness/clarity, focus/off-focus, etc.

Embers is a radiophonic dream-like play. "Scenes" slip into one another with no definite scenic borders between them. One matter is never finished when the next matter is brought up and pushes the radioplay forward. This kind of structure leaves hardly any doubt about the highly subjective,

associative nature of the radioplay. It is basically a linear development, into which small vignettes are interwoven. There are certain thematic similarities between the vignettes, like Henri's relations with his father which parallel his relations to his daughter. He becomes alternatively father and son.

We also do not know whether a realistic sense of time exists at all. Is the present the time when Henri sits on the beach, or when he meets his wife? Or did even these scenes happen after Ada's death, occurring only in Henri's memories as flashbacks?

Henri is the director who shifts the scene, half by will and half by independent memories that thrust themselves upon him. Any other voice but Henri's must be conceived of as repercussive projections of Henri's memories. Noises keep coming to him due to their vocal quality and emotional intensity, such as the sharp ordering voices of the two teachers, of his daughter's voice.

The only "point of hearing" is Henri's, and the listener cannot ascribe any independence of objectivity to any reality but Henri's. The constant vocal entity is that of the sea. External and internal reality should, therefore, be understood as one and the same thing, namely, Henri's mind, and that includes his strange attitude towards the sea. The listener takes an active part in Henri's reflected life. The content of Henri's stories is very personal and

intimate. In Embers, Henri is found in the midst of his attempts to summarize or at least make sense of his closest, most intimate personal relationships -- father, daughter, wife, and friend. The form (i.e. memories) also makes the listener feel almost uncomfortable because of the intimacy and proximity to the source, Henri's mouth. Even the beating of the hooves (Henri's heart-beats?!) and the sound of the sea are filtered through Henri's impressions and way of treating them. The listener is totally dependent on Henri, especially as Henri is described as a most lonely and forsaken man. Henri populates the theatre within the skull as director, actor, sound effects man and, one could add, as audience as well. It is in this radioplay especially that lack of sight is an outstanding advantage. The listener is bound to drag props from his own imagination and partake in creating the lacking elements. The result is a joint work of Beckett and the listener. One could possibly maintain the same argument about other media which, likewise, do not supply audiences with all the data. Yet on radio, a whole dimension is created by listeners.

This factor, together with intimacy and proximity, structure and smooth shifts, verbalism and internal realia, are among the most important elements of pure radio. Embers uses all of these.

Words and Music

Words and Music was performed on the BBC in 1962. It

is the third radioplay as well as the third clearly distinguishable stage in Beckett's exploration of the medium. In fact, Words and Music can be described as an almost formal approach to the four basic elements of radio, namely, silence, words, music, and sound effects. The play is highly economical in its use of artistic means. It is brief and has an almost abstract quality, with which Beckett expresses his attempts to express rather than any actual expression. Words and Music and the next radioplay, Cascando, can be regarded as 'twin' radioplays. In the first, Beckett focuses on the modes of expression; in the second, on the inability to lift oneself radiophonically by one's own bootstraps.

The figures in the radioplay are one person called Croak and two "personified" modes of expression called "Words" and "Music". The two modes, Words and Music are depicted in very general terms, hardly individualized since they are not human. Croak (croaking) is in fact, a "sound effect", and the listener is led to believe that he is much more of an individual. There is yet another figure in the radioplay, silence, against which all three fight. The figures, their characterization and their mutual relationships, are the central clues with which this work should be comprehended.

Joe-Words and Bob-Music are Croak's two servants. They are two main vocal modes of expression: one, verbal;

the other, musical. They do not live peacefully with one another. They function as yet another one of Beckett's inseparable couples (Didi/Gogo, Hamm/Clov, Willie/Winnie). When it is one's turn to appear, the other one voices discontent, doubting his rival's competence and adequacy in expressing anything at all. When followed closely, one is more aggressive, intellectual, etc., the other is more emotional or sentimental and more submissive, like Vladimir and Estragon. Croak treats them with mixed feelings. Being a croak (an ambivalent name, connoting both death and an ugly, agonized non-verbal noise), the person cannot express himself without his two modes of expression. He rebukes them ('Dogs') or implores them to "be friends", or even calls them "my comforts ... my balms". Nevertheless, he is totally dependent on them for a communicable and comprehensible expression of either a musical or a verbal nature. He himself can only emit croaky, broken and laconic phrases, groans (non-verbal phonetic units contextualized in language), and a few sound effects, such as thumps of a club and shuffling of carpet-slippers.

Croak needs his servants in order to express something and to overcome the biggest enemy, silence, which is associated with death. In that, he is similar to Henri, although the weapons in this radioplay are personified and given an active role. Beckett explores the two modes (three, if Croak's own sound effects are counted) with which silence can

be overcome.

Silence, too, is a figure, but it cannot possibly be qualified and characterized in the radioplay, without being broken. In spite of the fact that Croak is mostly silent in the radioplay, he is still very much present and alive (unlike Maddy Rooney) even when he is silent. One soon learns that Words and Music are Croak's vocal extensions, serving as externalized radiophonic entities, in their attempt to express their "master".

Both servants constantly address their master, and thus his silence becomes the focus of attention for the other two figures, as well as for the sensitive listener. Croak's silence is both the actual target and the implied source of the utterances of Words and Music. On radio, this is a subtle and effective way to establish presence. Beckett used this technique in All That Fall (Maddy's addressing Mr. Barrel) and in Embers, (the evocation of characters) and fully exploits it here. Croak is an embittered, gloomy and suffering master. He not only has to fight silence, but also must tyrannize over his modes of expression. He bosses them around and commands them in quite an unpleasant manner. As the radioplay develops, one learns that there is something -- a memory, an experience, some essential and very crucial issue and artistic message, or even life itself -- that Croak wants to convey through his servants, either to the outside world or more probably, to himself.

Words is the more complex figure of the two. This evidently is the result of the fact that Beckett uses mainly words to describe the whole situation. Words' duty is to deliver speeches on topics such as love, soul, sloth, age. He is ready with his discourses. At the beginning, he is found rehearsing his lecture on sloth. It is as though the only function of words is to come up with scholastic, mouldy, casuistic speeches that have no life to them and no originality whatsoever. (Beckett uses Words the way he treats Lucky's nonsense speech in Waiting for Godot).

Words, in Words and Music, walks the tightrope stretching between the connotative power of words on the one hand, and sheer utterance of morphemes on the other. Words is a compulsive figure who must utter something, no matter what, in order to live and justify his existence. Unlike words in Embers, here Beckett describes some kind of control over them, namely, Croak.

Beckett is pessimistic about Words, yet he does not give in and keeps using them, despite their nonsensical, and futile nature. Words tries to be logical, intellectual, discursive and meaningful, yet succeeds in coming across as a poor parody. Beckett uses Croak who uses Words (and Music) to express very eloquently how difficult (or impossible) it is to express things adequately.

Words carry the radioplay's "story" since words are traditionally the content-carrying mode. The tension between

what Words says and how he says it that extricates Beckett from the classical mistake of boring the audience instead of talking about boredom or, in this case, expressing himself adequately about the inability to express.

Music may prove to be another outlet. Music tries to convey the emotional, non-verbal message that weighs on Croak and needs to be revealed. Music, by nature, is released from the duty to say something discursively; it may elicit memories by the power of association, by appealing directly to emotion.²⁹

In Words and Music, Music has a little less time for action, but his role is not secondary. Words rejects Music, while Music seems to be more tolerant. When the two are required to join in a common effort, Words first refuses yet agrees reluctantly to cooperate with Music under Croak's threats. Still, Music gains the upper hand in the quarrel with Words and ends up louder, drowning Words' words. Only at the very end does Words beseech Music to continue, probably because he realizes his own inability to save Croak, or at least, please him.

It is interesting to note that Words sometimes uses musical patterns of behaviour (repetitions, emphases), whereas Music sometimes functions as though it were Words. Since Music is given an actual role in the play, it tries to talk. The inability of Music to talk should be compared with the inability of Words to penetrate Croak's mind, or for that

purpose, to mean anything. This is also the reason why Music is not really threatened by Words. It is deaf to its potential meaning. Both servants do their best to please their master. Success or failure cannot be ascribed to their unwillingness to help, but to the intrinsic incompetence to do so.

Words and Music is a short radioplay (approximately twenty-five minutes in length), yet it has a definite development, dictated by structure and motifs:

Exposition

First interlude
First theme - Love (soul)

Second interlude
Second theme -- Age (Age song)

Third interlude
Third theme -- Face (Face song)

Fast and abrupt end

The first part is an exposition. It begins with the orchestra tuning up and ends with Words' rehearsal. Croak follows the shuffle of his own slippers and enters the audio-spatial scene. He becomes aware of Words and Music who were previously left alone in Croak's head.

The entire radioplay takes place in the dark, as we learn from Words' first plea that turns into a rebuke:

Please! (Tuning. Louder). Please! (Tuning dies away). How much longer cooped up here, in the dark, (with loathing) with you! ... (WM 23)

Beckett makes a special effort to indicate that there is no visual aspect to what happens, in addition to the names which

vouchsafe the purely vocal approach of the radioplay.

The animosity between Words and Music is established right from the beginning. (Is it because they are cooped up in Croak's skull? Or do not have enough "brain" to expand on, each in his own way, to exclude the other's "Lebensraum" as they wish?). Music disturbs Words. Words himself rehearses a speech and later, he will discourse on all the various themes in the same rattled-off manner, except that the pathos of his rhetoric is emphasized when he is not rehearsing. At the beginning, there is no attempt to emphasize anything from the point of view of content. The exposition sounds like a last brush-up before a performance or concert.

Following the exposition, Croak asks Words and Music to be friends. (Between themselves? his?). He introduces the real focus of the radioplay, both by his mere arrival and by his commanding tone and speech. He apologizes for coming late,³⁰ and demands the first theme. The words "theme tonight" imply that there have been a number of such nights, and that the present situation is yet another attempt to achieve something not yet attained.

Various elements have already been established: the characters, their relations among themselves, etc. Henceforth -- the first theme of the radioplay is presented -- love. Words emits the speech after the fashion of a real, live performance. Croak is not happy and asks Music to try

the same theme in his own way. Words agonizes while hearing Music and protests wildly. There must be something in the nature of words, or at least in the hollow text, that repels music violently. Music wins this short battle. Croak is not happy, and suffers from the incompetence of his "balms" to supply him with the right message, whatever it is, in either verbal or musical modes.

On the next theme the two modes are required to cooperate. Words finds it utterly disagreeable. He tries to sing, following musical suggestions. Croak's involvement is increased. It is as though Words and Music succeeded in drawing something from his life in the past. After an agonizing, slow series of both verbal and musical phrases, the song of age is finally crystallized. Croak asks for the theme of Face; Words ignores him for a while, but later inserts the motif, and elaborates on it and on its corresponding, vague female figure.

Croak's involvement increases -- clear enough from his frequent groans. After the song is born he collapses, his club falls, and he moves away broken, unsatisfied, desperate. "Long pause". When Words and Music are finally able to cooperate, it is too late for Croak. The listener is left in the dark as to whether Words' and Music's "success" was emotionally too strong and moving for Croak to handle, or whether they simply failed, completely missing the issue.

In terms of content, the song can be observed as an elaboration on the famous line in Waiting for Godot: "They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more" (WFG 81). In this radioplay, it is the same kind of summing-up of Croak's life, or at least a crucial event in it.

In any case, both Words and Music lost Croak (or he lost them). Their final, almost forced cooperation did not move Croak in any relieving sense. He was either too moved or completely disappointed with the result. It seems that vocal expression is only the superficial, inadequate facade of memories and feelings. The discrepancy between artistic, or any other, creation and that which cannot be expressed is there to stay, in Beckett's radioplays at least. Yet creation, boring and silly as it may be, is presented not only as a sign of life, but as life itself. Obsessive talking on radio is simply the will to remain alive and 'prove' it radiophonically.

The medium in Beckett's radioplays is not the message. The message can never be delivered and the medium serves only to focus on certain aspects of the inexpressible message. The listener is given to understand that there is more that could not have been said. The value of the attempt to express anything at all lies mainly in the courage gained to know that it is only a tentative expression and yet keep on trying. It is a Sisyphean kind of pride.

Croak extends his two modes of expression and examines their respective influences on him, and whether they really serve his purposes. Silence is therefore not only death. Beckett treats silence not as a testimony to the inadequacy of expression, but as the expression of the inability to say or utter or play music in any way more meaningful than mere noise-making.

Words and Music is an allegory of art as a process of imaginative exploration. What it explores is the situation of an artist in relation to his life, that is, it attempts to embody in artistic form, in a fusion of emotion and rational thought, an adequate vision of the artist's reality.

Cascando

Cascando was first broadcast in 1963, by the BBC. In the two radioplays, Words and Music and Cascando, Beckett uses Words and Music in a roughly similar way, but the relationships between the figures and the overall meaning of the two radioplays are different.

With this radioplay, Beckett achieved maximal density and an almost absolute exhaustion of radiophonic elements. The balance between economy of means and richness of expression is perfect in this radioplay.

When compared with Words and Music, from the point of view of the figures, one notes that Music remains Music, Croak is replaced by Opener, and Words is replaced with a character called Voice. Here, again, Voice carries most of

the verbal element in the radioplay. But unlike Words and Music, there is no animosity between Voice and Music. Music itself loses a little of the independence it had in the previous radioplay. It still functions independently, but no more as a personified mode of expression. Voice does not use sound effects anymore; in fact, there is no indication of any sound effects at all.

The idea that the scene takes place in somebody's head is a metaphoric way of describing Maddy in All That Fall. This idea is suggested and elaborated on in Embers, strongly implied in Words and Music, and quite explicit in Cascando: "They said, It's his, it's his voice, it's in his head" (CAS 13). Here Opener doubts whether "it" is or is not in his head -- whether the experience takes place in an objective or subjective realm. Yet, from the division and names of the figures, one can conclude that the dominant image is of an Opener who lifts a lid off his own skull and lets Voice speak. One of the two voices, Voice and Opener, functions as the inner, more reflective counterpart of the other. The two switch roles alternatively. Whereas croaks and groans are found in Words and Music, there is more of a real speech in Cascando. Opener's words replace Croak's sound effects and laconic retorts.

Thematically, the main difference between the two radioplays is the need, in Cascando, to tell and finish a story. The very beginning of the radioplay explains the

function of the story and the structure of the play simultaneously:

Story ... if you could finish it ... you could rest ... you could sleep ... not before Oh, I know ... the ones I've finished ... thousands and one ... all I ever did ... in my life ... with my life ... saying to myself ... finish this one ... then rest ... then sleep ... no more stories... no more words ... (CAS 9)

The radioplay is a story about "almost", and it is almost a story. Beckett's hypotheses have been seen in other places. Here he focuses the listener's attention on the urgent need to tell a story, not being able to do so and yet trying. The actual story one hears is the story about the story, about the story, etc. Beckett uses the "barber-shop mirror" trick of presenting two mirrors opposite each other and watching the reflections. In Cascando, Voice's voice and Opener's voice replace visual mirrors. They mirror each other vocally. Yet there is a sense of something missing. That missing element is the incomplete story, which this implied scheme ought to present between the two mirrors, acting as substance for the mutual mirroring. There is not much to be vocally reflected. Since the end of the story is not found and the story is not completed, the only thing left to do is tell how it might be found, and how incessant the search is. ("A thousand and one," Beckett says, like the well-known Arabian stories, and the story about Scheherezade who told them, there is always one more, the right one, in Beckett's Cascando, to be told).

Still, there are a number of facts to be learned from

Voice's story about a story. There was a man by the name of Woburn (probably himself, referred to in the third person), who gets up to go on a strange and difficult path, looking for something, in the wish to arrive somewhere, a light, an island.

The radioplay introduces the sense of an urgent need to achieve something, particularly because of the awareness that time is running short. If anything such as claustrophobia of time exists, it exists in this play. It is a sense of "almost" achieving essentials. The essential always slips away, yet there is a feeling of approximation. There is always the hope that,

... this time ... it's right ... finish ... no more stories ... sleep ... we're here third and first person become one 'we' there ... nearly ... just a few more ... don't let go ... Woburn ... he clings on ... come on ... come on ... SILENCE. (CAS 19)

The story and the radioplay are an agonizing process of trial and deeply disappointing error. There exists a tension between the wish to give in and the inner push to continue.

There also exists a strong sense of escalation in the radioplay Cascando. There is a rhythm and volume decrescendo at the end of the radioplay, an end that suggests the growing urgency of finding the 'right one', yet lack of power to do so. Final (and radiophonic) silence puts an end to the efforts.

Cascando strikes one as being a slightly more

optimistic radioplay than Words and Music although the optimism implied is of a Sisyphian nature, namely, such in which the process rather than the result is in the focus. Beckett seems to imply that there is a need of some external intervention to lift Woburn's eyes and make him see that the island and the light are rather near and at hand. The intervention is needed so as to extract Woburn from the cyclical pattern in which he walks. Beckett does not say whether such an external intervention is possible, but Woburn's own efforts seem to be endless and locked within themselves. He gets closer to his one and finite story in the same way as Zeno's paradoxes²⁷ move from one to zero, namely, by infinite division, never reaching the goal, in an asymptotic manner of approximation.

The radioplay has a mock classic beginning "It is the month of May" (Canterbury Tales, The Waste Land), yet the "dry as dust" voice and the verbal modification "for me" (CAS 9) give this promised resurrection a very subjective and ironic touch. The allusion, "It is the month of May", appears later again for the same purpose, and is perhaps indicative of the fact that Beckett, the artist, finally manages to write this very radioplay. Beckett describes the situation as that of a man very close to his death, in need of some achievement of a lifelong objective, never before attained.

It is interesting that Beckett appeals rather often

to visual images, especially in Woburn's gradual decay into mud, bilge, etc. Yet everything happens in the dark, and even the technique of evoking those visual images is different from, for example, All That Fall. Here it is an attempt to hold on to every one of the senses in order to complete the story. It is Voice who serves as eyes and helps to reconstruct the event in full. Voice does that both for Opener and for the listeners.

The atmosphere of Cascando is that of a nightmare. Beckett deliberately switches the internal and external functions of Voice and Opener. Therefore, there is no foothold which the listener can gain in order to be sure about whatever is really only in Opener's head. The situation is close to the one in Embers, but by far more internal, intensive, and intimate. Here, again, Beckett draws the listener right into the speakers' heads. What was more of a metaphor in the first two plays becomes, in Words and Music, and especially in Cascando, a realization of a metaphor. The realization works in two ways: it works in Beckett's use of the medium and in the roles he gives his figures; and it works for the listener because of the nature of the medium.

Cascando ought hence to be regarded as an allegory of the art of radio (and, for that matter, of the struggle any artist may have with his expressive means); at the same time, it is the manifestation of such an art. In Cascando, Beckett

is engaged in the process of exploring his art while presenting it. He explores the situation of an artist who has examined his artistic tools (in Words and Music) and now, in Cascando, wants to see what it is they can express.³¹

In this respect, Cascando marks the end of one road of exploration, a road that is roughly parallel to the one Beckett travelled from Waiting for Godot to Breath. Inasmuch as nothing further can be said in the same "reductio ad absurdum" way of diminishing the modes of expression, after Breath, so it is the case with Cascando.

After Cascando, Beckett, if he is to follow the consequences of his own implied pattern, ought to change the direction of his exploration of the medium. Radio I and Radio II are the last two radioplays Beckett has so far published (Radio I was published first in French by Minuit, 1973), and were produced by the BBC in 1976. Beckett calls them "roughs" but they will be treated here as complete works.

As in Play, Film, Acts Without Words (I and II), the name of the medium for which the work is intended is the name of the work itself, thus, obviously, drawing attention to the mode of performance as well as to the works' self-referential nature.

These two radioplays mark a new way in Beckett's exploration of radio, since after Words and Music and Cascando, it is quite inconceivable to imagine yet another

stripping-off of the modes of radiophonic expression. In both Radio I and Radio II, Beckett seems to try and cross the dividing line between the writer-producer-actor and the audience-listener. Here Beckett emphasizes not so much the very means of expression (or the inexpressibility), as in the previous two radioplays, but rather the potential impression and impact the means of expression may have on the listener. The last two radioplays seem to be building the writer-actor-listener situation into the work itself, and in a peculiar way, to even internalize outside criticism of the play and assign it a role inside it.

Thematically, Radio I and Radio II are a little easier to understand because the situation is more realistic, less enigmatic in its location.

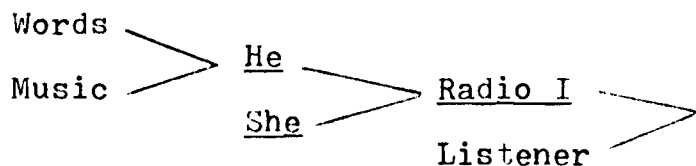
Radio I

In the first part of Radio I, a she-figure comes to a he. She arrives at a place which is, one soon learns, a room with a recording machine, perhaps a studio, perhaps some sort of radio-receiver. On coming, She expresses an interest in his disposition -- "Are you all right?" (RI 105) and adds that He asked her to come. He, reluctantly, agrees only that He "meets his debts" (RI 105), by inviting her He just "suffered" her to come. Unlike Words and Music or Cascando, in which the self is completely enclosed, here one finds clearly distinct other people, and relationships not between two or more phases of one person, but actual

relationships between all those internal phases of one person (Words, Music) and other people. She comes to listen, as She says. Rather than lifting lids off one's own skull (as in Cascando), She does it to him by pushing knobs and turning them ("to the right, Madam ...") (RI 106).

Radio I can be divided into three parts. The first is the encounter between He and She, the second is his attempt to report -- and get help -- on the fact that "they're ending", meaning the voice and the music. The third is the strange report on the "confinements".

Having asserted the existence and the nature of words and music in the first part, the anguish felt for their ending is more understandable in the second, until, in the third part they are personified and "made" into babies. There exists an interesting comparison between two sets of relationships: the he-she relationship sheds light on the relationship between the words and the music. If one extends this comparison one sees that whatever happens in the radioplay parallels that which happens between the actual listener and the radio receiver:



Quite a number of thematic textual references reinforce this highly self-referential quality of Radio I (other than the

structural one). She says: "I have come to listen" (RI 105). She wants to have some heat and later says: "How cold you are" (RI 106). She asks, "Is it alive?" (RI 106) (in contradistinction with either "recorded?" or "dead?") and receives the (rather funny but morbid) answer, "No, you must twist" and then, to her "All alone?" (the voice is He). He says, "When one is alone one is all alone" (RI 107). Towards the end of the session he says that he "cannot describe" the condition to which they are subject. All of these lines are deliberately ambivalent and descriptive of both the people and of Words and Music. Later, one learns that He regards Words and Music as his needs, but he has, just as well, a need to be listened to by the doctor and his secretary.

Between He and She, She is the one who tries to communicate, whereas He stresses the motif of "alone" (three times) against a notion of "they" who cannot see or hear one another. She, finally, and quite unsurprisingly, due to his "cold" treatment, leaves him to his "needs" (called "balms", "comforts", or "dogs", in Words and Music) and He, on his part, associates them with "house garbage".

The second part opens after a 'long pause'. He remains alone and is now trying to get in touch with his doctor. In the meantime, he draws the curtain violently, an act suggesting further inner enclosure. The relatively direct communication of actual encounter in the first part is replaced by the indirect, more mediated attempt to call

the doctor on the telephone. During the three phone calls, two to the secretary, one to the doctor himself, voice and music gradually faint away and "fail" him; leave him alone. He reacts as does Opener in Cascando: 'Good God' and 'Come on'.

Finally, in the third part of the radioplay, he receives a phone call in which he is informed that there was a "confinement ... breech" (RI 112), etc., and it is quite likely that Beckett alludes here to a birth given to twins (two confinements). This again, can refer to either some as yet unknown birth-giving of real babies, but in the context of Radio I, it is more reasonable to associate the birth with the already introduced twins -- words and music. Perhaps the very enigmatic ending line "Tomorrow ... noon ..." (RI 112) suggests that one or two of the twins died (due to the difficult "breech" birth) and that the funeral will take place tomorrow.

There is an obvious link between that mysterious birth of the twins and the slowly dying voice and music. The impression is that they are, simultaneously, being born and die. It is the birth and death of the radioplay Radio I itself.³²

Other than the parallel between the he-she relations and the voice-music one, there also exists a parallel between the ending of words and music and the (apparent) dying of those who were born in part III of Radio I. While listening

to the doctor (who returns the phone call) McGillycuddy hears something about "last gasps". The doctor, one may assume, thinks he is dealing with a psychotic and uses, perhaps, a patronizing, calming down tone. In the end, and at least from the point of view of McGillycuddy, the protagonist, He is the one to hear about the "confinement", "breech", and probably about the death of whoever was born. Thus shifting the disbelief in the reality of the dying words and music which the doctor expresses into a report McGillycuddy receives.

There are many listeners and listening situations in Radio I, so much so that one can rightfully assume that the radioplay is all "about" listening; it is listening.

1. Voice and music do not listen to each other.
2. He listens to voice and music, but hardly to She.
3. She listens to He and to what he listens to, namely, voice and music. (She leaves him, like they do).
4. There is a series of telephone 'listenings':
 - a) He and the doctor's secretary (twice)
 - b) He and the doctor himself
 - c) He and Miss X who calls about the confinements.

It is easy to notice that the common denominator of Radio I is listening itself. The radioplay elaborates on modes of listening and on situations (and contents) in which they take place. It has already been mentioned that the precise meaning of what is said is highly evasive and deliberately

vague. As in other Beckett works, one sees that here, too, it is this vagueness of content that draws the attention to the mode and medium of that which is being said at all.

The person who listens to all the listenings in the radioplay is, of course, the radio listener who is, vicariously, also represented in Radio I. The many silences and pauses indicated are the spots where the listener ought to plug himself in and be part of all the others who listen, and especially McGillycuddy himself.

Radio II

Radio II, too, is an allegory and more clearly so than Radio I on the roles and possible relationships between author and audience. Whereas Theatre II deals with this issue in theatrical terms and modes of expression, Radio II does so radiophonically. The allegory is reflected in the theme and situation of the radioplay as well as in its images, mutual attitudes between characters, and the highly evasive point of view (or of listening) presented.

The four characters who take part are A, animator; S, stenographer; Fox, apparently the subject; and Dick, a mute figure. A, obviously is the dominant figure, domineering and cruel though sometimes polite and even flirtatious towards S. S. is a "typical" secretary, rather obedient but not effaced. She has her own way of reacting. Dick is the one who says nothing but uses the pizzle, following A's command. Fox is described as half-human, half-animal, as even

his name suggests (is he sly?!), as well as the treatment he is given. In a remote way, one can conceive of him as a metamorphosis of a Lucky-like figure (as in Waiting for Godot). He evokes negative emotions in A and a certain degree of compassion from S.

The situation of Radio II is that of an inquiry or experiment performed by Animator on Fox, with the assistance of a lady stenographer and a mute figure called Dick. A tries different techniques in order to draw the desired information on Fox's life, and he uses mainly violence and cruelty. In fact, Fox does supply some information about a mole -- soaping and drying it, its underground life, etc. During the session, A and S exchange words about their previous achievements and failures with the subject. Also, A flirts a little with S, but she does not respond. Since the information Fox gives is insufficient and does not make much sense to A, he finally decides to fix it up and actually falsify it:

S: But, sir, he never said anything of the kind.

A: (angry) ... Maud would say, between two kisses, Amend.

S: But, sir, I --

A: (...) Amend!

S: (feebly) As you will, sir. (RII 128).

To the reader or the listener the added words "between two kisses" do not matter much and do not clarify the vagueness of the entire story; yet their importance lie in the very

fact that A wants -- and does -- change the "message" of his subject Fox. The radioplay ends with a promise for a better future tomorrow when "we may be free" (RII 128).

The main task the team is involved in is to mark down every syllable as well as facial expression of the subject, who is either reluctant or unable to deliver the clear information demanded of him. The entire situation is presented as one session in a series of attempts to find out something. Yet what it is they do not know: "Of course we do not know, anymore than you, what exactly it is we are after ..." (RII 125).

The images are mainly those of light and darkness (if they are images at all and not literal descriptions of fact). The "mole experience" takes place in the dark, the interrogation, in light; perhaps it is even too glaring for S as A suggests (RII 119).

Beyond the mystery and vagueness of the plot of Radio II, one can easily detect an intricate pattern which relates to the author-character-audience situation. In fact, this allegorical interpretation is the only one that can make sense of this otherwise uncrackably enigmatic radioplay. Even so, there are two possible formal schemes according to which author-audience relationships can be set:

	(a)		(b)
Animator	=	listener (critic)	-or- author
Stenographer	=	objective, disinterested	recorder (text)
Fox	=	author	-or- character
Dick	=	character	-or- listener

Due to the high degree of indeterminacy in the text, the above two possibilities are not mutually exclusive but, in fact, mutually complementary as long as the actual reader (or, for that matter, the listener) keeps being active. According to interpretation (a), Animator is the figure who endows characters with life (= anima) and wants Fox, the sly author (Beckett himself, in this context) to supply him with explanations of the sombre words on the mole, and especially the words 'have yourself opened' which are often repeated. Fox, the author, will be freed, will stop "harking on the same old themes" (RII 125), and could return to his "darling solitude" (RII 126). If Fox is an author/playwright figure, one ought to read the radioplay as a bitter attack launched by Beckett on his critics (again, as in Theatre II, his so far last stage play) implying that they finally not only torture him but actually distort his words -- as A did to Fox's. Dick's position in this interpretation is less clear. Perhaps he is, as suggested, the dramatic-radiophonic character, mute though he is, that the listener-critic uses in order to misinterpret (and torture) the author-playwright, who does his best. Describing Fox as a mole (or his describing a mole he had -- like his twin) serves, on this allegorical level, to elucidate the way in which Beckett sees his creation, namely, as groping in the dark. A's notion as a critic is no doubt reinforced by direct textual allusions to Dante, to Sterne and to those "old spectres from the days of

book reviewing" (RII 122).

According to interpretation (b) Animator is the author who tries to "suck" (a word often used in Radio II) and finally, as the deliberate falsification in the end suggests, to "fictionalize" the entire situation and the relationships between the characters who take part in it, thus making at least some sense of it. It is also possible that the author simply tries to make the best out of an already fictitious character. (The same patterns and situations can be found in Sterne's works, in Cervantes, Unamuno, Pirandello, Borges, etc.). Hence the stenographer in the framework story and Maud in the inner story of the "mole", are, at the same time, Danté's "Beatrice"-figures, motivating inspirations, and the objective reporters of the goings-on -- like the text itself is. Maud, in the mole story, is the one who saw him, witnessed him, as S is to both A and to Fox. In this interpretation (b) Dick is the listener, mute as a listener of a radioplay should be -- and is -- and his whips would hence stand for the need for the further information the author wants to draw from his subject.

It is certainly possible to mix these two interpretations, but it is not easy to dispose of them altogether. The need for such an allegorical interpretation ensues from the text itself:

Of course we do not know, any more than you, what exactly we are after, what sign or set of words.
But since you have failed so far to let it escape

you it is not by harking on the same old themes that you are likely to succeed, that would astonish me.
(RII 125)

In this radioplay, Beckett seems to be playing with his critics and hypostatizes, by means of a constantly self-referential text, the very process of interpreting his works in general, and Radio II in particular. In short, it is a radioplay about interpretation, while at the same time practicing it in the work itself. Whether Beckett himself (or, more precisely, the implied author) is presented as Fox or as the Animator, it is important to note that a number of otherwise arbitrary lines in Radio II now become clear.

A says: "What counts is not so much the thing, in itself ... no, it's the word, the notion" (RII 123). This is what an author is interested in as well as what Fox says when he first opens his mouth -- "Ah yes, that for sure, live I did, no denying ..." (RII 119). The radioplay tries to bridge over the gap between life lived, on the one hand, and the word or notion which may sum it up, explain it, on the other. Hence the radioplay, which is engaged, naturally, in giving vocal utterance to a life lived, is caught in the same trap. Radio II follows the same logically paradoxical pattern such as "this sentence has five words". In the self-referential character of the utterance it unites the mode of expression with its content. Radio II is only as vague, or inexplicable, to the listener as that which the characters within it are trying to do.

Conclusion

Paul Ricoeur distinguishes between text and discourse and maintains that the latter is "realized temporally and in the present", referring "back to its speaker", its instance is "self-referential" and an event, the character of which is "attached to the person of the speaker". Ricoeur says that discourse also refers to "a world which it is supposed to describe, express or represent". It is not only a world but "an other, another person, a hearer to whom it is addressed."³³ Beckett's radioplays follow these qualities of discourse, although they are a particular case of it. The two main differences between discourse (in Ricoeur's general notion) and the discourse in Beckett's radioplays are that (1) they were written first (and hence may be said to follow the characteristics of text) and (2) they are uttered by persons different from the writer. Yet these differences are reduced due to the directness, intimacy and realism of radio, as well as by the very fact that they are uttered. Modally, however, Beckett's radioplays are discourse, and can hence be further examined as such.

Every radioplay is realized temporally and in the present. Beckett's radioplays deal with the present and with the passing of time not only as their modus of performance necessitates, but also from the point of view of content. In varying degrees of intensities, all radioplays are engaged in the attempt to cope with the fleeting moments of the

characters' lives. In All That Fall the main image is "lingering dissolution". In Embers, Henri is constantly busy marking time: "every syllable is a second gained". In Words and Music and Cascando, there is mention of the one motif, the one story that may redeem the character from his claustrophobic notion of losing time. In Radio I and Radio II, there is a clear shifting, in the end, of the "solution" to tomorrow. In all the radioplays, the point of view is that of the present -- both the present of the characters and the present of their listeners. Time, and the minute by minute passing of the present, is an element constantly made to be felt in the radioplays; so much so that it can be regarded as one of their major subject matters.

Beckett's radioplays refer, naturally, directly (or indirectly) to their speakers in the first, second, or third person. But here again, in Ricoeur's second characteristic of discourse, the radioplays are self-referential, not only due to the use of personal pronouns, but actually self-reflexive and self-referential in regard to the use of the medium in which they are produced. Many of the characters are keenly aware not just of their often obsessive talking but also of the kind of talking they perform on radio: they are unseen, their existence depends on words, it is words. Discourse in the radioplays is an event on radio insofar as it does, surely, "describe, express and represent" the world of the characters; furthermore it is this world itself. This

world has two implied extensions, such that they reach out beyond the actually performed "event": one of them is the author, who may or may not be identified with the first-person narrator(s); the other is the listener, the listener who is represented in the radioplay, as well as the actual listener to whom the radioplay is addressed. By the very use of discourse (vicarious as it may be in Beckett's case) one is logically obliged to assume that there exists a listener. Whereas Beckett's stage plays are always enwrapped in the self-referential notion of "being seen", the radioplays -- all of them -- deal with the equally self-referential notion of "being heard". It is an idea of esse est percipi as ensuing from the 'motto' of Film and applied to radio. Beckett's radioplays' characters actually say so and utter words which basically amount to the same effect.

The talking-listening situation is the central motif in all of the radioplays. It is the epitome of self-reference: the talkers in the particular radioplay represent the playwright whereas the listening figure (an often changing role) represents the listener at home. Maddy Rooney complains about her difficulties with language, but more important is her wish to be heard ("Do not imagine, because I am silent, that I'm not present and alive ...") (ATF 23).

In Embers, Beckett goes one step further and deliberately blurs the borders between reality and

imagination in both Henri's and in the listener's case. One does not know whether Henri "really" hears or imagines hearing his wife, his daughter, the piano teacher, etc. Indulging and delving into the "inside" voices in Words and Music and in Cascando, Beckett implies that one always needs a listener, even if the character has to be, so to speak, split into a "talking phase" versus a "listening phase". Unable to go deeper into the self itself, Beckett turns, in Radio I and Radio II to the listening situation to "another".

Listening in the radioplays reflects listening to them. Obviously Beckett may certainly enjoy the irony ensuing from a situation in which no body is listening to a radioplay on the air. Typically, and quite in line with the paradoxical nature of self-referential utterances, even this possibility is thoroughly dealt with in the radioplays.

One can discern three main phases in Beckett's exploration of radiophonic expression. The first phase includes All That Fall, where the author makes extensive use of radio's facilities and its specific techniques such as mixer, elaborate sound effects, blending of voices, music and sound effects, a big cast, etc. Embers marks a shift from the first phase to the second. Technically Embers is still relatively "rich" (in terms of an elaborate use -- though much less than All That Fall -- of techniques, fast cuts, of voices, and effects, etc.) but the "scene" no longer takes place outdoors. There are fewer characters and the ones who

participate are, possibly, extensions of Henri's imagination and memory. While stripping off "technique", Beckett goes further in exploring the radiophonic mode of expression itself in his second phase -- Words and Music and Cascando. Language, too, becomes more economic at this stage. If one compares, for instance, All That Fall to Cascando, one sees that in the first Beckett presents a "rounded" three-dimensional figure, a rather self-conscious one, yet the medium in which she comes across is still a means for her portrayal. In Cascando, Beckett is involved in exploring the very process of artistic creation on radio -- with voices and music, though no sound effects at all -- and hence the medium is the subject matter, reflecting the means of that creation.

The third phase consists of Radio I and Radio II, two radioplays in which Beckett seems to be turning from almost drowning in the self-reflectiveness of Opener (in Cascando) to attempting to say, "how it is" radiophonically.

Notes to Chapter III

¹(1) "The basic elements ... of TV drama apply equally to radio drama. However, since radio lacks the all-important advantage of visual ..." In Stanley Field, TV and Radio Writing (Houghton & Mifflin Co., Boston, 1958), p. 127.

(2) Radioplays are to be classified "according to their length, ... the audience for whom they were intended," and so on, to the exclusion of artistic considerations. Rome Cowgill, Fundamentals of Writing for Radio (Reinhart & Co., New York, 1949), p. 321.

(3) "The tragic ending is not popular with either sponsor or listeners." (Even if this is true, the manifested approach is hardly esthetic!). G. Whitaker & H. Wilson, Writing for Broadcasting (A. & C. Black Ltd., London, 1935), p. 87.

(4) "The play of discussion rather than the play of action is the purest form for broadcasting." (Here there appears to be a vague notion of what radio can be, yet the critics' statement is haphazard and only partially true). Abbott Waldo, Handbook for Broadcasting (McGraw Hill, New York, 1950), p. 114.

²The specific contribution of Ruby Cohn, Hugh Kenner, John Fletcher and others will be discussed in further detail when appropriate in the context of the given radioplay.

³Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media (Sphere, London, 1967), pp. 318, 332.

⁴Dylan Thomas told his listeners: "Only you can hear and see, behind the eyes of the sleepers, the movements and countries and images and colours and dismays and rainbows and tunes and wishes and flight and fall and despair and big seas of their dreams." In Under Milkwood (New Directions, New York, 1954), p. 3.

⁵In the visual medium, the image is untrue to its real size; it is either smaller, as on the TV screen, or larger, as on the cinema screen. The distortion of size prevents even the cinema close-up from attaining genuine intimacy. The radio voice, compared to the visual image, loses relatively little in its realism. There is no need of any convention, such as perspective, in order to imagine the radio speaker as present in the room. In all other media there are obvious clues of falsity; in radio there are almost none.

⁶Ernst Schnabel writes about the first radioplay ever -- (Richard Hughes' A Comedy of Danger): "dessen ganze Stärke gerade in der entschiedenen Abwendung von der Schaubühne gelegen hatte Was in der Finsternis geschieht, gescheh' nirgendwo ... denn in der Finsternis lasse sich ein Punkt so wenig lokalisieren wie im Ausserhalb der Finsternis wäre keine dieser Geschichten möglich und nötig." And the conclusion is: "das reine Hörspiel scheint nur im Rahmen der Formel möglich zu sein." Methodically Schnabel is right. But radio is not "blind." It is a categorical mistake, like calling a wall "blind." Actually radio has nothing to do with light or sight. The visions radio may evoke are the listener's business only. Ernst Schnabel, Hörspiele (Fischer, Frankfurt & Hamburg, 1961), p. 43. "In der Finsternis, auf der Projektionsfläche der reinen Phantasie haben Zeit und Ort keine realen Funktionen mehr. Die Assoziation von Zeiten und Räumen tritt hier an ihre Stelle -- und die Hörspielblende entpuppt sich als einfacher assoziativer Sprung, als Stufe hinauf oder hinunter, nicht als Mittel, sondern als logische Folge des Spieles in der Finsternis." Definitely this attitude is much closer to my own.

⁷John Cage, Silence (Wesleyan U.P., Middleton, Conn., 1968), p. 8. (Henceforth -- Cage, Silence).

⁸Marshall McLuhan and Edmund Carpenter, Explorations in Communication (Beacon Press, Toronto, 1960), pp. 65, 72.

⁹Cage, Silence, p. 9.

¹⁰Words on radio take various forms within an established tradition. For instance, monologues often become spoken streams of consciousness, as in Robert Pinget, La Manivelle (actually a double monologue and not, as it may seem, a real dialogue); Tom Stoppard, Albert's Bridge, If You're Glad I'll be Frank; Alan Sharp, The Long-Distance Piano-Player; Henrich Boll, Klopfzeichen; Yehuda Amichai, Pa'amonim Virakavot (Bells & Trains).

¹¹(This is only a working definition since both words and music can function as effects as well; yet I follow the definition used by both writers and producers of radioplays).

¹²Radio used to specialize in thriller stories, science fiction and profound psychic dramas, since such specialties trigger off vivid imaginary pictures. More often than not such dramas rely on an extensive use of sound effects.

¹³By way of example, sound effects are used realistically in H. G. Wells' War of the Worlds, or any other typical thriller; metaphorically in Alan Sharp's The Long-Distance Piano Player; and symbolically in Louis McNeice's The Dark Tower. One can imagine a complete radioplay composed only of sound effects, and in that respect the sound effect approximates the border between concrete music and music on the one hand, and concrete music and words on the other. Visages by Luciano Berio is a good example.

¹⁴Hugh Kenner, Samuel Beckett (Calder, London, 1962), p. 167.

¹⁵Hildegard Seipel, Untersuchungen Zum Experimentellen Theater Von Beckett und Ionesco (Romanisches Seminar, Bonn, 1963), p. 242 ff.

¹⁶Victor Zuckerkandl, Sound and Symbol (Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1969), p. 184.

¹⁷Irving Wardle (ed.), New English Dramatists, Radioplays (Penguin, Middlesex, 1968), p. 21 ff. (Henceforth -- Wardle, Radioplays).

¹⁸Donald McWhinnie, The Art of Radio (Faber, London, 1959), p. 133 ff.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 135.

²⁰Both Hayman, Samuel Beckett (Heinemann, London, 1968) p. 39 and Wardle Radioplays note the movement in All That Fall. Hayman remarks that All That Fall deals with a lot of movement done by people who hate to move and find moving painful. Wardle notes that "radio cannot handle a static experience (even Beckett acknowledges this principle). It cannot show a character in motion, except towards or away from the microphone ..."

²¹Thus Dylan Thomas blinded his Captain Cat; Heinrich Boll used typically non-visual means of communication (a euphemism for darkness!) in his radioplays called Klopfzeichen and Sprechanlage. See also Yeats' The Cat and the Moon, Maeterlinck's Les Aveugles, and Ghelderode's The Fable of the Blind. All three play on blindness, metaphorically and as subject matter.

Blindness is often associated with the ability to have an inward insight. Beckett seems to avoid this "Tiresias" image, and concentrate rather on Dan's groping in the darkness of his physical and spiritual world. In poetic terms, one could say that the listener is made to see the world through Maddy's voice and hear it through Dan's blind eyes. Blindness is a favourite with authors of radioplays, producers and directors. Darkness (as occasional blindness) and blindness-as-a-malady link between the consciousness medium and the awareness of the writer in the attempt to catch the consciousness of the listener and increase the credibility of the radioplay. Besides, Beckett has more blind in his works; e.g. Hamm, Pozzo and more.

²²William York Tindall, Samuel Beckett (Columbia University Press, New York, 1964), p. 41.

²³Ronald Hayman, Samuel Beckett (Heinemann, London, 1970), p. 54.

²⁴In Molloy, Beckett says: "Not to want to say, not to know what you want to say, not to be able to say what you think you want to say, and never stop saying, or hardly ever, that is the thing to keep in mind, even in the heat of composition."

²⁵Martin Esslin (ed.), Samuel Beckett, Twentieth Century Views, (Prentice Hall, N. J., 1965), p. 7 ff.

²⁶Such is also the basic situation of characters like "Not I", the ones in Play and many more. (I use eye-lips instead of eye-lids ...).

²⁷It is quite impossible to ignore these following lines found in Shakespeare's Henry IV. I cannot prove it, but it is hard to believe Beckett did not know the lines and used them as an allusion or even as a trigger for the whole radioplay -- hooves, horses, time, and the name Henry:
"Think, when we talk of horses that you see them
Printing their proud hoofs because the receiving earth
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings
Carry them here and there, jumping o'er time
Turning the accomplishment of many years
Into an hour of glass."

²⁸Hayman seems to make the inevitable mistake that happens when a radioplay is treated 'unmediumally' -- "We are neither quite taken into the madness nor quite left outside it, but kept swinging uncomfortably between the two positions, in Samuel Beckett (Heinemann, London, 1964), p. 43. Even Kenner and Esslin did not quite see the point, although it is Esslin himself who notes "... the work of art as a whole is its meaning, what is said in it is indissolubly linked with the manner in which it is said, and cannot be said in any other way" (Samuel Beckett, in 20th Century), p. 8. Beckett makes it specially clear when Maddy's words are heard and performed. It is not only how (acting-wise) she says whatever she says, it is also the fact that certain words are spoken at all.

²⁹In my own production, the music was written according to the indicated themes, such as love and soul, warm, sentimental, etc. Yet I asked the composer to add a touch of incongruity or jerkiness which, in musical terms, was executed by strange and disharmonic endings, special orchestration, etc.

³⁰Perhaps a reinforcement of the possible notion that Croak is the substratum of the two 'modi'. If this is true, it should be conceived of as a joke on scholastic philosophy.

³¹It is interesting to note that very few radioplays have made use of non-semantic word orchestration. Before the advent of TV, when radio alone served the social function of disseminating information, it was almost inconceivable to use words in an unconventional fashion. "Now that radio need no longer fill its erstwhile purely social chores, it is open to wide experimentation." In Explorations in Communications and Understanding Media. See also Irving Wardle's introduction, p. 12. Very few efforts have been made to harness radio to nonsense-literature (e.g., Gertrude Stein's extremely radiophonic piece entitled "What Happened"; Ring Lardner's plays), speaking choirs and the like. This sort of works have a long tradition in European literature. They could prove more suitable for radio (in terms of a correlation between genre and medium) than those many, often awkward, adaptations of stage plays. The O.R.T.F. and the Suddeutscher Rundfunk have had their experimental radio workshops and have broadcast some purely radiophonic works, often based on dada and nonsense-like material.

³²Due to the very large amount of 'Unbestimmtheit-sstellen' (gaps in the text) it is even possible to assume that it was the she-figure of the first part of the radio-play that gave birth to their children, real or 'metaphoric', namely, Words and Music. Accordingly, there are many possible interpretations to Radio I and what it is supposed to mean.

³³Ricoeur, Metaphor, p. 119.

CHAPTER IV

THE AUDIENCE

At me too someone is looking, of me too someone is saying -- he is sleeping ...

- Samuel Beckett, Waiting for Godot

What? Is it me you are referring to?

- Samuel Beckett, Endgame

Introduction

An ever-growing number of critics and theoreticians see the epitome of theatre as an experience shared by audiences and actors through the role-playing of the latter on the one side of stage, and the watching and vicarious participation of the former, in the auditorium. Ricoeur does not talk of dramatic performance in his discussion of metaphor and hermeneutics, but the basic polarities of discourse (as distinguished from text) are helpful in regard to the awareness of audience in Beckett's drama. The polarities of discourse are "event and meaning, singular identification and general predication, propositional act and illocutionary acts, sense and reference, reference to reality and self-reference."¹ In this context, the last pair is of great interest since reference to reality and self-reference stand at the centre of discussion in Beckett's plays.

In spoken language, what a dialogue ultimately refers

to is the situation common to the interlocutors, that is, aspects of reality which can be shown or pointed at. Reference is "ostensive". In written language reference is no longer ostensive: poems, essays and fictional works speak of things, events, states of affairs, characters which are evoked but are not "there", in the strict and spatial sense.²

The main difference, then, between Beckett's texts and his texts intended for performance can be regarded in terms of the ostensive reference that is present in performance and absent in text, except, of course, for Beckett's attempts to pull himself up by his own bootstraps using words in a pseudo-ostensive manner. Nevertheless, in a text there is nothing except paper and printed signs on it. In drama, as a special case of discourse,

the reference is resolved by the power of showing a reality common to the interlocutors. Or if we cannot show the thing being talked about, at least we can situate it in relation to a unique spatio-temporal network to which the partners in discourse also belong.³

Drama does not and cannot abolish the ostensive reference of the spoken text. "The dramatic situation is hence not an objective reality external to the language; it is an immaterial meaning generated by the language itself".⁴ In Beckett's plays, when the "situation" is of ultimate importance, from the point of view of the actors' very existence on stage, the audience is not only not exempt, but actually built into the same situation of "geworfenheit." From his point of view, Georg Luckacs also says: "The dramatic hero

does not set out to prove himself; he is a hero because his inner security is given a priori beyond the reach of any test of proof."⁵ The novel, on the other hand,

tells of the adventure of interiority, the content of the novel is the story of the soul that goes to find itself, that seeks adventure in order to be proved and tested by them, and by proving, to find its own essence.⁶

Lukacs emphasizes the public character of Drama. Drama,

has a side which concerns the public directly, which requires a public for its representation ... the essence of dramatic effect is immediate, direct impact upon a multitude ... the dramatist's representation of an event ... as belonging entirely to the present To witness something depicted and conceived as happening in the present, one has to be present in person, whereas to learn about something entirely past, neither the physical immediacy of communication nor therefore a public is at all necessary.⁷

Lukacs' distinction is fully applicable to Beckett's theatre, especially since there are endless indications in Beckett's texts themselves concerning the presentness of both characters and audience.

Whereas problems of interpretation in a written text must be solved through the text where "the discourse must speak by itself,"⁸ in spoken language, like the language an audience encounters in Beckett's produced texts, "Problems are usually solved ... by a kind of exchange or intercourse which we call dialogue or conversation,"⁹ and naturally there are a number of extra-textual elements to be considered in a theatre production.

Eleven different approaches to theatre are listed in

Shank's study, The Art of Dramatic Art. Shank emphasizes the audio-visual characteristics of theatre, without at least one of which it cannot exist, unlike mime and radio plays and the literary work which is "a complete work of art in its printed form because all of the aesthetic facts are in the book and it is ready to be experienced by its public."

Basing his argument on Susan Langer's notion about inaccessibility of discursive language to a conveying of subjective reality, Shank says that in artistic expression an artist "must make external and objective that which is internal and subjective. He must make visible or audible that which is invisible and inaudible."¹⁰

The notion of theatricality finds its most accurate manifestation in a theatre that is not simply "aware of itself" but such that incorporates the theatrical metaphor of the "Theatrum Mundi". In her book, entitled Theatricality, Elizabeth Burns dedicates a lucid chapter to theatrical metaphor. Though sociological in its approach, Burns' study is helpful in order to move from the general idea of the self-conscious notion of theatre to the self-reflective one.

The traditional theatre offers a play world (however serious) in which the spectators' anxieties about results and outcomes can be relaxed and in which both consequentiality of action and the intrusion of accident are clearly spelt out. In happenings or improvised theatre the brackets which contain the unreal world are spaced more widely apart so that doubt enters in concerning the outcome, for players and audience alike, of the action in the ordinarily enclosed world of the theatre, of what goes on, and of what they will do, outside it.¹¹

With Beckett's plays one has to examine the relationship between this mechanism of mirroring and that which is being mirrored. The encounter of two different notions of the 'real', as in everyday life and in theatre, are two levels of consciousness. The encounter between the two ensues from Beckett's usage of self-referring utterances.

The concept of the theatre as an emblem of the world -- *Theatrum Mundi* -- and an emblem of man's life in it, is used by Beckett in a manner both ironic and much more restricted. Its cosmic, moral, etc., significance has been replaced as Burns correctly observes, by the self-consciousness of the actor. Burns adds:

The same device can be applied to the audience's interpretation of the significance of the dramatic world within the theatre although in this case the *epoché* -- the frame of action -- is declared and temporary. The world of the play becomes an alternative and tangible reality; hence there is a temptation to make play, as Pirandello did, with the shifting boundaries between the theatrical and the ordinary world. He is able to express doubt in reality because he works always within a world that is bracketed as unreal. The mirror world can mirror endless images but is never broken. In this he is different from those contemporary dramatists or producers who try to break the circle of illusion and merge the real and theatrical worlds. They do not, however, escape the dilemma of definition. By drawing the audience into the action they substitute "theatricality for theatre".¹²

The built in self-referential quality of discourse in general (according to Ricoeur) -- the ostensive meaning of drama, the importance of the situation and the experience in theatre, the immediacy and presentness of the performance, as well as the incorporating of the theatrical metaphor into the

play -- all these elements are not only found in Beckett's plays, but, they constitute an important part of what those plays "mean". There are so many variables simultaneously working to create meaning on the stage that it is impertinent to identify it in terms other than its own. The experience is the meaning."¹³ The physicality of the theatre is in fact what gives rise to the inescapability of the situation which audience and actors share in Beckett's plays.

Everyone is liable to be "on stage" so that there is no escape to a position from which the theatrical world can be viewed objectively as separate from, contrasting with, or even complementary to the "real" world, outside the theatre.¹⁴

Simmel says:

The art of the actual performance is molded by a particular human experience: man's life consists in or shapes itself in terms of a prescribed Other which he takes over and develops as his own essential being, without however, therefore deserting his own self but filling out with that self ... without being in any sense false or hypocritical, the personal existence of the individual is metamorphosed into some pre-determined guise which is, of course, produced out of the resources of his own life, but is, nevertheless, not merely the straightforward expression of his own life.

The possibility exists for us to assume such appearances, even strange ones and nevertheless remain consistent with our own nature. We are harnessed into this paradox at all times. And this constitutes the prototypical form of theatricality. This particular function becomes an art when it exists for its own sake instead of being part and parcel of the manifestations of ordinary life.¹⁵

To the above remarks on theatre, one ought to add two more specifically Beckettian notions. The first is that of self-reference, the second, following Austin, is that of a "performatory" speech-act.

Lowry just maintains that the reader is conscious of being guided through the work: "Involvement of the reader or spectator as accomplices or collaborators is essential in the curious situation of artistic creation."¹⁶ Quoting I. A. Richards, Lowry agrees that the reader is both a willing accomplice to the author as well as being conscious of his situation as an outsider. Lowry tries to link two elements -- that of the fictive reader and that of the self-reflexive works:

In seeming contrast to the fictive reader is the fact that in many works of literature one finds an inward-turning self-reflexiveness: the poem commenting on itself, first, in the process of composition and then in the reading or performing of it. Yet one may argue that both the fictive role of the reader and the self-reflexiveness of the work have in common a playing the reality of the fiction or more strongly, the exposure of the fiction to the end, paradoxically, of reinforcing it.¹⁷

With drama the role, or task, of the audience is part of the dramatic convention, ensuing both from the theatrical situation itself, based on direct confrontation and direct address to the audience; and from numerous dramatic devices such as asides, monologues, etc. A direct unmasking and powerful appeal to an individual reader such as Baudelaire's, "Tu le connais lecteur, ce monstre delicat-Hypocrite lecteur-mon semblable-mon frère!" is built-in theatrical situation in which the direct appeal is the norm, and quite conventional in (at least) the non-realistic theatre. The fictive "audience" on the other hand, is not fictive at all; the audience is actually, physically present. Only the

audience's involvement can be related to, or hoped for, to be enlisted.

Wolfgang Iser's approach is more radical. He claims that the reader may be given the chance of discovering himself, both in and through his constant involvement in "home-made" illusions and fictions. If, as Iser says, the written text lies half-way between real objects and the reader's own experience,¹⁸ then theatre experience shifts more to the side of creating the illusion of an objective world. The "Unbestimmtheitsstellen" (indeterminacy gaps) in theatre present themselves through both texts and their presentation and re-presentation. Whereas a theatre director receives a dramatic text that is full of gaps, and tries to fill some of them with his own directorial interpretation, he still, and necessarily so, opens other gaps which in turn are to be filled by the audience.

The "literary McLuhanism" in which Iser is engaged, namely, his emphasis on texts "hot" and "cool" and the amount of involvement they give rise to in their readers according to their varying degree of informativeness, can be applied to theatre despite McLuhan's own negligence of theatre and Iser's own and only partial way in applying his own theory on Beckett's texts.

Beckett often fills in unimportant gaps (such as descriptions of precise position of a protagonist and his movements) while omitting (deliberately, we maintain)

ultimately important ones (such as protagonist's motivation, plot, background, etc.) which are meant to be completed by audience and readers' active interpretative involvement. Hence, one is entitled to conclude that the more the work of art gives up the definition of its intention, the more the hermeneutic act of reading or viewing a play is reinforced.

In Beckett's plays the audience finds out, after a long and effortsome process, that they themselves are the focus and object of attention, criticism, pity, anger, etc., rather than the actors, and at least, just as much. Beckett does this, not only by a possible far-reaching technique of actor-audience identification, but by direct, straightforward appeals and references.

Drama, with Beckett, is no more a means to achieve Catharsis and relief, or even pleasure. It presents a demand to the understanding in three interrelated ways. It contains gaps the audience is supposed to fill in; it contains gaps between the theatrical presentation and the ways to interpret it; it refers to the audience who becomes not only a witness, but an object of the play's "message." Viewing a Beckett play is a constant process of choosing, the criterion of which is supplied by each and every member of the audience's intelligence, experience and imagination.

Before beginning this discussion, it may prove useful to recapitulate in brief J. L. Austin's concept of speech-acts, which will be helpful in illuminating the specific

theatrical approach Beckett uses in his treatment of the audience.

In 1956, J. L. Austin introduced the notion of "performatives" which he described as:

A kind of utterance which looks like a statement ... that is not nonsensical, and yet is not true or false .. [If] a person makes an utterance of this sort we should say that he is doing something rather than merely saying something.¹⁹

Unlike texts intended for individual and silent reading, a play can be described as a sequence of speech-acts.²⁰ Speech-acts do not appeal to an implied reader but to an actually present group of people. In order to focus on the speech-acts performed in a play, theory is followed and a distinction made between the locutionary aspect of the content of the spoken discourse, which is basically similar in text and in a theatrical speech-act, and the more typically theatrical aspects of the illocutionary and the prelocutionary. (That which is done in saying; that which is effected by saying). The written text has a much better chance of losing its author and becomes fairly autonomous of his intentions. Text, in contradistinction to speech-act, is also lacking in the ability to control the reader. It transcends the socio-psychological conditions of a specific dramatic presentation. Due to the illocutionary and prelocutionary aspects of a dramatic speech-act, the spoken dramatic sentence in a play is very powerful in reducing the distanciation of language from reality and, more importantly,

it reduces the distanciation between author and audience.

In dealing with notions of audience in Beckett's theatre, reference will be made to Austin's above-mentioned notions on speech-acts. They will apply to the analysis of the audience in the plays. At the same time, one should bear in mind the specifically theatrical constituents and condition of performance in which such speech-acts are uttered, namely, a large number of entirely non-verbal means such as gesture, mime, movement, light, sets and costumes. Inasmuch as the author reaches out toward the audience through his play, so too are the members of the audience required to reach back to the author through that very same medium. The locutionary aspect of a speech-act is, so to speak, the objective. It is through the illocutionary and the prelocutionary that Beckett makes the actors invite the audience to accept the locutionary.

The performance-performatory character of the Beckett lines extricates its author from an otherwise hermetic solipsism. Only if an actor succeeds in fully internalizing the self-reflexiveness of the line written by Beckett would he be able to pass it over to an audience (give necessary talent, elementary conditions of sight and sound, etc.). By bringing the audience to experience its own embarrassing situation of non-understanding, Beckett opens the way to freedom. The "Unbestimmtheitsstellen" are the switch that activates the reader to use his own ideas in order to realize

the text's intention in fiction, and the theatrical situation in the theatre.

Having dealt with Beckett's concern for the "vehicle", namely, plays for theatre and radioplays in Chapters II and III, it is now necessary to turn to his concern for "humanity" (i.e., the specific group of people who are the audience of a play or listeners to a radioplay²¹) and see how they are treated.

Beckett's awareness of his audience is manifest in a number of dramatic ways and techniques in the plays, in addition to the quite obvious fact that theatre is intended to be shown and uttered in front of an actual, live audience. With a varying degree of intensity one finds at least one of the following approaches to the audience in the plays: the direct appeal (verbal and non-verbal); the indirect appeal (again, both verbal and non-verbal); the theatrical situation itself; and a deliberate depiction of an actor-audience relationship on stage in the given play as part of the theatrical situation. Also, we find that possible critical approaches to the play are already built into it, supplying the audience with guidelines for their evaluation of the play. At the same time, this built in self-criticism of the play partially deprives the audience of a valid and original evaluation of it outside the theatrical encounter.

These different dramatic modes of referring to the audience partially overlap, yet taken either separately or

together, they indicate that the actual audience of the play (in contrast to the notion of the audience in the play) is invited to regard itself as being made up of those people about whom, and for whom, the play is written and presented.

Direct and Indirect Appeals

The direct verbal appeal will be considered here as a direct second-person address to the audience, in which the actor addresses his lines to (or about) the audience right in their faces. Such appeals are much more scarce in Beckett's plays than one may expect from a writer who is practically obsessed with his yearning for communication. Beckett usually does not address his audience directly. In Waiting for Godot, one finds Vladimir saying "that bog" and "muckheap". Hamm, in Endgame, uses the same noun. One also finds, in Waiting for Godot, that the audience is referred to as "not a soul in sight" and as corpses and skeletons. In all the plays that follow chronologically, Beckett makes no more direct verbal addresses until as late as Footfalls in which the character says, "whom the reader will remember" (PF 47) -- thus, no doubt, playing a double irony on the audience. The scarcity of this approach ought not to be misleading. It is a rather unsubtle and too easy approach. Also, it is functional only once or twice in a play, anyway, because the surprise effect is soon gone.

The Indirect Verbal Appeal

In his earlier plays, Beckett refers to people in the third person and calls "them" by many names such as Men, Humanity, My Likes, Creatures,²² Souls, Skeletons, Corpses, Mankind, Everybody, Somebody, Someone, Anyone, Gentlemen, Wayfarers, Some Kind of Person, etc. It is suggested that all these labels can be treated as a general notion of They which is a simultaneous reference to both the actual audience and to all of humanity outside the theatre. When one examines the content of these third person appeals, one sees that they can easily be relevant to the audience. The "they" is a camouflage for a "You". An extensive use of the various They can be found especially in Waiting for Godot, and then, in reducing frequency, in the later plays.

In the use of the They, a grammatically indirect appeal to an audience, Beckett suggests that he himself, his actors, and his audience share the same fate of passing time in a highly self-conscious, self-referring manner, in which the self-referential quality of the actor's speech-act enhances that of the audience. Beckett's better known protagonists are given quite a large number of lines in which they develop this notion of They, and integrate it into themselves. Pozzo says: "I cannot go along without the society of my likes" (WFG 16b).²³ Vladimir says, in a much more explicit manner: "At this place, at this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it or not" (WFG 79) (Italics

mine) and also: "At me too someone is looking" (WFG 58). Hamm wants to know whether even the toy dog is looking at him: "Is he gazing at me?" (EG 31). Winnie, perhaps more than most other characters is obsessed with They who are none other than the audience sitting right in front of her: "Someone is looking at me still, caring for me still" (HD 37).

The integration of the third person (singular or plural) into one's own is best shown in Not I where Mouth treats herself in the third person. Her deliberate relinquishing of the first person is the most intense expression of Beckett's attempts to hold the I and the They in an extreme tension of an attraction-rejection relationship.²⁴

The Direct and Indirect Non-Verbal Appeal

In Beckett's plays most of the stage activity is both centered and meticulously frontal. Hamm wishes to be seated right in the middle. Winnie finds it very hard to look anywhere but forward, and so do the two women and the man in Play, the three women in Come and Go, the mouth and the head in Not I and That Time -- all of whom cannot look but forward. The frontal approach is the most natural pose towards a theatre audience, yet in Beckett's plays this is not simply a natural theatrical device. Other than enhancing the artificiality of the theatrical situation the frontal, mostly centered or slightly off-centered location of the action on stage, serves to reinforce the need for the audience's response, tacit though it may be. Certainly, the actors'

body postures towards the audience is part of the illocutionary and prelocutionary aspects of the speech-act delivered on stage. Hence, acts such as Krapp throwing the banana peel into the auditorium, or, conversely, retreating to his dark backstage source of liquor, should be interpreted as part of the confrontation-avoidance pattern in need of facing an audience.

Beckett's characters, like their author, avoid or face themselves, insofar as they avoid or face each other, and they avoid or face each other (in language and in non-verbal action) insofar as they avoid or face the audience. However, being on stage they are already, and by definition, exposed to some sort of at least minimal "facing". Whereas in older theatrical traditions a protagonist is being interrogated for certain deeds -- actions or failures to act -- in Beckett's plays, the very existence on stage already implies a situation of interrogation from the outside as well as inner quest. The theatrical situation of being on stage compels them to do something, to justify their being there at all, as many of the characters realize and express. In Beckett's first and last plays (so far) one of the key lines is "lets go" (Waiting for Godot, Theatre II). The characters cannot go away; they are bound to stay on stage, in front of an audience. Hamm is constantly aware of his need to play and goes as far as asking: "Did anyone have pity on me?" (EG 49) and then cuts his own appeal to the audience with a self-conscious, ironic

remark: "Did you never hear an aside before?" And the audience no longer knows whether the line addressed to it was or wasn't "an aside". Winnie wants to know, as a person, as an actress too, what she is supposed to do in her weird situation: "There's so little one can do ... one does it all ... 'Tis only human", (HD 18) and "One can not sing just to please someone" (HD 31). Winnie keeps on going because "someone [be it Willie or the audience] is looking at me still ... eyes on my eyes" (HD 37). The same need to utter, act or simply be in front of the audience is made very clear in Play, in which the three characters feel required by the light, to explain, tell, do; an attitude which is reduceable to Beckett's formula-notion: "Am I as much as being seen?" (Pl 61). The external pressure a character feels to present it's life is epitomized in Not I, both in the story within the play -- the one about the woman in court, "speak up woman ... mouth half open ..." (NI 21) -- and in the whole play which is a perfect unity between the content of the speech and the mode of its presentation: "start pouring it out ... mad stuff ... no one could follow" (NI 22).

The notion of the audience here is achieved through the balance between the spoken text and the conditions under which the lines are delivered, in terms of posture and movement (as well as pitch, speed, etc.). The audience in Beckett's plays is not only described in the text as an

external motivator for the characters to behave, as they do, but also as the actual audience who have to suffer and sit through the listening and watching of the sometimes agonizing plays.²⁵

The answer to the question whether the members in the audience regard themselves as the addressees is left free for them to decide. Beckett's offer to them to respond is, however, a standing, actual invitation as long as the play is on.

Actors As Audience

The most unique single pattern Beckett uses in the overall attention given to the audience is that of establishing dramatic situations in which the relationship between stage and audience is reflected in the plays themselves. An audience-actors relationship can best be defined with the dialectical axis of alienation-identification. Any rhetoric of stage implies both a conscious, well-formed expression of spontaneous feeling and a primal, experiential empathy -- on behalf of both actors and audience. Uri Rapp (following Duvignaud) calls this typically theatrical double attitude -- "Willing suspension of disbelief" -- by the name "inlusion".²⁶ It is a meta-level of experience-participation, while being distanced. Here a person experiences himself and the plot in which he partakes in as theatrical.

Characters in Beckett's plays often treat each other in precisely this way, half distanciation, half participation. Estragon, Vladimir, Pozzo and Lucky relate to each other as

the audience relates to them, namely, with that ambivalent "inlusive" attitude, combining empathy and detachment, alienation and identification. Whenever Vladimir and Estragon are alone on stage they go through innumerable routines of quarreling and reconciliation, of pitying each other and being emotionally absolutely blank to each other. Between the two main characters, Estragon usually maintains more of the role of an actor, and Vladimir, more of the omniscient or understanding audience. With Pozzo and Lucky, Pozzo is the spectator and Lucky the performer. The greater mutuality between Vladimir and Estragon is reduced, in Pozzo and Lucky's case to a rather one-way attitude. When the two couples meet, they, again, treat each other as an audience treats actors. As soon as they get to know each other a little better, the more estranged, perhaps even 'person-object' attitude is replaced with a flexible shifting between empathy-antipathy, affection-disgust, or simple indifference. Vladimir and Estragon examine Lucky: "they resume their inspection" (WFG 17b) and comment on him, "He's not bad looking ... Perhaps he's a half wit ... a cretin" (WFG 17b). To them he looks as strange as they may look to the audience.

In the sequence of Lucky's speech (in itself a mock locutionary-illocutionary-prelocutionary speech-ACT) all three other characters watch him, each following Lucky with his typical individual mannerism, following the same pattern in which the audience can be said to follow the whole play,

and particularly that specific scene. Such an attitude is made yet clearer when they say: "Will you not play? Estragon -- play at what? Vladimir -- We could play at Pozzo and Lucky" (WFG 47). Earlier in the play, Lucky asks for audience reaction to his speech: "How did you find me? (Vladimir and Estragon look at him blankly) Good? Fair? Middling? Poor? Positively bad?" (WFG 25b).

Hamm and Clov play actor-spectator to each other. Although Hamm can't see, he can still hear and smell. He is an actor in his role, and plays to himself, to his co-actors on stage and to the audience. Whenever he leaps out of his play-within-a-play, he also comes across as an altogether stripped-of-theatricality character: "Let's stop playing!" implores Clov, and Hamm gives him the paradoxical answer: "Never!" which entails a simultaneous affirmation and negation of the suggested offer. As in Waiting for Godot, the form characters in Endgame serve as audience to each other. Nagg and Nell are two commentators: "Nothing is funnier than unhappiness" (EG 20).

The one play that reflects actor-audience relationships on stage in the most precise way, is Happy Days. Winnie's attitude to Willie reflects the attitude of the playwright to his audience, and the attitude of any person to any other.

The spatial setting of Willie already indicates that he is not a "regular" co-actor. He disturbs the symmetry of

the stage, and lies to the side and back of Winnie. Willie is both Winnie's husband and her audience-on-stage. He does not only "give her the impression she exists" -- as Estragon would say -- but is a precondition to her entire act. Willie is the representative on stage of the audience in the auditorium.

Winnie appeals to him and talks to him by talking to the front, namely, to the real audience. Beckett succeeds in creating the impression that it is Willie who witnesses Winnie's "dialogue" with the audience rather than the audience witnessing her talking to Willie:

Can you see me from there, I wonder? Oh, I know it does not follow when two are together -- (faltering) -- in this way -- (normal) -- that because one sees the other, the other sees the one. (HD 22)

The play is replete with utterances that refer to both Willie and the audience: "Dont go off on me again ... I may need you ... no hurry, just don't curl up on me again" (HD 13), and even more explicitly:

Ah yes, if only I could bear to be alone, I mean prattle away with not a soul to hear ... something of this is being heard, I am not merely talking to myself. (HD 18)

Winnie uses this approach in foreshadowing Willie-the-audience's potential response:

Oh I can well imagine what is passing through your mind; it is not enough to listen to the woman, now I must talk to her as well. (HD 22)

In this respect one of the most striking self-reflective lines -- at least the real audience is not expected to answer

Winnie back ... is: "Ah yes, so little to say, so little to do, and the fear so great, certain days, of finding oneself" (HD 26) (my italics). Here Winnie expresses her fear of being left without an audience at all. Act II also begins with this craving to be seen:

Someone is looking at me still. (Pause) Caring for me still. (Pause) That is what I find so wonderful. (Pause) Eyes on my eyes. (HD 37)

From here on Winnie is engaged in a series of exercises in order to check herself against herself (e.g., sticking out her tongue) or against the content of her bag. But all such attempts cannot possibly be practised by Winnie-the-actress without the presence of an audience. Having internalized Willie's possible self-reflexiveness, Winnie tries a mock Cartesian equation: "I say I used to think that I would learn to talk alone ... But no ... Ergo you are there" (HD 38). Such lines refer to the characters, to the actors who play them, and to the relationships between the implied author and his dialogue. This dialogue is carried out via his actors-characters with the live audience in the auditorium.

Beckett-Winnie says:

One cannot sing just to please someone, however much one loves them, no, song must come from the heart ... pour out from the inmost, like a thrush. (HD 37)

The song Winnie finally sings at the end can be regarded as a metonym for the whole play, comparing the state of a stuck actress to that of a "stuck" author. In the same

way, she needs "true motivation" to sing on stage; he too needs something -- more than "love" for an audience -- in order to write and present a play instead of a play about a play. Winnie does sing her song at the very end, and even Beckett did write a play.

Winnie is looked at by a Mr. Shower²⁷ and evokes an impression of a play within a play, creating a double reflexion and a double situation of actress and audience.

This man shower or cooker -- no matter - and the woman -- hand in hand -- in the other hands bags -- standing there gaping at me --' ... What's she doing? he says -- What's the idea! he says, stuck up to her diddies in the bleeding ground -- course fellow -- what does it mean? He says -- what's it meant to mean?" (HD 32)

The man and the lady are reflections of Willie and Winnie. They too, man and woman, hold bags, and they too, are looking. They can be regarded as representations of Beckett who "looks" at Winnie or as yet another "audience" doing the same. This is a doubly reflexive scene of incredible sophistication and many layers of mutual mirroring. Hence, no doubt, the deliberately confusing use of personal pronouns.

The issue of looking is, in this play as well as in other Beckett works,²⁸ a reassurance of presence and existence. By the same token, we can see the next lines, "Perhaps he is crying out for help all this time and I do not hear him!" (HD 42)

Winnie-Beckett allows for the "other's" consciousness, namely, that of the audience, not merely to exist -- as it

would be necessary to assume in order for them to continue to assert their own self-consciousness through the other -- but to actually feel exactly the same, the same misery and need for help.

Gadamer says:

Only if the other is not merely the other of the first self-consciousness 'his other', but is rather free precisely in opposition to a self, can it provide confirmation of the first self-consciousness.²⁹

This, precisely, is the case here, with the intricate relationship between Beckett -- (through Winnie-Willie) -- and the audience.

Through his mouthpiece on stage, Beckett comes full circle back to openly admitting another "self" -- that of Willie, that of Winnie's as well as that of his own audience. It is an urgent need to respond to the "other's" consciousness, not even knowing whether the other has self-consciousness at all!

Happy Days uses theatre in order to explore the expressive possibilities of the author, through the vehicle of theatre, in order to reach out, both on stage, and from the stage to the audience.

In his three plays, Not I, Footfalls and That Time, the notion of the audience is part of what constitutes the relationships of the characters to themselves, but even in these dramatically condensed plays there always remains an actor-audience situation on stage.

In Not I, the function of the auditor, that

audience-on-stage figure, is reduced to four gestures of "helpless compassion", and the "sideways raising of arms ... lessens with each recurrence till scarcely perceptible at third" (NI 14). Other than in Krapp's Last Tape, in which live Krapp is his own audience -- if one considers the recorded Krapp to be the "actor" -- Beckett, in Not I, reduces the activity of his audience-on-stage to a bare minimum. The tall figure, sex undeterminable, is there just to show how little an audience can help, and yet his/her four movements are conceptually necessary as well as theatrically effective. This figure is a condensed, perhaps more abstract Willie-figure who plays audience for a Winnie-figure (mouth), who, in her turn, is sunk yet another degree into her mound. This figure is desperately needed as a witness -- an actual and present human being who ought to be there when another human being is suffering,³⁰ and to express even that little bit of helpless compassion. The figure is there to represent the audience and its expected attitude. Just as the mouth is the most minimal visual theatrical expression of a talking human being, an actor, so is the figure the most minimal -- though still perceptible and externalized -- manifestation of audience response.

Throughout his plays Beckett gradually stripped his means of expression to a bare minimum, and this is well exemplified in his use of actor-audience situation on stage, too. Whereas in Waiting for Godot, the roles actor-audience

change and shift (except for Lucky who acts "actor" all along), in Endgame, Hamm refuses, and consciously so, to peel off his "actor" role. Clov, his main audience, but his parents too, who die on him (of darkness!) is a nervous, unwilling audience who is sick of playing his audience role. Winnie is a most typical actress who, among other things, also plays an actress. She is still willing to sometimes maintain an audience role: "Perhaps he is crying out for help all this time and I do not hear him!" (HD 42). Willie's reaching hand and the possibility of mutual help between people in general and the stage characters who represent them is abandoned in Not I. But Beckett tries yet another variation of the notion of audience: in Come and Go and in Play, the three characters are serving as audience to each other, and only due to that device does the real audience in the auditorium accept and understand the mutual relationship between W1, W2, and M and the fact that they function in the alternatively audience-actor situation almost simultaneously.

In Footfalls and in That Time, Beckett seems to be going back to notions already suggested in Krapp's Last Tape, and develops them further. In That Time, it is the face of the person serving as audience for his own three voices (in different stages of his life) which are talking to him. The self becomes its own audience, and the two functions of actor and audience are to be found in one and the same person. Interestingly enough, only two of Beckett's characters are

alone in the strict sense of having no other person to relate to: Krapp and the listener in That Time. In all the other plays, the actor is never completely abandoned, and always has someone else on or off stage to be helped by. When, as in these two plays, an actor is alone, there occurs a split in himself, and his older (or younger) self emerges so as to assist in a "dialogue", namely, a situation of speaker-listener or, again, that of actor-audience. A theatricalized schizophrenia.

In Footfalls, the audience is deprived of its previous relative certainty of whom to identify with as its "reliable" representative on stage. V and May present two equally reliable and valid points of view. They dwell, so to speak, in each other's inner spaces and we don't quite clearly know whether both are dead or alive; whether only May is alive and V dead or vice versa, and what is the degree of objective-realistic truth ascribable to the long speeches of either one of them. The two women are an internalized audience of each other. They revolve each other in their minds and allow the audience to take part in the process. The very end may suggest that they are finally united, that vocalized V has swallowed visual May, and the narrow strip -- this tiny stage -- is now empty. Surely this extreme relativity of point of view reflects the actual audience as well. Here Beckett tries to shake the already narrow foothold of his audience: "How could you have responded if you were not there?" (FF 48).

Theatricalized Theatre -- Self-Referential Situations

Having discussed the most important element in a theatrical situation, i.e., the relationship between A-B-C (actor-role-audience), the focus now shifts to the theatrical situation itself and to more of its components.

Waiting for Godot is full of self-reflexive lines which serve to strip off, as well as reconfirm, theatricality. Some of the lines are more explicit than others, yet taken together, they all fall into the category of self-referential patterns which Beckett is so meticulously careful to pass on to the audience.

"Charming spot ... inspiring prospects" (WFG 10), "Godot ... who has your future in his hands ... at least your immediate future" (WFG 19b), "professional worries" (WFG 22b) -- such lines refer to actors who make it absolutely clear that they talk about their jobs as actors while performing them. They talk about Godot whose arrival -- "at least the immediate future!" -- may put an end to their to-night's show, since outside they may not necessarily (!) wait for him. They talk about their clownish routines as being "worse than the pantomime -- the circus -- the music hall -- the circus" (WFG 23b), but such a routine is, nevertheless, highly theatrical. They know that theatre is not what one does but how one does it: "But it's the way of doing it ..." (WFG 60). When Vladimir has to relieve his bladder he asks Estragon, who sends him to the toilet of the house ("end of corridor, on the

left") (WFG 23b) to keep his seat. (Here he behaves as a member of the audience!).

The whole of act II can easily be regarded as the following day's performance of act I, in which characters on stage try to amuse one another while waiting for somebody who (even the audience knows by now) will never come. Hacking away at possible illusions they say: "Recognize? What is to recognize? All my life I've crawled in the mud and you talk to me about scenery!" (WFG 40).

Time passed in the theatre is fictitious time. The characters in Waiting for Godot try to defictionalize it. The time spent in Waiting for Godot is real, unfictionalized time, not only in that its very passing is highly intensified, nor by the clash between linear and cyclical time, by constant recurrence of events, or by mere waiting. All the characters do what bored audiences do in a play. They stop watching the show, ask for the time and check what has happened so far and what still lies ahead of them. instead of being enveloped by whatever goes on on stage. It is also the place, the uniquely "framed" theatrical space and situation, that ought to be focused on in order to enhance theatricality. Combining both time and space, Vladimir and Estragon say: "The beginning of what? -- This evening. -- It'd be an occupation" (WFG 41b), and, toward the end: "I assume it's very near the end of this repertory" (WFG 86), since "I begin to weary of this motif."

In Endgame, this time-space enclosure is reinforced,

yet saved from sentimentalism and sheer boredom by a keen self-addressed sense of irony. Here Beckett hardly leaves one theatrical element untouched or unreferred to. Clov draws curtains, like stage drops, on the windows. He mentions, "Nice dimensions, nice proportions," (EG 12) meaning the stage itself and the scenery as scenery. Hamm begins his lines with, "Me to play" and soon after -- and it is only the beginning of the play -- he says: "Have you not had enough? Clov - Yes! (pause) of what? Hamm -- Of this ... thing" -- again meaning the very "thing" they are doing.

As in Waiting for Godot, they cannot leave each other. The "Let's Go" of the previous play is here shown and uttered in "I'll leave you -- you can't". As long as they play the Endgame they are inseparable. They are not playing in a play or being actors in the play -- they are the play itself. They don't mean anything beyond what they say and do, and Hamm can relax: they are not going "... to mean anything" (EG 27). In another indirect reference to his audience, Hamm complains, "Ah the creatures, the creatures, everything has to be explained to them" (EG 32). He refuses to explain or to mean, but supplies, like so many other characters, a story to exemplify his being there. So does Nagg who tells the story about the tailor who progressively made the trousers worse and worse, like God made the world, like Hamm himself decaying, like his own telling of the story. Being blind like Pozzo, and being symbolically so much like the audience,

Hamm is obsessed with the idea of being seen. Asking whether the dog is gazing at him, he reminds one of Winnie: "Oh I know it does not follow ... that because one sees the other, the other sees the one" (HD 22). And Vladimir, "At me too someone is looking," (WFG 58) and the characters in Play. All of them derive their raison d'être to utter this very line from an audience who do see them.

Hamm talks about "bringing in other characters" (EG 37) into his own play within a play, but does not know where he would find them. Could he see, he would have picked them from the first row. He knows, in a sharp and doubly ironic line, that what keeps Clov with him is nothing but "the dialogue" (EG 39). He knows that he has a "technique" (EG 39), he is feeling rather drained -- as any actor who ever played Hamm's role may testify -- because of the "prolonged creative effort" (EG 41). Those people in his story whom he could have helped are again none other than actual or potential members of the audience. He is talking about "an aside", "warming up", "soliloquy", "an underplot" and finally, with a great sense of panache, about "This is what I call making an exit" (EG 51). Having behaved throughout the play as an actor who refuses to take off his mask, Hamm reminds one of Marcel Marceau's famous number where the clown can't take off his mask. Hamm still, with human dignity and decency, as well as tremendous courage, thanks his supporting co-actor and immediate on-stage audience: "I'm obliged to you, Clov".

Clov, being just as much of an actor as he is an audience to Hamm, does not delay his reply: "(turning sharply) Ah, pardon, it's I am obliged to you" (EG 51) as though knowing that he who thanks is more of a star in a show than he who is thanked. Hamm, still maintaining the upper hand, "it's we are obliged to each other" (EG 51). Not realizing (blind as he is) that Clov is still there, he is ready to begin again all alone, "me to play". Clov, the audience had enough. The Hamm actor didn't.

A close reading of the first few pages of Happy Days will reveal the high degree of theatrical self-reflexiveness the play contains. In the stage directions, Beckett writes:

Maximum simplicity and symmetry. Blazing light. Very pompier trompe-l'oeil backcloth She is discovered sleeping ... capacious black bag ... bell rings piercingly. (HD 9)

The very symmetrical arrangement of the scene already suggests deliberate and self-conscious dramaticality. It is an en-face view suggesting direct appeal to the audience, hiding nothing and making no pretense at "reality". The light is a theatre spotlight, and the backcloth is supposed to look deceiving and expose rather than hide its own theatricality. The ringing of the bell can easily be perceived as the theatre bell and as a sign for both actress and audience to take their places. It reminds one of the Pavlovian model of reflexes which occurs in other Beckett plays as well, and suggests that Winnie is fully subservient to the imposed ringing, for both beginning and end.

Happy Days has two beginnings. The first ("another heavenly day") is a ritualistic, most actor-like pattern of behaviours. The actress prepares herself, as though at this stage, she is still in her dressing room and about to go on stage. Since she is there already, she performs the little ritual of praising the day and the Lord rather quietly -- "lips move again in inaudible addendum" -- and the play really begins with the self-reflexive words: "Begin, Winnie (pause) Begin your day, Winnie" (HD 10). Throughout the play Winnie keeps spurring herself on. Winnie tries to establish, alternately, a communication with stage props and with Willie, in the attempt to confirm herself in her unique situation of being literally, as well as metaphorically, stuck on stage. She first establishes contact with her bag, her toothbrush and toothpaste, after which she is ready to acknowledge and look for the other character on stage ("Hoo-oo!"). Winnie even compares Willie to her toothpaste: "Poor Willie (examines tube, smile off) -- running out" (HD 10). She then turns to examine herself and her tooth. She continues with a comment on drama: "What are those wonderful lines?" (HD 11, 13) in which Beckett makes the text itself self-reflective, as he does with the cliché words Winnie utters all along. Then, another focusing on a theatrical element: "holy light -- (polishes) -- bob out of dark -- (polishes) -- haze of hellish light" (HD 11).

All these meticulously enumerated theatrical elements

what it is, namely, a self-reflexive theatrical metaphor, one can continue and charge the light with further meaning such as "light of conscience", "the eye of another", a "divine light", or even a light representing the audience whose eyes follow the moving spotlight and behave in the same inquisitive manner -- not really knowing what to expect from these three urned figures. Inasmuch as the light causes the actors to react, it also conditions the response of the audience. It creates the pattern of looking at the figures as in a three-fold ping pong game. It is an interrogating light not because of what it is, but because of what the figures say of it. The light is hence the real protagonist of Play. In that respect, it is addressed to the audience as well. The situation in Play is a dramatization of the need to respond to another consciousness. The need is there, but there is no certainty that the other, the light, has a consciousness at all. Perhaps it is "Mere eye. No mind". It is suggested that by using the theatrical situation, Beckett calls in doubt any consciousness of "another". In Play, he uses a triangle love story because in such an emotional muddle, people are supposedly in an intense position regarding what they really feel, and how they truly respond to each other. They often attempt an internalization of the other's state of mind. Hence the mentality of the objective, personality-lacking nature of the light does not enable them to get away easily -- with deceiving one another or even themselves.

The three characters in Play are well aware of the strange unreality of their situation (urns, hellish-half light", etc.). They are even aware of its theatricality, or better, "hellish half-theatricality". "I know now all that was just ... play" (Pl 54). Here M probably refers to the first half which now, in the second half of Play, seems to him remote. He only wishes that this second part, the fully conscious one, will also have been just play. He doesn't know what Beckett knows: the games one plays with consciousness are as theatrical as the ones he, M, played with women, and a person is no less prone to self-deception than to the deception of others.

Not I begins before curtain rise and ends after its fall. Mouth talks before and after the visual convention of opening and closing is triggered, and therefore gives the clear impression that in a way similar to other Beckett plays, this play too attempts transcendence beyond its own medium-limits. While once again being highly aware of its own theatricality, Not I, like Waiting for Godot, like Play, has no real beginning and no real end. It tries to extend beyond the stage, as though whatever is presented is just a short curve in a huge spiral. Thus the audience is made to feel that it witnesses an arbitrary sequence in a never ending prattling of a seemingly unrealted, though in fact, extremely well devised, string of words and phrases.

In Not I, the distinction between theatricality and

reality is harder to tell apart. The visual image of a mouth lit -- "upstage audience right" -- and fiercely talking, as on fire, is perhaps one of the most striking uses made of a dramatization of a "speech-act". Except for the auditor, nothing else acts on stage but the speaking organ, speech itself. More than any other Beckett character, Mouth does what it says and says what it does, thus effacing the otherwise relatively clearer border between theatrical illusion and realistic reference that exists in other plays.

The first intelligible word of Not I is out. This word suggests actual and verbal birth, both "into this world" (NI 14) and onto the stage. The mouth itself, and the girl who may be its owner, are both a "tiny little thing". Both mouth and the girl "stare into space" (NI 15), both share a "stop ... then on ... a few more ..." -- pattern of progressing in life and in speech. Both refuse to accept self-identity: the girl or woman -- quite a number of ages in her life are referred to -- due to some traumatic experience, is fiercely opposed to using the first person singular. Mouth can't do it because it has no "personality" and it does not know whether it has a body and whether this body is "standing ... or sitting". (NI 15). The brain is still working, nevertheless. The "ray of light" is, at one and the same time, the theatre projector and that inner light which flashes (metaphorically?) through Mouth's brain. It could not possibly be a "moon beam" (NI 16). Both the Mouth and the

character it talks about (herself!) are "so disconnected". "The buzzing" is simultaneously what the character says it hears, as well as being the very noise of the words it produces, being both object and subject. Mouth talks away its stream of words and about them: "and now this stream ... this steady stream ..." (NI 18). It is talking about a character who was always speechless and now pours everything forth, while not admitted it is "her voice at all", and having "no idea what she was saying!" (NI 18) -- yet knowing she was deluding herself in so doing.

At this point in the play, Mouth indulges in a meticulously minute description of the sense-motorics of speech: "... gradually she felt her life moving ... the tongue ... jaws ... cheeks ... etc" (NI 19). She analyses the action of speech in a speech-act which is closely watched by her. She herself, like the audience (she, in a way, being her own audience because of the refusal to say "I") cannot catch the half "... not the quarter ..." of what she says. And now she can't stop, and can't stop saying she can't stop. Now she can only talk and therefore there is no use in her "straining to hear" and "piece it together". "She" is in fact "dragging up the past", and brings up fragmented bits and pieces of scenes, such as walking aimlessly in the field, the supermart, and her appearance in Croter's Acres in the court.

Her speech sounds like an abortion of words to match

the baby abortion hinted at in her speech. Her "sudden urge to ... tell" (NI 22) is an act of giving birth to bubbling baby words.

In Not I, Beckett equates language with life. Both are described as a response or result of some guilt, and are, therefore, a punishment (NI 16). Not being sure even of this, because there is no pain involved, she is trying to make something of it. The overall effect of the speech is that of a sock turned inside out. The speech is, by content, an inner dialogue, in which, once externalized, the limits between speaker-subject and spoken-about-object are diffused.

The speech is an extended, verbalized vagitus, as in Breath. She "must have cried as baby -- perhaps not -- not essential to life -- just the birth cry to get her going" (NI 20).

The silent figure talked about pouring it all out in the "nearest lavatory ... till she saw the stare she was getting ... then die of shame" (NI 22). Characteristically, Beckett never fails to refer to the attention others give to self -- a situation which constitutes the essence of theatre. What it finally and really is, neither Mouth nor the audience ever get a chance to know, "what she was trying ... what to try ... no matter" (NI 23). Yet both take part in one of the most amazing theatre experiences -- that of the "trying" itself.

Notes to Chapter IV

¹Ricoeur, Metaphor, p. 95 ff.

²Alain Robbe-Grillet opens his article on Beckett's Presence in the Theatre with Heidegger's words: "The condition of man ... is to be there. The theatre probably reproduces this situation more naturally than any other of the ways of representing reality. The essential thing about a character in a play is that he is 'on the scene! There ...'" In regard to Beckett, Robbe-Grillet says: "For this is what we have never seen on stage before, or not with the same clarity, not with so few concessions and so much force. A character in a play usually does no more than play a part, as all those about us who are trying to shirk their own existence. But in Beckett's play, it is as if the two tramps were on stage without a part to play." Alain Robbe-Grillet, Samuel Beckett, or Presence in the Theatre, in Martin Esslin (ed.) 20th Century Views, Samuel Beckett (Prentice Hall, N. J., 1965), p. 108.

³Ricoeur, Metaphor, p. 95.

⁴Jiri Veltrusky, Basic Features of Dramatic Dialogue, in Metajka and Titunik, Semiotics of Art (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press .., 1976), p. 130.

⁵Georg Lukacs, The Theory of the Novel (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press .., 1971), p. 89.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Georg Lukacs, Approximation to Life in the Novel and the Play, in Elizabeth and Tom Burns (eds.), Sociology of Literature and Drama (Middlesex: Penguin, 1973), p. 281 ff. (Henceforth -- Luckacs, Approx.).

⁸Ricoeur, Metaphor, p. 96.

⁹Ibid., p. 98.

¹⁰Theodor Shank, The Art of Dramatic Art (N. Y.: Delta, 1969), p. 35. See also, "A transcription of WFG into novel form is perfectly conceivable ..." but what was a confrontation between two isolations would become a person to person relationship." Michael Zeraffa, The Novel as Literary Form and as a Social Institution, in Burns (ed.) Sociology of

Literature, p. 41; Bernard Beckerman, Dynamics of Drama (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970) chs. I and IV; J. L. Styan, Drama, Stage and Audience (Cambridge University Press, 1975), chs. 2 and 7; James Eliopoulos, Samuel Beckett's Dramatic Language (The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1975), p. 55 ff.

¹¹Elizabeth Burns, Theatricality (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 19. (Henceforth -- Burns, Theat.).

¹²Ibid.

¹³J. L. Styan, Drama, Stage and Audience, p. 4 (italics mine).

¹⁴Burns, Theat., p. 20.

¹⁵Georg Simmel, On the Theory of Theatrical Performance, in Elizabeth and Tom Burns (ed.), pp. 309-10. (Henceforth -- Simmel, Performance). When Vladimir says: "At this place, at this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it or not," the beauty of the line lies not only in its humour and accuracy, but really in its self-reflexive reference. It refers to the dramatic characters, to the actors, and most important, to the audience. It can serve as a superb illustration to Simmel's above quoted lines.

¹⁶Nelson Lowry, Reflexiveness and the Reader, p. 174 ff.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Iser, Reader, p. 44.

¹⁹In J. L. Austin, Philosophical Papers (N. Y.: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 235.

²⁰John R. Searle, Speech Acts (Cambridge University Press, 1970); see also Edward S. Shirley, "The Impossibility of a Speech Act Theory of Meaning," Philosophy and Rhetoric, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Winter 1975), pp. 115-122.

²¹Beckett, Proust, p. 66.

²²Beckett seems to be particularly fond of the term "creatures."

²³In this section only, references are made to page numbers of the Grove Press edition of Waiting for Godot.

²⁴Cohn, Beckett: Beckett's fiction has been pre-occupied with the identity of the self, but this is the first time he dramatized it so nakedly. Some ten years earlier he had already refused identity beyond a face to Winnie of act V. Play denies expression to faces, and Come and Go denies faces to bodies. They are all avoiding self-betrayal of emotion (p. 214). See also Hersh Feifman, Being and Non-Being, Samuel Beckett's Not I, Modern Drama, Vol. XIX, No. 1 (March 1976), pp. 35-47.

²⁵This may also explain the very general names given to the characters. They are made to resemble the anonymity, yet strong presence of the group of people in front of the stage.

²⁶Rapp, Sociology and Theatre, p. 67.

²⁷In German "schauen" and "Gucken" -- pronounced "Kuken" mean "seeing", "watching". It is likely that Beckett used the English names in their German sense.

²⁸Compare, for example:

"Is everybody looking at me?" (WFG 20b)

... I don't like talking in vacuum

How did you find me? (46)

I have such a need of encouragement

At me too someone is looking, of me too someone is (58)
saying -- He is sleeping ...

Who is looking at V? Certainly the audience is looking at him. Is this a reference to a transcending being? That is and remains the question. While the significance of what he has said is open to doubt, that he has said something, that he has acted, that through language and gesture, time is filled -- these things are relatively assured.

²⁹Gadamer, Hegel, p. 64.

³⁰To paraphrase: "Was I sleeping, while the others suffered? Am I sleeping now?" (WFG 90) or: "To all mankind they were addressed, those cries for help still ringing in our ears!" (WFG 79).

CHAPTER V

THE IMPLIED PLAYWRIGHT -- A CONCLUSION

Morbidly sensitive to the opinions of others ...

- Samuel Beckett, Theatre II

Behind the overt efforts to portray infinite negation through an ever-growing process of condensation of expressive means, there is still the irrefutable fact that Beckett is a publishing author. His works are widely read and often produced. Even a full recognition of the paradox ensuing from the discrepancy between the negative message of Beckett's works on the one hand, and the very act of trying to communicate that message does not extricate Beckett from the ultimate need to choose between silence and writing-producing. No matter how filled with "silences" (and only silence can hope to "affirm" ultimate negation) or bleak notions on the fate of Man, Beckett finally opts for the absurdity of communicating his ideas rather than the slightly lesser inconsequence of keeping silent. Having committed himself by the very fact of writing, Beckett can never fully retreat to full-fledged solipsism, although he -- implicitly -- often does preach such philosophy. The agony, so often felt in his works of attempting to express the inexpressible, ought hence to be regarded as the innermost conviction of an artist who tries

to convey to others what he believes to be his human and artistic essence. The fact that Beckett does so with meticulous artistic precision, a hilarious sense of humour and great skill, helps to explain his world acclaim and adds to the highly personal quality of his works.

As Wayne Booth has already shown, the author is never totally eliminated from his work.¹ In the play, he draws attention to himself. In contrast to the characters, the author is the central subject -- the subject behind the characters, the maker of all the semantic contexts to which they are respectively linked.²

In fact, only the work itself is objectively self-referential. The notion of the audience, from Beckett's point of view is an implied (individual or collective) figure. It is to be detected and discovered. In the same way the playwright ought to be discovered, too, by examining the text, from an audience's point of view. Having dealt with the ways the playwright sees the audience, this concluding chapter deals with some of the ways in which the playwright can be detected in his plays (playwright as actor and as critic, text and stage direction) and concludes with the completion of the hermeneutic circle.

George Lukacs says, in regard to the difference between drama and the novel, that:

... the presentness of something already contains in itself a direct relationship with the hearer. To witness something depicted and conceived as happening

in the present, one has to be present in person, whereas to learn about something entirely past, neither the physical immediacy of communication nor therefore a public is necessary at all.³

This holds true in regard to self-reference too, although the particularly theatrical self-reference is filtered through the performance of actors, and their presentness and immediacy. Regarded from the point of view of the medium of theatre, self-reference can only be performed in the first person singular and in the present. Hence, that self-reference which the playwright inserted in his play can work if and only if the actors too perform it (in the sense of both "acting" and "doing"). It is still logically necessary to assume that self-reflexion and self-reference have to be performed. Hintikka has shown it in regard to Descartes' Cogito, which is a performative act. Beckett's self-referential characters follow, basically, the same rule. The actors who play them have to be self-reflexive, whereby the "self" they reflect upon is not only the fictitious character's self but their own real one.

In theatre, the mediation between an actual self-reflexive playwright and his implied or actual audiences, self-reflexion can only be achieved by an actual, performing self-reflexive actor. Here, again is Gadamer's distinction between the reflection and confirmation of the self through its encounters with selfless objects:

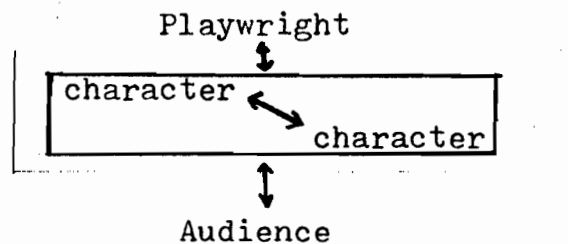
If self-consciousness is to become true self-consciousness it must stand on its own and find another self-consciousness that is willing to be

'for it'. Thus the doubling of self-consciousness is a necessary consequence There is not only the confirmation of one's own self here, but also confirmation of the self of the other The freedom of self-consciousness consists not only in the confirmation of self given in existent things (sciences) but also in successful self-assertion in opposition to dependency on existing things.⁴

This distinction accurately describes the pattern of behaviour assigned to many of Beckett's protagonists, reflecting the playwright's own wish to have his self-consciousness confirmed by that of "another", namely, the actor, and through him, the audience.

Through the positing of the self-reference of the medium, Beckett suggests that there exists a parallel relationship between on-stage relationships (a good example of which is the relationships between Winnie and Willie in Happy Days) and the stage-audience and playwright relations.

The following diagram may serve to clarify this notion:



The play and the actors serve as mediator between the self-consciousness of the playwright in his search for another self in the audience. Beckett leaves the option for the audience to respond as self-asserting human beings or as selfless objects in the same way this option is given to

Willie.

Beckett's stage has a built-in actor-audience situation. The pattern that was depicted in Happy Days is applicable to all of Beckett's plays. Essentially, Beckett the author, can be associated with the actor-figure who acts out something to be seen and heard by an audience-figure, both on stage and in the auditorium. If theatre could be reduced to its bare essentials, it would lose costume, lights, makeup, and a long list of other relatively minor elements.⁵ It would, however, maintain the basic formula that constitutes the theatrical situation: "A impersonates B while C is looking" (A -- actors, B -- roles, C -- audience).⁶ Beckett's theatre lays a special emphasis on the mutual relationships between this A-B-C factors of the play. The author, being constantly aware of the paradoxality of the situation, makes this very paradoxality the subject matter. The paradox, from the actor's point of view, is that of having to both demonstrate and impersonate.⁷ From the viewer's point of view, the paradox lies in the clash between (a) Identification (empathy, "addiction") versus reflexion (in the cognitive, more alienated sense of the word) and (b) Illusion versus Inlusion.

Those two sets of paradoxes which initially belong to the actor and the audience are, in Beckett's plays, made into lines uttered by actor-roles and audience-roles on stage, as we have seen. Hence, this double irony of the Beckettian

theatrical situation. The dramatic irony in Beckett's plays lies not only in the texts, but also in the actors' own challenge against their roles. And, most important is the active enlisting of the audience. A passive, dull audience which refuses Beckett's (or his actors') invitation to accept the author's expressed views about the world, people, their situation and their communicability, is made to be the object of the irony. If, however, the audience does respond "properly" and sees the relationships on stage as reflecting its own relationships to the stage, then, and only then, does Beckett succeed in using theatre in order to transcend it, and through the theatrical situation to express something about what's happening beyond it, namely, between any two, or more, human beings.

Ricoeur suggests that:

The understanding of a text is not an end in itself and for itself; it mediates the relation to itself of a subject who, in the short circuit of immediate reflection would not find the meaning of his own life.⁸

The same holds true for a dramatic text and, moreover, for a theatrical performance, since it is, firstly, mediated through an actor and, secondly, calls for the "short circuit of immediate reflection."

There exists not only a parallel between the relationships Winnie-Willie, for example, and Beckett-audience, but also that the intra-textural references to self-reflexive author and self-reflexive audience, reflect the extra-textural references between real author and audience.

Beckett can be regarded as the initiator of a self-reflexive circle. He writes his own self-reflexion into the play, the play becomes self-referring in relation to its writer, to itself and its audience, and then, finally, the audience is invited to become self-reflexive. Only if this cycle is completed would the playwright's intention be fully realized, the audience becomes actual co-creators of the play, and, as Ricoeur says, become able to interpret their own lives through Beckett's text as spoken and acted by an author.⁹

Even if the audience does not become self-reflexive, its very presence is a necessary condition for the playwright's "true" consciousness. This is so since a person (or group of people constituting an audience, as well as Willie in the play) should be "recognized as a person even though he himself does not attain the truth of being recognized as an independent self-consciousness."¹⁰

While every other form of art translates from real life into an objective structure which is different from life, the actor is supposed to do the opposite As a real person the actor is no more the stage character created by art than coloring is a portrait ...¹¹

For it is only the actor standing there who has any existence at all. Taking for granted that theatre is an independent art and not a realization of the dramatist's textual intention given to an actor to "play", "interpret", "present", "represent", etc., the actors' performance is, in terms of art, itself the end-point.

Probably the most important factor in Beckett's plays

is the actor. This may be confusing since hardly any other dramatist does so much in order to mutilate, minimize, ridicule, and finally, eliminate altogether the function of a living person on stage.

Beckett, the actual playwright, has always been very interested in the production of his works. His attitude to directors, actors, etc. has been described in a number of biographical essays as well as production logs. One should also add that despite, or perhaps because of, such rigour Beckett has always been extremely generous in allocating production rights to all sorts of directors. His involvement in the productions is yet another indication concerning the connection between the implied and the actual playwright, and more than circumstantial proof for the importance of self-reflexion.

Beckett's active participation in the performance of his plays, from the days of producing the Paris version of Waiting for Godot (1953) to the present engagement with the Schiller Theater in Berlin, shows that he does not only deal with any "right" interpretation of his plays but, perhaps with the artistic extensions of an authentically imposed self. Alan Schneider, a friend and director of Beckett and his plays, says, furthermore, that Beckett has a strange way of making himself "present in absentia":

I've always rehearsed as though he (Beckett) were in the shadows somewhere watching and listening, ready to answer all our doubts, quell our fears and share

our surprises and small talk. Sometimes, without sounding mystical or psychotic, I've felt that he was indeed there.¹²

Such a feeling that Beckett is "indeed there" issues, in part at least, from the self-referring notions in the text; notions that gain vivacity when performed, and which can be explained by literary terms (rather than by parapsychology). It is not only true that Beckett treats his actors with warmth, care, understanding and yet "allows you any amount of freedom you want, provided he feels it does not conflict with the text",¹³ as Jack McGowran says, but the written role itself shows great concern for whichever actor willing to identify with it. It is practically impossible to assume that a playwright like Beckett would not think of the actual man or woman who play a Winnie or a Hamm. (In fact, Madeleine Renault, Martin Held and a long list of actors who have worked with Beckett testify to this effect).¹⁴ But, besides the importance of treating people well, and besides the almost self-explanatory reason to do so in connection with a Beckett play, there is yet another reason, and a dramatically built-in one, to be "good" to actors. A Beckett actor is not just a mediator of a text but he whose text is delivered as self-referring; the self not being the self of the role but the self of the acting person.

In Beckett's plays, the actor is given self-referential texts and the only way he could possibly relate to them is to internalize them. A self-referential sentence does not

only refer to the role (Vladimir, Krapp, etc.) but to the actor in it. If one finds self-referential sentences such as "where were we yesterday -- here" (WFG), (namely on stage at this or that specific theatre in town) and if actors follow patterns like "they cry -- ergo they are" (EG) or "they utter -- ergo they exist" (CAS) -- then the very fact of putting an act on stage is performatory.

The actor's self-consciousness, reinforced by spatio-temporal conditions of the theatre, releases the audience from the need to interpret him. The actor's immediate presence -- let alone utterances of self-referential sentences (or medium-aware sentences) compels the audience to practice self-referenceness themselves.¹⁵ In the same way that a Beckett novel-character indulges in self-reflectiveness, so does the actor, yet he does so "live". His soliloquy is therefore to be understood not just as a dramatic convention, but as a really self-referring speech-act. Doing the job of interpretation himself, his motives, explaining (as best as Beckett allows him) his very existence on stage, a Beckett actor often deprives the audience of their traditional task of interpreting the play, at the same time implicitly demanding they so "interpret" themselves.

In theatre the pretense of authenticity is double-headed. On the one hand, theatre is not reality, and cannot be one. It will always remain one step remote from the real, and in order to grasp it as such, an audience will always

need to know that it came to see a "show", and play the theatrical game of "to be" real and "not to be" real simultaneously. On the other hand, the very encounter of stage and audience -- being the one indispensable quality of theatre -- is real.

The sense of this kind of reality derives in Beckett's plays, not so much from a general sense of contemplating the bleak content of Beckett's plays, but rather from the fact that Beckett imposes self-referentiality on the audience and compels people to "do the work themselves", to the extent that he himself, as well as his actors, did so. Identifying with an actor is an identification with oneself, as the logic of self-reference makes utterly clear.

Hence, insofar as one regularly pays attention to the actor-in-the-role, one focuses, in Beckett's plays, on the actor as actor, and on his attempts (well substantiated by the lines given) to be fully conscious of the situation, both existentially and theatrically, and by being conscious of one's consciousness, one becomes highly self-conscious.

Beckett actors or actresses are, therefore, not only intermediaries of texts, but, much more important, they are, through their own self-referentiality, intermediaries of self-consciousness, from that of the playwright to that of the audience.

The "I" of the role is a triple I. It is the "I" of Beckett, the "I" of the actor and finally, and hopefully, the

"I" of the Eye of the spectators.

Having noted on the medium-related aspects of Beckett's implied playwrightship, it is necessary now to turn to the generic aspects of drama. The generic uniqueness of the "author's voice" has been dealt with by Herta Schmid, who distinguishes between three sorts of drama. Ms. Schmid talks about "personal drama" in which the auctorial subject withdraws behind the dramatic world and action; "conversational drama" in which the role of characters and the situational frame is subordinated to the characters' verbal activities, and the auctorial subject appears more distinctly through the inconsistencies in the subject-matter; and "situational drama" in which the framework of the situation points distinctly to the auctorial subject.¹⁶

In his critical article on Schmid's book, Rolf Fieguth observes, and rightly so, that: "In the course of Herta Schmid's discussion, it becomes more and more apparent that the auctorial subject cannot be separated from a presupposed recipient's acts of perception."¹⁷

Hence, in applying the notion of Schmid's theory on Beckett's plays, one observes that the plays fall under all three categories. They are "personal" because the auctorial subject in the plays withdraws somewhat behind the consistency of the three unities of time, place and action. They are "conversational" (Gesprachsdrama) since Beckett's heroes are almost always engaged in verbal activity which not only

subordinates the situational framework, but often compensates for it. The plays are situational due to the overall importance of the dramatic effect of characters being confined to wheelchairs, ash bins, mounds, etc.

The "auctorial subject" (the implied playwright in Schmid's terminology) can be traced in the above-mentioned three sorts of drama (a task which exceeds the scope and purpose of this chapter) as well as in yet another important distinction made by Schmid. She treats the "auctorial subject" under the two phases of the auctorial text (otherwise called stage directions) and dialogue text, which consists of the lines spoken by the actors.

Beckett's auctorial text is very detailed and specific in regard to where, when and how actors should perform their roles. There are many instructions concerning tone, emotion, pitch, speed, body posture, location on stage, etc., all of which indicate that Beckett was very careful in designing contextual and subtextual elements of the bare text. Whereas in a novel the dialogue text and the author's text constitute one verbal structure, in drama in general, and particularly in Beckett's plays and radioplays, these two "texts" are quite distinct. Accepting, with Schmid, that the stage instructions are the author's text in a direct way, one sees the degree of Beckett's intervention in his plays as being rather high.

Furthermore, Beckett sometimes even engages in

creating a bridge of ironic understanding between himself and a reader (rather than a spectator) of his play, in the form of jokes played at the characters' expense. Notes such as "he puts on his glasses and looks at the two likes" (WFG 24) or "he tries to look intelligent" are typical self-reflexive semi-jokes which testify to the degree of their writer's self-consciousness as well as his attempt to expose the theatrical artifice by deliberately appealing to a reader. Evidently no audience can possibly get the jist of such stage directions.

Beckett's stage instructions are usually limited, as in the more active plays, to a description of movement, handling a stage property or a brief qualification of feeling or tone the actor should follow. Yet quite often the stage directions acquire, if read independently, a poetics of their own. Such is the fairly long description of Krapp's fumbings at the beginning of Krapp's Last Tape, a description which resembles the one of the pebbles in Watt or the hat-scene in Waiting for Godot, or the meticulously planned "dialogue" between "auctorial" text and "monologue" text in Happy Days. When read, the stage instructions serve as corrective to the text. When performed, the "auctorial" text loses its poetic, corrective-correlative quality and turns into actual directions:

Vladimir: Now! ... (joyous). There you are again ...
(indifferent) There we are again ...
(gloomy) There I am again. (WFG 59)

Yet the stage-directions, even when performed, are,

naturally, to be carried out carefully since they are the explicit and intentional intervention of the actual playwright in his play. In Beckett's plays, the characters -- the carriers of the "dialogue-text" -- often seem to rebel against the meaning of the "auctorial text" although "They do not know about it" (Schmid, p. 81). But such an assumption, as Fieguth rightly observes, "presupposes a perceiving subject that establishes a level on which this conflict can take place." When, again, applied to Beckett's plays, the "perceiving subject" is no other than the spectator, the audience whose involvement and self-reflexion are thus invited. Such is Hamm's response in Endgame, and the more extreme case of the protagonists of Play. In Play, they even talk back to their "auctorial" text (when read or actualized as moving of the spotlight).

In the dialogue-text, the implied playwright is traceable mainly in the many figures of various Talkers. In all of Beckett's twenty plays and radioplays (except, perhaps, Theatre I) there are figures who try, in different modes, some of which are medium-related, to express themselves. One can, of course, see an implied playwright behind the deliberate creating of gaps and the insertion of endless cultural allusions, both of which are "teasers" or, at least, invitations extended to audiences to plug themselves into the plays. Yet, the most impressive and prevalent notion of an implied playwright ought to be found behind the obsessive

"self-expressors" in the plays.

Almost all of Beckett's dramatic heroes perform in their dramatic life what Beckett said about Van Velde: "Unable to act, obliged to act, he makes an expressive act, even if only of itself, of its impossibility, of its obligation."¹⁸ These dramatis personae, extensions of their author in a non-metaphorical manner, are fully aware of their mode of existence. On radio, characters such as Maddy Rooney, Henri, Croak and Words (together!), Opener and Voice, He and She, and even Animator, Dick and Fox, all are trying to express themselves vocally and thus give vent to their author's need to live-by-talking and, at least, "make an expressive act". On stage the characters resort to the particular stage techniques of doing the same: they are fully aware of their stagy-ness, and hence indicate that their playwright is just as much aware of his role as playwright. The Beckettian world (Beckett said: "the Proustian World") is "expressed metaphorically by the artisan because it is apprehended metaphorically by the artists: the indirect and comparative expression of indirect and comparative perception."¹⁹

Many of Beckett's heroes are practising artists, story-tellers, writers, actors, and, in short, people, fictitious as they are, who try to express their playwright by expressing themselves.

Lucky, when finally speaking up, expresses the typical

self-referential agony of speaking about speech. Hamm, and his father too, though to a lesser extent, is an actor, a story-teller. He often breaks off his story in order to note on the conditions in which the story is told, and in the attempt to tell another story about the initial story and why it can or cannot be told. Winnie is another actress and story-teller, just as much aware and self-conscious of her situation as Hamm. Krapp is depicted as an author ("17 copies sold ...") and a failure as such. He, like Beckett, dares to fail ("To be an artist is to fail") (Dialogues, KLT 125). All three characters in Play feel the inescapable need to talk and tell about their closely entangled mutual lives. In Come and Go, the emphasis is placed on laconic, highly indeterminate phrases and on more movement, but even Vi, Flo and Ru are involved in a brief encounter with self-expression, relative as it is. In Breath, self-expression is compared with a whole life squeezed into thirty-five seconds of inhaling and exhaling. Mouth, in Not I, is, clearly, not only motivated but also blocked by her enormously obsessive and excruciating need to "give vent". And so are the characters of That Time and Footfalls. In Theatre II, the implied playwright is C who is simply "there", and the talking about him is done by others. As it is suggested, C represents Beckett himself on stage. In the two Acts Without Words, Beckett tries to "talk" without words.

All Beckett's characters are highly engaged in the

awareness of the creative process, especially in words, so much so that talking for them becomes, at one and the same, a metaphor for living, a substitute for living and a mode of living, in the Cartesian sense of "I utter ergo I am". They are highly aware of their verbal existence and they crave silence so as to stop it all, but, and dialectically so, as long as they talk about wanting silence (death) they keep on living as do, for instance, Winnie and Mouth.

The Critical Voice and the Self-Reflexive Author

The building in of the critical voice in Beckett's plays is a rather tricky issue. To begin with, Beckett himself said that had he known who Godot, for example, is, he would have said so himself in his play. Such a statement is probably true for his other plays as well, which are no less baffling, as far as their "meaning" is concerned. Beckett's dramatic texts invite the audience to fill in the interpretative gaps, but hardly offer any real support or preference for one interpretation over any other. Showing the self-reflexive quality of the text, one hasn't yet quenched the thirst for knowledge of what it may possibly mean after all, since the self-reflexive quality per se is not a "meaning." It is, therefore, important to realize that "the focus of hermeneutical reflection is not methodology but the hermeneutical situation."²⁰ Beckett's plays may mean different things to different people, as an ever growing list of critics (and meta-critics) constantly show.

Beckett's plays are replete with notions that each of the major critical approaches today may easily adopt and interpret according to its own standards. One can treat the slave-master relationship under social and Marxist predicaments. It is certainly meaningful to detect existential ideas of alienation, lack of sense and meaning in life, and the dominance of sheer being over any justification thereof in the works. Likewise, one can use a psychoanalytical, or a religious approach and find peculiar father-son relationships or a long list of Christian elements and connotations. However, all these approaches, and many others, impose a general theory on a highly "spongy" text which treats most of them with equal inexhaustibility.

Being a keen critic himself, Beckett is most likely aware of the problems his works present to the critic. His awareness can be traced in the texts themselves, and it adds yet another, though not a major point of view to the understanding of his attitude to the audience. Since critics are somewhat of an active audience, at least they give vent to their impressions.

It follows that when dealing with the built-in critical voice in Beckett's plays, one ought to focus on the initial openness of the text, which enables so many critics to fight fiercely against each other's interpretations -- as well as to single out and comment on Beckett's own reflected attitude to potential criticism. Since this work attempts to

prove the importance of self-reflexive patterns in Beckett's plays, I deal mostly with the second point, and touch upon the "exhaustibility" of the text only when it adds to the understanding of the first.

The only direct reference made to A Critic is found in Waiting for Godot, among a string of rather uncomplimentary adjectives: "Curate -- Cretin -- Critic!" (WFG 75). In Beckett's last play (Theatre II) the whole play is dedicated to dramatic criticism. Between this snide remark in the first play and a full treatment of the subject in the last, one finds many indirect references to the interpretability of the plays, in the plays themselves. Hence, recurrent notes to meaninglessness in Waiting for Godot, in Happy Days, Endgame and in Play, and most impressively in Not I, are primarily remarks addressed to the play itself, as well as to life outside it. This idea is reinforced by Beckett's attitude to the stage and the theatrical situation in general.

The recurring answer to questions pertaining to meaning in Waiting for Godot all end with different variations on "I don't know", with deliberate evasions and digressions into other topics, and finally, with yet another emphasis on inescapability. There's no "Let's go" -- there's only waiting for Godot. Beckett, in an interview, did not only say he would have written who Godot is -- had he known -- but in fact he says, in the play, that he does not know. In Endgame, the critical function is ascribed mainly to Hamm, the main

actor, the ham actor, who criticized his play, its content and its mode of presentation. He admits that "the whole thing is comical", thus at one and the same time depriving, and reassuring, the audience that its own mixture of feelings is fruitful. In Play, the consciousness of having no interpretation is heightened by the characters constantly looking for one. It is the audience who does not only have to supply its own interpretation, but has actually to make out the play and sort out the collage of lines thrust at it. Using audio-visual techniques, the audience must combine the three figures' versions and knit them into a whole sensible unit in the first half. In the second half, the audience, together with the characters, tries to find meaning in what it has previously experienced. In both parts, the audience is not much better off than the characters in knowing what Play is all about. And Beckett is, as always, better in devising a superb technique to ask the questions than in giving answers. Every possible unequivocal solution to questions such as "are the figures alive", "who or what is the spotlight?", etc. is negated. Inasmuch as none of the three figures is given a favourable point of view over the other two, so is the case with a favourable interpretation of Play. None has the upper hand, since the play contains its unanswerable questions, and acts them out instead of answering them. Hence, the only logical and sufficient meaning of Play lies in its actual presentation, and the same goes for the

performance of the other plays.

In Not I, as mentioned before, the critical voice is found in the double role of Mouth as being I and not I together. She describes the goings-on while doing them. Here again she deprives the audience of their otherwise natural right to extricate themselves from the situation by analyzing it. Since Mouth, Winnie and all the rest are highly self-conscious about the situation, and more often than not quite brilliant in describing it.

In Beckett's dramatic practice, as well as in the tentative theory that can be drawn from it, one finds a deliberate alienation between audience and character. But such an alienation (to use Brechtian terms) only tricks one into further involvement, commitment and identification. All that is left is an everlasting process of quest and search, in which the actors serve as spotlights, Godots, goads, etc. to their audience. But, it ought to be performed, as exemplified by Beckett in Theatre II.

Theatre II deals with three gentlemen, A, B and C. They occupy a stage which is, quite uncharacteristically, rather full of objects, symmetrically arranged, an open double window, two small tables, two chairs, two reading lamps, a door, as well as props such as a briefcase, papers, a watch, etc. "standing motionless before left half of window with his back to stage, C" (TII 83). A and B enter, and throughout the whole play perform a series of actions and

conversations, while treating C in the third person, although he is obviously there and alive -- as one learns later in the play. They are there in order to "sum up" (TII 90), perhaps adding something to what C did not know already. These two men rummage through the personal papers of C in their attempts to make out who and what he is, what his life is like and to "have him" (TII 95). Their tentative results: "A black future, an unpardonable past" (TII 96). The two behave like two notaries who are in charge of carrying out a testament (if the man, C, is dead or just about to jump out of the window -- as suggested right in the beginning) or finding a justification for C to keep on living, trying to find some sense in his papers. During their work A and B express boredom and quite a definite wish to pack and go. Their job is tedious, and they don't seem to be very successful in finding what they are after. While still doing it, they are side-tracked by their own little stories, by the two lamps which go out arbitrarily, and finally by the two song-birds (one dead). Soon after, at the end, they find out that C is dead, too -- as suggested by A, timidly raising his handkerchief to C's face (TII 101).

The situation, the relationships between the characters, the stage metaphors and, of course, the content of the discourse, all point out that the play, Beckett's last so far, is primarily an allegory on the relationship between the author and his critics. C is the author -- or rather his

present on-stage-agent -- whereas A and B are critics in their half-interested task of "making out" the implied author. The first notion Beckett made to the "critic" in Waiting for Godot receives here a full treatment which is nonetheless ridiculing, not altogether cold but quite condescending. If one accepts that C is an embodiment of Beckett himself (or, for that matter, any person who needs other people to "justify" or "make-out" his life), then his presence on stage, back to the window, is a double message to both his critics on stage as well as the ones in the auditorium -- or even those in and out of the shrines of dramatic criticism everywhere. The double message reads something like "You can't reach me but please try hard!" Or is it that those two, A and B, "critics" should simply talk to him instead of about him?

Having settled on stage (like all Beckett characters who need a few minutes to warm up on stage) A wonders "why he needs our services ... a man like him ... and why we give them, free men like us" -- thus establishing the incongruity of the situation, at least from C's viewpoint. Consulting the watch (and many more references to the time of day, the date, etc. later in the play) suggest the habitual pre-occupation with the urgency of time with which Beckett's plays are always imbued. Here, specifically, the urgency is achieved by linking the passage of time with the need to "sum up" before C jumps out of the window. In a line often

repeated in Theatre II, and unmistakably reminiscent of Waiting for Godot, A suggests "shall we go" (or "let's go") and a typically Estragon and Vladimir short repartee ensues:

B: Rearing.
A: We attend.
B: Let him jump.
A: When?
B: Now. (TII 84)

A and B coolly discuss the height and the chances of C to "land on his arse, the way he lived, his possible way down from the sixth floor, the spine snaps, and the tripe explodes" (TII 84). The detached and funny description only enhances the discrepancy between what A and B do, their function as C's "saviours", and what they feel about C (their complete carelessness and gross rummaging in his personal effects?). For them their job is just an occupation; it has nothing of the importance of life and death as it has for C. They treat his "work, family, third fatherland, cunt, finances, art and nature, heart and conscience, health, housing conditions, God and man, and so many disasters" (TII 85) with cool indifference. They say they have been to the "best sources" -- no doubt another ironic remark Beckett puts in their mouth, perhaps in regard to real critics rummaging.²¹

A and B notice that the room (a hotel room?) is not C's home -- he just comes there "to take care of the cat" (TII 86).

The main activity of the play is the reading of notes written, as is gradually made clear about C. The notes refer

to C's biography -- all in fragments -- and is supposed to shed some light on C's present situation, and on his life in general. There are ten fragments, some of which are mentioned more than once, since A and B keep referring back to them as being possible clues: (1) The memory book -- about the elephant; (2) on love and miscarriages (formal juridical style, of a separation?); (3) on remembering only the calamities of the national epos; (4) on family -- never shedding tears; (5) on his life when tipsy; horror worked into humorous skits; (6) on the watch; (7) on playing with dog excrement near the post office (see also TT 25); '8) on the heiress aynnt; (9) on the milkmaid's bottom; (10) on confidences -- "morbidly sensitive to opinions of others" (appears eight times!) and, finally, the story about running away from home. Having gone through these fragments, A and B (called Morran and Bertrand) comment on them and the play leads towards the eye-to-eye encounter between A and C. Most of the fragments include a funny touch -- achieved mostly by the ridiculous names of people and places and by juxtaposing the content of the note and the profession or place of the writer. All the fragments portray a glum picture of the person, and the final result of the collage can be summed up by what is found under "confidences": "... need of affection ... inner void ... congenital timidity ... morbidly sensitive to the opinions of others" (TII 91). This last line appears seven more times and, due to rhetorical emphasis, proves to be the key line in

a play which deals with "the opinions of others". There is a gradual approximation to what seems to be the crux of the matter while going through the papers, and especially in this last fragment, apparently an autobiographical one. The dynamics of seemingly approaching the core of the issue brings B closer to A, as though he is afraid of revealing some dangerous truth, or an intimacy that they could not find thus far. At this point A goes to see C's face, but C, whose secret has not been revealed through papers, does not reveal his secret when facing A either, and B notes: "Could never make out what he thought he was doing with that smile on his face" (TII 95). One cannot possibly avoid thinking about Beckett himself, smiling at his real critics, to the legion of which this line has just been added.

The constant, slow accumulation of facts on C's life is a deceptive device. Even after getting closer to him, B says: "Looks to me we have him"; they don't really have him at all and A answers: "We're getting nowhere, get on with it". The effect is one Beckett has often used before: the stringing of more and more facts, more and more stories, is more perplexing than clarifying, since there is no evident focus to them. The accumulation is an asymptotic approximation, never a realization. A and B do not understand that they have already arrived at some answer, namely, that C is "morbidly sensitive to the opinion of others". The end is therefore quite abrupt and simply an end of an accumulation

rather than any firm conclusion ensuing from a causal process.

Here Beckett uses a collage technique already seen in Play. In Play, three people told a three-faceted story. Here we have one story, the main "meaning" of which is that there remains an ontological gap between who and what a person is (C) and how others can "make him out" through loosely related writings about him. A and B have no criterion to judge which is "right" and which is "wrong" (TII 96). Their summing-up is "a black future, an unpardonable past -- so far as he can remember, inducements to linger on all equally preposterous and the best advice dead letter" (TII 96) (*italics mine*).

The last part of the play deals with what C had a "pathological horror of" -- the songbirds. A and B find one of the two love birds dead, and A indulges in an overly sentimental outburst of emotion: "Oh you pretty little pet, oh you bonny wee birdie!" (TII 100) and says about the bird something which is also characteristic of C, "And to think all this is organic waste! All that splendour!" (TII 100). B retorts with a typically funny and ambivalent Beckettian line, "They have no seed!" (TII 100). There is no mention of why the bird died, but the previous mention of the cat may hint at the answer, since C came to feed the cat and feared the birds. Soon after finding the dead bird, A and B discover that C has apparently died too. They let the cloth

fall on the bird cage, and cover C's face with a handkerchief. He, in a way, is the songbird; and "there is nothing we can do," says B, a line as true about the bird as it is about C.

During the whole play, Beckett supplies a lighting scheme which serves to "shed light" on a person's life. And the light is flickering, playing strange tricks and goes on and off arbitrarily.

This is a play representing an attitude toward the possibility of "making out" a person. In Theatre II, Beckett ridicules the critics who try to make him out through that typical rummaging in papers and through trying to fit grim but insignificant details into a whole that has no unity. It is just there.²²

One can observe an interesting line of development leading from Waiting for Godot all the way through the plays to the (so far) last play, Theatre II in regard to the notion of the implied playwright. Assuming that Godot is a disguise for Beckett himself, one sees that Beckett succeeds in establishing a fascinating relationship between the playwright and the play, the creator and the work. He is constantly "present in absentia." Waiting for Godot is hence a waiting for a playwright who, in a sense, is not only the author but the subject matter of the play. Since Beckett did not in fact know what the play is "about" (otherwise he would have said so in the play), he is in the play and out of it at one and the same time. In his last play, Theatre II,

C is, again, no other than a live though silent embodiment of a playwright who is relatively more explicit than implied. In Theatre II, A and B are theatre (or literary) critics who are looking for he who is right there, in the same way that Vladimir and Estragon are waiting that "entity" which will come in Theatre II (14 plays rather than one act later). In between Beckett's first and last plays (to exclude as yet unpublished material) one finds endless self-referring notes which clearly show that Godot and C are theatrical embodiments of their author and they, as well as the other characters are deeply stuck in the attempts to explain themselves and their situation to an audience. By the same token, the very act of writing and presenting a play can only be interpreted as Beckett's incessant wish to do the same (this notion is substantiated by Beckett's non-fiction remarks on Joyce, Proust, Van Velde, etc., which have been referred to in the introduction).

When actors play characters in a performance, they (both actors and characters) become "vice-existers," in more than one sense. Here the question arises in regard to how and in what sense do actors-in-their-roles represent the playwright's attitude, his thoughts, feelings and his situation. If it is true that the playwright manifests his existence in a play, he must do so by having actors represent him, actors who in their turn actually represent characters who represent the playwright.

The presentness and immediacy of the theatrical work changes the distance and the mode of interaction between the writer and the recipient of the work. In the theatre, the audience is actually present, and therefore the direct though fictitious appeal of the author to his reader is replaced with an indirect though actual appeal of an actor to an audience. In the novel authors can differ from each other by the literary distance they create between themselves, their characters and the readers. There are different sorts of distance, such that ensue from a moral or intellectual level, or the distance in time or space. In theatre, yet another sort of distance is introduced, namely, that which ensues from the medium of a performing art. The speech-act, when performed in theatre, involves an actual two-way communication between actor and audience instead of an implied and one-way communication between author and reader, even though this mode of communication is often a metaphor.²³

The existence of actors (not to mention their quality) on stage implies that the playwright is both more remote from his audience, because he is replaced or represented by the actor, and closer to his audience because of the live interaction that takes place between his "representatives" and the recipients of his works. The greater distanciation (no direct appeals from an author, an example of which is the previously mentioned approach) in drama as a genre is fully compensated by contracting the distance through the medium of

theatre.

Paul Ricoeur discusses distanciation in text versus discourse. He notes that there is a "triple distanciation introduced by writing: (1) distance from the author; (2) from the situation of discourse; (3) from the original audience."²⁴ In plays, only the first sort of distanciation is different from the discourse since it is an actor who performs the play and not the author. Ricoeur concludes his article in claiming that the text is the mediation by which we understand ourselves. Understandably, whatever holds true for text is as true, and easier to prove, for discourse. In Beckett's plays, one ought to bear in mind that it is (a) a special case of discourse, namely, that of theatrical speech-act; (b) that such a discourse must be an expression of a self in its attempts to "come across" to others so that they can use it as a mediation to understand themselves. Hence, in drama, it is not the text but the speech-act of an actor that mediates between playwright and audience.

Beckett's active intervention in the production of his plays should therefore be understood not only as sheer attempts to improve their artistic quality, but as an attempt to endow the actor with the same self-referential quality that he and his dramatic characters have.

The notion of the implied playwright in Beckett's plays is closely linked with that of the audience.²⁵ It has already been noted (see previous chapter) on the many

references made to an audience, directly or indirectly, in all of Beckett's plays. Such references necessarily point out both to their speakers-actors and to their original source, the writer.

The self-referential quality of the play and its numerous elements, such as acting, the time and space of the performance, the constant mentioning of speaking, seeing and witnessing, are finally all reduceable to the different phases of the implied playwright's extremely high degree of self-consciousness which, paradoxically, finds its most un-narcissistic vent in the very act of presentation.

In presenting this self-reflexive circle, Beckett does not revolutionize the conventions of theatre. In fact, he relies on the existing conventions of theatrical lighting, design, makeup and style of acting. If revolutionized or drastically changed, these conventions cannot serve their main function of self-reflexion.

The relative conventionality of Beckett's theatre serves as both grist for the self-referential mill and as deliberately well-known background to which the audience may relate while actually being referred to by themselves. If Beckett had radically revolutionized his theatrical modes of presentation, he would have side-tracked the main issue of focusing on the self-reference of the creative process, of himself, his play and the recipients.

The link between the playwright and the audience is

established through a self-conscious, self-referring actor in the role of a Winnie, a Hamm, a Krapp and others who act-out the self-referential meaning. The specifically theatrical function of this acting-out is that which Austin calls a performative art and Ricoeur calls the actual event of discourse. By using the medium of theatre instead of sheer text, Beckett seems to be engaged in the very courageous attempt of actively communicating that which is hardest to communicate.

Winnie's (to choose a lively example of a role) constant yearning for "communication" is nothing but Beckett's own (though highly sophisticated) craving for the same. The play is, therefore, not about communication, but an actual act of communication, and an attempt to attain it by creating a real dialogue between the characters on stage and an author and his potential audience. It says attempt, since people can treat other people as objects too. Beckett did his share in asserting true self-consciousness of the "other". It is for the audience to complete the "circle" of mutual consciousness.

Does Willie's hand reach Winnie's?

Notes to Chapter V

¹Wayne Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 155 ff.

²Jiri Veltrusky, Dramatic Text as a Component of Theatre, in Matejka and Titunik (eds.), Semiotics of Art (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1976), p. 110.

³Luckacs, Approx., p. 283.

⁴Gadamer, Hegel, pp. 61-2.

⁵Richard Southern, The Seven Ages of the Theatre (London: Faber, 1964), pp. 21-2.

⁶Eric Bentley, The Life of the Drama (London, 1965).

⁷Rapp, Sociology, rightly maintains that the actor as well as the audience are aware of their dual role, this duality being part of the theatrical situation. The actor is aware of his need to represent an "unexisting" world and yet be "realistic", and of his duty to bridge between the intended meaning of the play and its perceived meaning. The audience, on the other hand, comes to see but knows it will also be seen (p. 252 ff).

⁸Paul Ricoeur, What is a Text? in D. M. Rassmussen, Symbolic Language and Philosophical Anthropology (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1971, pp. 135 ff.

⁹Ricoeur, ibid.

¹⁰Gadamer, Hegel, p. 62.

¹¹Simmel, Performance, p. 304.

¹²Alan Schneider, "Anyway You Like it, Alan", Theatre Quarterly, Vol. V, No. 19, 1975, p. 28.

¹³Jack McGowran, Interview with Richard Toscan, Theatre Quarterly, Vol. III, No. 11 (July-September), p. 16.

¹⁴See, for example, Volker Canaris, Samuel Beckett, Das Letzte Band, Regiebuch (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970); John Calder (ed.), Beckett at Sixty (London: Calder and Boyars, 1967); Walter D. Asmus, "Beckett Directs Godot," Theatre Quarterly, Vol. V, No. 19, 1975, and others. Also, in my own vicarious "Beckettship" in directing Play and Cascando, Words and Music, Not I, Eh Joe, etc., actors felt a sense of "being mentally close to Beckett". Alan Schneider, certainly a much more experienced Beckett director, testifies to the same effect.

¹⁵Instead of the typical 19th century convention (relying, in its turn, on the "naturalistic fallacy") of stage-reflects-audience model, one should introduce the model of stage reflects itself versus audience-reflects itself. In that sense the statement that the final effect of a Beckett play is to disallow the perspective to criticise it, is only partially true. A perspective to criticise a Beckett play is given if and only if it is understood that the play reflects itself in order for the audience to do the same. And again, it is the necessary element of presence and immediacy that brings self-reference straight to an audience in a way more aware of the medium.

¹⁶Herta Schmid, Strukturalistische Dramentheorie (Kronberg TS: Scriptor, 1973).

¹⁷Rolf Fieguth, A New Structuralist Approach to the Theory of Drama and to General Genre Theory, PTL, Vol. I, No. 2, p. 389 ff (*italics mine*).

¹⁸Beckett, Proust, p. 125. See also Lawrence Harvey, Beckett, Poet and Critic (N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 401-440. Lawrence makes interesting references to the connection between Beckett's own criticism and the criticism of Beckett, as I tried to show in the introduction.

¹⁹Beckett, Proust, p. 88 (*italics mine*).

²⁰Richard E. Palmer, Post-Modernity and Hermeneutics, Boundary 2, Vol. V, No. 2 (Winter 1977) (State University New York, Binghamton), pp. 363-388.

²¹In these days, Deirdre Bair has published a volume of over 700 pages -- a Beckett Biography (N. Y. and London: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovitch, 1978). One wonders to what extent Beckett (who "neither helped nor hindred" Prof. Bair) regards this new and very extensive work "a rummaging!"

²²A and B are portraits of critics. Ironically, many of Beckett's real critics treat him (if he is C, as suggested) with great love, deep involvement and care.

²³If special case of speech-acts is metaphor. Beckett uses quite a number of metaphors, but since the matter is not directly related to the scope and intention of this essay, it is dealt with, in brief, in the appendix. However, see Dorothy Mack, "Metaphoring as Speech Act," Philosophy and Rhetoric, Vol. 7, 1974, p. 245.

²⁴Ricoeur, Distanciation. Presentation, Translated by David Pellauer of St. Olaf's College, Northfield, Minn., p. 7. See also "Discourse has not only one kind of reference ... it refers to an extra-linguistic reality ... but it equally refers to its own speaker by means of specific devices ... language has both a reality reference ... intentional bound and reflective, thing-bound and self-bound". Ricoeur, Metaphor, p. 98.

²⁵Compare also: (i) Holland: His real medium is surely the most difficult, intractable of all -- our minds -- and therefore all the greater an artist is he -- or any writer -- because he creates us into creators, in Norman N. Holland, The Dynamics of Literary Response (N. Y.: Norton, 1975), p. 280; (ii) George Poulet, Phenomenology of Reading (a translated hand-out): "To understand a literary work ... is to let the individual who wrote it reveal himself to us in us A work of literature becomes (at the expense of the reader whose own life it suspends) a sort of human being, that is a mind conscious of itself and constituting itself in me as the subject of its own objects; (iii) Gilles Deleuze: "Creation is the genesis of the act of thinking within thought itself. This genesis implicates something which does violence to thought, which wrests it from its natural stupor, and its merely abstract possibilities. To think is always to interpret -- to explicate, to develop, to decipher, to translate a sign. Translating, deciphering, developing are the form of pure creation." Proust and Signs, p. 280.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Asmus, Walter D. "Beckett Directs Godot." Theatre Quarterly, Vol. V, No. 19, 1975.

Austin, J. L. Philosophical Papers. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Bachelard, Gaston. The Poetics of Space. Boston: Beacon Press, 1964.

Bair, Deidre. Beckett. New York and London: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovitch, 1978.

Barnard, G. C. Samuel Beckett. New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1970.

Barthes, Roland. Mythologies. St. Albans: Paladin, 1973.

Beckerman, Bernard. Dynamics of Drama. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970.

Beckett, Samuel. (Plays chronologically)

Waiting for Godot. London: Faber, 1971.

Endgame. London: Faber, 1958.

Act Without Words I. New York: Grove Press, 1960.

Krapp's Last Tape. London: Faber, 1958.

Act Without Words II. New York: Grove Press, 1960.

Happy Days. London: Faber, 1961.

Play. New York: Grove Press, 1964.

Come and Go. New York: Grove Press, 1968.

Breath. New York: Grove Press, 1974.

Not I. London: Faber, 1973.

That Time. London: Faber, 1976.

Footfalls. London: Faber, 1976.

Theatre I. New York: Grove Press, 1976.

Theatre II. New York: Grove Press, 1976.

(Radioplays, chronologically)

All That Fall. London: Faber, 1969.

Embers. London: Faber, 1959.

Words and Music. New York: Grove Press, 1962.

Cascando. New York: Grove Press, 1963.

Radio I. New York: Grove Press, 1976.
Radio II. New York: Grove Press, 1976.

(Novels, chronologically)

Watt. New York: Grove, Press, 1959.
The Unnamable. New York: Grove Press, 1965.

(Criticism)

Dante ... Bruno. Vico ... Joyce. London: Faber, 1972.
Proust. London: Calder, 1965.

Bentley, Eric. The Life of the Drama. London: Penguin, 1965.

Bergson, Henri. Le Rire. Paris: Minuit, 1958.

Booth, Wayne. The Rhetoric of Fiction. Chicago and London:
University of Chicago Press, 1965.

_____. The Rhetoric of Irony. Chicago and London:
University of Chicago Press, 1975.

Burns, Elizabeth. Theatricality. New York: Harper and Row,
1972.

Cage, John. Silence. Middleton, Connecticut: Wesleyan
University Press, 1968.

Calder, John. (Ed.). Beckett at Sixty. London: Calder and
Boyars, 1967.

Canaris, Volker. Samuel Beckett, Das Letzte Band, Regiebuch.
Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970.

Chevigny, Bell Gale. (Ed.). Twentieth Century Interpretation
of Endgame. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1969.

Cohn, Ruby. The Comic Gamut. New Jersey: Rutgers University
Press, 1962.

_____. Back To Beckett. New Jersey: Princeton University
Press, 1973.

Copeland, Hanna. Art and Artist in the Works of Samuel Beckett.
The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1975.

Cowgill, Rome. Fundamentals of Writing For Radio. New York:
Reinhart and Co., 1949.

Driver, Tom. Interview With Beckett. New York: Columbia
University Forum IV, 1961.

- Durozi, Gerard. Beckett. Paris: Bordas, 1972.
- Eliopoulos, James. Samuel Beckett's Dramatic Language. The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1975.
- Esslin, Martin. (Ed.). Samuel Beckett. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1965.
- Even Zohar, Hamar. Correlative Positive and Correlative Negative Time. Tel Aviv: Hasifrut, Vol. I, Nos. 3-4.
- Fieguth, Rolf. A New Structuralist Approach to the Theory of Drama and to General Genre Theory. The Hague: PTL, Vol. I, No. 2.
- Field, Stanley. T.V. and Radio Writing. Boston: Houghton, 1958.
- Fletcher, John and Spurling, John. Beckett. New York: Hill and Wang, 1972.
- Gadamer, Hans Georg. Hegel's Dialectics. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.
- Gessner, Niklaus. Die Unzulänglichkeit der Sprache. Zurich: Juris, 1957.
- Grotowski, Jerzy. Towards a Poor Theatre. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968.
- Habermas, Jurgen. Knowledge and Human Interests. Boston: Beacon Press, 1972.
- Hacker, P. M. S. Insight and Illusion. London: Oxford University Press, 1972.
- Harvey, Lawrence E. Samuel Beckett, Poet and Critic. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970.
- Hasselbach, Hans Peter. "Endgame." Modern Drama, Vol. XIX, No. 1 (March 1976).
- Hayman, Ronald. Samuel Beckett. London: Heineman, 1970.
- Hesler, David H. The Shape of Chaos. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1973.
- Hintikka, Jaaco. "Cogito, Ergo Sum, Inference or Performance." In Alexander Sasonke and Noel Fleming (eds.) Metameditations. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1965.
- Holland, Norman N. The Dynamics of Literary Response. New York: Norton, 1975.

- Honzl, Jidrich. "Dynamics of Sign and Theatre." In Matejka Ladislaw and Titunik, Irwin R. (eds.), Semiotics of Art (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1975).
- Iser, Wolfgang. The Implied Reader. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University, 1974.
- Jørgensen, Kattsoff, Ushenbo, Encarnacion, et al. Mind, Nos. 247 (July 1953) and 253 (Jan. 1955).
- Kenner, Hugh. Samuel Beckett. London: Calder, 1962.
- _____. Samuel Beckett. New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1973.
- Knowlson, James. Light and Darkness in the Theatre of Samuel Beckett. London: Turret Books, 1972.
- Kirby, Michael. Experimental Theatre. Washington: Washington Square Press, 1969.
- Kishu, Richard. Structure of Experience. New York: Harper and Row, 1970.
- Laing, R. D. The Divided Self. London: Penguin, 1974.
- Langer, Susan. Philosophical Sketches. New York: Mentor, 1974.
- Levi-Strauss, Claude. La Pensée Sauvage. Paris: Minuit, 1970.
- Luckács, Georg. Approximation to Life in the Novel and the Play. London: Penguin, 1973.
- Mack, Dorothy. "Metaphoring as Speech Act." Philosophy and Rhetoric, Vol. 7, 1974.
- Martin, R. L. (Ed.). The Paradox of a Liar. New Haven: University of Yale Press, 1970.
- McGowran, Jack. Interview with Richard Toscan. Theatre Quarterly, Vol. III, No. II.
- McLuhan, Marshall and Carpenter, Edmond. Exploration in Communication. Toronto: Beacon Press, 1960.
- McLuhan, Marshall. Understanding Media. London: Sphere, 1967.
- McWhinnie, Donald. The Art of Radio. London: Faber, 1959.

- Ohmann, Richard. "Speech Acts and the Definition of the Literature." Philosophy and Rhetoric, No. 4, 1971.
- Palmer, Richard. "Post-Modernity and Hermeneutics." Boundary 2, Vol. V, No. 2, (Winter 1977).
- Peyre, Henri. Literature and Sincerity. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963.
- Piaget, Robert. La mainveller. Paris: Minuit, 1960.
- Poulet, George. Phenomonology of Reading. Translated hand-out.
- Putz, Peter. Die Zeit in Drama. Gottingen: 1970.
- Rapp, Uri. Sociology and Theatre. Tel Aviv: Sifriat Praline, 1973.
- Reid, Alec. All I Can Manage, More Than I Could. New York: Grove Press, 1968.
- Ricoeur, Paul. Distanciation. Minnesota: St. Olaf's College. A translation by David Pellauer.
- _____. What is a Text? The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971.
- _____. Metaphor and the Main Problems of Hermeneutics. Minnesota: St. Olaf's College. A translation by David Pellauer.
- _____. Freud. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.
- Robbe-Grillet, Alain. "Presence in the Theatre". In Martin Esslin (ed.), Samuel Beckett. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1965.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. La Liberté Cartesienne. Paris: Trois Colines, 1946.
- _____. Being and Nothingness. New York: Washington Square, 1966.
- Schmid, Herta. Strukturalistische Dramentheorie. Kronberg: Ts., 1973.
- Schneider, Alan. "Anyway you Like it, Alan." Theatre Quarterly, Vol. V, No. 19, 1975.
- Searle, John R. Speech Acts. Cambridge University Press, 1970.
- Segal, Ora. The Theory of Speech Acts. Tel Aviv: Hasifrut, No. 18-19, 1974.

- Seipel, Hildegard. Untersuchungen Zum Experimentellen Theater Von Beckett und Ionesco. Bonn: Romanisches Seminar, 1963.
- Shank. Theodor. The Art of Dramatic Art. New York: Delta, 1969.
- Simmel, Georg. "On the Theory of Theatrical Performance." In Burns, Tom and Elizabeth, Sociology of Literature and Dramas. London: Penguin, 1973.
- Southern, Richard. The Seven Ages of the Theatre. London: Faber, 1968.
- Styan, J. L. The Dark Comedy. Cambridge University Press, 1968.
- _____. Drama, Stage and Audience. Cambridge University Press, 1975.
- Szanto, George H. "Samuel Beckett, Dramatic Possibilities." Massachusetts Review (Autumn, 1974).
- Thomas, Dylan. Under Milkwood. New York: New Directions, 1954.
- Thompson, A. R. Anatomy of Drama. Jerusalem: Magnes, 1976.
- Tindall, William York. Samuel Beckett. New York: Columbia University Press, 1964.
- Veltrusky, Jiri. "Basic Features of Dramatic Dialogue." In Matejka and Titunik, Semiotics of Art. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1976.
- _____. "Dramatic Text as a Component of Theatre." In Matejka and Titunik, Semiotics of Art. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1976.
- Waldo, Abbot. Handbook for Broadcasting. New York: McGraw Hill, 1950.
- Wardle, Irving. (Ed.). New English Dramatists, Radioplays. London: Penguin, 1968.
- Webb, Eugene. Samuel Beckett. Seattle: University of Washington, 1974.
- Whitaker, G. and Wilson, H. Writings for Broadcasting. London: A. & C. Black, 1935.

Zeifman, Hersh. "Being and Non-Being, Samuel Beckett's Vol. 7."
Modern Drama, Vol. XIX, No. 1 (March 1976).

Zeraffa, Michael. "The Novel as Literary Form and as a Social
Institution." In Burns, Tom and Elizabeth (eds.),
Sociology of Literature.

Zuckerlandl, Victor. Sound and Symbol. New Jersey: Princeton
University Press, 1969.

APPENDIX

An Exercise in Formalizing Beckett's Metaphors

In Roland Barthes' essay, Myth Today,¹ there are a few lines which, when slightly changed, are applicable to Beckett's special medium-oriented techniques. (My proposed modifications are in double brackets).

As meaning the signifier ((a word uttered on radio)) already postulates a reading ((hearing)) I grasp it through my eyes ((ears)) it has sensory reality ((acoustic image; a performing art element, influenced by intonation, pitch, "colour of tone", etc.)) (unlike the linguistic signifier, which is purely mental) there is a richness in it Beckett's radio-oriented words ... they have at their disposal a sufficient rationality ((relying on a basic credibility in words, always comprehensible as such by the listener, in Beckett's radioplays))

It is this constant game of hide-and-seek between the meaning and the form which defines myth ((Beckett's de-mystification of language on one level, and re-mystification of language on another level, namely, on the level of meta-language)).²

... myth ((Beckett)) plays on the analogy of meaning and form But what the form can always give one to read ((hear)) is disorder itself ((sheer utterance)) -- it can give significance to the absurd, make the absurd itself a myth((!)).³

Finally if I focus on the mythical ((radiophonic)) signifier as an inextricable whole made of meaning and form, I receive an ambiguous signification, I respond to the constituting mechanism of myth ((Beckett's radioplays)) to its own dynamics, I become a reader of myth ((an aware listener? a decodifier of Beckett's radioplays?)).⁴

... myth encounters nothing but betrayal in language, for language can only oblige the concept if it hides it, or unmask it if it formulates it. The elaboration of a second-order language ... etc.⁵

Beckett's poetic attempts prove that he is conscious of the will to "reach to the meaning of things themselves" through words, while, on the other hand, knowing that words are a "tangible analogue of silence."

Using Barthes' words differently, the following formula is applicable to Beckett's metaphoric usage of certain words and serves as a clue to the understanding of Beckett's achievements in the performing arts.

Metaphor is sometimes regarded as a relationship between a word X and a word Y (Tenor, vehicle; Focus, frame; subject, modifier; etc.). The word (adjective, verb, noun, etc.) Y functions as a description or modifier of the word X. Together they create a new verbal unit which, when successful, conveys a new meaning, that the X and the Y did not have while separate.

A realization of a metaphor, such as may be found in Gogol's The Nose or in Kafka's Metamorphosis, or even in Fellini's Satyricon (fire between a woman's legs!), is yet another way of developing the X and the Y and their interrelations. Beckett goes yet one step further in using metaphors.

In his radioplays (and, for that matter, his metaphors in all the performing arts) can be described as follows:

Many metaphors link the word-as-text with that same word-as-uttered.

I X + VWX = RUZ
 (word x) + (vocalized word X) = (radio-metaphor unit Z)

and also:

II WX + FIX = FIZ
 (word x) + (filmed corres- = (film-metaphor unit Z)
 ponding image
 of word X)

III WX + PEX = PEZ
 (word x) + (played corres- = (theatrical-metaphor
 ponding event unit Z)
 of word X)

WX = one or more words having both form and meaning (according to Barthes), when they are not uttered (namely, still as text). E.G., "... it's all in your head," (Cascando) or "You'll be all alone with your voice," (Embers).

VWX = the utterance of WX on radio (open to pitch, intonation, etc., modifications. Yet sheer utterance is the important factor).

RUZ = pseudo- or super-metaphoric tension which exists between WX and VWX. This is the hypothesis that often exists in Beckett's radioplays, and the essence of self-referential utterances.

There exists a double tension in Beckett's use of metaphors. The first is of a conventional type, namely, that of the X-Y tension. The second is the typically "mediumal" metaphor. It creates the tension between the word (or verbal unit) as a written, literary-text and the word as an uttered

(or filmed, "staged", etc.) unit. Evidently, this tension is quite well known, and any person who has ever been introduced to the relation between literature and the performing arts is aware of the differences. Yet when we come to think that it is actually radio itself (or theatre, or film) that functions as a topic and subject matter in Beckett's radioplays, the establishment of these relationships as a medium oriented metaphor gains in significance. Furthermore, they are a short-cut explanation for self-referentiality in his works. To this one ought to add the all important factor of what can be achieved by self-reference.

Notes to Appendix

¹Roland Barthes, Mythologies (Frogmore, St. Albans: Paladin, 1973), p. 117 ff. .

²Ibid., p. 118.

³Ibid., p. 126.

⁴Ibid., p. 128.

⁵Ibid., p. 129 (*italics mine*).