

Reconstituted Pathos: Time and Loss in the Dramatic Works of Samuel Beckett

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at Samuel Beckett's *Film* and selections of his dramatic works for radio, theatre and television to demonstrate the processes in which an intuition of loss may be invoked in the audience. More specifically, interrogating the dominant attitude in Beckett studies that Beckett's works are intellectually demanding of the audience, I maintain in the dissertation that his drama may appeal more to the audience members' intuition than their intellect. Following this trajectory, I posit that the frustration experienced by an audience member could be caused by an intuition of loss that is triggered by the plays' reconstitution of her habitual framework of understanding. Key texts that influenced the definitions of 'habit', 'intuition', and 'time' in this research are Henri Bergson's *Time and Freewill* and Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.

In this dissertation, I illustrate that the radio plays thematically appropriate the regard for radio as a 'blind' medium to highlight the audience's entrapment in their habitual way of knowing. Further, *Film* is analysed as reconstituting the audience member's habit body to an ecstatic being that is temporarily freed from stratified limits. Whereas Beckett scholars tend to attribute static interminability to Beckettian time because of the pervasiveness of ineffectual repetition depicted in his stage plays, I argue that Beckett's conception of time may be dual: an incarcerating habitual continuum and a potentially liberating *durée*. Following that, I analyse how the television plays establish the intuition of loss as seemingly subject-less because the characters and the audience's reliance on the habitual way of knowing has rendered them amnesiacs who cannot remember *what* they have lost, except that they have lost. In considering the intersection of Beckett's dramatic works with the concept of habit, this thesis maps out the process in which each medium could have been exploited by Beckett to reconstitute the audience's habitual framework of understanding to an intuitive experience of his works.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

‘To be always what I am - and so changed from what I was.’

— Samuel Beckett, *Happy Days*

Within the anglophone context of Samuel Beckett studies, considerations of audience reception often acknowledge mixed attitudes towards his early works but neglect to examine the fact that, despite growing appreciation for Beckett’s drama since *Waiting for Godot* was first performed, there will always be frustrated members of the audience who consider Beckett’s plays ‘boring, irritating and incomprehensible’.¹ Such a negative perspective is likely triggered by the playwright’s deliberate frustrations of audience expectations, and could lead certain viewers to jump to the conclusion that the depiction of meaninglessness must mean that the works are meaningless. However, Simon Critchley rejects the view that Beckett’s works are meaningless because of the performance of meaninglessness. Instead, he postulates that meaninglessness ‘need[s] to be conceptually communicated’.²

As such, following Theodor Adorno’s view that Beckett’s plays ‘are absurd not because of the absence of meaning — then they would be irrelevant — but because they debate meaning’, Critchley emphasises Beckett’s works as intellectually demanding in their resistance to offering audiences an easily discernible or familiar narrative form, so as to articulate ‘meaninglessness as an achievement of the ordinary without the rose-tinted glasses of redemption, an acknowledgement of the finiteness of the finite and the limitedness of the human condition’.³ Similarly, in Linda Ben-Zvi’s interpretation of

¹ S. E. Gontarski, ‘The Business of Being Beckett: Beckett’s Reception in the USA’, in *The International Reception of Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Mark Nixon and Matthew Feldman (London: Continuum, 2009), pp. 24-39 (p. 26).

² Simon Critchley, *Very Little... Almost Nothing* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 151.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

Beckett's television plays, she asserts that Beckett foregrounded 'the apparatus of the medium [as message] by revealing its trappings, conventions, and artifice' in order that the viewers are shown 'the inherent instability of all mechanical reproduction' and '[forced] to confront its power and seduction'.⁴ By postulating that Beckett's television drama exposes to the viewer the medium as a manipulative artifice that conceals 'the mess' that is the human condition, Ben-Zvi, like Critchley, emphasises that Beckettian television drama stimulates the viewers' intellect by leading them to confront the weaknesses of the medium and their susceptibility to its manipulation. However, such emphases on the role of the viewer's intellect to rigorously interrogate Beckett's expression of our limited condition, often overlook the intuitive effect that Beckett's film and plays invoke in his audiences even before an intellectually derived overall conclusion could be drawn about his drama. The sense of frustration experienced by some of his audiences is a good starting point to examine this intuitive effect.

Jonathan Bignell's *Beckett on Screen: The Television Plays* offers an informed report on the history of Beckett's film and television plays' negative reception, yet his perspective that Beckett's works are 'both pedagogical and paedocritic' continues to align his analysis with the existing regard in Beckett criticism for unfavourable reception to be considered as merely a side effect of Beckett's 'educational' delineation of failure and resistance.⁵ Although Bignell's view follows Ben-Zvi's perspective that Beckett's works are trying to teach the audience how to see (and as a result overlooks the intuitive effect that the Beckettian drama could evoke in the audience members prior to their intellectual arrival at a neat and coherent conclusion about his works), I applaud the motivation of the book to introduce Beckett's works to a broader audience and

⁴ Linda Ben-Zvi, 'Beckett, McLuhan, and Television: The Medium, the Message, and "the Mess"', in *Beckett at 100: Revolving It All*, ed. by Linda Ben-Zvi and Angela Moorjani (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 271-84 (p. 280-1).

⁵ Jonathan Bignell, *Beckett on Screen: The Television Plays* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2009), p.159.

readership. However, it is this that Chris Ackerley takes issue with, arguing that Bignell's attempt to 'invigorate the study of Beckett's television plays and introduce them to a broader audience and readership [...] seems an improbable outcome; more realistic perhaps, is the hope that the small following Beckett's television drama currently commands will be invigorated by his findings.'⁶ Tellingly, his attitude seems to suggest that Beckett studies should be content with our 'small following' and fails to appreciate the possibility that Beckett's venture into other media might have been motivated by an artistic obligation to articulate an everyman experience to an everyman audience, instead of merely to appeal to intellectuals. This dissertation maintains that not only might Beckett's drama have been thus motivated but that they also possess the capacity to articulate this everyman experience. This dissertation is my attempt to uncover this artistic articulation as the film and plays' invocation of the audience's often-neglected intuition. I observe that the audience's intuition plays a large part in the experience of Beckett's drama, yet it suffers from having been buried under the many sophisticated interpretations of Beckett's dramatic oeuvre.

As such, the invocation of the intuitive effect by Beckettian drama, specifically apparent in the form of an everyman audience's frustration with his works, is the main subject of this dissertation. Whereas Bignell's emphasis is on the pedagogical value of Beckett's works in relation to the audience, this thesis foregrounds the intuitive effect provoked in the audience by Beckett's drama prior to their drawing of any definitive overall conclusions about his works. Following this trajectory, by placing an audience's intellectual engagement with his plays at the background of this dissertation, I postulate that the negative reception of Beckett's dramatic works presents an opportunity for the analysis of the intuitive aspect of audience experience. As part of the interpretive

⁶ Chris Ackerley, 'Beckett on Screen: The Television Plays (review)', *Modern Drama*, 54.3 (2011), <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/modern_drama/v054/54.3.ackerley.pdf> [accessed 15 May 2014], 383-5 (p. 384).

approach that will be employed in this thesis, I will survey instances of the negative reception of Beckett's drama within existing scholarship and also draw on my personal encounters with his works as an audience member.

In this dissertation, *Film* and selected plays for radio, stage and television will be examined to consider whether their reminder of the fragmentary condition in his audiences could cause the negative experience of Beckett's dramatic works. I hypothesise that an audience member's frustration with Beckett's film and plays could be a manifestation of an intuition of loss that is triggered by this reminder of fragmentation. To many such audiences, this intuition of loss is ineffable because our condition of intrinsic fragmentation has been concealed and forgotten under the layers upon layers of habits that society has constructed and piled upon us in order that we may go on assuming that an organised and coherent narrative of life is the only reality of life. Thus, I postulate that the audience members' habitual ways of thinking are formed in Time and the shedding of these habits while experiencing a Beckettian play entails an intuition of Loss, which may be the root of their frustration.

Two of the key writings that inform my understanding of a temporally organised lived reality are Henri Bergson's *Time and Freewill* and Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.⁷ The tension between the two philosophers' conceptions of Time is of particular significance to my understanding of the human intuition that is veiled under the veneer of habitual systems. Bergson intimated that if not for habits, humans will be consumed by the intellect's desire to self-destruct.⁸ As such, habits are formed according to a spurious but necessary concept of successive time that is evenly divided

⁷ Henri Bergson, *Time and Freewill: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. by F. L. Pogson, 3rd edn (London: G. Allen, 1913); Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by J. M. D. Meiklejohn (New York: Prometheus Books, 1990).

⁸ Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. by R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton (London: Macmillan and Co, 1935)
<<http://www.archive.org/details/twosourcesofmora033499mbp>>[accessed 14 Jan 2014], p. 98.

into hours, minutes and seconds which social life is organised around.⁹ However, responding directly to Kant's conception of Time as a successive continuum, Bergson maintained that time is in reality intuitively experienced as fluid duration (*durée*) and suggested that articulating an intuitive experience is difficult but that the task of the artist is to express it.¹⁰ Whereas scholars such as Steven Connor, Stephen Barker, Anthony Uhlmann and S. E. Gontarski have examined Beckett's works in relation to Bergson's philosophy, as far as I am aware, the representation of the intuitive *durée* as a possible escape route for the Beckettian characters from a successive external time continuum has not been considered.¹¹ Thus, habit and successive time are inextricably tied together in this dissertation as a governing structure of Beckett's dramatic landscape as well as the audience's extradiegetic world. A sense of loss invariably ensues as the audience member experiences a paradoxical disjunction between an intuitive pity for the characters' desire to escape this organised continuum and her persistently frustrated habitual frames of understanding that are employed to comprehend the 'point' of Beckett's depiction of the characters' failure to escape.

As such, the terms 'reconstituted pathos' in the title refer to the process of how Beckett's plays do not appeal to the audience's emotions in order to direct them to a specific judgement, but that they activate an intuitive core in the audience members, and as a consequence temporarily restore them to an intuitive awareness of their fragmentation. This reconstitution is conceived as temporary because I posit that Beckett's works are not pedagogically functional in that context and that the audience

⁹ *Time and Freewill*, p. 127.

¹⁰ *The Two Sources*, p. 217.

¹¹ Stephen Connor, 'Slow Going', *Critical Beckett Conference*, University of Birmingham, 26 September 1998 <<http://www.stevenconnor.com/slow.htm>> [accessed 13 June 2014]; Stephen Barker, 'Qu'est-ce que c'est d'après in Beckettian time', in *Beckett after Beckett*, ed. by S. E. Gontarski and Anthony Uhlmann (Tallahassee: Florida University Press, 2006), pp. 98-115; Anthony Uhlmann, *Beckett and the Philosophical Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); S. E. Gontarski, 'Recovering Beckett's Bergsonism', in *Beckett at 100: Revolving it all*, ed. by Linda Ben-Zvi and Angela Moorjani (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 93-106.

would continue to lean on their habitual frames of understanding the organised reality around them the moment the plays end. Jacques Lacan's 'Mirror Stage' is employed in this research, particularly in relation to the analysis of *Film*, to understand our intrinsic but forgotten state of fragmentation, whereas Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concepts of 'deterritorialization' and the 'body without organs' are adopted to shed more light on the spectatorial process of reconstitution. Effectively, the audience members' intuitive experience of their intrinsic fragmentation in relation to each specific medium is examined in each chapter as a process of reconstitution. In Beckett criticism, fragmentation has been largely explored in relation to characterisation and this will be extrapolated in the following chapters to include the audience members as fragmented subjects.

The plays in this thesis are arranged by medium in the order of radio, film, stage and television. Each chapter focuses on one medium so as to explore how each medium might have been employed by Beckett to invoke the spectatorial process of reconstitution. Although the arrangement of the chapters does not follow a chronological order, the plays within each chapter are examined by taking into account some of the key cultural developments of the time the plays were written and first performed or broadcast in English. Crucially, the dissertation examines the subject of reconstitution through an interpretive approach by considering the intersection of the concept of habit with the philosophical and psychological contexts in which the film and plays were produced.

1.1 THE CONCEPT OF HABIT

Beckett had it that 'Habit is a ballast that chains the dog to his vomit. Breathing is habit. Life is habit. Or rather life is a succession of habits, since the individual is a succession of individuals; the world being a projection of the individual's consciousness

[...], the pact must be continually renewed, the letter of safe-conduct brought up to date.¹² As it is evident in the quotation, even before Beckett began writing drama, his concept of habit is that it permeates every aspect of lived reality as a necessity, yet he seems also to be aware that there is something mechanically oppressive about it. The successive structure of habits that governs a projected world also implies that consciousness is also structured successively as a result of habit. In effect, his assertion that there is a ‘pact’ between habit and life that needs to be continually renewed suggests that this partnership could be a contrivance.

In Ulrika Maude’s ‘Beckett and the Laws of Habit’, she compares Felix Ravaisson’s concept of habit with Beckett’s portrayal of habit. She surmises that early Beckett’s negative perspective on the subject, which was expressed in *Proust*, might have been influenced by his readings of Bergson and Marcel Proust, but that late Beckett seems to view habit in a slightly more affirmative light since in his late drama ‘residual subjectivity emerges and is tenuously articulated through acts of habit.’¹³ She suggests that like Ravaisson who asserted that the repetition of habit affords an automatic grace, Beckett demanded of his actors ‘the graceful gesture and posture of habitual mechanical action and enunciation’ so that a ‘sense of self’ could emerge out of it.¹⁴ I agree with Maude’s observation that a Beckettian character’s ‘sense of self’ could emerge through the performance of a habitual routine, but these do not only occur in his late works and I find it difficult to agree with her conclusion that habit thus ‘constitute[s] a tenuous, fraught, and primitive ontology, which is the most, perhaps, that we can hope

¹² Samuel Beckett, *Proust*, in *The Grove Centenary Edition: Poems, Short Fiction, and Criticism of Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Paul Auster, Vol. 4, 1st edn. (New York: Grove Press, 2006), pp. 511-554 (p. 515).

¹³ Ulrika Maude, ‘Beckett and the Laws of Habit’, *Modernism/modernity*, 18.4 (November 2011) <<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/modernism-modernity/v018/18.4.maude.html>> [accessed 24 Jul 2014], 814-21 (p. 820).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

for.¹⁵ It is problematic to regard Beckett as depicting the habitual state of being as the most that we can hope for insofar as we agree that his works articulate habit as already an entrapment that could be the root of his characters' wretchedness. We cannot 'hope for' a condition of being that we are already trapped in. In my perspective, habit is not dramatised to accentuate the glimpses of 'a residual subjectivity' of the characters. Instead, habit is staged so that it may be exposed as the condition that veils the characters' intuitive subjectivity, which remains trapped under it. As such, I maintain throughout this dissertation that habit is depicted in Beckettian drama as a necessary but entrapping veil that dulls the senses to the intuition, and the glimpses of the characters' 'residual subjectivity' that occasionally escape the veil are dramatised to activate the audience's intuition of this veiled condition.

The concept that habit is a trap in this dissertation leans heavily on Bergson's philosophy on Time and Intuition, which shortly will be introduced in the next section 1.2 Philosophical Context. It should suffice for the purpose of this section to understand that Bergson asserted that habit dictates that we '[imprison] the whole of reality in a network prepared in advance'.¹⁶ This 'network' constitutes the conceptual framework by which one understands the world around us (and in the context of this dissertation, the conceptual framework by which an audience member unavailingly tries to understand Beckettian drama). For the practical purpose of living, the organised network is more preferable to the intuitive flux, which is the unbridled state of our being, because of the former's clear system of relations.¹⁷ Thus, Beckett's recognition of the necessity of habit, as I have quoted in the first paragraph of this section, follows Bergson's recognition of its necessity, but more significant is their shared negative

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. by T. E. Hulme (London: Macmillan and Co Limited, 1913), pp. 1-79 (p. 71).

¹⁷ Ibid.

regard for habit by envisioning it as a trap. Habit is examined in this dissertation as a mechanically organised structure that is inextricably tied to time and language in Beckett's dramatic works. As such, I observe that this structuring habit is destabilised in Beckettian drama in order that the characters and the audience could momentarily be put back in touch with the intuitive 'centre' of self, where 'a continuous flux' of reality is governed 'by intuition and not by simple analysis'.¹⁸

1.2 PHILOSOPHICAL CONTEXT

To a large extent, the Bergsonian conception of Time and Intuition influenced the trajectory of this dissertation. Michael R. Kelly points out in his introduction to *Bergson and Phenomenology* that 'If phenomenologists did not ignore Bergson, they derided his contributions to [the] perennial philosophical problems of life because they found in his vitalism either a thoroughgoing materialism or an unrealistically optimistic spiritualism.'¹⁹ Nevertheless, the influence of his concept of *durée* extends from Martin Heidegger's ecstatic temporality of *Dasein* to Gilles Deleuze's three syntheses of time. Indeed, Kelly points out that Deleuze's re-introduction of Bergson to contemporary philosophy through *Bergsonism*, results in Bergsonists' presentation of Bergson as a philosopher who advocated 'flux in the most profound sense' rather than 'vitalism or bland spiritualism'.²⁰ Following Manfred Milz who identified Bergsonian influence in Beckett's early theoretical writings and fiction from 1929 to 1936, Graley Herren's *Samuel Beckett's plays on Film and Television* and Colin Gardner's *Beckett, Deleuze and the Televisual Event* are two works that, despite the latter's focus on Deleuze's philosophy, point to the centrality of Bergson's philosophy in the understanding of

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁹ Michael R. Kelly, 'Introduction: Bergson's Phenomenological Reception: the Spirit of a Dialogue of Self-Resistance', in *Bergson and Phenomenology*, ed. by Michael R. Kelly (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 5.

²⁰ Ibid.

Beckett's drama.²¹ Moreover, Gontarski helpfully points out that although Bergson's "mystical certainty" had little resonance with Beckett's works, 'it is decidedly opposed to teleology, or what Bergson calls "mechanism"', which I agree might have been a position shared by Beckett if we take into account the latter's disparagement of habits and routines in his oeuvre as ineffectual, yet inescapable.²²

For instance, Bergson's doubt in the mechanical clock that has been so instrumental to the scientific understanding of time in relation to human life contributed to his interrogation of the extent by which reality can be defined by teleological systems. Interestingly, Beckett's naming of Georges Pelorson's one-act burlesque of Pierre Corneille's seventeenth-century four act play *Le Cid* after Charlie Chaplin's film *The Kid*, could imply that Beckett saw a parallel between Pelorson's reconfiguration of Corneille's play with an emphasis on the fluidity of Time, and Chaplin's portrayal of how the governing system of the depicted world in the film *The Kid* is sustained at the expense of the Tramp and the child's desire to stay together. Both works seem to articulate a disjunction between constructed systems that are imposed on lived reality and a subjectively experienced reality.

James Knowlson describes Beckett's part in the play *Le Kid* as Don Diègue and his idea to 'bring an alarm clock on stage with him' to interrupt Don Diègue's famous monologue and wake up the silent figure who controls the hands of a large clock that was set against the backdrop of the stage:

[H]e knelt down, placed the clock very carefully on the floor and was
midway when the alarm went off infuriating him and waking up the man

²¹ See Manfred Milz, 'Echoes of Bergsonian Vitalism in Beckett's Early Works', in *Borderless Beckett/ Beckett sans frontières*, ed. by Minako Okamuro, *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui*, 19 (Tokyo: Rodopi, 2006), pp. 143-154 (p. 1), Graley Herren, *Samuel Beckett's Plays on Film and Television* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 13, and Colin Gardner, *Beckett, Deleuze and the Televisual Event: Peephole Art* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 16.

²² Gontarski, p. 98.

on the ladder. This combined with the speeded-up movements of the hands of the big clock, forced him to go faster and faster until he built up a wild, crazy momentum, producing a torrent of sound that has been aptly compared with the effect of Lucky's extravagant monologue in *Waiting for Godot*.²³

Although Pelorson might have had a greater part to play in designing this sequence of actions, Beckett's involvement in this particular section of the performance might have served to form his conception of Time as a creatively manipulatable subject onstage. Further, his equation of the play 'as a blend of Corneille and Bergson, because of the importance given to time' further attests to his awareness of Bergson's doubt in mechanical time and valorisation of an intuitive experience of *la durée*, which he asserted was more qualitatively accurate to describe time as it is experienced subjectively.²⁴ As Gontarski has it, Beckett's 'study of Bergson, if only for his preparation for teaching his Trinity students, remained with him as a ghost, an afterimage that informed much of his work for the remainder of his career'.²⁵ Partly as a response to Gontarski's suggestion that 'the depth of Beckett's debt to Bergsonism needs to be reserved for a fuller study', a significant portion of this thesis, specifically Chapters 2 and 4, are devoted to answering the questions: could there be an intuitive experience of Beckett's plays that occurs prior to a discursively drawn conclusion about his drama? And if there is, how do Beckett's works invoke this intuitive experience in the audience members? Crucially, the definition of the audience's intuitive experience of Beckett's plays in Chapter 2 will inform the rest of the dissertation's employment of

²³ James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1996), p. 124.

²⁴ Quoted in *ibid.*

²⁵ Gontarski, p. 104.

the terms as an experiential process that occurs within the audience member prior to an intellectual drawing of an overall conclusion about each dramatic work.

In addition to Deleuze's attraction and attention to Beckett's works, Connor describes Deleuze as 'that most loyal of Bergsonians' while Kelly attributes to Deleuze the revival of the otherwise underappreciated philosopher.²⁶ As such, Deleuze's philosophy of perpetual motion and the interminable process of becoming are also examined in this dissertation, specifically in Chapter 3, in relation to the audience member's intuitive experience of loss as they view the Beckettian film and plays. It is noteworthy that whereas Gardner subordinates Beckett's works to Deleuze's philosophy, this dissertation focuses on Beckett's drama and his audience, and employs Deleuze's perspective as one of the many lenses through which to understand the audience member's viewing experience of the Beckettian drama. Specifically, Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of 'deterritorialisation' and the 'body without organs' (derived from Antonin Artaud's play *To Have Done with the Judgement of God*) are of particular significance in the context of my analysis of Beckett's *Film* in Chapter 3, to describe the spectator's experiential process of becoming an ecstatic 'body without organs' as she views Beckett's film.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty's concept of the habit-body is employed in Chapter 4 to explain the experiential process of transcorporeality between the characters in Beckett's plays, the actors and the audience members. The concept of the habit-body has been specifically acknowledged by Merleau-Ponty's critics as very likely influenced by Bergson's observation that 'habit is formed by the repetition of effort', which through each repetition effects an understanding of 'a new detail which had passed unperceived'

²⁶ Connor, 'Slow going'; Kelly, p. 5.

and thereby appeals to the intelligence to learn the movement.²⁷ As such, if Bergson's philosophy is not at the foreground of a chapter's analysis in this dissertation, it is worth noting that his work's influence as a predecessor to the philosophical concepts that I will employ in the subsequent chapters colours the lens from which these concepts are understood in relation to Beckett's works. Further, it is noteworthy that the reading of Merleau-Ponty's concept of embodiedness in Beckett's dramatic oeuvre is not new in Beckett criticism. Beckett scholars such as Stanton B. Garner Jr., Anna McMullan, Ulrika Maude and more recently Trish McTighe have recognised Beckett's privileging of perceptual consciousness over intellectual consciousness by drawing a relation between Beckett's dramatic representation of the body and Merleau-Ponty's foregrounding of embodiedness, thereby persuasively identifying this as a common tenet in their works.²⁸ However, the concept of the habit-body, which has been largely explored with an emphasis on characterisation in Beckett's dramatic oeuvre, is more specifically explored in this dissertation in terms of its relation to the audience member's intuitive experience of disjunction while viewing or listening to a Beckettian drama.

1.3 PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTEXT

This disjunction is also investigated through the lens of social psychology in relation to psychoanalysis. For example, Wilfred Bion's concept of O and Solomon E.

²⁷ See Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, 'Kinesthetic memory: Further critical reflections and constructive analyses' in *Body, Memory, Metaphor and Movement*, ed. by Sabine C. Koch et al. (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Co., 2012), pp.43- 72 (p. 57 n 8), and Gary Gutting, 'Bergson and Merleau-Ponty on Experience and Science', in *Bergson and Phenomenology*, ed. by Michael R. Kelly (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 63-77; Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. by N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer, 1912 Macmillan edn. (New York: Dover Publications, 2004), pp. 137-8.

²⁸ See Stanton B. Garner Jr., "'Still Living Flesh": Beckett, Merleau-Ponty, and the Phenomenological Body', *Theatre Journal*, 45.4 (December 1993) < <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3209015> > [accessed 15 June 2014], 443-60; Anna McMullan, *Theatre on Trial* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993); Ulrika Maude, "'Material of a Strictly Peculiar Order': Beckett, Merleau-Ponty and Perception", *Beckett and Phenomenology*, ed. by Ulrika Maude and Matthew Feldman (London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009); Trish McTighe, *The Haptic Aesthetic in Samuel Beckett's Drama* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

Asch's influential 1956 social group experiment are employed in Chapter 3 to explore the resistance of Beckett's works to social conformity and the effect of this resistance to the viewing experiences of the audience. Bion's influence on Beckett has been explored in Beckett criticism, most recently in Ian Miller and Kay Souter's *Beckett and Bion: The (Im)patient Voice in Psychotherapy and Literature*.

Miller asserts that Bion's invitation to Beckett to have dinner and to attend C. J. Jung's lecture was an incongruence in their analyst-analysand relationship, which can be explained 'as an activity attempting to continue psychotherapy in the face of Bion's inability to articulate as yet unformulated experience and Beckett's increasing desire for termination.'²⁹ That is, Miller is suggesting that Bion's 'heroic boundary violation' may be understood as his awareness that he 'lacked the conceptual tools' to remedy an impasse felt by Beckett, but that he would not abandon 'his erratic and gifted patient'.³⁰ As such, Miller goes on to assert that 'the patient is clearly left with a sense that the therapist is not afraid to stay with him, and, above all, with a profound sense of what real mutuality might feel like.'³¹ Despite the lack of concrete evidence to prove that Bion's invitation was indeed thus motivated, Miller's conjecture is refreshing. Facilitated by this perspective of mutuality between the therapist and the patient, Miller and Souter's reading of Beckett's literary form as an innovative employment of free association accompanies an interpretation of Bion's therapy sessions with Beckett as influential in Bion's theoretical work. Nevertheless, this 'profound sense of real mutuality' does not conclusively explain Beckett's eventual termination of his sessions with Bion and their lack of contact after the therapy ended.

²⁹ Ian Miller and Kay Souter, *Beckett and Bion: The (Im)Patient Voice in Psychotherapy and Literature* (London: Karnac Books Ltd, 2013), p. 91.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

By considering Bion's attention to the interactive processes of groups from the 1940s which resulted in the publication of *Experiences in Groups* and his concept of O in *Transformations* as an absolute inner truth that can be a unifying experience should the analysand arrive at the experience with the help of the analyst, I hypothesise that Beckett might have terminated his sessions with Bion because of, in addition to the relapse of panic attacks, his doubt in the kind of potentially fruitful 'mutuality' that is postulated later in Bion's career and by Miller and Souter in their book.

Further, derived from group psychology research, the concept of conformity is also presented in this thesis in the form of consumer culture and explored in terms of the deviation of Beckett's dramatic works from the form and content that were familiar to most mid-twentieth century television and film audiences. This deviation from what is deemed standard by the majority extends to the interpretation of his characters' depicted psychosis and the audience's consequent experience of a frustrating disjunction.

Abnormal psychology is a branch of psychology which studies behaviours that go against what the individual's society deems are standard and as a consequence result in causing the subject and/or others significant harm or discomfort. Although the term 'abnormal' is rarely stated in analyses of psychosis in Beckett's characters, the underlying nature of these ailments is conceived as a deviation from the norm. Schizophrenia, dissociative identity disorder, Cotard's and Capgras's syndromes are just a handful of the many forms of disorders that have been examined in relation to the Beckettian characters in Beckett criticism.³² In this dissertation, by positing that the

³² See for example Adam Piette, 'Beckett, Early Neuropsychology and Memory Loss: Beckett's Reading of Clarapède, Janet and Korsakoff', *Beckett in the 1990s: 2nd International Beckett Symposium: Selected Papers* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993), pp. 41-8, Peter Fifield, 'Beckett, Cotard's Syndrome and the Narrative Patient', *Journal of Beckett Studies*, 17.1-2 (2008) <<http://www.eupublishing.com/doi/pdfplus/10.3366/E0309520709000120>> [accessed 14 July 2014], 169-86, and Dustin Anderson, 'Remembering to Forget: The Event of Memory in Joyce and Beckett' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Florida State University, 2010) <<http://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3636&context=etd>> [accessed 15 July 2014].

audience member is reminded of their forgotten state of fragmentation as they are experiencing Beckett's plays, I propose to examine the Beckettian audience as metaphorically afflicted by a mass amnesia that is reminiscent of Prosopagnosia symptoms (also known as face blindness). I posit that our intrinsic state of fragmentation is forgotten as a result of the layers upon layers of habit that we subscribe to and are imposed on us by constructed systems that structure and govern our societies; Beckett's drama gestures towards this amnesia by dramatising a deviation from the audience members' habitual expectation of a familiar and coherent narrative in theatre, radio, television and film.³³ As such, 'abnormal' is interpreted as resistance to the audience member's habitual expectations. Consequently, I postulate that the result of Beckett's dramatic works' representation of resistance is a reconstitution of his audience's pathos from pity for the Beckettian characters' predicaments to an intuitive empathy.

1.4 CHAPTERS SUMMARY

Through the consideration of the intersection between the concept of habit and the philosophical and psychological contexts outlined above, this research aims to contribute to the understanding of the often acknowledged but seldom articulated frustration experienced by Beckett's audiences, as a process of reconstitution. The continued success and spread of *Godot* performances in Europe, the United States of America and Asia, as well as Ireland's embrace in recent years and active promotion of Beckett as an Irish writer, have prompted Beckett scholars to focus more on the increasing acceptance of Beckett's works rather than on the less accepting attitudes of

³³ At this point, it is worth noting that the focus of this dissertation is on the entrapping structure of habit instead of the complex mechanisms of habit formation that have been studied by theorists such as sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, and political theorist Yannis Stavrakakis. Nevertheless, Bourdieu's concept of the habitus and Stavrakakis's work on the relation between consumerist behaviour and capitalism will be touched upon briefly in Chapters 2 and 5, respectively.

some audiences who are unfamiliar with his works and reputation. However, these audiences' experience of a similar sense of frustration that affected the audience members who attended the first *Godot* performances suggest that Beckett's drama possess an intrinsic power to frustrate. The increasing popularity of *Godot* with mainstream audiences, evident in the recent performances of the play at Broadway by Hollywood actors Ian McKellen and Patrick Stewart under the direction of Sean Mathias, could imply either that the sensibilities of contemporary audiences are more attuned to the condition of fragmentation represented in Beckett's drama, or that the valorisation of 'difference' and 'uniqueness' in what some deem to be the postmodern era of mass culture has rendered the 'absurd' in Beckett 'mainstream'. In any case, the increasing acceptance of Beckett's works renders it more crucial than ever to address the persistent frustration that continues to plague certain members of the audience, including uninitiated students and non-specialised audiences, instead of dismissing this frustration as a lack of intellectual engagement.

In 'Chapter 2 The Intuition of Loss in Beckett's Radio Plays', the listeners' intuition of loss is defined in relation to Beckett's depiction of 'blindness' in his radio plays. This blindness is specifically explored as 'blind faith' in the various narrative systems that form the basis upon which a listener's subjective framework of understanding the lived reality around her is constructed. The early Western Christian narrative will be employed in this chapter as an apparatus to examine how the flux of reality is concealed and how Beckett's radio drama triggers the audience member's memory of it to invoke the intuition of loss. The radio plays that will be examined in this chapter are from the CD collection *Samuel Beckett: Works for Radio- The Original*

Broadcasts.³⁴ Once held as a blind medium, I agree with Tim Crook that radio is essentially an audio-visual medium. As such, I postulate that the acoustics of a radio play supports the imaginative spectacle in the audience's mind's eye and as such effectively allows for the coincidence between the audience and the characters of the radio play to result in the Bergsonian intuition 'by which one places oneself within an object'.³⁵ More specific to this analysis is that the listener is placed within the play as much as the play is placed within her as she listens to the radio play. Consequently, in the context of Beckett's radio plays, I posit that the depicted blindness of the Beckettian characters is transposed to the listener as she intuits her entrapment in grand narratives that instead of accurately represent lived reality, repeatedly distorts it.

'Chapter 3 Film and the Spectator's Ecstatic Becoming' continues to expand the definition of the Beckettian audience's intuition of loss by exploring how Beckett's film diverges from mainstream cinema and challenges the audience member's established conceptual framework. In particular, if Beckett had attempted to follow Sergei Eisenstein's 'pathos construction' in *Film*, it is examined in this chapter as an unsuccessful enterprise. Eisenstein defined the ecstatic effect elicited by pathos construction as the viewer's experience of 'being beside oneself' as she is transported from conscious conceptualisation to a 'pure' feeling. I observe that although Beckett's film does not execute the process of pathos construction effectively, the attempt nevertheless resulted in the evocation of an 'ecstatic' spectatorial experience that is unique to Beckett. I hypothesise that this Beckettian ecstatic spectatorial experience temporarily frees the audience from their bondage to their existing habitual frame. In order to understand this unique spectatorial freedom, Deleuze and Guattari's concept of Becoming will be employed to interpret the film in parallel with the audience member's

³⁴ *Samuel Beckett: Works for Radio - The Original Broadcasts* (British Library Publishing Division, 2006) [on CD].

³⁵ Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 6.

reconstitution from a parochial conceptual framework that is characterised by stratified limits to an intuition of reality as an assemblage of possibilities.

In ‘Chapter 4 Time out from the World: Respite in Beckett’s Stage Plays’, Time is examined as dual in the plays. As stated above, Bergson’s opposition to Kant’s sequential time continuum is brought to bear on my analysis of Beckett’s dual depiction of time in the stage plays as an external time continuum and an internal duration. The audience is implicated in that the external time continuum presented onstage by the theatre actor’s bodily presence extends to the extradiegetic world offstage and governs the spectators’ compulsion for narrative closure. Here, I critique and extend Michael David Fox’s assertion that the audience’s empathy with the Beckettian characters is in fact empathy with the actors’ suffering body by maintaining that during storytelling, a character is abstracted from the actor’s body in the audience’s mind as a spectre of a lived life with an unclear and unreliable history, whereas the body of the actor continues to anchor the perception of the audience to the embodied present of the character in the external time continuum. When the audience’s compulsion for narrative closure is challenged by the anachronical stories that constitute the unreliable spectre of the characters’ lived history, they experience the disjunction between the external time and a fluid duration. I posit that a sense of loss is intuited as a result. More importantly, I maintain that this temporal disjunction which is effected by the unfamiliarity of the anachronical stories that are told by the actors/characters is precisely that which would afford the characters brief moments of respite, and conversely deprive the members of the audience of their expected narrative closure.

In ‘Chapter 5: The Disengaging Beckettian Television Audience and the Monument to Loss’, I explore how Beckett’s television plays erect a monument to loss by leading the ‘disengaging spectator’ towards an intuitive experience as she gradually gives up trying to find an easily discernible ‘point’ in his plays. The ‘disengaging

spectator' refers to the home viewer who desires to disengage from Beckett's teleplays, not because they are unable or unwilling to appreciate Beckett's works, but because the desire to disengage is an intuitive response to the television plays' evocation of a forgotten, and therefore, seemingly subject-less sense of loss. As such, I posit that the monument to loss that is set up in these plays could be a site of remembrance to invoke the often-neglected intuition. The main teleplays that are examined in the chapter are from BBC 2's *Lively Arts Series* that aired in Britain on 17 April 1977, and *Eh, Joe?*, which was broadcast on 4 July 1966.

What this research attempts to articulate therefore is the audience member's intuitive experience of Beckett's dramatic works. Although the findings of this dissertation are largely based on the anglophone audience's reception of Beckett's film and plays, I maintain that the intuitive effect of Beckett's works is universal. This perspective is in large part influenced by my pre-university experience of Beckett's stage and television plays in Singapore. Even prior to reading what critics thought about his works, I found the text of *Waiting for Godot* strangely moving despite not being able to understand many cultural expressions that are specific to the West, which I later learnt are biblical allusions and intertextual references to writers like Marcel Proust, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and Dante Alighieri.

While channel surfing one night, I recall being struck by the black and white image of two identical old men sitting next to each other, one reading and one knocking on the table. I remember feeling moved by the helplessness of the repeated knocks that begged to no avail for the reader to continue reading from the book. I only realised what I just saw was a Beckett play when the credits rolled. Although, the original play was written as a stage play and would no doubt have had a different effect on the viewer when performed onstage as opposed to being presented on screen, Charles Sturridge's 2002 film adaptation of *Ohio Impromptu* induced me to question how a viewer can be

so moved by what she does not understand. A few years later, I went to see a performance of *Not I* at the Drama Centre in Singapore as an undergraduate. I did not read the text before seeing the play and therefore much of Mouth's lines eluded me. Nonetheless, by the end of the play I was overwhelmed with an inexplicable sense of pity, which surfaced again when I experienced Walter Asmus's *Not I* at the Royal Court Theatre in January of this year, almost nine years since I first saw the play in Singapore. In my mind, there is little doubt that Beckett's works appeal to the audience's intuition more than the intellect, yet the audience member's intuitive experience of Beckett's works is rarely considered at length in Beckett criticism, specifically in terms of the audience's inclination to disengage from his plays. As such, this dissertation is an original contribution to Beckett scholarship in its in-depth exploration of how Beckett's film and plays may invoke an intuitive experience in the audience. Ultimately, what I hope to illustrate here is the process of experiencing Beckett's dramatic works intuitively, which would result in the audience's reconstitution from a securely coherent framework of understanding the external world around them to a destabilisingly heightened experience of a simple but often-neglected intuition of loss.

CHAPTER 2 THE INTUITION OF LOSS IN BECKETT'S RADIO PLAYS

The interrogation of issues of loss is nothing new in Samuel Beckett studies. Its discussion in Beckett criticism has been mediated by, just to name a few, the departed mother, the fragmentation of language and ideas of faith in his oeuvre. However, the focus of this chapter is to investigate how his radio plays draw the audience's attention to her inherent but often neglected *intuition of loss*.¹

Amongst the earliest critics of Beckett's works, Hugh Kenner pointed out that '[b]ehind work after work of Beckett's we are to sense a loss, somewhere in the past, of a power to love'.² In Mary Bryden's *Samuel Beckett and the Idea of God* she examined 'the hypothesised God who emerges from Beckett's texts [as] one who is both cursed for his perverse absence and cursed for his surveillant presence' and her work concluded by aligning Beckett's oeuvre to the apophatic tradition, which indicates a loss of faith in organised religion.³ While scholars such as Adam Piette view Beckettian loss in terms of 'bereavement', Dan Gunn, in his introduction to the second volume of Beckett's letters, specifically draws the readers' attention to how the artist's deceased mother's 'eyes, the mourning, the loss, the gain, infancy and great old age' draws a map of 'the literary space that [Beckett] is going to make his own [...]'.⁴ The interrogation of faith by negation, the lost power to love, and bereavement are a few of many forms of loss that are perceived by critics as having their roots in the author's deeply personal preoccupations. The existential aspect of these cogitations is often discursively derived

¹ The radio plays that are examined in this chapter are from *Samuel Beckett: Works for Radio - The Original Broadcasts* (hereafter TOB) (British Library Publishing Division, 2006) [on CD].

² Hugh Kenner, *A Reader's Guide to Samuel Beckett* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1996), p. 15.

³ Mary Bryden, *Samuel Beckett and the Idea of God* (Hampshire, London: Macmillan Press; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p. 2.

⁴ Dan Gunn, 'Introduction to Volume II', *The Letters of Samuel Beckett 1941-1956* (Cambridge: Cambridge Uni. Press, 2011), pp. lxiv- xciii (p. lxxvi); Adam Piette, 'Beckett, affect and the face', *Textual Practice*, 25.2 (2011) < <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0950236X.2011.552292> > [accessed 3 April 2013], 281-295 (p. 291).

in Beckett criticism, but these are rarely explicitly articulated as relatable to the everyman audience of Beckett's drama.

I understand that one of the many difficulties of positing an everyman's reception is the geographic, cultural and language specific origins of the publication and broadcast of Beckett's works. To explore his allusions to Christianity, for instance, would demand a culturally specific analysis of his work and its effects on a group of audiences who would be familiar with the biblical narrative. However, since the radio plays were at first only broadcast to a European audience, they were broadly addressing the same habitus across a single field of the plays' production. By 'habitus', I am referring to Pierre Bourdieu's systems of dispositions and structures that 'generate and organize practices and representations' without a 'conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them'.⁵ Thus, the religious references that articulate loss retain their integrity and metaphoric potency regardless of one's specific subscription, and are 'universal' in so far as they are enacted within the habitus in which these plays are produced. Following this trajectory, I postulate in the chapter that Beckett's radio drama critiques the habitual constructs that his audiences are predisposed to employ in their understanding of the world around them, in order to bring the inherent intuition of loss to the forefront of the everyman audience's consciousness.

With the above in mind, the first section of this chapter offers an examination of the simplistic truism that radio 'is a blind medium' by asserting that the relationship between radio and the audience is an internally audio-visual one.⁶ I postulate that the Beckettian radio dramas *All That Fall* (1957) and *Rough for Radio II* (1976)

⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, 'Chapter 3: Structures, Habitus, Practices', in *The Logic of Practice*, trans. by Richard Nice, reprinted edn. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), pp. 52-65 (p. 53).

⁶ Andrew Crisell, 'Chapter 1: Characteristics of radio', in *Understanding Radio* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 3-16 (p. 3).

thematically appropriate this ‘blindness’ instead in their allusions to the Christian narrative so as to activate an audience member’s intuition of loss through the concept of ‘blind faith’. The final part of this chapter investigates how a similar intuition of loss is invoked by the non-culturally specific depictions of blindness in *Embers* (1959), *Words and Music* (1962) and *Cascando* (1964). Radio is a particularly suitable medium to explore the form of Beckettian doubt in constructed narratives that his characters (and audience) are depicted as blindly subscribing to. Invariably concealed under dogmatic systems of relations, the everyman’s intuition of loss is regarded in this chapter as being excavated by the radio plays so that the audience member may be reconstituted to her intrinsically intuitive centre.

To reiterate, through the portrayal of ‘blind faith’ in constructed narratives, Beckett’s radio plays are conceived in this chapter as eliciting an intuitive feeling of loss in his audience, which as opposed to the totalizing and confining systems of relations depicted, could effectively be a less oppressive and perhaps more compelling experience of our existence.

2.1 INTUITING LOSS IN THE AUDIENCE’S MIND-SPACE

The intuition is understood in Bergsonian terms as ‘a simple act’ of the mind that is inherent in each of us.⁷ In *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Henri Bergson asserted that the difference between analysis and intuition is that the former is a positioning of the self outside of the object whereas the latter is a placing of oneself within the object.⁸ He stated further that intuition is ‘the kind of *intellectual sympathy* by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in

⁷ Henri Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. by T. E. Hulme (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1949), p. 24.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

it and consequently inexpressible'.⁹ As David Scott also explains, 'by immediate intuition', Bergson was referring to 'the act of knowledge [which] coincides with the generating act of reality'.¹⁰ Bergson's example on how a character's 'adventures' in a novel 'are related to' or coincide with the reader is useful in explaining how the concept of intuition is applied in this chapter to the audiences of Beckett's radio drama.¹¹

Stating that a character's 'description, history and analysis' would not help the reader to achieve 'the simple and indivisible feeling which I should experience if I were able for an instant to identify with the person of the hero himself', Bergson seems to have suggested that intuition is a sympathetic coincidence between a character and a reader that cannot be directly represented by description, history and analysis of a character since symbolic representation alone does not get to 'his essence' of being a 'person himself'.¹² Although a character is not a person, and as such would seem there is no essence in the character, I interpret, with reference to Anthony Uhlmann's explication of the Bergsonian 'intuition' in relation to the 'image', that the 'essence' of a character refers to the 'secondary image' of a character that is intuited by the reader based on the original intuition of the author, 'but does not fully succeed in reproducing or expressing that [original] intuition'.¹³ In the creation of this secondary image, the reader would have to be placed 'within' the character itself to effect a coincidence 'for an instant' to experience 'the simple and indivisible feeling' of intuition. The radio play occupies the audience's consciousness quite differently from the way a novel would unfold in the reader's mind. As opposed to a single character in a novel presented in the

⁹ Ibid., p. 24.

¹⁰ David Scott, 'Bergson on Intuition', in *Understanding Bergson, Understanding Modernism*, ed. by Paul Ardoin, S. E. Gontarski, and Laci Mattison (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), pp. 320-22 (p. 321).

¹¹ Bergson, p. 22.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Anthony Uhlmann, 'Chapter 6: Beckett, Berkeley, Bergson, Film: the intuition image', in *Samuel Beckett and the Philosophical Image* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006) pp. 114-28 (p. 116).

example above, the voices of the characters and the ambient noises of a radio play are more concrete than those that are described in written text.

As a sum of these concrete sounds and the audience's imaginative spectacle, the fictional world of a radio drama is constituted in its entirety acoustically around and visually within the audience. This does not then mean that the audience member would identify with a specific character by virtue of the play being enacted within her, but that the overall effects invoked by the radio drama would directly coincide with the audience within her consciousness. In the context of this chapter's analysis, it follows then that the moment in which a radio play evokes the audience member's 'intellectual sympathy', could effectively be the 'instant' of intuitive coincidence between the play and the listener.¹⁴ This moment is presented below as the instant when the audience intuits loss.

Whereas the sense of futility that is often attributed to Beckett's oeuvre suggests an existential pointlessness, the intuition of loss is an anxiety-ridden awareness that outside of a dogmatic system of relations that governs our daily lives is flux and uncertainty. 'Loss' is therefore twofold in that it refers to the loss of these incarcerating restrictions as well as the loss of bearings. Intuiting these through Beckett's radio drama is therefore an induced awareness that the uncertainty of reality is in fact veiled by closed-systems of grand narratives which the everyman readily subscribes to. This awareness consequently leads to a loss of bearings as the listener's habitual framework of understanding proves inadequate to completely grasp the Beckettian narrative. Following this trajectory, as opposed to a closed-system of passive listening, the destabilised listener's experience of Beckett's radio drama is regarded in this chapter as an active process of listening and visualisation.

¹⁴ Bergson, p. 23.

Given that the audience's experience has traditionally been taken for granted as passively led by the events depicted in a work, I propose an alternative approach that would entail examining the audience-play relationship from the perspective of the audience's *ecstatic performance*. By ecstatic, I follow Drew Leder's definition of 'ecstasy' as the conscious experience of attending to events that are occurring outside of one's body.¹⁵ In this state of ecstasy, the body recedes into the background of one's consciousness and the events that occur through the radio broadcast would occupy the foreground of the audience's consciousness or 'mind's eye'. One becomes actively involved in a performance by investing her attention and imagination in the radio drama and, as a result of her participation, becomes partially responsible for the creation of an imaginative spectacle. Therefore, as opposed to passive audience experience, an examination of ecstatic performance involves regarding the audience's imagination as a key component of the dramatic spectacle. If Beckett's radio plays are indeed, as I am postulating, expressions of doubt in closed-systems, the artist would logically expect and anticipate an audience's active involvement in his works.

Leder observes that '[w]hile driving, I may turn on the radio and soon find myself singing along [as] [...] the eyes, hands and feet so central to driving play a background role relative to listening to music.'¹⁶ Similarly, as one listens attentively to a radio play, the body's interaction with its immediate surrounding that remains visible may recede to a background of automatic responses as the mind becomes flooded with images conjured by the sounds and words of the play. When comparing the radio play to the stage play, it is not difficult to notice that one of the main distinguishing differences between them is an absence in the radio play of any substantial physical visuals afforded by a stage and its actors. But this is not necessarily a lack that would in

¹⁵ Drew Leder, *The Absent Body* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 21.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 24-5.

anyway render radio a blind medium and reduce the audience's participation in the work. Instead, almost as if she is engaged in an interior monologue, the mind of a listener may play the roles of both the audience and the characters in her mind's eye in order to supplement the absence of external visuals.

As Leder has it:

When engaged in inner monologue, even my hands and mouth, my eyes and ears, drop out of immediate employment. The sensorimotor organs that were used in speaking or reading are now placed in background disappearance with the rest of the body. I can think while sitting perfectly motionless, no corporeal activity whatsoever apparent to myself or to another. It seems as if the thinker makes no use of a body.¹⁷

By 'drop[ping] out of immediate employment', Leder is referring to a reduced consciousness of our interaction with the immediate physical environment as we engage with our inner monologue. In addition, the act of 'speaking or reading' joins in the overall physical recession from consciousness as thoughts in the mind take centre stage at the foreground of one's consciousness. I posit that listening to a radio play is similar to turning one's attention to one's interior monologue except that the unfamiliar dialogues of the characters would conjure foreign images that rely on the imagination of the listener for their creation in this conceptual space. As such, more so than the reception of prescribed images on the physical stage or screen, the recession into the mind and hence the audience's withdrawal into self is more total and could potentially render the listener's engagement with a radio play stronger than with other media employed by Beckett in his dramatic oeuvre.

¹⁷ Leder, p. 123.

The conceptual space of the audience's mind where the radio plays are being enacted is also referred to as the mind-space in this chapter. Steven Connor observes that '[i]n processing radio space as mind-space, we make it possible to believe in the priority of the latter — to believe, in other words, that radio has the power it does because it happens to resemble the interior auditory dramas we all already experience'.¹⁸ However, taking as an example Beckett's insistence that *All That Fall* is a radio play 'for voices, not bodies... which depends on the whole thing's coming out of the dark', Connor contends that '[i]t is in radio that Beckett seems to have found the possibility of writing without ground'.¹⁹ In the following, he asserts further that the characters in the radio play seem to emerge out of nothing, and this perspective is worth quoting at length:

Characters in *All That Fall* surge out of nowhere or rather, perhaps, arise in their words, entering the sound space of the play with no announcement and vacating it just as abruptly. Existence in sound is the only existence possible. And yet, the comic overstatement of certain sounds, like the "exaggerated station sounds. Falling signals. Bells. Whistles. Crescendo of train whistle approaching" which mark the passage of the up mail in *All That Fall* also suggests a desperate need to convince, as though sound itself, even in this medium in which sound is everything, could never be enough.²⁰

In his analysis, Connor seems to separate the auditory emergence of drama and its auditory reception as two disparate components, when they are, in my opinion, indivisible complements of the listening process.

¹⁸ Steven Connor, "I Switch Off": Beckett and the Ordeals of Radio', in *Broadcasting Modernism*, ed. by Debra Rae Cohen, Michael Coyle and Jane Lewty (Florida: University of Florida, 2013), pp. 274- 294 (p. 275).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

In other words, his postulation that Beckett's emphasis is on the medium's capacity to render sounds as emerging from 'nothing and nowhere' so much so that '[e]xistence in sound is the only existence possible' seems to have taken apart sounds and the imagery they invoke instead of regarding them as being necessarily constituted in a process of conversion from sound to imaginative spectacle in the audience's mind-space. The 'desperate need to convince' and the ultimate inadequacy of sound to convince as observed in *All That Fall* by Connor himself particularly contradict his postulation since the need to convince highlights the medium's and the playwright's central concern with the radio drama's appeal to the audience's visual substantiation of its sounds in her mind's eye. As such, regardless of its persuasiveness, the images conjured by a piece of radio drama and the audience's imagination must first and foremost be presented as figure upon the audience's mind as ground. I maintain that it is only after the mental imagery emerge in the mind that an audience is able to experience and judge the intended effects of the piece — in the context of Connor's essay, the extent in which sound is convincing to the audience. Moreover, Connor's subsequent observation that '[r]aising bulk upward costs huge and extravagantly audible effort, whether it is Mrs Rooney being shoved into the seat of Mr. Slocum's van or her purgatorial toilings up the Matterhorn of the station steps', overlooks the 'raising' and 'shoving' as principally images of actions in the mind's eye that are derived from the sounds in the play.

More specifically, Ulrika Maude rightly observes in *All That Fall* that

Beckett's almost obsessive insistence on corporeal sounds in the play, rendered in the text as directions such as 'Sobbing', 'Breathing hard', and 'Sounds of handkerchief loudly applied', not only goes against a philosophical tradition that has aimed to obscure all signs of the voice's

origin in the body; it together with the repeated references to different forms of perception, contributes to the creation of an embodied character in the absence of a body and a space.²¹

Citing Clas Zilliacus's early observation on Beckett's employment of radio as a medium which 'expressions are aural, temporal, nonspatial and uncorporeal', Maude's central challenge is directed at this regard for radio as a blind medium.²² In the quotation above, her emphasis is on Beckett's utilisation of bodily sounds to effect embodiment in the mind of the listener, in the absence of a visually perceptible actor and set. Thus, sound and the corporeality it could conjure in the audience's mind space clearly indicate listening to a radio drama as an indivisible process of auditory reception and visualisation.

Indeed, in Tim Crook's influential *Radio Drama Theory and Practice* he pointedly began the eighth chapter 'Radio drama is not a blind medium' by stating that, I think there is something inherently depressing about the human inclination to establish the concept of hierarchy [of the senses] in any context.²³ He maintained that radio drama is not a blind medium and that '[e]ven though the BBC exhorted people listening to the first play written for radio (*The Comedy of Danger*, 1924) to turn out the lights, the reality of listening for most people is communication while seeing and doing something else.'²⁴ Like Leder's concept that while reading, the act of seeing words on a page recedes to the background of a reader's consciousness and the images conjured in the mind occupy the foreground, the seeing referred to by Crook in this quotation is twofold; it is simultaneously external and internal. The immediate environment may

²¹ Ulrika Maude, 'Hearing Beckett', *Beckett, Technology and the Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 47- 69 (p. 53).

²² Ibid.

²³ Tim Crook, 'Radio Drama is not a blind medium', in *Radio Drama Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 53- 69 (p. 54).

²⁴ Ibid., p. 63.

continue to be physically visible to the listener, but the mind's eye is turned inwards, into mental visualisation. According to Crook, there are two ways by which people listen: elliptical and parabolic.

On one hand, elliptical listening entails listening to a radio drama in a 'blacked out environment', being 'fully engaged and without physical interruption by light, sound and movement' as well as residing in an acoustic space that is 'specifically arranged to appreciate the full potential of [a] programme maker's sound design'.²⁵ This is the kind of listening condition which the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) first encouraged listeners to subject themselves to, and may be regarded by some as the ideal condition in which to listen to any radio play. On the other hand, parabolic listening referred to by Crook as 'the reality for most people' entails listening to a radio drama while being 'mobile and active'.²⁶ The listener is 'partly engaged' with the 'imaginative spectacle', and Crook likens this to the state of 'day dreaming' because priority may be given 'to the process of cognitive and physical interaction with the outside world'.²⁷ The acoustic space in which this listener resides is therefore a space where sounds in the environment compete for the listener's attention.²⁸ In both types of listening, the imaginative spectacle may differ in quality depending on the level of concentration of the listener, but it continues to be a visual constituent of the listener's mind-space. Realistically, as with other radio drama, Beckett's radio plays would depend on such a constitution in his listener's mind-space too. So how are Beckett's works unique?

In Junko Matoba's explication of Beckett's stage plays, she draws a relation between the darkened areas in the plays to the function of Yohaku. Yohaku refers to the

²⁵ Ibid., p. 65.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 66.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

blank spaces of Japanese monochrome paintings known as ‘Sumi-e (or Suibokuga)’.²⁹ Observing that the Yohaku aims ‘at the effect the painting has on the viewer’, and that ‘in the Zen sense, the ultimate function of the Yohaku is for the viewer to participate in the “creation” of the universe [in the painting]’, Matoba is suggesting that Beckett might have expected his spectator to participate in a creative process.³⁰ In other words, if the darkened areas in the stage plays are likened to the Yohaku, Matoba posits that Beckett might be inviting his audience to contribute their imagination to these works. She goes on to cite Daisetu Suzuki, “Zen — or, more broadly speaking, religion — is to cast off all one thinks he possesses, even life, and to get back to the ultimate state of being [...]” to awaken to enlightenment and to knowledge. Thus, to be selfless, is to give up the will, even not to will to become will-less.³¹ Juxtaposing this quotation with Beckett’s conception of ‘will’ as ‘a servant of intelligence and habit’ in *Proust*, Matoba seems to be suggesting that Beckett’s stage plays challenge the viewers to shed their habitual conditioning by inviting them to participate in the visualisation of the darkened areas in his works, instead of passively watch the images prescribed to them onstage.³²

Transposing this to the context of the radio plays, the lack of physical visual representation effectively creates the blank canvas on which the listener is able to create images according to the sounds and words that they hear. Xerxes Mehta’s comment that the darkness in Beckett’s theatre is ‘a form of sense deprivation’ is even more provocative when we consider a more physical visual sense deprivation in radio.³³ The absence of an immediate visual representation of a radio play effectively relies on the

²⁹ Junko Matoba, ‘Religious Overtones in the Darkened area of Beckett’s Later Short Plays’, in *Beckett and Religion*, ed. by Marius Buning, Matthijs Engelberts and Onno Kusters, *Samuel Beckett Today/ Aujourd’ hui*, 9 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2000), pp. 31-42 (p. 32).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Xerxes Mehta, ‘Ghosts’, in *Directing Beckett*, ed. by Lois Oppenheim (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), pp.170-185 (p. 170).

space in the listener's mind's eye for the generation of an interior drama. Like the Yohaku in a Sumi-e, the absence of immediate visual representation in a radio play depends on the listener's participation through her imagination for the play to be enacted. Of course, this is true for most radio plays, but the uniqueness of Beckett's works lies in the extremely limited extent by which the images invoked in the conceptual space would serve to reveal a complete narrative. In other words, regardless of how vivid the images are conjured by the audience from the sounds and speeches of Beckett's radio drama, his works remain enigmatic because of their resistance to completion. Julie Campbell also observed in her examination of the difficulties of listening to *Embers* that the 'veiled elements' of the radio play 'encourages the listener to enter into a strange, dark and inexplicable place - the interior- to circumvent the habitual and discover/uncover the hidden and the strange'.³⁴ As such, I postulate that Beckett's radio plays do not provide the listener with any opportunity to enact completion in her mind-space because his images are not merely representative, they provoke the mind into creating a gap-filled interior drama so as to reflect a reality that resists any pretention to be containable within the system of a closed-narrative.

To illustrate how the listener supplements the absent visuals by playing the role of the audience and taking up the roles of the characters as she imagines them in her mind, let us consider the radio play *All That Fall* (1957).³⁵ The sound of Mrs Rooney's 'dragging feet', the faint music of 'Death and the Maiden' and her first words, 'Poor woman' set up a bleak mood at the beginning of the play from which the listener is able

³⁴ Julie Campbell, "'Close your eyes and listen to it': *Embers* and the Difficulties of Listening', in *Samuel Beckett: Debts and Legacies* (London, New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013), pp.133-152 (p. 148).

³⁵ *All That Fall* (1957) in *TOB*, dir. Donald McWhinnie, performed by Mary O'Farrell, J. G. Devlin, Allen McClelland, Brian O'Higgins, Harry Hutchinson, Patrick Magee, Jack MacGowran, Shela Ward, Peggy Marshall, Terrance Farrel (British Library Publishing Division, CD 1, 2006) [on CD].

to launch an imagination from a grim soundscape to a dismal landscape.³⁶ In fact, as attested by Everett C. Frost, this visualisation begins in the very process of producing the radio play itself, ‘Although the audience does not need ever to have seen it to appreciate the plays, *All That Fall*, *Cascando* and *Embers* are minutely rooted in the Irish landscape and it helped me to envision it in directing them.’³⁷

Beckett’s assertion about the play being ‘specifically a radio play, or rather a radio text, for voices, not bodies’ can be interpreted as a resistance to a physical enactment on a stage of Mrs Rooney’s journey to and from the station because the play is primarily an assemblage of Mrs Rooney’s mental landscape through the sounds that she hears and the thoughts in her head. Conceived of as such, the most appropriate space for the play to unfold is in the mind of the audience. Although the images in the mind’s eye of a parabolic listener are indistinct, as indicated by Crook, and can be likened to the distant memory of a portrait in which she is unable to remember the exact details that reside in the background of the main subject, such indistinctness may contribute to the audience’s immersion in the radio play. This is because the mind works constantly throughout the play to imagine the vague details of Mrs Rooney’s mental landscape as they are uncovered when she encounters characters along the way to the station. Mrs Rooney’s mental landscape thus expands in the mind of the listener at each encounter as the characters she meets reveal something about themselves when they speak with her.

Brian McHale attributes ontological worlds within a world to works that depict multiple narrative levels where, taking as an example Douglas R. Hofstadter’s story about ‘Achilles and the Tortoise [who] distract themselves from a tense predicament by

³⁶ For textual references, please refer to *All that Fall*, in *The Complete Dramatic Works* (hereafter *CDW*) (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), pp. 169-199 (p. 172).

³⁷ Everett C. Frost, ‘Fundamental Sounds: Recording Beckett’s Radio plays’, *Theatre Journal*, 43.3 (Oct. 1991) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3207590>> [accessed 8 May 2013], 361-376 (p. 375).

reading a story in which two characters called Achilles and the Tortoise enter an Escher print, in which they read a story in which two characters called Achilles and the Tortoise are lost in a labyrinth', the primary narrative forms the 'primary world, or diegesis' and each additional narrative forms the 'hypodiegetic world'.³⁸ In *All That Fall*, there are always two narrative levels: the primary narrative and the unfulfilled potential of the hypodiegetic.

The unfulfilled potential of the hypodiegetic is represented by the potential 'depth' that is created when each encounter between Mrs Rooney and a character is met with an exchange of information that introduces but never quite reveals the backstory of each character and their relationship with her. Thus, the exchanges expand the listener's imagination of Mrs Rooney's mental landscape but do not allow the listener to transcend the primary narrative in order to penetrate its additional narrative level, which resides within the primary one only as a potential to the audience.

With Christy, for instance, when Mrs Rooney asks after his wife and daughter the response is that they are doing neither better nor worse. With Mr Tyler, we learnt that he has a daughter who can no longer bear children and with Mr Slocum, we know that his mother is 'fairly comfortable' as she is '[kept] out of pain'.³⁹ The family members brought up in the conversations are never described in detail although the surface description of them intriguingly connotes a bleak story to which the listener has no access despite being privy to most thoughts in Mrs Rooney's head. Further, from their exchanges, the listener would notice that the sexual tension between Mrs Rooney and these men is palpable and this again connotes possible backstories of romantic entanglements in their youth that are never quite spelt out in the text.

³⁸ Brian McHale, 'Chapter 8: Chinese-Box Worlds', in *Postmodern Fiction* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 112- 130 (p. 113).

³⁹ *All that Fall* (1957); for textual reference please refer to *All that Fall*, in *CDW*, p. 172; p. 174; p. 177.

Joseph S. O’Leary also notes that ‘it is as if the characters are building towards an overwhelming question à la Prufrock, but the question never gets asked’.⁴⁰ O’Leary is referring to T. S. Eliot’s poem *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* in which the titular persona keeps postponing an ‘overwhelming question’ which never gets asked. Such a build-up presents the listener with the static potential of delving into the mindspace of Mrs Rooney and, as a result, going beyond the primary narrative level. Nonetheless, it remains an unrealised potential because the listener continues to be anchored in an assembling process of Mrs Rooney’s mind at the level of the primary narrative. As such, the images generated in the primary diegesis are not merely incomplete representations, they provoke the listener into doubting that the diegetic world that is emerging in her mind would eventually be fully revealed by the radio play. Despite being an actively listening and visualizing participant of the radio play, the seed of Beckettian doubt is sowed in the listener by virtue of her denied access to the implied hypodiegesis. Thus, it is indeed difficult to imagine how such static potential-driven depth in the listener’s mind-space can be effectively achieved if this radio play was adapted to theatre.

Effectively, I observe that the moment of doubt that occurs when the audience’s desire to learn more about the hypodiegesis is unsatisfied, is also the moment when the audience intuits loss. As established at the beginning of this section, ‘loss’ in this chapter is regarded as an anxiety-ridden awareness that outside of a dogmatic system of relations that governs our daily lives is flux and uncertainty. In the context of this section, the intuition of loss induced in the audience by *All that Fall* can generally (for now) be interpreted as an awareness that this radio play does not seem to offer a conventional close-ended narrative of a typical radio drama by which a listener can

⁴⁰ Joseph S. O’Leary, ‘Beckett and Radio’, *Journal of Irish Studies*, 23 (2008) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27759603>> [accessed 8 May 2013], 3-11 (p. 7).

identify clear perspectives of its characters and from there construct a definite understanding of the characters and their predicaments. However, in addition to being invoked by the unsatisfying hypodiegesis in *All That Fall*, in the next section, I explain how the play's representation of Miss Fitt's blind faith in the closed Christian narrative contributes more specifically to this intuition of loss.

As I have been positing from the beginning of this chapter, radio is not a blind medium. A radio drama cannot be blindly enacted in so far as it has an active audience that participates in the creation of images in her mind-space while she listens to the sounds that the radio play is programmed to produce. Consequently, Beckett's radio plays' gesture towards the concept of blind faith in grand narratives will be elaborated further in the next section as precisely suggesting that the radio as a medium is not blind as long as it is capable of visually representing such blindness to the mind's eye of the audience.

To demonstrate this, I observe that the indistinctness of the images conjured by the gap-filled diegesis of the radio play in the audience's mind-space mirrors the dreamlike quality of the audience's intuitive perspective. I postulate that this intuitive perspective is the usually neglected centre of the self that is hidden under a more distinct and peripheral parochial gaze. The indistinctness that characterises the perspective of the central intuition could represent our reality's inherent nature of flux and uncertainty. As Bergson observed, habit dictates that we '[imprison] the whole of reality in a network prepared in advance'.⁴¹ As such, I aver that this 'network' constitutes the peripheral gaze and is usually preferable to the perspective of an intuitive flux because of the former's clear system of relations. As we shall soon see, in *All That Fall*, by depriving the audience of access to the hypodiegesis which is potentially

⁴¹ Bergson, p. 71.

constituted by a system of clear relations, the audience is effectively induced to take up their positions in their intuitive centre from which to witness the blindness of parochiality.

In the following section, the peripheral gaze, the central intuition concealed under it and their relations with the concept of blind faith will be elaborated through an analysis of the Christian narrative as one of the major systems of relations that are subjected to doubt in Beckett's works.

2.2 BLIND FAITH

Whenever the subject of religion arises as one considers Beckett's drama, the comparisons between a Christian God and the invisible but palpable power that seemingly lurks in the background of Beckett's enigmatic oeuvre become indispensable given the artist's Protestant childhood, self-confessed fascination with the *King James Bible* and extensive allusions to St Augustine and Bishop Berkeley in his works. While all three factors have contributed to the perspective that the implicitly questionable Godhead in Beckett's works is inextricably related to the Christian God, I notice that Augustine and Berkeley's shared disapproval of 'salvation by merit' might have informed Beckettian doubt too but this specific commonality seems to be largely unexplored.

In accord with Beckett's comment that Christianity is 'a mythology with which [he was] perfectly familiar [...]', this section will proceed to regard the biblical narrative from a literary instead of a theological perspective.⁴² As such, the belief that salvation can only be attained through Grace and faith in an omnipotent and potentially selective God instead of by merit is an interesting aspect of early Western Christian thought

⁴² Quoted in Kristin Morrison, 'Neglected Biblical Allusions in Beckett's Plays: "Mother Pegg" Once More', in *Samuel Beckett: Humanistic Perspectives*, ed. by Morris Beja, S. E. Gontarski and Pierre Astier (Ohio State: Ohio State University Press, 1983), pp. 91-8 (p. 93).

which we could employ as an apparatus to examine how a parochially concealed intuition of loss is invoked in the audience in the following radio plays.

In this section, I hypothesise that the audience's intuition of loss is invoked in the portrayal of a limited metanarrative in *All That Fall* and *Rough for Radio II* through an allusion to the abovementioned aspect of the Christian narrative. The term 'metanarrative' was coined by Jean-François Lyotard to suggest that 'the postmodern' could be defined as 'incredulity toward metanarratives'.⁴³ According to Brendan Sweetman, Lyotard's definition could be a reference to the postmodernist belief that 'no particular worldview can claim to have the truth because meanings which are constitutive of a worldview cannot be known to be true objectively. This is because there is no objective knowledge'.⁴⁴ Sweetman added that a close equivalent to the term 'metanarratives' is therefore the term 'worldviews'.⁴⁵ As such, I understand 'metanarrative' to mean a grand narrative that claims to be the legitimate and universally applicable truth about the world. The decision to use the term to describe the Christian narrative in this section is informed by the attitude of 'incredulity' it connotes. This is particularly relevant to my postulation that the radio plays could evoke a revelatory intuition of loss in the audience, which the subjugating and rigid system of concepts perpetuated by authoritative interpreters of the bible invariably conceal.

It is my understanding that the belief in God always already assumes the temporality of one's lived reality. Religious doctrines are therefore often applied by believers to the world as a guiding lens that would help them to understand and interact with the world around them. Inherent in the compulsion to submit to the metanarrative of a greater power may be a fear of the unknowable life after death and, perhaps more

⁴³ Jean-Françoise Lyotard, 'Introduction', in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. xxiv.

⁴⁴ Brendan Sweetman, 'Lyotard, Postmodernism, and Religion', *Philosophia Christi*, 7.1 (2005), 139-151 (p. 140).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

importantly, the logical preference for an idyllic infinitude in the event that the afterlife is eternal. Religions may therefore be regarded as born out of and sustained by a rather pragmatic preference for an empyrean transcendental infinitude for certain people.

Nonetheless, this pragmatism almost always demands a sacrifice; that is, its laws would require one's adherence to a specific way of living, and as a consequence, this might restrict one to a mode of thought that would render her resistant to the dynamic flux of an otherwise intuitively apprehensible reality.

Nevertheless, when Beckett responded to Charles Juliet's question on whether he was 'able to rid himself of the influence of religion' by stating that he was able to do so in his 'external behaviour, no doubt... But as for the rest...', his response indicated that the influence of religion is not reducible to a binary opposition of adherence and renouncement of its doctrines.⁴⁶ As explained in the beginning of this chapter, Bourdieu's 'habitus' can be defined as the systems of structures and dispositions produced by social conditions that determine practices and representations.⁴⁷ The conflict between the 'rest' of Beckett and his 'external behaviour' situates him in a habitus in which expunging the predisposed compulsion to believe despite an awareness of its limitations is difficult.

After a brief introduction of the contentious issues of salvation by merit or grace in the Christian narrative, I will demonstrate how the potentially aleatory nature of God's grace is depicted in *Rough for Radio II* and *All that Fall* to evoke in an audience an intuitive sense of loss. To reiterate, as far as these two plays are concerned in the context of this analysis, the Christian narrative, as it is perpetuated by interpreters of the

⁴⁶ Quoted in Bryden, p. 1; French original from Charles Juliet, *Rencontre avec Samuel Beckett* (Paris: Editions Fata Morgana, 1986), p. 50: 'dans mon comportement extérieur, sans doute.... Mais pour le reste....'

⁴⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, 'Chapter 2: Structures and Habitus', in *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. by Richard Nice, reprint edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.72-87 (p. 78).

bible, is regarded as a fable that could have aided Beckett's conception of an intuition of loss.

I would like to begin my analysis by pointing out that the name of one of Christianity's earliest known traditions connotes 'universality'. The word 'catholic' comes from the Greek adjective καθολικός, which means 'general' or 'universal'. What is significant about the 'universal' Christian narrative is not its assumption of an appellation that touted it to be *the* true religion that governs the universe; instead, it is its paradoxical connotation of universal inclusiveness and historical persecution of 'heretics' that is interesting in the context of this section.

Claiming that the bible offered the true account of the world, early Western Christian doctrines overtly excluded those who did not share the same ideas and regarded those people as heretics. Rather paradoxically, St Augustine of Hippo, whose *Confessions* deeply fascinated Beckett, was 'in favour of coercion in religion' but did not believe in universal salvation.⁴⁸ Although made more explicit in his anti-Pelagian writings and in *The City of God*, his belief in God's exclusive selectivity was implied throughout *Confessions* in which he iterated his belief that 'If he is able to resist [temptations], it is because of God's grace and not of any strength of his own'.⁴⁹ This is tied to his idea that grace is 'God's gift', and by 'gift' he was pointedly indicating that grace could be given or withheld by God regardless of a person's conduct. Since God's grace is required for salvation, Augustine's belief in God's selectivity effectively renders him an opponent of universal salvation.

Further, in an effort to challenge the beliefs of the Pelagians who advocated complete freewill and that God metes out grace to the free man by merit, Augustine

⁴⁸ Perez Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West* (Oxfordshire: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 29.

⁴⁹ John K Ryan, 'Introduction', in *The Confessions of St Augustine*, trans. and intro. by John K Ryan (New York: Doubleday Religion, 1960), pp. xvii-xxxix (p. xxix).

maintained in the chapter ‘The Grace of God is Not Given According to Merit, But Itself Makes All Good Desert’ that:

Thus, it is necessary for a man that he should be not only justified when unrighteous by the grace of God --- that is, be changed from unholiness to righteousness--- when he is requited with good for his evil; but that, even after he has become justified by faith, grace should accompany him on his way, and he should lean upon it, lest he fall.⁵⁰

The chapter concluded with Jesus’ words to his disciples. ‘Without me you can do nothing’ (John 15.15).⁵¹ In the quotation above, Augustine was asserting that man is incapable of righting his own mistakes and it is only by the grace of God that he can be made ‘righteous’ again. In line with this view, I interpret the quotation to mean that salvation is only available to God’s selected group of people and even if one chooses to repent his sins through ‘faith’, he can do nothing without God’s grace. I infer from this that the choices people make in life are therefore potentially futile because leading a meritorious life alone would not guarantee their salvation.

Despite the depiction of God in the Christian narrative as the benevolent creator of the universe and as the father of the son whom He had sent to bear the sins of the world, it is intriguing that the perspective of one of its most revered saints can be interpreted as maintaining that this God is decidedly selective. It is possible that the absurdity, in the potential exclusion of a meritable person from the gates of heaven simply because he was not chosen by divine grace, did not escape Beckett. To illustrate Beckett’s awareness of the absurdity in this aleatory aspect of Augustinian thought, I

⁵⁰ St Augustine, ‘Chapter 13. IV’, in *On Grace and Freewill*, trans. by Peter Holmes and Robert Ernest Wallis, rev. by Benjamin B. Warfield. From *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series*, ed. by Philip Schaff., Vol. 5 (New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887) <<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1510.htm>> [accessed 3 April 2013].

⁵¹ Ibid.

would like to briefly invoke *Waiting for Godot*, before I analyse Beckett's radio plays further.

A well-worn example of a biblical allusion in his dramatic works is the story about the thieves in *Waiting for Godot*. Vladimir questions why people are inclined to believe in one out of the 'four Evangelists' present at Christ's crucifixion when he is the 'only one who speaks of a thief being saved'.⁵² This refers to Luke's account of the two thieves who were crucified along with Jesus. In this version, one of them was damned while the other was saved. What Vladimir seems to be suggesting in his question is that, for want of more consistent testimony between the Gospels, both thieves could have been damned. Mary Bryden posits that Vladimir's question is a 'false dilemma' since two out of the remaining three, Mark and John, did in fact describe two men who were crucified with Jesus in their Gospels and that none of them 'contradicted' Luke's account.⁵³ She maintains that the 'Gospel writers' could have 'simply' decided that 'the event' did not have to be included in their writing.⁵⁴ Further, to explain why people are more inclined to subscribe to Luke's account, Bryden suggests that 'visual and linguistic presence is always more powerful than absence'.⁵⁵ In other words, the additional information given by Luke would naturally capture the imagination of the reader more than the lack of details in the accounts of the other Gospel writers. Nonetheless, I aver that there is more to Vladimir's question than a mere challenge to the consistency of these biblical accounts. Indeed, his question could represent a criticism of the human propensity to subject an ancient text that is rife with unremitting uncertainty to a convenient coherence. If so, explaining why people choose to pay more

⁵² Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, in *CDW*, pp. 7- 88 (p. 14).

⁵³ Bryden, p. 110.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

attention to Luke's account seems to be a good example of our propensity to contain incertitude in a rational deduction.

Moreover, rather than merely pointing out the inconsistencies of the biblical account, the following comment sheds further light on Beckett's interest in critiquing the human inclination to contain uncertainty:

I am interested in the shape of ideas even if I do not believe in them.

There is a wonderful sentence in Augustine... 'Do not despair; one of the thieves was saved. Do not presume; one of the thieves was damned.'

That sentence has a wonderful shape. It is the shape that matters.⁵⁶

The 'shape' that Beckett was referring to can be seen in the two seesawing Augustinian sentences that, despite a stark contrast with each other, reveal nothing upon first reading except a shock of ambivalence. This effect is created through the juxtaposition of consolation and caution. The threat of damnation is cancelled in the call to 'not despair' in the first sentence but reinstated again in the second sentence. Interestingly, when the fear of this threat sets in, one is inclined to refer back to the first sentence for consolation before she is led to confront the threat again in the second sentence. Such a 'shape' can perhaps be best described as similar to the curved band of wood that can be found attached to the legs of a rocking chair.

Both sentences can be conceptualised as residing on either end of the band and the rocking motion symbolises the trapped thought process as one compares and considers the two clauses. I postulate that this overall 'shape' of the 'sentence' is constituted within the parochial space of the audience's mind. Its metaphorical 'shape' represents the paradoxical nature of the parochial gaze in which both clauses may initially seem reasonable, but quickly become contradictory to each other when

⁵⁶ Samuel Beckett, quoted in Michael Worton in 'Waiting for Godot and *Endgame*: Theatre as Text', in *The Cambridge Companion to Beckett*, ed. by John Pilling (Cambridge: Cambridge U Press, 2005), pp. 67-87 (p. 75).

compared. I have chosen to imagine this shape as the curved band of wood attached to the legs of a rocking chair so as to employ this shape in the next example to illustrate Beckett's evocation and critique of blind faith in the Christian narrative in *Rough for Radio II*.

Bearing the sense of seesawing contradiction of Beckett's Augustinian sentence in mind, one might note that the image of Christ is starkly alluded to again in this play. When the radio drama was first broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on 13 April 1976, it was broadcast under the title *Rough for Radio*, but to avoid confusing this with *Rough for Radio I*, I will continue to refer to it as *Rough for Radio II*.⁵⁷ In this radio play, as the listener is jolted into seeing Dick whipping the faintly crying Fox (F) in her mind's eye, what might come immediately to her mind is the flogging of Christ. The violence brought against him by Dick's whip has been going on for a while and this is implied by the Stenographer's (S) comment that it 'would take some time' to find out from her notes 'from the beginning' if F had ever mentioned the name 'Maud' during his previous tortures.⁵⁸ That his suffering will continue the following day is suggested by the Animator (A) and S's exchange about 'yesterday's' unsatisfactory 'result' and the near impossibility of giving F 'back [his] darling solitude' since he may 'prattle away to [his] last breath and still the one... thing remain unsaid'.⁵⁹ This one thing that remains unsaid is the ultimate 'result' that A and S hope to achieve from the torture of F. Yet, paradoxically because it remains 'unsaid' and therefore unknown to them, A and S are also hoping that they will not hear it since they would not be able to recognise it even if they do hear it. By implication, if their 'free[dom]' from their repetitive tasks as torturers depend solely on F's successful articulation and their recognition of the one

⁵⁷ *Rough for Radio (1976)*, in TOB, dir. Martin Esslin, performed by Billie Whitelaw, Harold Pinter, Patrick Magee, Michael Deacon (British Library Publishing Division, CD 4, 2006) [on CD].

⁵⁸ Beckett, *Rough for Radio II*, in CDW, pp. 273- 284 (p. 280).

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 281.

thing that remains unsaid, they are effectively as doomed as F to remain where they are.⁶⁰

The absurdity of F's interminable torment thus contrasts starkly with the immensely significant flogging of Christ. F's last words the day before the textual present, "[...] my god my God" [*She strikes with her pencil on her desk.*] "My God",⁶¹ are reminiscent of Christ's last words recorded by Matthew, 'And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (Matthew 27.46). This comparison between F and Christ suggests that F's unceasing suffering is not only like Christ's in terms of its ungodly duration, it is seemingly as devoid of God's assistance as Christ's. Although it is clear to some theologians that Jesus' cry of abandonment at the cross could be 'an event within God' in which the Holy 'Spirit' manifests itself through 'the sacrificing Father and the abandoned Son in the power of sacrifice', the layman's initial reaction upon being presented with the Son's despairing words would very likely be that of puzzlement.⁶² Questions concerning whether God has truly abandoned Christ are instinctively raised upon reading these words in the bible. In the absence of a satisfactory answer, the haunting cry, at its core, expresses Jesus' doubt in God.

Furthermore, in Beckett's radio play, F is not Christ the lamb; he is Fox, the opposite of the lamb. The name Fox seems to be an allusion to the character's status as a sinner when we consider the fact that 'fox' is used in the New Testament to describe Herod the evil king of Judea (Luke 13.32). Thus, the sense of despairing abandonment evoked by Fox's cry serves no conceivable divine significance compared to Jesus' cry. And this absence of significance is confirmed by the characters' cluelessness as to what

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 284.

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 277.

⁶² J. Moltmann, 'The Crucified God', *Theology Today*, 31.1 (1974) <
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/004057367403100102>> [accessed 15 Jul 2014], 6-18 (p. 16).

precisely must F say in order that they may finally be freed from their repetitively cruel roles. The notion of seesawing ambiguity arises here when we consider F's position as the opposite of Christ's.

The unanswered call to God is the curved band of wood linking the lamb with the fox and their predicaments reside on the opposing ends of the band. When making the comparison between F and Christ, the layman's thought process is like the seesawing motion of the curved band: if God could bear to let His blameless Son suffer for our sins, what divine assistance is a presumably sinful Fox to expect from his supplication? But if Christ was sent to suffer for our sins, then surely God cares about sinners enough to sacrifice his only son? Nonetheless, given God's non-assistance in the face of Christ's suffering, could anyone's suffering be so much greater than Christ's as to move God into action? Like Augustine's sentence on damnation and hope for salvation, there is no clear answer that can be drawn from the comparison between the blameless Christ and an implicitly sinful Fox. The only apparent point that can be derived from the play's biblical allusion to the flogging of Christ in this radio play is God's inaction in both instances.

Described as a non-religious but persistently 'God-haunted man', Beckett projected his preoccupation with this haunting in his works through the employment, truncation and distortion of biblical allusions.⁶³ Kristin Morrison observed that these alluded stories are accessible to a non-academic audience as a result of Beckett's use of biblical stories that are widely familiar.⁶⁴ In addition, she also pointed out that these allusions were not usually invoked under full knowledge of which part of the bible Beckett was referencing.⁶⁵ Further, the term 'mythology' with which Beckett used to describe Christianity suggests his doubtful attitude towards the credibility of its

⁶³ John Calder, *The Philosophy of Samuel Beckett* (London: Calder, 2003), p. 15.

⁶⁴ Morrison, p. 92.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

narrative, and since the ‘use’ of Christianity in his works can thus be inferred to be not at all motivated by a desire to affirm its validity, his reason for not employing the allusions reverently is clear.

By implication, his fascination with Augustine’s works can therefore be understood to a certain extent in terms of an artist’s interest in potential materials for parodies and interrogation. Indeed, in terms of parodies, critics like Michael Guest suggests that ‘[c]o-opting St Augustine’s thought, Beckett supplies a constant source of irony for his characters’ narratives and language’.⁶⁶ In terms of artistic interrogation, Elizabeth Barry observes that Beckett’s indebtedness to Augustine is not ‘completely understood’.⁶⁷ Instead of the often-cited allusions to *Confessions* that Beckett made in *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, she suggests that it might be useful to examine the relationship between Beckett’s works and Augustine’s *The City of God* as sharing the concession that ‘the feverish activity carried out in the space of mortal life is [...] in the end, a meaningless evasion’.⁶⁸ As such, it is not difficult to notice that analyses of his oeuvre’s relationship with the Christian narrative in Beckett criticism, particularly in the light of St Augustine’s thoughts, often conclude with a perspectival alignment to the firmly established sense of irony and futility that characterise his works. Nonetheless, I would like to point out that an articulation of the audience’s intuition of loss in this sense of ineffectuality has so far been overlooked.

As I have stated in the previous section, whereas futility suggests an existential pointlessness, the intuition of loss is an anxiety-ridden awareness that outside of a closed system of relations is boundless uncertainty. ‘Loss’ therefore refers to the loss of restrictions, and intuiting this loss is tantamount to recognising the uncertainty and

⁶⁶ Michael Guest, ‘Paul Ricoeur and Watching *Endgame*’, in *Samuel Beckett’s Endgame*, ed. by Mark S. Byron (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 69- 96 (p. 81).

⁶⁷ Elizabeth Barry, ‘Beckett, Augustine and the Rhetoric of Dying’, in *Beckett and Death*, ed. by Steven Barfield, Philip Tew, Matthew Feldman (London, New York: Continuum, 2009), pp. 72- 88 (p. 84).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

chaos that govern our lived reality. The intuition of loss is thus an awareness that the metanarrative one subscribes to could potentially disappoint once its veil over the uncertain and chaotic reality falls. This veil is presented in *All That Fall* as blind faith.

In the context of what we have examined above, the notion of faith requires one to assume not only that God metes out Grace to whoever he deems is deserving, but it also demands one to expect herself to be one of the selected by virtue of having faith.

Søren Kierkegaard explained this contradiction of faith better:

Faith is just this, the contradiction between the infinite passion of inwardness and objective uncertainty. If I can grasp God objectively, then I do not have faith, but just because I cannot do this, I must have faith. If I wish to stay in my faith, I must take constant care to keep hold of the objective uncertainty, to be ‘on the 70,000 fathoms deep’ but still have faith.⁶⁹

Following the trajectory of the quotation, I posit that the intuition of loss in a listener is elicited by Beckett’s radio play at the point when this faith, established by a habitual subscription to a familiar Christian narrative, is questioned as she immerses herself in the enactment of the radio plays in her interior mind-space. That is, when the ‘infinite passion of inwardness’ is removed from the ‘contradiction’ quoted above, and leaves behind ‘objective uncertainty’ as the only experience of reality, Beckett’s characters’ predicaments could effectively evoke a subtle punctuation in the audience member’s impetus to subscribe to the metanarrative. This punctuation is subtle because it seems to be fleetingly experienced as an audience member is listening to the radio play, then forgotten at the end of the play as she reverts to her habitual extradiegesis, which is governed by her parochial gaze. Nonetheless, the potency of the punctuation may be

⁶⁹ Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, ed. by Alastair Hannay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.171-2.

observed in how these dramatic pieces invariably leave his audiences with an unsettling impression of Beckett's works. The audience's inevitable reversion to a parochial gaze will be elaborated further in the final section. For now, it is worth noting that this disruption is particularly poignant in the radio drama because the medium requires Beckett's audience to internally enact the possibility that should a greater power exist, it might be impotent or indifferent to the characters' predicaments.

While the story about the thieves in *Waiting for Godot* highlights the human inclination to ignore the inconsistencies of the bible, *Rough for Radio II* portrays God to be an impotent or indifferent God because of his inaction, should He exist. Bryden is right to suggest that 'the central disjuncture which Beckett's writing dramatises' is that 'the God whose hypothesised existence can never be entirely relegated, constantly fails to meet expectations'.⁷⁰ I interpret this to mean that Beckett's work neither accepts nor rejects God's existence. Instead, it is more likely that his idea of God is always appended at the beginning with the conjunction that denotes possibility, 'should': should He exist, He is not the omnipotent or merciful God that the Christian narrative depicts Him to be. Before we examine *All That Fall*, an elaboration on such a perspective is in order.

Citing the parable about the 'wicked servant' who was pardoned by his lord for owing him 'ten thousand talents', but cast a fellow servant who owed him 'an hundred pence' into prison 'till he should pay the debt', Robert L. Plummer asserts that it is here that 'Jesus emphasizes the immense grace of God in forgiving the depth of our sin, while also putting in proper perspective the sins we are asked to forgive in others' (Matthew 18.23).⁷¹ Plummer's reading can be interpreted as likening the 'ten thousand talents' to the 'depth of our sins' and the one 'hundred pence' to the petty crimes that

⁷⁰ Bryden, p. 110.

⁷¹ Robert L. Palmer, *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible* (Michigan: Kregel Publications, 2010), p. 274.

we inflict on one another. He goes on to cite other parables to substantiate the image of an omnipotent and forgiving God. Poignantly, Plummer's assertion not only highlights the biblical representation of God's virtues, it also illustrates a general Christian conception of the actively forgiving God. Therefore, we must take note that the 'central disjuncture' in Beckett's works is not only about God's inaction, it could also be about the corresponding disjunction in man's unquestioning inclination to see a forgiving and omnipotent God, even when their experience of reality do not present any indication that the divine qualities described in the biblical and Christian narratives might be true.

Underlying Bishop Berkeley's disapproval of 'the Catholic use of indulgences and the treasury of merit' in exchange for the Grace of God, was his rejection of the Pope's authority and his belief in 'the individual use of reason and guidance from God' as the 'keys to salvation'.⁷² By lucidly challenging papal authority, his emphasis on the guidance of God as key to salvation affirmed the absolute and unmediated authority of God. Nonetheless, Beckett seems to regard Berkeley's opinion of unmediated and authoritative guidance as contradictory with the Bishop's attribution of a succession-governed Nature to the uniformed and constant perception of an Infinite Spirit or God, by implying in his works that God's constant perception may be non-intervening hence devoid of guidance. In Branka Arsić's intriguing explication of a Berkeleian-Beckettian conception of *esse est percipi* in *Film* she suggests that:

God's eye— we will use Beckett's solution here— is therefore similar to a camera that is forever rolling and behind which there is no other eye looking through it— there is only the lens, which registers flat planes within an angle smaller than 45 degrees and objectifies them, "E is the camera." But no one stands behind this lens. God is the lens that

⁷² Scott Breuninger, 'Chapter 8: Bishop of Cloyne: Protestantism, Patriotism, and a National Panacea', in *Recovering Bishop Berkeley: Virtue and Society in the Anglo-Irish Context* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp.137-58 (p. 140).

objectifies. The work of this lens is the condition of possibility for objectivation, for the existence of the perceived—*esse est percipi*. But this perception is not perceived. Objectivation does not produce “subjectivation.” Everything unfolds as if the object objectifies the objects of vision, as if there is no subject. There is no gaze to accompany God’s gaze.⁷³

By this, she is not asserting that God does not have a mind, but that the mind is his eye as his eye is his mind. I understand this to mean that God’s mind objectifies and that since ‘objectivation’ is the sole process of this mind, he is blind. Indeed, in the paragraph that follows the quotation, she maintains that God’s seeing is a ‘nonseeing’ therefore he is blind, and that ‘his knowledge is a nonknowledge’ thus ‘God perceives us constantly, but does not know it’.⁷⁴ Bryden’s suggestion that God is ‘cursed for his perverse absence and surveillant presence’ in Beckett’s oeuvre entails, in my opinion, the following question of the hypothesised God’s culpability in the characters’ predicaments: Is he prone to being distracted or is he only interested in watching? Arsić’s blind God seems to answer this question by exculpating the Infinite Spirit from either the flaw of being susceptible to distraction or worse, of maleficent idleness. More importantly, in Arsić’s interpretation, God is stripped of the omnipotence implied by an omni-perception. If having faith, as examined above, is believing blindly, then I posit that the blindness of God suggests that this condition is reciprocal between God and the faithful in the context of Beckett’s radio drama.

⁷³ Branka Arsić, ‘The Passive Synthesis of Exhaustion’, in *The Passive Eye: Gaze and Subjectivity in Berkeley (via Beckett)* (California: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 94.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

In *All That Fall*, the most direct allusion to the idea of a blind God is through the ‘piercing sight’ of Miss Fitt.⁷⁵ She describes her experience with her ‘Maker’ during and after Sunday worship at the church as a ‘big pale blur’.⁷⁶ I understand this to mean that when she is with God everything around her becomes a ‘big pale blur’. The character asserts that when she is ‘alone with [her] Maker’ she is ‘not there [...] just not really there at all’.⁷⁷ ‘[T]here’ refers to the diegetic reality that she shares with Mrs Rooney. Markedly, she is depicted as suggesting when she is with God, she loses touch with her immediate surroundings. As stated earlier, there are always two narrative levels in *All that Fall*: the primary narrative and the unfulfilled potential of the hypodiegetic. Since the hypodiegetic level in Miss Fitt’s case occurs when she is ‘alone with [her] Maker’, Miss Fitt’s depicted suggestion that there are two distinctly separate ontological worlds in the play could imply that reality appears to God from where He is to be a ‘big pale blur’ too, should He exist. As such, this could mean that his position in that blurred hypodiegetic space is representative of his limited perception. Effectively, blindness seems to be illustrated in this play as a reciprocal condition between God and his follower.

Evidently, in Mrs Rooney’s encounter with Miss Fitt, the audience is led to imagine that the latter’s faith in God has rendered her blind to the primary world whenever the character is transported to a hypodiegetic world where God resides. It is worth noting at this point that the audience’s position as a listener can be illuminated further by comparing her relationship with her external world (extradiegesis) to Miss Fitt’s portrayed relationship with her external world (diegesis). As the listener attempts to assemble the diegetic world of the radio play through Mrs Rooney’s experience, she is effectively drawn out from the parochial gaze by which she normally perceives her

⁷⁵ *All That Fall* (1957); text from *CDW*, p. 183.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

extradiegetic reality. That is, it is at the audience's intuitive centre that the diegetic world of *All That Fall* is enacted. I pointed out in the previous section that Beckett's plays could occupy the intuitive centre of the listener's gaze and this is particularly evident in *All That Fall* since the listener's position at this centre as she is listening to the play could potentially give her a third person view of the parochial gaze through the character, Miss Fitt.

Whereas Miss Fitt is drawn into blindness in her withdrawal from the diegesis during prayer, the radio drama listener is conversely drawn out of a similar blindness and into her central intuition to witness the depicted parochiality as the third person. In other words, by assembling the gap-filled diegetic world of the radio play in the mind's eye while being denied access to the blurred hypodiegetic in which God, according to Miss Fitt, resides, the play effectively removes the listener from her parochial gaze and sets the focus of her mind's eye at her intuitive centre to bear witness to the reciprocal blindness between God and the faithful that is being enacted at the periphery of the play. The listener's intuition of loss is thus invoked as her habitual impression of an omnipotent God is disrupted by this depiction of reciprocal blindness.

Now that I have established how blind faith in the Christian narrative may have been depicted to invoke the audience's intuition of loss, the next section of this chapter will be an examination of the relationship between blindness and memory in order to illustrate how a similar intuition of loss is invoked in a non-cultural specific context of the radio plays. More importantly, the section will also elaborate on the nebulous quality of the audience's centrally located intuitive gaze by investigating how this is presented in *Embers*, *Words and Music* and *Cascando*.

2.3 FROM THE PERIPHERY TO AN INTUITIVE CENTRE

Compared to the culturally specific Christian narrative depicted in the radio plays that were examined above, the portrayed interior narrative that will be explicated here is subscribed to by the everyman audience member. ‘Subscribed to’ is an understatement since ‘depended on’ is more accurate in describing her relationship with this Interior narrative, which largely consists of memories and fabulation. It will become evident that the intuition of loss is universal when we consider how it is invoked through the interrogation of this concomitantly personal and universal narrative in Beckett’s radio plays. It is personal since memories are private, but it is also universal because most of us share the ability and the compulsion to select and organise these memories into a subjectively coherent life narrative. Therefore, I posit that the invocation of the intuition of loss in an audience via the radio plays could be a momentary reconstitution of the listener’s perspective to an awareness that outside of the organised store of memories and stories in their heads is an ungraspable flux of life.

As has been considered in relation to *All That Fall*, there are always at least two narrative levels in *Embers*, *Words and Music* and *Cascando*. The primary narrative level is the diegesis whereas the secondary level is the unfulfilled potential of the hypodiegesis. In the three radio plays that I will be explicating in this section, each hypodiegesis is observed to be a narrative or narratives that are under construction. By looking at the contrast between the hypodiegesis and the diegesis, I will establish how the audience’s intuitive perspective is located on the level of the gap-filled diegesis and that this is essentially a position of fluctuating instability from which the unfulfilled hypodiegesis in the periphery of each play is perceived.

In the 24 June 1959 BBC broadcast of *Embers*, although Beckett’s stage direction is ‘Sea scarcely audible. Henry’s boots on shingle’, the audience would of course hear the sound of the sea but compared to the stage direction, a more general

sound of footsteps shuffling in thick sand would be heard.⁷⁸ These sounds would form the image of a character walking along the seashore and this image, I posit, is the primary narrative level or the central vision from which the audience would witness a parochial hypodiegesis in her mind-space. The secondary level, or the parochial hypodiegesis, is where Ada, Addie, Henry's silent father, Bolton and Holloway reside. Memories and 'stories' are constructed and re-constructed at this hypodiegetic level to form Henry's Interior narrative.

In this radio play, Henry, played by Jack MacGowran, is portrayed as desiring but unable to 'drown' out the sound of the sea.⁷⁹ He has tried to do so by 'talking, oh just loud enough to drown it' and going 'to Switzerland to get away from the cursed thing', but the sound of the sea persists so 'now' he 'walk[s] about with the gramophone'.⁸⁰ However, it is noteworthy that in the diegetic present, he is portrayed as having forgotten to bring the gramophone and so the sound of the sea is audible to him and the audience throughout most of the radio play. As a consequence, the audience would notice that the sea in the diegetic space is depicted by Beckett as bleeding into Henry's Interior narrative, which is composed of his memories of the people he had lost and his seemingly fictional story about Bolton and Holloway. Ada's question 'Holloway, he's still alive, isn't he?' would indicate to the audience that the character whom the listener had initially thought was Henry's fictional character in his story could have been a significant person in Henry's life just as Ada, Addie and his father once were.⁸¹ By implication, Bolton could be Henry's last name. It is here that

⁷⁸ *Embers (1959)* in *TOB*, dir. by Donald McWhinnie, performed by Jack MacGowran, Kathleen Michael, Patrick Magee (British Library Publishing Division, CD 2, 2006) [on CD]; textual references from *Embers*, in *CDW*, pp. 251-64 (p. 253).

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

memories and fabulation seem to be indistinguishable from one another and become conflated fragments of his constructed Interior narrative.

The sea, which is described by Henry as unpredictably alternating between turbulence and calmness, is also presented in this broadcast as loud at times and scarcely audible at other points. Effectively, the sea may be interpreted as a representation of the flux that governs the diegetic reality, and consequently, the intuitive central vision from which the audience perceives the constructedness of Henry's Interior narrative. An intuition of loss is thus invoked when an audience becomes aware that the bleeding of the diegesis (sea) into the hypodiegesis (Interior narrative) indicates that despite Henry's portrayed attempt to select and arrest in his Interior narrative, the diegetic events that had or could have transpired in the past, the objects of loss in the diegetic reality cannot be reconstructed absolutely and contained within his Interior narrative.

Woburn's movement away from the island and into the 'open sea' in *Cascando* despite the destination being so close in sight exemplifies the Interior narrative's inadequacy to fulfil the Opener's (Denys Hawthorne) goal of finding a concrete 'land' where his character, and himself, can retire from a world that seems to be governed by a sense of restlessness.⁸² This interpretation is an inference from Voice's (Patrick Magee) depicted assumption that 'story... if you could finish it... you could rest... sleep... not before [...] and not the right one... couldn't rest... straight away another'.⁸³ Although Voice might represent a compulsive flow of thoughts in the Opener's mind and therefore be attributed with an associative trait similar to that of a stream of

⁸² Beckett, *Cascando* (1964) in *TOB*, dir. Donald McWhinnie, performed by Denys Hawthorne, Patrick Magee, with Mihalovici's music (British Library Publishing Division, CD 4, 2006) [on CD]; textual references from *Cascando*, in *CDW*, pp. 295- 304 (p. 302).

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

consciousness in the Opener's Interior narrative, I posit that this mental act of fabulation is in fact depicted as compulsively organised.

In the radio play, the Opener seems to be using Voice and Music to construct his Woburn story. When Martin Esslin described these characters, he likened each of them to a 'door or channel of [the Opener's] consciousness'.⁸⁴ He added further that the music and words in both *Cascando* (1964) and *Words and Music* (1962) are like 'streams' that are 'emanating from more or less mysterious sources, and that they depended on 'the principal characters' who were 'more or less successful' in attempting to 'control' them in the process of 'artistic creation'.⁸⁵

Implicit in Esslin's reading is that as 'streams', the words and music are initially unruly and are only tamed to a certain extent when the Opener or Croak asserts a level of control over them. I interpret this perspective as suggesting that at the beginning of either play there is an artistic intention on the part of the principal characters to mould into an artistic image, a yet-to-be created object. With this understanding, I would like to suggest that the emphasis of the play could thus be on the preconceived procedure by which both the Opener and Croak are portrayed to employ in order to get to that end-object. That is, I posit that they quite possibly already know what they are trying to create from the outset and are, perhaps more importantly, familiar with the disappointing outcome of their repeated endeavours. As I will shortly illustrate, through words and music we can see that both principal characters subscribe to a rigid framework that they follow repeatedly to arrive at a premeditated but ultimately unsatisfactory result.

⁸⁴ Martin Esslin, 'Samuel Beckett and the Art of Radio', *On Beckett: Essays and Criticism*, ed. by S. E. Gontarski (London: Anthem Press, 2012), pp. 273-291 (p. 285).

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

In *Words and Music*, Words, also referred to as Joe by Croak, rehearses a stock speech, which he uses to describe the subject of Sloth as well as Love.⁸⁶ The most significant part of this speech is the emphasis on the subject being ‘of all passions the most powerful passion and indeed no passion is more powerful than the passion of’ the subject.⁸⁷ The ease of substituting the subject is noteworthy for its comical effect but the idea of ‘most’, in my view, seems to deserve serious attention here because even when Joe tries to improvise a speech later for Love, Age and ‘The face’, he continues to dwell in the extreme limit of each subject. For example, love is described as ‘more than all the cursed deadly or any other of its great movers [that] moves the soul’.⁸⁸ Age is presented as infirmed old age when ‘a man/ Huddled o’er the ingle/ Shivering for the hag/ To put the pan in the bed/And bring the toddy [...]’.⁸⁹ Finally, Joe is depicted as describing ‘The face’ of Lily in terms of her climactic arrival at orgasm and then immediately after, her experience of resolution.⁹⁰ This orgasmic moment of a relationship is understood here as the highest mental and bodily limit that two people can experience together through coitus. Thus, it should be clear by now that despite the changing subject of Joe’s speeches, the maximum limit of any subject seems to be the sole constant from which his words are depicted as trying to articulate.

Nonetheless, despite being seemingly successful at evoking, with the help of Music, Croak’s desired image of ‘The face’ which preoccupied him since the beginning of the radio play, the articulated image seems to effect a sense of disappointment rather than satisfaction when Croak lets his club fall and shuffles away in his slippers.⁹¹ The constructed image that very likely fitted with the image in Croak’s head is ultimately

⁸⁶ *Words and Music (1962)* in *TOB*, dir. Michael Bakewell, performed by Patrick Magee and Felix Felton, with John Beckett’s music (British Library Publishing Division, CD 3, 2006) [on CD].

⁸⁷ *Words and Music*, in *CDW*, pp. 285-94 (p. 287).

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 288.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 291-3.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

only ‘one glimpse of that wellhead’.⁹² Its insubstantiality and fleetingness only serves to remind Croak of what and whom he has irretrievably lost. Whereas Kevin Branigan interprets Croak’s departure as being induced by the humbling effect of Words and Music’s cathartic power, and Esslin observed this departure as indicative of Croak’s experience of ‘total despair of fulfillment’, I maintain that Words’ implorations to Music to repeat the last musical statement and his concluding deep sigh could suggest unsatisfied yearning rather than cathartic release.⁹³ As such, the constructed image in the hypodiegesis is interpreted in the context of this chapter as continuing to be inadequate at permanently capturing the memory of what has been lost in the diegesis. If anything, it only serves to remind Croak of his present state of infirmed impotence.

Esslin described Music in *Words and Music* as an ‘emotional’ counterpart of the rational Words in Croak’s stream of consciousness, but in *Cascando* it ‘supplies a new element’ by virtue of the Opener’s ability to ‘evoke [music] either by itself or in unison with the verbal flow of the Voice’.⁹⁴ The significance of this ‘new element’ is not elaborated by Esslin, but I interpret this as indicative of Beckett’s move to divide Music from Words in order to define them further as disparate elements of the principal character’s consciousness. Extending this interpretation, I propose that this disparateness does not indicate that any clear-cut distinction between thoughts and emotions can be made in reality, and that the more Croak or the Opener contrives to organise them into constructs of a memory, the more they elude his ultimate aim to capture the desired object of loss.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Kevin Branigan ‘Chapter Five: The Philosopher’s Tone: Mauthner’s Influence within Beckett’s Radio Plays’, *Radio Beckett: Musicality in the Radio Plays of Samuel Beckett* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008) pp. 129-164 (p. 145); Esslin, p. 281.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

Notably, in *Cascando*, the Opener is depicted as repeatedly denying the assumptions of ‘they’ that ‘say’ that the ‘nothing’ and ‘his voice’ are in his head.⁹⁵ If we transpose this to the playwright’s predicament, it is likely that ‘they’ could be a reference to critics who try to locate the ‘mysterious source’ of the personified streams of voices and music in the playwright’s mind. However, the Opener insists that there is ‘[n]o resemblance’ of Voice to ‘his own voice’ and soon after, Opener lets Music play briefly then asks ‘...is that mine too?’⁹⁶ It is of course not. The fact that Opener was played by Hawthorne, Voice was performed by Magee and Music was composed by Marcel Mihalovici, indicate that the characters in *Cascando* (1964) are thrice removed from the playwright’s control. That is, although, the words that structure the play are Beckett’s, the articulated end-product can never be the perfect representation of the playwright’s initial conception of the play at the time of writing. The participation of the audience removes the play even further from its first conception since the unique mind-space in which the radio play is enacted would differ from person to person.

It is also worth highlighting that whereas the diegetic world of *Words and Music*, in which the audience’s intuitive perspective is located to view the hypodiegetic assembly of a memory through song, can be visualised in the audience’s mind-space as a throne room of sorts, *Cascando* is devoid of the depictions of a thumping staff or shuffling feet. Here, the diegesis is only represented by the Opener who seems to be controlling an unspecified apparatus that requires him to ‘open’ and ‘close’ in order to construct his Woburn story in the hypodiegesis. This reduced representation of the diegesis seems to indicate that the more disparate the emotions and thoughts are regarded, the more the audience lose sight of and the principal character lose touch with the diegetic reality.

⁹⁵ *Cascando*, p. 300 and p. 302.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 302.

This inverse proportion seems to be one of the many strands of Beckett's thought patterns. As Esslin helpfully recounted, when Bennett Maxwell tried to adapt *Play* to radio Beckett explained that:

[...] there must be a clear progression by which each subsection is both faster and softer than the preceding one. If the speed of the first Chorus is 1 and its volume is 1, then the speed of the first Narration must be 1 plus 5 percent and its volume 1 minus 5 percent. [...] The implication is quite clearly that any quantity, plus or minus, still has to be a finite quantity; however soft, however fast, the same text will go on ad infinitum, ever faster and ever softer without quite ceasing altogether.⁹⁷

From here we can see Beckett's idea that volume and speed should be inversely proportionate. The 'any quantity' that is referred to in the quotation above seems also to be applicable to the relation between the 'visibility' of the diegesis and the distinctness of the contrived elements in the hypodiegesis. Just as the diegetic reality disappears for Miss Fitt whenever she is caught up in the hypodiegesis with 'God', the reduction of the diegesis's visibility in the 1964 *Cascando* compared to the 1962 *Words and Music* is inversely proportionate to the increased disparateness between Voice (Words) and Music in the plays.

Further, although the Opener is portrayed as denying that Voice and Music are his, the discerning audience would recognise that these elements could indeed be in the principal character's head. However, both characters do not represent the Opener because they are contrived derivatives of a fluidly intuitive consciousness. They cannot be representative of the ungraspable real because they are spuriously regarded as

⁹⁷ Esslin, p. 281.

disparate in order to be manipulated into reproducing what one has lost to the flux of the diegetic reality.

By ‘real’, I am referring to the reality of the diegesis, which is also constituted in the audience’s intuitive central vision from which the peripheral hypodiegesis is perceived. To Bergson, memories ‘more or less adhere to’ perceptions ‘which serve to interpret them’.⁹⁸ He describes these memories as ‘detached [...] from the depth of my personality, drawn to the surface by perceptions which resemble them; they rest on the surface of my mind without being absolutely myself.’⁹⁹ This surface is also referred to by Bergson as ‘the periphery’ of a ‘centre’ self and that this periphery is a ‘frozen surface’ of ‘sharply cut crystals’.¹⁰⁰ Under these crystals, which are the ‘clearly defined elements’ of ‘perceptions and memories’, is ‘a continuous flux’ of a reality that is governed ‘by intuition and not by simple analysis’.¹⁰¹ This flux is specifically defined as the intuitive experience of an indivisible *durée*. But this is outside the scope of this chapter and will be discussed in-depth in Chapter 4. For now, in the context of this chapter, let it suffice us for the moment to have shown Bergson’s conception of reality as one that is indivisible and the breaking of this reality into parts in order to analyse and understand one’s experience of the world as akin to a reconstruction of the real. Such a reconstruction would never perfectly capture one’s experience of the moments that have come to pass.

Following this trajectory, Beckett’s characters are observed in this chapter as being portrayed in *Embers*, *Cascando* and *Words and Music* as incapable of capturing their experiences by constructing stories and reconstructing their memories. Henry’s depicted incapacity to make Ada ‘stay’, the Opener’s inability to conclude his Woburn

⁹⁸ Bergson, p. 25.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

story through Voice and Music, and Croak's anguished departure from Joe and Bob all point to the inadequacy of the constructed narrative to represent the intuitively experienced reality either in the past, present or future.

Future here refers to the limit state right before death. Like many Beckettian characters such as the Woman in *Rockaby* and Malone in *Malone Dies*, the Voice in *Cascando* narrates a story that he anticipates would eventually end as he expires. Beckett depicts anticipating the experience of this limit with a constructed narrative as persistently foiled by a story ending before the character dies, but the unsuccessful endeavours are also what drives the character to doggedly continue fabulating until his end arrives. As such, I interpret this to mean that the desire to simulate an unpredictable experience of the limit through a constructed narrative would inevitably fall short; that is, the end of a constructed narrative would not match precisely the moment of death. It is more likely that the character would meet its demise mid-sentence, and the Interior narrative would remain imperfect even when death arrives. Therefore, in the context of this analysis, the sense of incompleteness that is invoked by the disjunction between the peripheral interior narrative and the diegetic reality, is intuited by the audience as the ungraspable flux of reality.

Despite Bergson's assertion that the breaking of reality into parts to understand and analyse the world can never be a perfect representation of lived reality, he was also aware of the inevitability and necessity to submit to this compulsion to lose ourselves in the exterior world of constructs. These constructed narratives are regarded as 'habits of mind more useful to life [...] that keeps us in the concrete' and as a result dispossesses us 'of the simple intuition of the self by self'.¹⁰² Paul Ardoin also points out that Beckett was aware that '[o]ur very existence depends upon the same habit which chains and

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 27.

dulls us.’¹⁰³ Maintaining that it is difficult to reconcile a thesis and an antithesis logically because ‘concepts and observations taken from outside points of view’ cannot ‘make a thing’, Bergson suggested that when the intuition is invoked, ‘we pass easily in many cases to the two contrary concepts; and as in that way thesis and antithesis can be seen to spring from reality, we grasp at the same time how it is that the two are opposed and how they are reconciled’.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, the auditory and visual experience of the audience as these radio plays are enacted in her mind-space can be interpreted as being ‘seized by intuition’ when it becomes apparent to her that a character is inevitably trapped in its Interior narrative despite the incommensurability between the peripheral constructs with the diegetic reality of its lived experience.

Turning back to the Beckettian doubt in the cultural specific religious construct depicted in *All That Fall* and *Rough for Radio II*, which is explicated in the second section of the chapter, it is not difficult to observe how Beckett seems to be driven by the same impetus to depict the incommensurability between a constructed interior narrative that is governed by the Christian narrative and the characters’ lived reality. Comparing both plays with Bergson’s concepts as they are presented in this section, I would like to point out that the Christian narrative is merely one of the many constructs that govern the characters’ interior narratives in these two plays.

In *Rough for Radio II*, when the Animator and Stenographer could not extract a satisfactory answer from Fox, the Animator decides to embellish Fox’s description of Maud by inserting the words ‘... between two kisses...’ into the recorded passage.¹⁰⁵ The Stenographer’s protest that ‘he never said anything of the kind’ is thrown out by the

¹⁰³ Paul Ardoin, ‘Perception Sickness: Bergsonian Sensitivity and Modernist Paralysis’, *Understanding Bergson, Understanding Modernism*, ed. by Paul Ardoin, S. E. Gontarski, and Laci Mattison (London and New York, 2014), pp. 128- 140 (p. 131).

¹⁰⁴ Bergson, p. 38.

¹⁰⁵ *Rough for Radio (1976)*; *CDW*, p. 284.

Animator's angry insistence that she 'Amend!' her record of Fox's words.¹⁰⁶ As such, even the immediate experience of what had just occurred in the diegetic present is distorted by the principal character's organisation and embellishment of an ambiguous passage to his desired interpretation. Ironically, the Animator's question 'How can we ever hope to get anywhere if you suppress gems of that magnitude?' suggests his blindness to the fact that the fabrication of such 'gems' would only take him further away from his goal of getting closer to an answer, should there be an answer.¹⁰⁷

Similarly, in *All That Fall*, Maddy Rooney's obsession with the death of her daughter Minnie forms the larger part of the play's unfulfilled hypodiegesis since the audience is not certain how her child has died, and by the end of the play the death of the child that had fallen out of the train carriage would also be a mystery that would remain hidden in the hypodiegesis that is Dan Rooney's memory. It has been suggested that Dan Rooney could have murdered the child that had fallen out of the train. Paul Stewart observes that 'in the light of St Augustine's theory of original sin, and Schopenhauer's will-to-live, both of which assert that suffering and death are brought into being by birth itself', the child in *All That Fall* 'is viewed as a regrettable guarantor of future suffering, thus somewhat justifying Dan Rooney's desire to murder a small child'.¹⁰⁸ Sinéad Mooney also notes that Dan Rooney's hatred for the Lynch twins 'may have prompted him to commit infanticide on the train'.¹⁰⁹

Nonetheless, I would like to propose an additional motive behind this potential murder. If Maddy Rooney is depicted throughout the play as unavailingly resurrecting her Minnie through the memories in her mind, Dan Rooney can be interpreted as

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Paul Stewart, 'Introduction', *Sex and Aesthetics in Samuel Beckett's Work* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 12.

¹⁰⁹ Sinéad Mooney, 'Ghost writer: Beckett's Irish Gothic', in *Beckett and Ireland*, ed. by Sean Kennedy, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 131-49 (p. 139).

physically trying to concretise his memory of Minnie by re-enacting her death through the death of another child in the diegetic reality. The parental pining for a lost child takes an immediately macabre turn as this memory is distorted to become an attempt at bringing her back through the death of another child in the physical diegesis. This is substantiated further in the following paragraph.

Although the sex of the child is not stated in the play, Beckett's response to Kay Boyle's question on whether Willie in *Happy Days* was trying to reach for his wife or the revolver indicated that the child in *All That Fall* is a girl:

The question as to which Willie is 'after' — Winnie or the revolver — is like the question in *All That Fall* as to whether Mr Rooney threw the girl out of the railway-carriage or not. And the answer is the same in both cases — we don't know, at least I don't... [...].¹¹⁰

Since there are only two child deaths in the play, their same sex significantly supports the idea that if Dan Rooney had indeed caused the child to fall out of the train, his motive might be more than a mere belief that children are 'regrettable guarantor[s] of future suffering'.¹¹¹ Further, when he started to cry upon hearing the faint music of 'Death and the Maiden', the audience has essentially come full circle to be back at the spot where the play first started, except that this time Dan Rooney is the one who is overwhelmed with sorrow instead of Maddy Rooney. Recalling that soon after hearing the tune at the beginning of the play, Maddy Rooney described herself as an 'old hag' who is 'destroyed with sorrow and pining [...]' for her 'Little Minnie', the audience would notice that Dan Rooney's sorrow could have been caused by the same subject of grief.

¹¹⁰ Quoted in James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (London: Bloomsbury, 1996), p. 485.

¹¹¹ Stewart, p. 12.

More importantly, his physical blindness is even more telling in the context of this analysis. Compared with Miss Fitt who withdraws almost completely from the diegetic reality to take up her position in the hypodiegesis beside her God, Dan Rooney's blindness could be interpreted as a more total blindness; that is, I postulate that Dan Rooney can be interpreted as attempting to concretise his memory of Minnie in his diegetic reality by re-enacting her death through ending the life of another child.

As I have stated in the first section, the concept that habit dictates that we '[imprison] the whole of reality in a network prepared in advance' suggests that this 'network' is constituted in the form of many conceptual elements within the peripheral gaze of the audience and the principal characters in the radio plays. For the practical purpose of living, the peripheral network is more preferable to the intuitive flux because of the former's clear system of relations.¹¹² By extension, although it always falls short of the characters' experience of their diegetic reality, they are depicted to continue to blindly adhere to it because it has become a habit of the mind. In my interpretation of *All That Fall*, the potential murder could be a reflection of the disastrous consequences of a life that is lived entirely in the Interior narrative of the peripheral hypodiegesis. Caught up in the 'sharply cut crystals' of his constructs, Dan Rooney, like the Animator, is depicted as having lost touch with his diegetic reality and as a consequence, consumed by the tyranny of the Interior narrative's repeatedly extended distortion.

Therefore, by examining Beckett's delineation of 'blindness', this chapter has established that it is effectively depicted in the radio plays as 'blind faith' in narrative systems that at best are inadequate to capture, and at their worst grossly distort, the reality of a character's lived experience. As the audience member acoustically and visually participates in the imagination of the radio plays in her mind's eye, she is

¹¹² Bergson, p. 71.

temporarily reconstituted, for the duration of each radio play, from a parochial gaze that is governed by a habitual way of knowing to an intuition of loss — this loss is twofold in that it refers to the loss of faith in the familiar systems of relations that instead of accurately represent lived reality, repeatedly distort it, as well as the loss of bearings that her triggered doubt in her habitual way of knowing invariably entails.

Following the trajectory of this chapter, in ‘Chapter 3: *Film* and the Spectator’s Ecstatic Becoming’, I explore how the audience’s habitual way of knowing that is employed to understand *Film* is challenged by its depicted resistance to pre-established patterns of understanding. Specifically, the chapter examines how a spectatorial perspective that is governed by a habitual conceptual framework is unravelled by *Film*.

CHAPTER 3 *FILM* AND THE SPECTATOR'S ECSTATIC BECOMING

The diegetic world of Beckett's film, television, radio and stage plays share the common feature of destabilising the spectatorial perspective by colliding head on with the perceived world (hereafter also referred to as the extradiegetic world) that is familiar to the audience member. In general, like the experience of listening to a radio play, the audience member's interaction with her immediate surroundings recedes to the background of her consciousness as she focuses her attention on the images enacted on the screen or onstage. However, one obvious difference between listening to a radio drama and watching a film is that the vision of the audience member is sensorily restricted to the diegesis when she is watching images that are prescribed to her by the visual medium. By 'more restricted', I am referring to the visual medium's demand that the eyes be riveted to its presentation rather than to the spectator's active participation in the creation of images in her mind's eye. In addition, a darkened auditorium would further reduce the audience member's interaction with her surroundings and render her physically idle for the duration of the presentation as her vision is singularly employed to watch the prescribed images. In this state of focused reception, the viewer's habitual frame of references would usually inform her understanding of the prescribed images of a film, but I postulate that Beckett's images paradoxically challenge the very frame that contrives to grasp his images with established patterns of understanding.

To elaborate, as opposed to the radio play listener who actively creates images in her mind's eye as she listens to a broadcast, the film viewer is less engaged with the creation of images and so more focus may be placed on understanding the prescribed images as she is watching the film in a darkened environment. The viewer's habitual frame of references is a network of relations that are derived from her known reality and is employed to understand the diegetic world that is presented onscreen. As a result, the

viewer may take on either a passive role as she lets herself be led by the prescribed images that are compatible with her frame of references, or an active role as she resists these images because they contradict what she knows. In the context of this chapter, I posit that as the spectator struggles to make sense of the enigmatic Beckettian images, her perspective may shift from the conceptual frame of references that is governed by a habitual way of knowing to an intuitive negative space of the mind when she realises that the Beckettian diegesis poses as a challenge to the selfsame frame of references that she is employing to understand his work. Following Chapter 2, this chapter is thus a continued analysis of the viewer's intuitive engagement with Beckett's drama. More specifically, the activation of the spectator's intuition by Beckett's film is examined as entailing a *deterritorialisation* of habit.

The habitual way of knowing refers to a habitual blindness that plagues the gaze of our immediate reality. As Tomás Gutierrez Alea has it, 'the typical consumerist film spectacle' induces the spectator to 'leave the viewing room with the sensation that everything's ok, that we don't need to change anything. One veil after another has been drawn over reality' in order to trap 'viewers into a net of relations that will keep them from self-knowledge and full self-development'.¹ Beckett's drama offers its audience no such delusional comfort. Nothing is 'ok' and the 'veil[s]', woven into 'a net of relations' that the audience member is familiar with and has come to expect from a typical dramatic plot are either displaced, absent, or unravelling in the Beckettian drama. The audience member's habit of expecting these veils and the familiar 'net of relations' constituted in the veils therefore define the habitual blindness that clouds the understanding of her reality. As such, I postulate that utilizing a habitual frame of

¹ Tomás Gutierrez Alea, 'The Viewer's Dialectic, part 2', trans. by Julia Lesage, *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media*, 30 (March 1985) <<http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinesays/JC30folder/ViewersDialectic2.html>> [accessed 2 April 2014].

reference to understand a work that challenges the selfsame habitual blindness effectively highlights a dialectical tension in *Film* that will birth a reconstituted pathos in the form of the spectators' *ecstatic* intuition of their entrapment in an organised system of habits.

3.1 THE INFLUENCE OF SERGEI EISENSTEIN

It is not difficult to see how Beckett's *Film* challenged expectations from the outset. For instance, by 1964, new filming techniques, sound and colour technology were readily available in the production of films, yet Beckett refused to 'budge from his fundamental position in the face of some highly sophisticated arguments about the new found flexibility and mobility of the film medium' and created a black and white film that is mostly silent.² At a time of such stark technical advancements, the discerning audiences would be aware of *Film*'s divergence from mainstream cinema and notice the influence of the French New Wave and avant-garde films on his work. Notably, the immense influence of Russian avant-garde film maker Sergei Eisenstein's film theory on the artist's work has not gone unnoticed in Beckett scholarship. More specifically, J. M. B. Antoine-Dunne's observation that Beckett made references to Eisenstein's *pathos construction* in his letters to his friends Mary Manning Howe and Arland Ussher, and her essay's analysis of Eisensteinian influences on the writing of *Murphy* and *Watt*, convincingly point to Beckett's active interest in the film theorist's work.³ *Film*'s engagement with Eisenstein's concept that 'a structure of pathos is that which compels us, in repeating its course, to experience the moments of culmination and becoming of

² Samuel Beckett, *Film by Samuel Beckett: complete scenarios, illustrations, production shots* (hereafter *Complete Scenarios*) (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), p. 68.

³ J. M. B. Antoine-Dunne, 'Beckett and Eisenstein on Light and Contrapuntal Image', in *Samuel Beckett Endlessness in the Year 2000*, ed. by Angela Moorjani and Carola Veit, *Samuel Beckett Today/ Aujourd'hui*, 11 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2002), pp. 315- 323 (p. 317).

the norms of dialectic processes' will be examined and elaborated in the following paragraphs.⁴

In this section, the collision between the Beckettian diegesis in *Film* and the audience member's habit governed conceptual framework will be elaborated through an examination of the extent that Eisenstein's concept of pathos construction is adapted successfully in the work. Following that, the next two sections will illustrate how the audience member is consequently reconstituted through a deterritorialisation of her habit-body that relies on a habitual way of knowing, into an ecstatic being that self-reflexively intuits her entrapment in an organised system of habit.

To begin, it is necessary to quote and briefly introduce Eisenstein's concept of pathos construction:

A work of pathos is what most profoundly awakes in the spectator a sentiment of impassioned enthusiasm. A work of pathos must observe throughout in the way it is ordered, the condition of violent explosions of action and that of continuous passage to new qualities.⁵

The 'impassioned enthusiasm' in the quotation above is referred to in his *Nonindifferent Nature* as an 'ecstatic effect' of "“being beside oneself” in the viewer”.⁶ Ecstasy, according to Eisenstein, refers to an effect that is capable of transporting the spectator out of conscious conceptualization and into a “pure” effect, feeling, sensation, “state” and this can be achieved through the concept of 'imitative behaviours'; that is, by presenting the viewer with an ecstatic character onscreen, a similar state of ecstasy can be evoked in the audience.⁷ More specifically, in his essay 'The Structure of the Film',

⁴ S. M. Eisenstein, *Nonindifferent Nature: Film and the Structure of Things*, trans. by Herbert Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 35.

⁵ Eisenstein, 'Organic Unity and Pathos in the Composition of *Potemkin*', *Cahiers du Cinema in English* No. 3 (reprint), ed. by Andrew Sarris (New York: Joseph Weill/Cahiers Publishing, 1966), 36-43 (p. 39).

⁶ Eisenstein, *Nonindifferent Nature*, p. 28.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 178-9.

he maintained that the filmmaker is ‘obliged in the work to suggest to [the spectator] a corresponding “guide”. Following this guide, he will enter into the desired condition’ in order ‘to gain a maximum “departure from oneself” and be transported into experiencing a pure effect intended by the filmmaker.’⁸ In other words, evoking pathos in the audience is, according to my interpretation of Eisenstein’s definition, guiding the audience to leap out of the self in order to imitate and arrive at a desired state that is intended by the artist.

As such, if assumed to have been successfully invoked, the ecstatic effect of “being beside oneself” in the context of *Film* may be interpreted as experienced by the spectator when she is guided by the filmic sequence to imitate a range of emotions or ‘a passage of new qualities’ that are entailed in viewing O’s depicted attempt to escape the relentless pursuit and perception of the camera. The following non-exhaustive list of a sense of pity, urgency and doubt are provisional examples of ‘a passage of new qualities’.

In addition to avoiding the camera, O’s tearing of photographs, which are nostalgic visual records of his life from birth to his present state, and his current isolation due to his rejection of any form of companionship by perceiving objects, would induce a sense of pity in the audience and contribute to their observation that O seems to be agonisingly rejecting all perceptions of his existence. O’s pulse-taking scenes that may be understood by the viewers as an indication of an impending death would contribute to their experience of O’s sense of urgency to coincide his death with the elimination of his perceived existence. The final scene, which shows that O has been running from his mirror image all along may confirm the audience member’s inference that O’s aim throughout the film may be to achieve a state of total non-perception

⁸ Eisenstein, ‘The Structure of the Film’, in *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, trans. by Jay Leyda (Florida: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1977), pp. 150-178 (p. 168).

before he expires. As such, if effectively invoked, the imitative behaviours that constitute the Eisensteinian ecstatic effect could influence the spectator to consequently question her seemingly straightforward relationship with her self-perception.

However, I postulate that the Eisensteinian ecstatic effect in *Film* was not as successfully invoked in the spectator's viewing process as it could have been. I would like to point out that the interpretation of the film in the paragraph above could only be drawn by an audience member at the end of the film from hindsight, and very likely without entailing a range of emotions. This is due to factors that will be elucidated in the next paragraph. Echoing Beckett's sentiment that the film is an interesting failure of intention that nonetheless possesses 'a sheer beauty, power and strangeness of image', I maintain that Beckett's *Film* does not successfully create the 'violent explosions of action' and 'continuous passage to new qualities' that Eisenstein advocated to invoke the ecstatic effect; nonetheless, what *Film* does evoke is an ecstatic intuition in the audience member that is defined by an unprecedented and evocative spectatorial freedom which would render the work uniquely Beckettian.⁹

To elaborate, although the expression of horror on the faces of the couple and the flower lady on the staircase when they are confronted by E, as well as the violent tearing of photographs and the picture of God off the wall, seem to qualify as 'violent explosions of action' that might evoke the audience's imitative pathos, by virtue of the audience's inability to see E and to clearly comprehend the cause of the characters' horror and O's fear, the close-ups on these expressions and actions are met with more puzzlement rather than a complete readiness to submit to the filmic intention of guiding an audience member into imitating the horror that is expressed on the characters' faces. The dialectical montage, which involves the rhythmic repetition of two contrasting

⁹ Ibid., p. 101.

images to create an ultimately unified explosion of idea or sensation, was clearly attempted in the street and staircase scenes in *Film*. In the street scene, O's panic-stricken flight from E clashes with the stationary couple that were calmly reading a set of newspapers along the sidewalk. In one long-shot, the spectator sees two contrasting states of the characters collide with great impact to form in itself an explosion of action that further highlights O's great haste to escape from E. Following this, filmed as a close-up, the distortion of the couple's disapproving expressions into expressions of horror when they are confronted by the vision of E is juxtaposed with the previous shot to invoke, in the spectator's perception, a heightened sense of E's malevolent nature since it is now clear that it not only induces flight, but also horror. Further, in the staircase scene, O's desperate decision to hide below the flight of stairs is contrasted with the flower lady's calm and cheerful descent down a long flight of stairs. Again, these contrasting images in one shot are juxtaposed with the next shot in which the close-up of the flower lady shows a facial distortion from cheerful calm to lethal horror. These expressions of horror or, in Beckett's words, 'the agony of perceivedness' are repeated in order to '[reinforce] the unbearable quality of E's scrutiny'.¹⁰ As such, it is apparent that the montage in *Film* involves the rhythmic repetition of two contrasting images in each scene to evoke an intense sense of apprehension.

However, throughout the film, instead of an urgency that is marked by horror at the intended intensity of E's gaze, a sense of curiosity may pervade the minds of the viewers as they are swept from the street scene to the stairway scene without having quite come to terms with the last scene that they just saw. Like a tourist being scuffled through an exhibition by a largely silent guide, the audience member who is unacquainted with Beckett's script or who is unfamiliar with his body of work might

¹⁰ Beckett, *Film*, in *Samuel Beckett: The Complete Dramatic Works* (hereafter *CDW*) (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), pp. 321-334 (p. 330).

understand that there is perhaps a lot to learn from the film that seems to be guiding her to experience the horror of ‘something’ but there is simply not enough information to suggest what this ‘something’ is. To my mind, the audience member’s greatest puzzlement may lie in her inability to fathom the motivation behind E’s relentless pursuit of O.

Beckett stated in the script that ‘[i]t will not be clear until the end of film that pursuing perceiver is not extraneous, but self’.¹¹ The ‘intensity’ of E that was intended by Beckett to evoke horror during the viewing process may have been crippled by precisely this scripted decision to withhold the identity of E as O’s ‘self’ until the end of the film. The spectator’s habit-governed conceptual framework sees a pursuit and flight sequence but is unable to decipher what induced this chase. Thus, for the rest of the film, the mind may become devoted to deciphering this missing puzzle instead of submitting to a range of imitative behaviours. When it is finally revealed towards the end of the film that E is O and that O seems to have been running away from self-perception throughout the film, the audience is immediately confronted with yet another question: why would the self-perception of O be horrifying to the couple and the lady with the flower basket?

Anthony Uhlmann finds Gilles Deleuze’s conclusion that ‘the fear [of perceivedness] stems from the perception of self by self, which can only be escaped by death’ unsatisfactory because according to Uhlmann, the horror of perceivedness occurs not only between O and E, but also with the couple and the woman with the flower basket.¹² To Uhlmann, Deleuze’s conclusion does not explain why O’s self-perceiving side, E, horrified the other characters. Therefore, Uhlmann attempts to answer this

¹¹ Ibid., p. 323.

¹² Anthony Uhlmann, ‘Image and Intuition in Beckett’s *Film*’, *SubStance*, Issue 104, 33.2 (2004) <<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/substance/v033/33.2uhlmann.pdf>> [accessed 15 April 2013], 90- 106 (p. 98).

question by postulating that these characters regard ‘the perceiving side of the E/O protagonist with fear’ due to its ‘intensity’ that he maintains is capable of ‘penetrating through the film of their consciousness and penetrating their being’.¹³ This idea of ‘intensity’ is not unfounded since Beckett intended the ‘agony of perceivedness’ to be caused by an ‘unbearable quality of E’s scrutiny’.¹⁴ But I would argue that the film does not effectively convey this intention. By the end of the film, a spectator who is unaware of Beckett’s scripted intention might have an alternative interpretation of the other characters’ horror and this possible alternative is that E is capable of morphing itself to whoever is viewing it. As the term ‘self-perception’ suggests, if E is indeed self-perception then the characters’ expression of horror can be interpreted as the horror of perceiving their own image as E confronts them.

As Colin Gardner also observes, ‘E must clearly function as a multiple subject – the ‘I’ as the eye of the spectator watching the camera recording O, as well as a role outside of the above, what one might call an ‘any-self-perception-whatever’, taken up by whoever might encounter the camera’s gaze and be affected by its piercing look’.¹⁵ Gardner relates this morphing quality further to the Free Indirect Discourse in which the line between subjective and objective images is blurred into a ‘free indirect subjectivity’.¹⁶ Despite observing that Beckett’s ‘use of camera perspective’ was ‘confusing’ and that this ‘[undermined] his own stated premise and exactitude of the piece’s formal integrity’, Gardner suggests that the free indirect quality ‘freed the perception-image from the subjective baggage of suturing film language’ and this interpretation is in line with Deleuze’s concept that the point-of-view shot can be freely

¹³ Ibid., p. 101.

¹⁴ *Complete Scenarios*, p.16 and p. 57.

¹⁵ Colin Gardner, *Beckett, Deleuze and the Televisual Event: Peephole Art* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 50.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 51.

floating, instead of being restricted by a subjective/objective duality.¹⁷ Therefore, the characters' horror can be read as directed at their self-perception. As such, it is conceivable that the unseen image of E may be alternatively interpreted as the image of whoever is regarding E; hence, Deleuze's explanation that the fear stems from the perception of self by self is applicable to the couple and the flower lady too, in so far as this morphing quality is regarded as an attribute of E.

Further, the depiction of the couple and the flower lady's expressions of horror as being directed at O's own self-perceiving image has perhaps a part to play in the failure of intention that Beckett had referred to. This is because in the film's final cut, E has clearly become more than merely O's self-perception. Notably, the morphing quality of E, like the intense quality intended in Beckett's script, is only apparent on hindsight when it is revealed that E mirrors O's image. It is important to reiterate that E's nature is not immediately obvious to the audience as they are viewing the film, and this illustrates that the Eisensteinian 'continuous passage to new qualities' is only vaguely achieved when it is revealed, as O is confronted by E towards the end of the film, that O is all along trying to escape self-perception.¹⁸ In other words, the only 'sentiment' that is 'continuous' for the audience member who is watching *Film* is a sense of urgent curiosity, and the only point of transition to a 'new' quality is when this sense of urgent curiosity is more or less quelled at the moment when E reveals itself to be 'self-perception'.¹⁹

This deferred revelation that follows after an overwhelming sense of curiosity essentially prevents the audience from experiencing 'a continuous passage to new qualities'. Indeed, the singularity of this qualitative transition from curiosity to comprehension is more reminiscent of the 'epiphany' that James Joyce sought to inspire

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Eisenstein, *Nonindifferent Nature*, p. 35.

¹⁹ Ibid.

in the reader through the structure of each short story collected in *Dubliners*. But like Eisenstein's 'continuous passage to new qualities', each epiphany invoked in each short story is interpreted as part of a collective whole rather than individually self-contained.²⁰ Pyeaam Abbasi and Hussein Salimian observe that '[t]he interconnectedness of the stories [in *Dubliners*] creates a system in which meaning is generated'.²¹ And as Francesca Valente has it, '*Dubliners*, in fact, in spite of the presence of subjective revelatory moments in the single stories, can be seen as a sequence of multiple objective epiphanies because what actually emerges from the book as a whole is the revelation of the city itself, perceived in its spiritual, intellectual and moral paralysis.'²² Effectively, *Dubliners*, when analysed as a collection, allows the reader to experience 'the continuous passage to new qualities' in terms of a Joycean passage of epiphanies. Although through the structure of Beckett's *Film*, it can be observed that it was set up to be a build-up towards a passage to new qualities, the film may be interpreted as a failed endeavour at pathos construction because of the singular sentiment it inspired in the audience through most of the film.

What has been discussed so far seems to point to Beckett's failure at constructing 'a work of pathos' as it is advocated by Eisenstein; however, the film's narrative about a character's unsuccessful flight from self-perception and its estrangement of the viewer from the narrative by subjecting her to a continuous state of urgent puzzlement, nonetheless successfully creates in the viewer another kind of

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Pyeaam Abbasi and Hussein Salimian, 'Binary Oppositions and the Meaning of Joyce's *Dubliners*', *Studies in Literature and Language*, 5.2 (2012) <<http://cscanada.net/index.php/sll/article/view/j.sll.1923156320120502.1926/3107>> [accessed on 10 December 2013], 63 -69 (p. 68).

²² Francesca Valente, 'Joyce's *Dubliners* as Epiphanies', *The Modern Word* <http://www.themodernword.com/joyce/paper_valente.html> [accessed 2 April 2014].

leaping out of the self to be ‘beside oneself’.²³ In other words, I postulate that what is created in the end is a form of ecstatic spectatorial experience that is unique to *Film*.

3.2 FROM HABIT BODY TO ECSTATIC BEING

As stated earlier, the singular curiosity that plagues the audience member as she watches the film implies a blindness that stems from Beckett’s intentionally withheld identity of E, whose veil, even at the point of revelation, is merely implicitly lifted. It is ‘implicitly lifted’ because, despite assuming the perspective of E through most of the film, the audience never really sees E. Its intended quality of intensity, when deemed ineffectively conveyed to the audience, leaves an ambiguous blind spot in the opening sequence of the film where E confronts the couple and the flower lady outside the apartment. The alternative interpretation of E’s morphing instead of intense quality is formed based on the possibilities opened up by this ambiguity.

In addition, Beckett’s decision to veil O’s face until towards the end of the film contributes further to the audience’s induced partial blindness. In mainstream cinema, an omniscient spectator, being led by the camera’s movements, takes up the camera’s point of view and regards the information presented through the camera-eye as her own.²⁴ But the spectator’s partial blindness to O’s face and the nature of E through most of Beckett’s film subverts this idea of the omniscient spectator. Raymond Federman observes that as opposed to conventional cinema in which ‘the viewer of the film sees more than the characters in the film’, O’s “angle of immunity” through most of the film ensures that ‘the field of vision of the camera-eye never exceeds that of the protagonist’.²⁵ Consequently, this denies the viewer of total visual perception right from the very beginning of the work. Beckett’s spectator experiences a further sense of

²³ Eisenstein, *Nonindifferent Nature*, p. 28.

²⁴ Steve Nolan, *Film, Lacan and the Subject of Religion: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Religious Film Analysis* (London: Continuum, 2009), p. 81.

²⁵ Raymond Federman. ‘Samuel Beckett’s Film On The Agony of Perceivedness’, *James Joyce Quarterly*, 8.4 (1971) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25486927>> [accessed 2 April 2014], 363-71 (p. 367-8).

alienation from the filmic diegesis at the point when she encounters the couple's perplexing reactions to the camera-eye. She cannot avert her eyes from the camera's point of view without losing sight of the film, and neither can she continue watching without feeling helplessly bound to an alien sight. Examining Beckett's prose, David Hayman helpfully pointed out that 'a major attribute of Beckett's work' is its 'deliberate play upon the reader's urge or impulse to accept as valid that which is presented as a controlled fiction' or 'the suspension of the suspension of disbelief or better the unwilling suspension of belief'.²⁶ Similar to a large extent in the context of *Film*, being alienated by the filmic diegesis means that the audience member is caught up in the contradictory desire to suspend her disbelief so as to continue to participate in the film as an omniscient spectator, and the inability to do so because the narrative eludes her habitual way of knowing.

Adding to the alien quality of E is O's unawareness of E's presence in the room with him as he attempts to avoid the perception or assumed perception of all the living and non-living things in his apartment. The nature of E remains a mystery to the spectator throughout most of the film despite its supposed role as the viewer's supplemented vision in the diegetic world of *Film*. Since a viewer's frame of reference, which is constructed by her habitual experience of the extradiegetic world, cannot decipher the nature of E, the Beckettian diegesis effectively clashes with her assumedly known reality to transform her sight into a seeing blindness. As the spectatorial vision becomes shackled to the alternating perspectives directed by the alien camera's points of view, her now ineffectual conceptual framework which is composed of an arsenal of habitual references accumulated from her experience of known reality, gives way to the

²⁶ David Hayman, 'Joyce -->/ Beckett/ Joyce', *Journal of Beckett Studies*, 7 (1982) <<http://www.english.fsu.edu/jobs/num07/Num7Hayman.htm>> [accessed 3 April 2014].

negative space of the mind which takes to the foreground of her consciousness in order to intuitively process this seeing blindness.

Before explaining what the negative space of the mind is, I would like to consider the desirability of the perplexed spectator in the context of this analysis. Markedly, a confused audience member's intuitive experience of Beckett's film may be a more compelling experience of the film. For example, a brief review published in *Time*, which Federman quoted in his essay, is an inadequate interpretation of the film:

It is a stark, black-and-white portrait of an old man who awaits death in a small, lonely room. Seeking absolute solitude, he turns out his cat and dog, closes the curtains, covers the parrot cage and goldfish bowl with his coat, and blacks out the room's only mirror. Finally he destroys the last reference to the world in which he has lived, a packet of old photographs. But he cannot escape himself, and as he lifts his eyes to the barren wall before him, he comes face to face with the image of his own deadpan likeness, with a patch over one blind eye.²⁷

Beckett's emphasis that '[n]o truth value attaches to' his scripted direction, 'Search of non-being in flight from extraneous perception breaking down in inescapability of self-perception' effectively renders the conclusion that *Film* is ultimately about an inability to escape the self quoted above questionable. Gardner suggests that this writing off of his stated direction 'activates the audience/reader as major agents of meaning production, inviting us to see the film structurally and dramatically as a creative work of art rather than as a scientific or philosophical tract'.²⁸ In this sense, I maintain that a perplexed audience member is ideal since her sustained curiosity signals her resistance

²⁷ Ibid., p. 366-7.

²⁸ Gardner, p. 44.

to a convenient interpretation of the work according to familiar frames of references. This, however, leads us to the question of audience ‘competence’.

Jonathan Bignell observes in relation to Beckett’s film and television plays that ‘They challenge the audience to decode the play’s dramatic form and to relate its concerns to their own experience and ideas. Here, levels of competence are important, and the audiences [may find] it hard to recognise the modality of the plays’.²⁹ This seems to be a valid observation; in order to resist oversimplification, the audience must first be competent enough to ‘recognise’ and consider the implications of the film’s basic organisation and structure according to their habitual frames of references. Instead of submitting to a general interpretation that seems immediately apparent the moment the film ends, the ‘[highly] competent’ audience ‘would be engaged in a self-conscious process of questioning their assumptions’.³⁰ However, there are two problems with Bignell’s view that prevents an easy transposition of these ideas to the context of this inquiry.

Firstly, his suggestion that ‘[a] high level of competence is required for this kind of drama’ implies an inherent exclusivity that discounts the experience of the regular non-specialist audience member; but we cannot be certain that Beckett only had academics in mind when he was creating these works. Secondly, Bignell’s suggestion that the audience will have to relate the concerns of the dramatic works to ‘their own experience and ideas’ in order to ‘decode the play’s dramatic form’ could paradoxically be the cause of oversimplification, since the mind is governed by the inclination to systematically arrest an idea by placing it in a known and probable category before more can be learned about it in its state of pure potential. Beckett’s belief that ‘art has always been this – pure interrogation, rhetorical question less rhetoric – whatever else it

²⁹ Jonathan Bignell, *Beckett on Screen* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2009), p. 196.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

may have been obliged by the “social reality” to appear’ clearly opposes the drawing of a potentially concretizing relation between the reader/audience’s viewing experience and his work.³¹ Here, we see Beckett’s stark resistance to an interpretation of art from the perspective of established conceptions of reality. By ‘pure interrogation’, he could be referring to the need to resist the inclination to arrest art by reducing them to mere constituents of clearly demarcated categories. Hence, to illustrate further that *Film* is a work of art that might have been created for the regular audience, I propose to examine the sense of alienation, a result of the collision between the audience member’s experienced world and the filmic diegesis, as the ideal state of ‘pure interrogation’; that is, an intuitive state that dispenses with such notions as ‘levels of competence’.

By ‘negative space of the mind’ stated above, I am referring to the intuitive space from which the audience member receives the negative space of pure interrogation set up in the Beckettian diegesis. I postulate that to receive the depicted negative space is to concurrently call upon the negative space of one’s mind to meet it. In his analysis of Beckett’s prose work from ‘Assumption’ to *The Unnamable*, Andrew Gibson rightly points out that ‘Beckett takes the preservation of the negative space to be integral to art’s task’.³² He observes that the reader who is receiving this negative space is ‘constantly being asked to keep mutually incompatible attitudes in play’ and is treated ‘in Beckett’s hands’ as ‘an old-fashioned plodder who wants plausibility, but also as a critical modern who doubts the accuracy of a cliché, and has to be convinced of it’.³³ In Gibson’s perspective, the reader’s reception of the negative space is kept in a general sense of ambivalence until she is:

³¹ Samuel Beckett, ‘Intercessions by Denis Devlin’, in *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*, ed. by Ruby Cohn (New York: Grove Press, 1984), p. 91.

³² Andrew Gibson, *Samuel Beckett* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010), p. 160.

³³ Gibson, *Reading Narrative Discourse: Studies in the Novel from Cervantes to Beckett* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1990), p. 154-5.

[...] endowed, not with the ‘curiosity’ that merely ‘seeks to assimilate’ (or even reflect back on) ‘what it is proper for one to know’ but with that curiosity ‘which enables one to get free of oneself’. It was precisely that kind of reader Nietzsche wanted: ‘a monster of courage and curiosity... something supple, cunning, cautious, a born adventurer and discoverer’.³⁴

By transposing Gibson’s observation of the reader of Beckett’s prose quoted above to the viewer of Beckett’s film, it is not difficult to see that the concept of the ideal spectator who engages in pure interrogation can be described in similar terms. The search ‘to assimilate’ the form and content of Beckett’s work with what a viewer thinks she already knows is akin to the attempt to arrest the work of art in a state that asphyxiates its creative potential. Nonetheless, merely transposing Gibson’s description of the ideal reader to the film audience does not explain the entire process by which a spectator’s mind is compelled to intuitively engage with the negative space of Beckett’s work during the viewing process and prior to discursively drawing an overall conclusion about the film. As such, this intuitive process is elaborated in the following paragraphs.

It is one thing to describe *Film* as inducing a sense of curiosity that elicits a very particular intellectual reaction from the audience and quite another to examine *Film* as being defined by the intuitive reaction of the audience. The former considers the audience as intellectually influenced by the artistic process by which she is endowed with the ability to logically interrogate her habitual frame, whereas the latter regards the audience member as an unsuspecting collaborator in the artistic process that seeks

³⁴ Gibson, *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), p. 272-3. Quotations in the first sentence are from Michel Foucault’s ‘Vol 2: The Use of Pleasure’ in *The History of Sexuality*, trans. by R. Hurley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), p. 8, and the quotation in the second sentence is from Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. by R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), p.73.

freedom from the habitual frame. The purpose of the following section, therefore, is to give definition to this intuitive interaction between the negative space created by Beckett in *Film* and the negative space that is activated in the audience's mind to meet it.

The idea of a negative space in Beckett's oeuvre is also considered by Dirk Van Hulle, who interprets this space created by Beckett in his works as a 'textual undoing'.³⁵ He posits that '[t]he awareness of the metaphorical nature of language, the frequent failures of communication, and the impossibility to know anything beyond language led Beckett to employ words in order to express precisely this impossibility'.³⁶ As such, the negative space, in Van Hulle's perspective, is a space for Beckett's articulation of the impotence of language in lived experience. In the context of *Film*, Beckett's decision to create an almost completely silent film can be seen as an attempt to shine a spotlight on the impotence of language through the muted film. However, since *Film* is the muted product of the written text, it follows that the audience's reception of this filmic representation of textual undoing may, by extension, be regarded as an extended unravelling of language in the viewers' minds since the film offers no linguistic clues about what it might be about and can only be interpreted by the audience member through the prescribed images. In this sense, *Film* can be read as an endeavour to express the impotence of language in art by dispensing with language in order to create, *with* the audience, a pure affect of Nonhuman Becoming.

Examining *Film*, Deleuze had it that a pure affect is 'the perception of self by itself' and 'it is the reflexive double of the convulsive man in the rocking chair. It is the

³⁵ Dirk Van Hulle, "'Nichtscnichtsundnichts": Beckett's and Joyce's Transtextual Undoings', in *Beckett, Joyce and the Art of the Negative*, ed. by Colleen Jaurretche, *European Joyce Studies*, 16 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2005), pp. 49-62 (p. 60).

³⁶ *Ibid.*

one-eyed person who looks at the one-eyed character.’³⁷ However, Deleuze’s definition is directed at explaining how this pure affect is experienced diegetically by the E/O protagonist and does not consider how members of the audience might experience it. As I cited earlier, following a long line of inquiry into the intersection between Deleuze’s concepts and Beckett’s dramatic oeuvre, Gardner observes, in *Beckett, Deleuze and the Televisual Event: Peephole Art*, that Beckett ‘activates the audience/reader as major agents of meaning production [...]’.³⁸ Nonetheless, this observation does not go beyond a nod of recognition that Beckett’s work involves a creative collaboration with the audience. Although a chapter is devoted to *Film* and the Deleuzian concept of Nonhuman Becoming, Gardner’s work does not provide an in-depth analysis of the spectator’s experience of this process. In sum, I attempt to illustrate in this chapter the process of Nonhuman Becoming in relation to the audience member as a Becoming Ecstatic. In this process, I will demonstrate how she might intuitively experience the self-reflexive ‘pure affect’ as she is viewing the film. Deleuze and Guattari maintained that ‘[t]he affect is not the passage from one lived state to another but man’s nonhuman becoming’.³⁹ As such, I posit that the spectator’s Becoming Ecstatic is the crucial product of the collaborative effort between the viewer and Beckett’s film, in which she is led to expansively intuit beyond her habitual way of knowing without having to completely shed away this habit as it is being deterritorialized.

To begin, the spectatorial vision is shackled to the alternating perspectives directed by the alien camera’s points of view. The spectator is E when she observes O and the spectator is O when she views the things that O is viewing. This uncontrollable

³⁷ Gilles Deleuze, ‘The Greatest Irish Film (Beckett’s *Film*)’, in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. by Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 23-6 (p. 25).

³⁸ Gardner, p. 44.

³⁹ Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p.164.

assumption of alternating first-person perspective suggests that the audience's vision is bound to the movements of the camera-eye and to a large extent this effectively subjects the spectator to a state of reluctant passivity in knowledge acquisition and steers her even further away from her habitual way of knowing and her assumed autonomy of sight. In other words, adding to the continuous sense of urgent curiosity caused by the audience's partial blindness is the further sense of estrangement caused by the camera-led digression from the spectator's habitual assumption of visual autonomy. While the audience is physically bound in such a state of partial blindness by the camera, the continuous sense of urgent curiosity may heighten. As a consequence, her ineffectual conceptual framework which is composed of an arsenal of habitual references accumulated from her experience of known reality, gives way to the negative space of the mind which takes to the foreground of her consciousness in order to intuitively experience this seeing blindness.

Considering Berkeley's idea of *esse est percipi* ('to be is to be perceived') in relation to *Film*, I agree with Uhlmann that 'one of the things that Beckett's *Film* makes us see with regard to Berkeley's formulation is that it does not allow or involve any simple connection between the eye and the I. According to Rimbaud, another favourite of Beckett's "*Je est un autre*" (I is another).'⁴⁰ Clearly, Uhlmann cites in brief this line by Arthur Rimbaud to emphasise Beckett's interest in the divided self, and it is worth noting that the sentence that preceded 'I is another' in Rimbaud's shorter "*lettre du voyant*" was '*C'est faux de dire: Je pense. On devrait dire: On me pense*' (It's false to say: I think. One should say: I am thought).'⁴¹ Indeed, '*Je est un autre*', when understood alongside '*On me pense*' in the letter, seems to present this divided self as

⁴⁰ Uhlmann, p. 98.

⁴¹ Edward J. Ahearn, 'Ecstatic Poetics: Self, Collectivity, Form', in *Rimbaud, Visions and Habitations* (London: University of California Press, 1983), pp.161-182 (p. 164). It is worth noting that a better translation of '*On me pense*', according to Mark Taylor-Batty, is 'I am being thought'. Ahearn's 'I am thought' risks a misinterpretation of 'thought' as a noun, instead of a verb written in the passive voice.

an unravelling of the limiting assumption of the self as an immanent whole. As Edward J. Ahearn observes, ‘Rimbaud’s forceful view of the “I” as other than what we normally assume can be placed in the context of other poetic attempts to enlarge and transcend the self.’⁴² In Beckett’s *Film*, the potential to transcend a pre-established assumption of wholeness is not limited to the artist and his work. The concept of the displaced ‘I’ from the self is a recurrent preoccupation in Beckett’s oeuvre, yet the spectator has never been so explicitly made aware of her division from her ‘I’ than when she is viewing *Film*.

The splitting of the self begins when the spectator’s mind is estranged from the information that her vision is receiving. As the film increasingly puzzles her, her body becomes increasingly bound to the camera as a mere receptor. This is an extraneous bondage which involves the vision and the seated body. It is a visual bondage because in an ideal auditorium, the viewer’s eyes are deprived of her immediate reality and bound only to the camera-eye and the diegesis; and it is, by extension, a physical bondage in that the audience member, in her struggle to make sense of the perplexing filmic sequence, is riveted to a state of physical inaction. As her receptor body recedes to the background of her consciousness, her unavailingly interrogating mind may give way to her intuition as it takes over her experience of the film.

The Eisensteinian concept of invoking the imitative behaviour of ecstasy or ‘being beside oneself’ in the audience by depicting an ecstatic character in a work of art, may be observed in Beckett’s depiction of a protagonist that is split into E and O in order to invoke an imitative behaviour in his audience to split into an ‘eye’ (body) and the ‘I’ (mind). But bearing Uhlmann’s words in mind that there is ‘no simple connection between the “eye” and the “I”’, we must also be aware that neither is there a simple

⁴² Ibid., p.162.

disconnection between the ‘eye’ and the ‘I’. The main concept of ultimate inescapability in *Film* suggests precisely an inescapable connecting force within the self despite the protagonist’s desire to disconnect the two. However, this desire is not peculiar to the Beckettian character. It should not come across as a surprise that the audience member’s conscious mind is predisposed to imitate the uneasy split of the E/O protagonist since the advent of psychology attests to the divisibility of the mind within itself, as in the case of schizophrenia, and from the body, as in the case of Coprolalia or the involuntary vocalisation of obscene and/or derogatory words. As Simon Critchley succinctly puts it, ‘we are divided against ourselves by a desire that attempts to deny that which makes ourselves the selves that they are. Simply stated, we are a paradox.’⁴³ However, due to Beckett’s unsuccessful invocation of Eisenstein’s pathos construction, as examined in the previous section, I would suggest that the audience’s ‘imitative behaviour’ is skewed to a *detritorialising effect*. This means that instead of straightforwardly imitating the mind and body split that could be represented by the split of the E/O protagonist, the audience member intuitively experiences three main elements that are presented in the film that would result in the deterritorialisation of her habit body to an ecstatic being in a differentiation process of Becoming Ecstatic. In the rest of this chapter, this process will be elaborated in further detail with the help of Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts of ‘Becoming’, ‘Organism’ and the ‘Body without Organs’.

In ‘The Greatest Irish Film’, Deleuze concluded that *Film* illustrates the return of the action-images, perception-images and affect-images to a pure movement-image through a neutralization method that pulverises self-perception to an ‘atom’ that is released ‘into the luminous void, an impersonal yet singular atom that no longer has a

⁴³ Simon Critchley, ‘To be or not to be is not the question: On Beckett’s *Film*’, *Naked Punch* (15 Sep 2010) <<http://nakedpunch.com/articles/30>> [accessed 2 April 2014].

Self by which it might distinguish itself from or merge with the others'.⁴⁴ This conclusion is derived from an analysis of Beckett's cinematographic work in terms of the diegetic relationship between the protagonist (O) and the camera (E) and it is noteworthy that the role of the spectator is starkly absent in his attempt to present Beckett's work as an articulation of a Becoming imperceptible.⁴⁵

Critchley rejects Deleuze's idea that Beckett's oeuvre ultimately seeks to depict 'the world before man, before our own dawn', but I would like to point out that Critchley's argument that Beckett is instead 'constantly struggling with the irreducibility of the human world' is not too different from Deleuze's postulation. To reiterate, in Critchley's view, Beckett's works are an articulation of the irreducibility of the world to a world before man but Deleuze seems to suggest that Beckett attempts to reduce his characters to the world before man and was able to successfully achieve this. However, in my perspective, Deleuze's analysis is a description of Beckett's artistic method to articulate precisely the same irreducibility in Critchley's interpretation. Deleuze concluded that the effect of Beckett's methods is ultimately open-ended:

But, for Beckett, immobility, death, the loss of personal movement and of vertical stature, when one is lying in a rocking chair which does not even rock any more, are only a subjective finality. It is only a means in relation to a more profound end. It is a question of attaining *once more* the world before man, before our own dawn, the position where movement was, on the contrary, under the regime of universal variation, and where light, always propagating itself, had no need to be revealed. Proceeding in this way to the extinction of action-images, perception-images and affection-images, Beckett ascends *once more* towards the

⁴⁴ Deleuze, 'The Greatest Irish Film', p. 26.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

luminous plane of immanence, the plane of matter and its cosmic eddying of movement-images.⁴⁶

When understood as retrogression to a ‘world before man’, the above quotation can of course be misinterpreted as an analysis of Beckett’s successful reduction of his character to a final atomic state. But the ‘world before man’ is described above as being governed by the ‘regime of universal variation’, which is an idea that is in line with the Deleuzian concept of Becoming. Deleuze’s philosophy emphasises perpetual motion, an always coming-into-being and a subjection to the interminable process of Becoming. Even after seemingly descending from the ‘subjective finality’ to the more ‘profound end’, Beckett’s character, for Deleuze, ‘ascends’ onto another state of denouement and that is ‘the luminous plane of immanence’. Again, this is a plane of ‘cosmic eddying of movement-images’; that is, a plane of unceasing movement trapped in perpetual Becoming. Thus, an emphasis should not be placed on the idea of a final reduced state; rather, it should be on the continued ascension of the character to another state of Becoming *in spite of* being in a reduced state. Deleuze’s demonstration of Beckett’s precariously near ‘exhaustive’ articulation of the human condition is not too dissimilar from Critchley’s attempt to present Beckett as concerned with the ‘irreducibility of the human world’; since, in this sense, what Deleuze addresses is the methodology by which Beckett’s characters are depicted as trapped in perpetual Becoming despite being in an extremely reduced atomic state, while what Critchley observes is the effect or articulation in Beckett’s oeuvre of man’s ultimately irreducible hence interminable struggle with being. Both philosophers, in my point of view, share a common resistance to a reducible finality in their interpretations of Beckett’s work.

⁴⁶ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Continuum, 2005), p. 70 [Italics mine].

Like the character's ascension to an atomic state of perpetual motion through a pulverisation of his self-perception in Deleuze's interpretation of *Film*, the spectator too experiences a similar ascension to an intuitive state through an ecstatic differentiation from the habit-governed body. The process of Becoming of the spectator, in the context of *Film*, can be observed in the partial blindness-induced 'sundering' of the ecstatic being from the habit body. But this description is not good enough since, as stated earlier, a split within the self is not a clear-cut split. Indeed, it is not so much a split as a differentiation that can be illustrated through the effect of deterritorialisation.

I postulate that within the process of this spectatorial differentiation, the spectator's body and mind are deterritorialised as she is viewing the *Film*. That is, these aspects of a spectator are deterritorialised from the organic habit body to become an ecstatic being as they experience three depicted elements in the film.

(a) The first of these three elements is the portrayed anticipation of the audience's habitual framework of understanding. This anticipation is considered here as one of the three elements depicted in the film because the work clearly anticipates this state of mind by depriving the audience member of an easily comprehensible context and the comfort of spectatorial omniscience, as I have pointed out in the beginning of this section. The anticipation is particularly evident in the portrayed 'sssh', the only sound in the film which is made by one character to prevent another character from speaking and potentially offering the audience member any verbal clues about the protagonist or the film. Effectively, I observe that the spectator's habit-governed mind is consequently deterritorialised as she is thrown out of her habitual way of knowing and plunged into an unfamiliar negative space to intuit beyond her constructed concepts of reality. The intuitive experience of Beckett's film can thus be considered as a development from the audience member's structured frame of references when these are no longer adequate to decipher the images prescribed by Beckett in the film.

In ‘Expression and Affect in Kleist, Beckett and Deleuze’, Uhlmann explains that an actor’s projection of a ‘familiar, easily recognisable emotion’ could interfere with the creation of affects because the audience that is receiving this familiar emotion ‘do not sense the unfamiliar affect of the work’ and would therefore be ‘comforted in the belief that they have grasped the “meaning”, and the play [would fail] to affect them in the least’.⁴⁷ This supports the idea that the couple’s ‘sssh’ gesture, which subverts the audience member’s expectation of verbal clues about the film could eject the spectator from her comfort of knowing through familiar frames of references. By implication, this corroborates with the concept that a spectator’s habit-governed mind is consequently deterritorialised to an intuitive experience after witnessing how her habitual way of knowing is anticipated and subverted by the film.

(b) The second depicted element is the predicament of O. As the viewer compares O’s physical predicament and other characters’ reactions to it, she notices immediately that O’s behaviour is unusual. In addition, throughout the film, the spectator sees that O is the only character that is fleeing from E and therefore O may be regarded as unusually bound to E by virtue of its subjection to pursuit. Nonetheless, O may seem trapped in this cat and mouse chase but I posit that he is in fact depicted as more liberated than the other characters who are not engaged in such a struggle, and that the audience member is in turn affected by O’s delineated resistance to E.

In Beckett’s original script, his intention was to depict ‘workers [as] going unhurriedly to work’ and all heading ‘in [the] same direction and all in couples’.⁴⁸ His intention was to portray them as being ‘contentedly in *percipere* and *percipi*’ or contentedly perceived by another and perceiving the other. If the filmed footages had not been destroyed by the strobe effect, it would be even more obvious to the audience

⁴⁷ Anthony Uhlmann, ‘Expression and Affect in Kleist, Beckett and Deleuze’, in *Deleuze and Performance*, ed. by Laura Cull (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 54-70 (p. 61).

⁴⁸ Alan Schneider, ‘On Directing Film’, in *Complete Scenarios*, p. 93.

that O is a displaced character in the film since by attempting to hide from E, he is not conforming to living as the other characters live, contentedly ignorant of their bondage to E.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, O is similarly made alien to the audience when the lady's 'sssh' prevents the man's vituperation and effectively cuts off a potential diegetic speculation through speech that could explain O's unusual behaviour. Consider this following sequence that involves the couple: the silencing gesture, the agonising confrontation with E, the closing of their eyes and the walking away in the opposite direction of O. The sequence suggests the unquestioning couple's instinctive decision to turn a blind eye to a malevolent entity, which role as 'self-perception' at this point remains unknown to the audience. Instead of acknowledging and resisting it, their movement towards the opposite direction of O highlights their preference to maintain the status quo (and this is another example of how the habitual way of thinking is anticipated and depicted in the film). Markedly, in contrast with the couple, O's dogged attempt to escape the agonising self-perception suggests a firm acknowledgement of it, albeit an acknowledgement that takes the form of resistance through flight.

In this regard, compared to the couple that choose to walk away and resume their contented lives in *percipere* and *percipi*, O's flight may be interpreted as a depicted resistance to living a life in resolute ignorance. Similar to O's subjection to E's pursuit, the habit body of the spectator is bound to E as the camera-eye imposes the filmic images on her vision. The body may at first seem trapped as the limited vision afforded by the camera-eye causes it to become a mere extraneous receptor of the filmic content. However, like O, the ecstatic being that results from the deterritorialisation of the trapped habit body is one that is liberated from its habitual function to actively

⁴⁹ Ibid.

anticipate the familiar. Deprived of familiar and readily comprehensible images in a darkened auditorium and also of an assumed visual autonomy, the ecstatic being is the result of the spectator's submission to bodily passivity as she views O's as yet inexplicable flight from E. Instead of simply walking away, like the early film critics who 'clobbered' and 'ignored' the film, the audience member has chosen to experience a unique liberation from her habit body by staying.⁵⁰

(c) From the effects of deterritorialisation examined in relation to the two depicted elements above, we see that the ecstatic being differentiates from the habit body as the spectator is deterritorialized from her habitual function of actively anticipating data that can be easily transmitted to and comprehended by her mind. Her active vision is displaced by the film to result in a perceptual passivity that no longer anticipates a familiar sequence of images, which promises the comforting illusion of spectatorial omniscience. In other words, the spectator surrenders to a state of limited vision; by unavailingly questioning what she is seeing and not seeing, her habitual conceptual framework is deterritorialized, and by being visually bound to the perspectives and enigmatic images directed by the camera-eye, she becomes free from the habitual function of anticipating the familiar. As the film increasingly puzzles the spectator, her consciousness of her habit body decreases to accommodate the pure affect of Becoming, which has been established earlier as a self-reflexive perception of self by itself. This means that the spectatorial differentiation process between the now extraneous habit body and the ecstatic being is rendering the spectator to become self-reflexively perceptive of the habitual self by the intuitive self.

Just as E can be interpreted as an amorphous 'self-perception' that represents the furcation and unification of the perspectives of E and O by the end of the film, so

⁵⁰ Ibid.

too is the spectator's pure affect of Becoming, a 'self-perception' that connects her habit body and ecstatic being as self-reflexive double by the end of the film. As such, I postulate that the final scene in which E is revealed to be 'self-perception' is the third depicted element that significantly supports the audience member's differentiation process of Becoming Ecstatic.

As stated earlier, I observe that due to Beckett's unsuccessful employment of Eisenstein's pathos construction, the 'imitative behaviour' of the audience is skewed to a deterritorialising effect. Nevertheless, with this effect film is still able to invoke an ecstatic spectatorial experience that is uniquely Beckettian. That is, instead of the Eisensteinian ecstasy of 'being beside oneself' in the audience, Beckett's film creates a pure affect of Becoming in the spectator in which the deterritorialising effect renders her self-reflexively intuitive of both her habit body and ecstatic being. Essentially, this spectatorial process of Becoming culminates at the point when E is revealed as the force which represents the furcation and unification of the E/O protagonist in the film, because the scene reflects back to the audience the deterritorializing effect of the differentiation process that has activated her Becoming from a habit body to an ecstatic being, which is capable of self-reflexively intuiting beyond her familiar frames of references.

Deleuze and Guattari's suggestion that if Becoming is viewed as a line-system, it is a 'movement by which the line frees itself from the point, and renders points indiscernible: the rhizome, the opposite of arborescence; break away from arborescence.'⁵¹ 'The law of arborescence' refers to the dualistic thinking of 'this as opposed to that' and is founded upon the basis of 'distinctive opposition', for example,

⁵¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), p. 294.

‘male-(female), adult-(child), white-(black, yellow or red)’.⁵² The rhizome, on the other hand, refers to a decentred way of thinking that presupposes that everything is part of an assemblage and cannot be attributed to a single cause. To think in binary terms is akin to considering only one particular part of an assemblage. In the context of this explication, the Becoming of the spectator is an intuitive perception of both her habit body and her ecstatic being. The Becoming of the spectator renders her an assemblage of multiplicity in which the ecstatic being that is freed from a habitual way of knowing becomes a pure affect that allows the viewer to self-reflexively perceive herself as both the habit body and an ecstatic being. Effectively, the audience member undergoes the differentiation process in which the habit mind and body are deterritorialised so as to reconstitute her as an ecstatic being that is freed from the ‘law’ of arborescence and as a result, open to a decentralised intuition that is characterised by lateral multiplicity instead of duality.⁵³

As such, instead of an imitative ecstatic audience advocated by Eisenstein, Beckett’s film creates within his audience, a heightened intuition of her capacity for non-dualistic thought as she becomes beside herself within herself through an internal differentiation process of Becoming described in this section. To put simply, Beckett had achieved an ecstatic spectatorial experience of pure affect that is uniquely Beckettian, not Eisensteinian.

3.3 TO HAVE DONE WITH THE JUDGEMENT OF ‘GOD’

The theme of partial blindness that pervades *Film* and leads to the reconstitution of the spectator into a self-reflexive ecstatic being is examined in this section as a critique of man’s habitually parochial vision. By invoking the intuition of our inherent

⁵² Ibid., p. 292.

⁵³ Damien Sutton and David Martin-Jones, *Deleuze Reframed: Interpreting Key Thinkers for the Arts (Contemporary Thinkers Reframed)* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris and Co. Ltd, 2008), p. 5.

ability to look beyond the law of arborescence, we are being made aware of our potential to reject ‘the judgement of God’. In Deleuze and Guattari’s words, ‘The judgement of God, the system of the judgement of God, the theological system, is precisely the operation of He who makes an organism, an organization of organs called the organism [...]’.⁵⁴ In brief, an acceptance of binary thinking can also be seen as an acceptance of our subjection to the stratifying order of God, ‘You will be organized, you will be an organism, you will articulate your body [the stratified body] — otherwise you’re just depraved. You will be signifier and signified, interpreter and interpreted — otherwise you’re just a deviant.’⁵⁵

Deleuze’s essay’s title ‘To Have Done with Judgement’ alludes to Antonin Artaud’s radio play *To Have Done with the Judgement of God*. True to its title, the play, which was recorded in 1947, is a cacophonous mix of poetry, screams, shouts and glossolalia that articulate the protagonist’s frenetic resistance to the judgement of God. The play concludes that in order for man to be ‘restored to his true freedom’, man will have to become a ‘body without organs’ for ‘there is nothing more useless than an organ’.⁵⁶ Deleuze explains that ‘judgement implies a veritable organization of the bodies through which it acts: organs are both judges and judged, and the judgement of God is nothing other than the power to organize to infinity’.⁵⁷ The body can only escape judgement if ‘it is not an “organism,” and is deprived of this organization of the organs through which one judges and is judged.’⁵⁸ Garin Dowd explains this further that ‘the organed body is striated’ in that it ‘generates hierarchies and imposes structures’,

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 158.

⁵⁵ *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 159.

⁵⁶ Antonin Artaud, ‘To Have Done with the Judgement of God’, in *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*, trans. by Helen Weaver, ed by Susan Sontag (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 555-74 (p. 570).

⁵⁷ Deleuze, ‘To Have Done with Judgement’, in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. by Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 126-135 (p. 130-1).

⁵⁸ Ibid.

whereas the Body without Organs (BwO) 'is rhizomatic' and free of the 'arborescent model'.⁵⁹

In relation to the concept of organized judgement stated above, I would like to reiterate that the ecstatic being of the spectator is the result of being reconstituted from a habitual arborescence into a decentred assemblage of self-reflexive pure affect. In the script of *Film*, O's frantic movement against the flow of 'workers going unhurriedly to work' in the 'small factory district' is the first representation of the project's resistance to the economic organ of the stratifying organism.⁶⁰ By 'economic organ', I am referring specifically to the 'economy of want and power' that has a hand in subjecting one to stratification.⁶¹ Paul Stewart observes that 'the relationship between want and power in *Endgame* would also be an appropriate gloss on, or a laying bare of, the economy that prompted the rise to power of totalitarianism, both of fascist and Stalinist hues, in the pre-war era'.⁶² Similarly, Beckett's *Film*, written in 1963, is set in the year 1929 which is the year of the Great Depression and the preamble to the economic hardships that would fuel the impending Second World War. In my perspective, in addition to regarding the film as set in the pre-WWII era, it is also helpful to look at 1929 as post-WWI because it significantly marks the precarious apex of the post-WWI economic boom that mirrors that of the post-WWII economic prosperity between the 1950s and 1960s.

Indeed, the intended depiction of the workers as being contentedly perceiving and being perceived by each other as they make their way to work suggests a general mood of idyllic optimism that is, unbeknownst to them, on the verge of becoming

⁵⁹ Garin Dowd, *Abstract Machines: Samuel Beckett and Philosophy after Deleuze and Guattari* (Amsterdam and New York, 2007), p. 151.

⁶⁰ *Film*, in *CDW*, p. 324.

⁶¹ Paul Stewart, 'But Why Shakespeare? The Muted Role of Dickens in *Endgame*', in *Samuel Beckett's Endgame*, ed. by Mark S. Byron (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 207-226 (p. 218).

⁶² *Ibid.*

shattered. The purpose of mirroring the positive outlook of the 1950s and 60s with the year 1929 could be Beckett's way of illustrating the ignorant optimism that induces people to repeatedly continue to pursue our insatiable material wants by relinquishing our freedom to the bonds of an unsustainable economic organisation that adheres to an inevitable pattern of boom and collapse. If the footages of the group scenes had not suffered 'badly from that strobe effect that' caused them to be 'impossible to watch', by following the camera's dogged pursuit of O, an audience member might have had the opportunity to experience a very visual tearing away of her attention from the collective enthusiasm in fuelling the economic organ, to the frantic resistance of the protagonist who is running in the opposite direction of the masses.⁶³

Next, O's tearing of the pictures that chart the milestones of his life and his ultimate confrontation with E that reveals a confrontation with his self indicate the film's resistance to the social organ. By 'social organ', I am referring specifically to the social determinants by which people allow themselves to be defined. This representation of resistance is a blatant reversal of Jacques Lacan's seminal idea that at the mirror stage, where an infant first recognises himself in the mirror, an "ideal-*I*" is formed:

[...] that situates the agency known as the ego, prior to its social determination, in a fictional direction that will forever remain irreducible for any single individual or, rather, that will only asymptotically approach the subject's becoming, no matter how successful the dialectical syntheses by which he must resolve, as *I*, his discordance with his own reality.⁶⁴

⁶³ Schneider, p. 73.

⁶⁴ Jacques Lacan, 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in a Psychoanalytic Experience', in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed by Vincent B. Leitch et al. (London: W. W. Norton & Company Inc, 2001), pp. 1285-90 (p. 1286).

The ‘dialectical syntheses’ as a means by which his ‘discordance with his own reality’ must be resolved, refers to his ‘social’ interactions and relations later in his life that will ‘determine’ the extent of his success or failure to achieve the “ideal-*I*”. But this is a ‘fictional’ goal that is doomed from the outset, since at the point of the ideal-*I*’s formation, the mirage of a total form of his body does not reflect the reality of the infant’s ‘motor impotence and nursling dependence’.⁶⁵ In other words, the image of a total form is an illusion because it hides the infant’s actual physical weakness at this stage of his life and sets up the illusion of a complete ideal-*I* that is ultimately unattainable throughout ‘the subject’s becoming’ or development in life because the subject has never been complete. He is, or rather, we are intrinsically fragmentary.

Shane Weller observes that ‘One source for a theorisation of literary style in relation to psychosis that Beckett may have encountered in the mid-1930s is the work of Jacques Lacan’.⁶⁶ According to his footnotes, Weller was informed by James Knowlson that Beckett once remarked to him that the ‘late Lacan is unreadable’.⁶⁷ Implicit in this comment is that Beckett had been following Lacan’s work. Effectively, these observations encourage and support an interpretation of *Film* with reference to Lacan’s early work. It is therefore likely that Beckett was familiar with Lacan’s early essay on the mirror stage and that this could have contributed to his conception of the E/O confrontation scene.

Further, Angela Moorjani has it that ‘Beckett’s textual mirrors, doublings, and disintegrating forms echo the mirror stage’s constitution of the *I* as other (self-estrangement) and the introjection and projection of virtual marionettes of bodily

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Angela Moorjani, ‘Beckett and Psychoanalysis’, in *Palgrave Advances: Samuel Beckett Studies*, ed. by Lois Oppenheim (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp.172-93 (p. 182).; Shane Weller, “‘Some Experience of the Schizoid Voice’: Samuel Beckett and the Language of Derangement”, *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 45.1 (2008),

<<http://fmls.oxfordjournals.org/content/45/1/32.full.pdf+html>> [accessed on 5 April 2014], 32-50 (p. 39).

⁶⁷ Weller, p. 39 n 38.

wholeness, on the one hand, and of bodily fragmentation and the dissolution, on the other'.⁶⁸ More specific to *Film*, Norma Bouchard also suggests that '[l]ike Lacan, Beckett emphasizes the shortcomings of vision' and that the confrontation scene represents the E/O protagonist's 'seeing eye's failure in positing a homogenous, unified subject'.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, in contrast to both Moorjani's consideration that the mirroring or doubling aspects of Beckett's oeuvre are an 'echo' of the Lacanian mirror stage and, Bouchard's attribution of the painful confrontation between E and O to the Lacanian conclusion that the specular imago can never be realised, I posit that the scene is not a mere iteration of the mirror stage. Regarding it as such would gloss over the nuances that can be extrapolated from the E/O protagonist's unique characterisation. With reference to my observation that Beckett may have appropriated the jubilant infant from Lacan's essay by transforming him into a dispirited old man in *Film*, I postulate that the emphasis of the E/O confrontation scene may be on the mirror stage's embeddedness in the protagonist's stratified reality.

To elaborate, the protagonist's ideal-*I*, E, *haunts* him despite his bleak knowledge that the promise of cohesion is empty. Towards the end of the film, O's confrontation with E is a mirroring that involves no physical mirror to reflect the ideal-*I*. As stated in the previous section, E represents the furcation and unification of all perceptions in and of the film. There is no need for a mirror in the confrontation scene to mediate E's manifestation since it is depicted as a representation of the omnipresence of perception per se. Instead of a mirror that mediates and sets up, in the infant's reflection, the subject's misdirected assumption of a potentially ideal cohesion of form, the E/O confrontation in *Film* presents the audience with the haunting spectre of the

⁶⁸ Moorjani, p. 182.

⁶⁹ Norma Bouchard, 'Film in Context(s)', in *Beckett Versus Beckett*, ed. by Marius Buning, Danielle de Ruyter, Matthijs Engelberts and Sjeff Houppermans, *Samuel Beckett Today/ Samuel Beckett Aujourd'hui*, 7 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 1998), pp.121- 34 (p. 125).

omnipresent E as an ideal which is so ingrained in the film's diegetic world, that the protagonist needs only to drop his guard to engage with it once again.

Further, despite the near similarity of both images, which is evident at the end of the film, O's abject fear of E underscores an incompatibility between the twin images that highlights an inherent disjunction between the two. As opposed to the sense of jubilation the infant initially experiences when he first recognises what he assumes to be his own image in the mirror, O's confrontation with E is marked by an anticipated sense of anguish so intense that he is compelled to cover his face with his hands. The aged man's rejection and fear of the image of his ideal-*I* is a stark contrast to the infant's initially happy acceptance of the ideal-*I*. The term 'asymptote' comes from the Greek word 'asumptotos' and means 'not falling together'. With reference to Lacan's idea that the image of the ideal-*I* that forms the ego will 'forever' only 'asymptotically approach the subject's becoming' throughout his life, the aged O's flight from E can be interpreted as representing O's resistance and fear of a relapse into believing that he could ever develop into his ideal-*I*. Essentially, this confrontation scene indicates that O is so deeply embroiled in the paradoxical fear of his compulsion to strive towards the ideal whole, that his futile resistance to all forms of perception, whether social or imaginary, causes the very sense of anguish that elliptically propels the entire filmic sequence.

This resistance can also be seen in O's tearing of the picture of 'the face of God the Father [with] eyes [that are] staring at him severely', which represents the film's resistance to the theological organ that structures the organism as a whole in the form of a metaphorical judgement of God.⁷⁰ In Lacan's work, the ideal-*I* is also referred to as

⁷⁰ *Complete Scenarios*, pp.12 and 32.

the ‘Imago’.⁷¹ This is a Latin term that alludes to the Augustinian concept of the ‘imago Dei’ or the ‘image of God’. John A. Lorenc explains that in the *De Trinitate*, ‘Augustine speaks of the image of God (imago Dei) in human beings’ in terms of ‘its deformity (deformitas, immunditia, obscuritas) on account of sin, and the need for it to be reformed (reformare, transformare, mutare, transire, renovare) in order to regain its likeness (similitudo) to God’.⁷² Nonetheless, Lacan’s allusion to the ‘imago Dei’ is an ironic one because the ideal image of Lacan’s subject is an unattainable image of an ideal self.

As such, the Beckettian protagonist’s rejection of his ideal-*I* and the image of God may be interpreted as a dual-layered rejection of any possibility of a personal or even spiritual cohesion. To reject the ideal-*I* is to recognise the futility of trying to become the ideal-*I* by subjecting oneself to the ultimately ineffectual social determinants of the organism. In the same vein, to reject the image of God is to recognise the vanity of trying to fulfil the theological organ’s criterion that one should strive to attain a devoutly God-like irreproachability. In the following paragraphs, I examine the tragic dimension that is employed by Beckett in the film, which will further inform our understanding of the protagonist’s rejection of the authoritative organism.

Juxtaposing Nell’s famous line in *Endgame* that ‘Nothing is funnier than unhappiness’ with Beckett’s decision to cast a veteran comedian Buster Keaton to take on the grim role of the protagonist, *Film* may be regarded as a tragicomedy.⁷³ Moreover, Beckett’s intention, as it is stated in the script, was to evoke the audience’s laughter throughout the film. However, as can be attested by any viewer of the film, the screenplay certainly does not send the audience into stitches. Bignell notes that the film

⁷¹ Bignell, p. 195.

⁷² John A. Lorenc, ‘The Reform of the Divine Image in Augustine’s *De Trinitate*’ (unpublished master’s thesis: McMaster University, 2008), p. 2.

⁷³ *Endgame*, in *CDW*, p. 101.

alludes to the ‘Keaton comedies’ but does not produce ‘a satisfactory spectating position for many actual film viewers’ to appreciate its intended humour.⁷⁴ Instead, it ‘leaves the film viewer with the sense that he or she is out of place’.⁷⁵ The audience’s puzzlement created by this sense of displacement thus takes the ‘comedy’ out of the term ‘tragicomedy’ and aligns the film more with the tragic genre than with comedy. Bennett Simon observes that ‘[f]rustrated in its search for meaning in *Endgame*, the audience typically experiences thwarted and poorly articulated affective responses while watching the play’.⁷⁶ This description of the audience’s response to *Endgame* is also applicable to the viewer’s response to *Film*. As opposed to *Waiting for Godot*, I regard *Endgame* as a tragedy, although it contains quite a few jokes. Similarly, in the creation of *Film*, Beckett might have had intended it to be a tragicomedy that is reminiscent of the bleak humour in *Waiting for Godot*, but the end product is definitely a tragedy in no uncertain terms.

Connecting the tragic genre with psychoanalysis, Simon argues further that ‘the nature of tragedy in Beckett’s works’ is defined by the ‘psychiatric disorders of infancy’.⁷⁷ Comparing Eugene O’Neill’s dramatic works with Beckett’s, Simon maintains that Beckett’s drama denies his audience the tragic catharsis and fulfillment that O’Neill’s works evoke. He goes on to describe *Endgame* as a ‘commentary on the history of Western tragic drama’ and that Beckett’s goal is to ‘get beyond’ the search, which ‘began with the Greeks’, for a satisfactory solution to the ‘intractable conflicts inherent in the family’.⁷⁸ At one point in his book, Simon assumes Beckett’s persona by writing as Beckett in the first person to suggest that his solution was to portray in his

⁷⁴ Bignell, p. 195.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Bennett Simon, *Tragic Drama and the Family: Psychoanalytic Studies from Aeschylus to Beckett* (Michigan: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 214.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 216.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

works the elimination of a character's past. This past includes the character's personal history and the potential for the continuation of this history. Nonetheless, 'this solution doesn't work' because people are always looking for 'some secret meaning' behind this elimination.⁷⁹ Simon's description is of a playwright who is looking for a solution to the tragic drama by eliminating everything that could potentially give rise to the familial conflicts that are central to tragedy. Although a 'solution' that is perpetually teetering on the brink of implausibility is a possible interpretation of what Beckett is trying to convey to his audience with his minimalist and apocalyptic settings, we must not overlook the fact that his works are not completely devoid of the traditional elements that define a tragic drama of antiquity.

In my perspective, the scene in which O sits in his rocking chair and rips up the pictures that record the significant achievements of his life depicts an acute reversal of the protagonist's circumstances. The concept of 'reversal' is not new in Beckett scholarship. Paul Lawley notes that in the master and servant relationship in Beckett's plays between 1961 and 1963, there is a 'final *peripeteia* in which the detached master is revealed to be slavishly dependent upon his servants. It is the terminal relationship foreshadowed by Krapp and his recorder'.⁸⁰ He supports this observation further by noting that Steven Conner sees 'the *peripeteia* of *Play* in terms of power, "the reversal of perceptual positions brings about a shift in the relations of appraiser and the appraised. The effect is not to elide or abolish power. Rather, it is to point to power as centreless and unfixed, as consisting in exchange rather than in permanence'.⁸¹ As such, the *peripeteia* in *Film* can be viewed in terms of the reversal of power relations between the protagonist (servant) and the organism (master). Nevertheless, in my analysis of the

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 249.

⁸⁰ Paul Lawley, 'Stages of Identity: From *Krapp's Last Tape* to *Play*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Beckett*, ed. by John Pilling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 88-105 (p.102).

⁸¹ Quoted in *ibid.*

film, I maintain that it may be helpful to consider the more traditional ‘dramatic reversal’ of the protagonist’s fortune alongside Lawley and Connor’s concept of *peripeteia*.

In *Film*, the photos from the envelope capture the chronological milestones of the protagonist’s progressive movement towards what could be deemed a wholesome life. It is interesting that from infancy to fatherhood, these images entail an aspect of servitude. As a toddler, he was taught to pray to the Lord. As a child, he taught a dog how to beg. As a father, his military garb leads the audience to infer that he was once a civil servant to his country. Nonetheless, the abrupt final photo of a solitary man with an eye-patch over one eye depicts a sudden reversal of the protagonist’s circumstances.

O’s departure from a lifetime of glowing achievements, as represented by the contrast between the photos and his present state, marks an acute reversal of O’s state of existence. The photos chart his unrewarded adherence to the dictates of a stratifying organism that promised an eventual wholesomeness. Turning back to Lacan, after a brief moment of jubilation at the mirror stage, the infant recognises its own lack when it notices the seeming wholeness and omnipotence of the ‘other people’ around him. The infant regards the ‘other people’ as imaginary rivals or ‘semblables’.⁸² It enters into competition with them and this turns the ‘specular *I*’ into the ‘social *I*’.⁸³ Lacan has it that the development of the *I* from this moment on will be ‘mediated by the other’s desire’.⁸⁴ Understanding this in the context of the stratifying organism, the development towards the ideal-*I* from this moment on can be interpreted as being dependent on the social and cultural dictates of the larger organism rather than the natural instinct of the child. However, compared to the infant, the Beckettian protagonist has gone through the

⁸² Jacques Lacan, ‘The Mirror Stage as Formative Function of the *I* as Revealed in a Psychoanalytic Experience’, in *Ecrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. by Bruce Fink (London and New York: W. W. Norton & Co. Inc., 2006), pp. 75-81 (p. 79).

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

stage of striving towards achieving the ideal-*I* and failed. He no longer harbours any illusion that the ideal-*I* or imago, which is governed by the determinants of the organism, can ever be realised. The tragic dimension of *Film* is thus observed in Beckett's portrayal of the protagonist's reversal from a deluded but purposeful life to a disillusioned but more lucid existence. Effectively, O's rejection of E highlights a rejection of the fabled hope for personal cohesion, but more importantly, it accentuates his resistance to being subsumed yet again by the stratifying organism. In terms of power relations, O's resistance to the organism is effectively a consequence of the reversal of his circumstances. His resistance is interpreted here as an attempt to wrest his autonomy from the deceitful grasp of the organism.

Such reversals represent Beckett's calculated attempt to deterritorialise the audience's expectation of familiar filmic narratives that may for example, as opposed to *Film*, involve an errant protagonist who actively pursues his reintegration into the organism or die trying. When the audience observes by the end of the film that E and O may be two aspects of a single protagonist she would notice that O's resistance is towards assimilation with E. Although she may not explicitly recognise this resistance as a rejection of the stratified organism, as her mind encounters the unusual filmic sequence, she distinctly experiences the organism through her habitual frames of references that cannot seem to assist her to comprehend O's actions. As she exhausts her habitual ways of seeing, she is led to abandon her arborescent frame of understanding by ceasing to anticipate the familiar and consequently submits, in her ecstatic state, to the flow of the film's resistance. This can be likened to the moment when the first-time viewer of a stereogram gradually crosses her eyes and discovers that she has the capacity to see things differently. Effectively, as the viewer observes O's recognition and rejection of the stratified organism in the diegetic world of *Film*, she is deterritorialised by the film from her habit body to an ecstatic being.

That is, insofar as the spectators choose to remain physically bound to the camera-eye, they have the opportunity to experience a momentary liberation from the conditions of the stratified organism. *Film's* epigraph is the Berkeleyan phrase *esse est percipi* and by portraying O as fleeing from the perception of E, the film is effectively a depiction of O's rejection of being the object of perception. This consequently highlights his depicted resistance to the notion of cohesion, but whereas O's attempt at escaping self-perception is superficially unsuccessful, his portrayal, as running away from the general direction of the crowd in the original script and as moving towards an increasingly enclosed space as opposed to the couple and the flower lady who are respectively moving within and towards the outdoors in the film's final cut, suggests that the focus of *Film* is on the process of going against the grain of the organism as much as it is a fixation on the futile inescapability from it.

In the first section of this chapter, I stated that humans are predisposed to divide within ourselves, but that we are also under the constant compulsion to conform to the stratified system that governs our daily lives. The implicit pressure to conform in the film might have been influenced by the advent of social psychology between the 1950s and 1960s. One notable work is the highly influential 'Studies of Independence and Conformity: A Minority of One Against a Unanimous Majority' conducted by Solomon E. Asch in 1956. Briefly, the study involved putting the subject in a position to decide whether she or he should concur with an obvious error of judgement by the majority of the 'participants' who were in fact planted by Asch. The conclusion was that people are indeed compelled by a need to fit in. As Asch had it, 'Yielding subjects seriously underestimated their compliance. They offered a variety of reasons for their errors, the

most usual being the painfulness of standing alone against the majority'.⁸⁵ During the height of research interests in social psychology, Wilfred Bion, the psychoanalyst whom Beckett underwent psychotherapy with from 1934 to 1935 at the Tavistock Clinic, published *Experiences in Groups* in 1961.⁸⁶

Although it is uncertain if Beckett kept up with the research developments of his former therapist, Steven Connor astutely points out that

one cannot but feel that something more momentous should surely have ensued from this meeting, at a formative time for both of them, of a man who was to become perhaps the most important European writer of the 1950s and 1960s, and a psychoanalyst who was to become one of the most famous and distinctive English psychoanalysts of his generation.⁸⁷

According to Connor, Bion was occupied by the interactive processes of groups between 'about 1940 to about 1950' and this interest culminated in the publication of *Experiences in Groups*.⁸⁸ In this work, Bion '[considered] that group mental life is essential to the full life of the individual [...] and that satisfaction of this need has to be sought through membership of a group'.⁸⁹ Bion goes further to assert that at no point at all, no matter how 'isolated in time and space', should an individual 'be regarded as outside of a group or lacking in active manifestations of group psychology'.⁹⁰ Although we do not know if Beckett had read this particular work by Bion, Knowlson reports that

⁸⁵ Solomon E. Asch, 'Studies of independence and conformity: A minority of one against a unanimous majority' in *Psychological Monographs: General and Applied*, 70.9 (1956) <psych604.stasson.org/Asch1956.pdf> [accessed April 2013], 1-70 (p. 70).

⁸⁶ James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (London: Bloomsbury, 1996), p. 175; Wilfred Bion, *Experiences in Groups* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1961);

⁸⁷ Steven Connor, 'Beckett and Bion', presented at the *Beckett and London Conference* which took place at Goldsmiths College, London in 1998 <<http://www.stevenconnor.com/beckbion/>> [accessed on April 2013]

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Bion, p. 54.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.169.

Beckett was encouraged during his therapy sessions ‘to counter his self-immersion by coming out of himself more in his daily life and taking a livelier interest in others’.⁹¹

Nonetheless, as Knowlson observes, ‘Beckett never liked groups’ and when ‘the panic attacks started up again at night, leading him to despair that nothing had been resolved by two whole years of analysis’ he wrote a letter to Tom MacGreevy and stated, ‘no more Bion’.⁹² If we consider the idea of being trapped within the stratified organism as akin to being subsumed in a group psychology by maintaining one’s membership in the organised group, then we can perhaps see how Beckett’s termination of his therapy sessions in 1935 could be an intuitive resistance to such an entrapping concept of a ‘full life’ which Bion would subsequently postulate later in his career.

In addition, Bion’s concept of ‘O’, which bears no overt relation to Beckett’s designation of the capitalised letter to his protagonist in *Film*, is highly intriguing.

O does not fall into the domain of knowledge, or learning, save incidentally; it can be ‘become’, but it cannot be ‘known’. It is darkness and formlessness but it enters the domain of K (knowledge) when it is evolved to a point where it can be known, through knowledge gained by experience, and formulated in terms derived from sensuous experience; its existence is conjectured phenomenologically.⁹³

By ‘its existence is conjectured phenomenologically’, Bion is referring to his concept that ‘O’ can only be intuitively experienced. To Bion, ‘O’ undergoes evolutions and it can only be intuited when it is transformed into ‘knowledge gained by experience’ during its evolutions. In *Transformations*, Bion makes a distinction between ‘O’ and the ‘transformations of O’. On one hand, ‘O’ is an unknowable reality ‘for the same reason that makes it impossible to sing potatoes; they may be grown, pulled, or eaten, but not

⁹¹ Knowlson, p.181.

⁹² Ibid, p. 224.

⁹³ Bion, *Attention and Interpretation* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970), p. 26.

sung. Reality should be ‘been’: there should be a transitive verb ‘to be’ expressly for use with the word ‘reality’.⁹⁴ On the other hand, the ‘transformations of O’ are the final products that can be known from a patient’s intuitive experience of the dark and formless O. Thus, Bion’s ‘O’ is a thing-in-itself that cannot be directly known.⁹⁵ According to Robert White, the experience of ‘O’ is an intuitive arrival at an Absolute Truth through the knowledge of its transformations.⁹⁶ This can be thought of as ‘the experience of the analytic pair at any one moment, both the patient’s experience of O and the analyst’s experience of O. Only the transformations of O are available to the patient and analyst to work on’.⁹⁷ James S. Grotstein has it that intuitively to experience O is also to arrive at a point in which ‘one is now in the realm of a realization beyond knowing, a concept that approaches faith and coherence’.⁹⁸ Grotstein goes further to suggest that Bion discovered that intuitively experiencing O is equivalent to transcending into an ‘inner world’ or ‘the Unconscious’ and meeting ‘the ineffable and inscrutable Godhead’.⁹⁹ Thus, despite the impossibility of ever knowing O, Grotstein explains that the aim of Bion’s work is for the analysand to arrive intuitively with the help of the analyst at this absolute inner truth that promises to be unifying.

In the context of *Film*, the Beckettian protagonist’s hope to achieve total non-perception is a search, not for a unifying Godhead (literally depicted when the picture of God was torn off the wall), but for an absolute zero. It is clear that his portrayed resistance is directed at the very notion of meeting another perceiving being, whether

⁹⁴ Bion, *Transformations* (London: Mansfield Reprints, 1984), p. 148.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12-13.

⁹⁶ Robert White, ‘Gelassenheit, from Three Points of View’, Gardner Lecture, Whitney Humanities Center, Yale University (7 May 2009) <<http://www.robertwhitemd.com/Images/Gelassenheit.pdf>> [accessed on May 2013], pp. 1-27 (p. 4).

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ James S. Grotstein, ‘Bion’s “Transformation in ‘O’” and the Concept of the “Transcendent Position”’, in *W. R. Bion: Between Past and Future: selected contributions from the International Centennial Conference on the Work of W. R. Bion, Turin, July 1997*, ed. by Parthenope Bion Talamo et al. (London and New York: Karnac Books, 2000) <<http://www.sicap.it/~merciai/bion/papers/grots.htm>> [accessed on 5 April 2014].

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

living or non-living. The unbearable quality of anything that could presumably be perceiving him is what he is physically fleeing from. Again, taking into account Berkeley's *ecce est percipi*, if being perceived is what gives us an illusion of being a cohesive whole, then the protagonist's search for total non-perception is a resistance to this illusion. Beckett effectively portrays the protagonist as one who sees potential cohesion through the stratified organism as a fear-inducing illusion. If this search for total non-perception resonates with the writer's predicament at all, actively pursuing an Absolute Truth that is unknowable but can be glimpsed intermittently under the guidance of a therapist's intense gaze would be akin to allowing himself to be abused by the painfully erratic lifting and dropping of the Schopenhaurian 'veil of Maya'. Beckett's interest in the veil of Maya is well-documented. Matthew Feldman has it that it is, 'without doubt, a major influence on both Beckett's artistic temperament and his philosophical outlook during the interwar period', and I gather that this influence may have extended to his conception of *Film*.¹⁰⁰

I stated earlier in the first section that Beckett denies his audience the delusional comfort of a 'veil' that is a woven net of relations that the audience member is familiar with and has come to expect from a typical dramatic plot. The Schopenhaurian veil of Maya is analogous to this veil in that it represents an illusive world, which we experience from day to day while concealing 'the world as it truly is'.¹⁰¹ Also referring to the veil of Maya in relation to Beckett's work, Ulrich Pothast astutely observes that the 'true world', to Beckett, 'only becomes visible in rare moments, and it is a world of pitiless light which most likely shows a pitiless reality'.¹⁰² Therefore, this

¹⁰⁰ Matthew Feldman, "But What Was this Pursuit of Meaning, in this Indifference to Meaning?": Beckett, Husserl, Sartre and Meaning Creation', *Beckett and Phenomenology* (London: Continuum, 2009), pp. 13-38 (p. 23).

¹⁰¹ Ulrich Pothast, *The Metaphysical Vision: Arthur Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Art and Life and Samuel Beckett's Own Way to Make Use of it* (New York: Peter Lang Pub., 2008), p.14.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

understanding, that the immediate reality is an illusion and that what lies behind this illusion is if not worse then no better, suggests that Beckett's work is not about transcending into a wholesome Bionic O of absolute truth and ultimate reality. What Beckett and his characters seek is an absolute zero that is outside of this binary between illusion and ultimate reality.

Based on the above, I maintain that the Beckettian zero is the complete opposite to Bion's 'O'. Even though Bion's description of O as dark and formless makes it tempting to assert a similarity between Bion's unknowable O and Beckett's search to articulate the absolute zero, one must bear in mind that Bion's path is towards an ultimate unity whereas Beckett's path is towards an absolute nothingness. If placed on an imaginary spectrum, the two endeavours would be placed on opposing ends. Further, comparing Bion's attribution of O with a cohesive quality to Beckett's characterization of O's incomplete corporeality, Beckett's resistance to the thought of finding any concrete state of unity is stark. That is, the Beckettian protagonist's flight from all perceptions including the perception of self-by-self is not merely a rejection of the illusion that a unified self is attainable, it is also a resistance to the idea that this false sense of cohesion is liberating. As such, in the rest of this section, I will illustrate in relation to *Film* and with reference to the Deleuzian concept of 'Becoming', the audience's ecstatic departure from their habitual expectation of and desire for a semblance of cohesion as it is dictated by the stratifying organism.

The organism that embodies the promise of unity is often compared with a 'theological body' and I consider this as a metaphor for the inextricably oppressing pressure in our immediate reality to conform. Judith Poxon observes that Deleuze compares the 'body-as-organism' to 'the theological body' in that 'it provides the material guarantee of the identity and immortality of the self that is constituted by

negation, limitation and exclusion.¹⁰³ This comparison is founded upon the idea that the ‘mind, or soul’ is only guaranteed its immortality when it is returned to the conformed body.¹⁰⁴ Fundamentally, being a subject of the theological order means being a subject to this clear demarcation of the mind and body by which union, separation or reunion depends solely on the divine judgement of God. Nonetheless, as a result of viewing O’s resistance to the ‘body-as-organism’, it is noteworthy that the spectator’s differentiation within the self differs from such clear distinctions between the mind and body since the ‘split’ within the self triggered by the film is, as stated earlier, Becoming a lateral multiplicity that is neither a reduction of being nor a clear-cut separation of the mind from the body.

In the context of O’s portrayed resistance to the theological organism, his rejection of ‘the conformed body’ implies his desire is to be expunged from the organism. Similarly, the Becoming of *Film*’s spectator can be observed most distinctly in her momentary liberation from the theological organism at the point when she is led by the camera-eye to witness O ripping off and tearing up the image of God. Such an explosive gesture can be interpreted as O’s resistance to being subjected to the perception of God, the purportedly indestructible authority figure. But considering the obvious ineffectualness of the action against the omnipresence of God, the nature of this resistance is by no means a ‘combat *against* judgement’.¹⁰⁵ Deleuze explains that the ‘combat-against’ is destructive or repellent whereas the ‘combat-between’ is ‘a force’ that seeks to appropriate ‘other forces’ in order to ‘make it one’s own’.¹⁰⁶ Instead of myopically interpreting O’s gesture as a destructive ‘combat against judgement’, it is worth considering that the gesture is ‘a combat between Oneself’ that is capable of

¹⁰³ Judith Poxon, ‘Embodied Anti-theology: The body without organs and the judgment of God’, in *Deleuze and Religion*, ed. by Mary Bryden (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 42-50 (p. 44).

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹⁰⁵ Deleuze, ‘To have done with judgement’, p. 132.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

‘replacing judgement’ with the force of resistance instead of destroying it.¹⁰⁷ I will elaborate this further in the following paragraphs.

In the context of *Film*’s protagonist, ‘it is the combatant himself who is the combat’ as he struggles to resist self-perception.¹⁰⁸ The crux of *Film* is the illustration of the anguish of perceivedness or the anguish of being the Object of perception. This anguish is directed at the experience of perceivedness per se which is assumedly reciprocal in that the perception of anything whether animate or inanimate can result in the assumption of a reciprocated glance. Hence, the tearing of the picture of God is a symbolic gesture that attempts to replace the protagonist’s assumed reciprocated divine perception of God with the force of his resistance. It is a combat between himself as it is a combat between his inclination to assume reciprocity and his resistance to this inclination.

In the context of *Film*’s spectator, the protagonist’s combat between himself ‘as a way to have done with God and with judgement’ by replacing the judgement with the force of his resistance, is translated into the spectator’s combat between her habitual regard for the organism as an absolute system that structures her extradiegetic world and her intuitive resistance to this habit in the process of her becoming an ecstatic being. Following Deleuze’s concept that the combat-between is the enrichment of one force by the other, it can be inferred that the effect of the combat-between the spectator is not a replacement of a habitual perspective with a deterritorialised perspective, but an enrichment of the spectator by placing the intuitive perceptions of both the habit body and the ecstatic being in self-reflexive juxtaposition. Her liberation from the organism lies precisely in this ecstatic intuition that she is in fact not restricted to looking out from within the organism and that she now looks at the organism from without too.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

In the words of Deleuze, ‘The way to escape judgement is to make yourself a body without organs, to find your body without organs’.¹⁰⁹ Having an overview of the organism as opposed to being merely a part of the organism marks the precise moment when the spectator finds herself to be a body *with* organs or the body-as-organism. That is, the spectator is concurrently becoming a body without organs as she intuits her body-as-organism. By virtue of intuiting the organism from within and without, she is turning her back against the theological organism. As Poxon has it, the body without organs is set ‘[a]gainst [the] divine order’ as an affirmation of the ‘order of the Antichrist, an order expressive not of identity but of difference’ that ‘undoes the order of God and the judgement on which it is based and which it in turn enforces.’¹¹⁰ I maintain that by intuiting the organism from within and without, the spectator is at the cusp of this difference, where the singular ‘identity’ of the organised divine order that is familiar to her habitual conceptual framework becomes a part of an intuitive assemblage of possibilities.

Uhlmann compares Deleuze’s concepts in ‘To have done with Judgement’ with what he deems to be Beckett’s aesthetic ideal, that is, a ‘non-relational art’ or an artistic expression that is not constituted by distinctive connections and relations, and observes that ‘there can be no judgement where there is no possibility of “obedience” and there is no possibility of obedience in an aesthetic system that claims to admit no relation’.¹¹¹ The all-encompassing intuition within and without the organism admits no distinctive relation between the organism and the non-organism because it is viewed as an assemblage and this vantage point is not coloured by an intention to dominate or overpower. Uhlmann defines ‘Obedience’ as a relation of and adherence to inadequately

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 131.

¹¹⁰ Poxon, p. 42.

¹¹¹ Uhlmann, ‘To Have Done with Judgement: Beckett and Deleuze’, *SubStance*, Issue 81, 25.3 (1996) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3684869>> [accessed 15 April 2013], 110-31 (p. 117).

understood terms that perpetuates ignorance and ‘makes judgement possible’.¹¹² By being within and without, the spectator becomes ‘disobedient’ from an organic perspective because the divine authority that requires her to be exclusively subjugated within the divine order of theocentric relations is subverted. But the term ‘disobedient’ is employed loosely here since from the ecstatic perspective, there is no subjugation or subversion as there is no domination without organic stratification and hierarchies. Instead, having done with the judgement of God, what remains is maximum potential and possibilities. The concept of Obedience no longer has a place in this assemblage. Therefore, in the context of this chapter, the Beckettian spectator effectively enters into an intuitive process of becoming an ecstatic body-without-organs when the organic system of judgement loses its foothold in her mind.

Tracing back to Deleuze’s assertion that Beckett’s *Film* pulverises self-perception to an ‘atom’ that is released ‘into the luminous void, an impersonal yet singular atom that no longer has a Self by which it might distinguish itself from or merge with the others’, the spectator’s habitual conceptual framework is also broken down and reconstituted from an adherence to the law of arborescence to become an ecstatic intuition of an assemblage of possibilities rather than stratified limits. Nonetheless, it would be naive to assume that such a reconstitution is infinitely enduring since as discussed earlier, outside of *Film* we are under the constant compulsion to conform to the stratified system that governs our daily lives. Thus, what Beckett offers to his audience through *Film* is a momentary liberation from the habit-governed world.

The next chapter continues to investigate how the spectator’s habitual frame of references is reconstituted as she intuitively experiences Beckett’s stage plays. More

¹¹² Ibid.

specifically, the chapter will explicate the depiction of quantitative Time in the stage plays as the foundation of the characters' as well as the audience's habitual experiences of their immediate realities, so as to illustrate Beckett's possible employment of the Bergsonian *durée* to challenge this incarcerating time continuum.

CHAPTER 4 TIME OUT FROM THE WORLD: RESPITE IN BECKETT'S STAGE PLAYS

In this chapter, I explore the intersection between drama and the philosophy of time with a focus on interpreting Samuel Beckett's stage plays through the lens of Henri Bergson's concept of the intuitive *durée* (duration). The aim of this analysis is to establish how a brief sense of respite is invoked in the characters and how the audience member is deprived of it as she bears witness to the Beckettian characters' entrapment in an interminable time continuum. In the stage plays, I observe that Beckett's storytelling characters seek to invoke the internal Bergsonian *durée* by inventing stories so as to temporarily escape an incarcerating external time continuum. With this in mind, I propose that in the midst of attempting to create the effect of the internal *durée*, the possibility of a sense of respite for the characters is produced.

Bringing the concept of the stratified Organism from Chapter 3 to Chapter 4, I would like to draw a connection between a mechanical external time continuum and the Organism in order to illustrate the time-cage that has been constructed for the Beckettian characters in the plays. I will define this time continuum in terms of Immanuel Kant's concept of sequential time.

By 'time continuum', I am referring to the Kantian time continuum that can be intuitively represented by a straight line 'progressing to infinity' in which an instant gives way to the next before fading away. Kant asserted that 'Time is not something which subsists of itself, or which inheres in things as an objective determination, and therefore remains, when abstraction is made of the subjective conditions of the intuition of things'.¹ This means that time can neither be a thing-in-itself, nor an objective order that is inherent in things. It is nothing if it is separated from the human intuition. In

¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by J. M. D. Meiklejohn (New York: Prometheus Books, 1990), p. 30.

other words, to Kant, time is internal intuition. As an intuition time is formless, however, in order to facilitate his explanation of this intuitive time, Kant attributes to it the form of a straight line and maintained that since an intuitive time ‘determines the relation of representations in our internal state’, the representation of time as a successive line ‘is itself an intuition’.² Implicit in this description is that this inherently intuitive time structures our experience of all phenomena as representations. Gilles Deleuze pointed out in his preface to *Kant’s Critical Philosophy* that what was truly revolutionary about Kant’s theory of time was the ‘reversal’ of time’s subordination to movement in traditional thought to movement’s subordination to time in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.³ In other words, time is no longer regarded as a mere measurement of movement, instead movement is conditioned by time. Time, to Kant, ‘is the formal condition *a priori* of all phenomena whatsoever.’⁴ With this in mind, the representation of the time line as successive is itself an intuition since our experience of all phenomena is conditioned by intuitive time.

One difference between Kant and Bergson’s respective concepts of ‘intuition’ is that Kant’s is an organised intuition whereas Bergson’s is a ‘simple intuition’.⁵ In one example, Bergson likened intuition to our ability to ‘distinguish our right from our left by a natural feeling’.⁶ An intuition is that ‘which no formula, no matter how simple, can be simple enough to express’.⁷ For Bergson, the *durée* is time that is qualitatively apprehended through intuition. As opposed to Kant’s formulation of time as an organised intuition and ‘is in itself a series (and the formal condition of all series)’,

² Ibid.

³ Gilles Deleuze, *Kant’s Critical Philosophy*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. vii.

⁴ Kant, p. 30.

⁵ Henri Bergson, ‘The Creative Mind: Philosophical Intuition’, *Henri Bergson: Key Writings*, ed. Keith Ansell Pearson and John Mullarkey, (New York, London: Continuum, 2002), p. 235.

⁶ Bergson, *Time and Freewill: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, 3rd edn. (London: G. Allen, 1913), p. 97.

⁷ Bergson, ‘The Creative Mind’, p. 237.

Bergson's concept of time is a qualitative duration which 'consciousness reaches immediately' through simple intuition.⁸ To my understanding, Kant's postulation that intuitive time is inherently an organized time because time can be spatialised in the mind as a successive order is one of the reasons that Kant's successive time is likened by Bergson to the limited ticking of the mechanical clock and consequently deemed as a 'spurious concept'.⁹

To elaborate what he meant by 'spurious', Bergson asserted that measurable time is but a construct. The successive units of time evenly divided into hours, minutes and seconds are contrived by the mind as residing in an imagined homogenous space that allows the setting of two points (i.e. a past moment A and a present moment B) in juxtaposition. Quantifiable time to Bergson is merely a symbolic representation of real duration or *durée*, necessary for the '[adaptation] to the requirements of social life in general and language in particular'.¹⁰ As opposed to measurable time, the *durée* is an experience of the process of reality that is unquantifiable; to Bergson, the process of reality can only be qualitatively experienced through human intuition.

In view of Kant and Bergson's contrasting concepts of 'time' and 'intuition', I posit that as the characters in Beckett's plays seek an end to their grim predicament of being trapped in a seemingly interminable successive time continuum, the non-successive *durée* presents itself as a viable short-cut that could plausibly 'speed up' their experience of the continuum, and by implication, speed them towards the end of consciousness. This postulation will be elucidated further in the following sections.

4.1 STRATIFIED ORGANISM AND KANTIAN TIME

⁸ Bergson, *Time and Freewill*, p. 127.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

For Kant, time is regarded as ‘a line progressing to infinity’.¹¹ His idea that ‘the representation of time is itself an intuition’ suggests that time is *a priori* awareness within us. Kant suggested further that although time can be conceived of as a straight line, it must not be thought that all the parts of the line coexist. Instead, time is ‘successive’ and instants do not coexist, as would the parts of a straight line; an instant fades as it is extended. Asserting that ‘it is quite indifferent whether we consider future time as ceasing at some point, or as prolonging itself to infinity’, Kant pointed out that time is the ‘synthesis’ of a series of conditions where the conditioned ‘time past’ precedes the unconditioned ‘time future’.¹² This consistent process of conditioning, in relation to all external phenomena, indicates that the passage of time entails change or an infinite series of transformation from being unconditioned to conditioned. Beckett described a similar conditioning of time as ‘a constant process of decantation, decantation from the vessel containing the fluid future time, sluggish, pale and monochrome, to the vessel containing the fluid of past time, agitated and multicoloured by the phenomena of its hours.’¹³ However, despite Kant’s assertion that the process involves changes and transformation, his concept of successive time continues to remain rooted in a systematic structure; that is, his suggestion that the sequential nature of time is *a priori* meant that it affects every aspect of how our intuitive experience of phenomena as representations is organised.

By limiting the intuition to the knowledge of representations, Kant was also suggesting that we can never know anything beyond representations. Bergson’s opposition arose from this limitation of the Kantian intuition. He proposed that intuition is ‘simple’ and that we can in fact intuit beyond representations. Bergson asserted that

¹¹ Kant, p. 30.

¹² Ibid., p. 233.

¹³ Samuel Beckett, *Proust*, in *The Grove Centenary Edition: Poems, Short Fiction, and Criticism of Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Paul Auster, Vol. 4, 1st edn. (New York: Grove Press, 2006), pp. 511-554 (p. 513-4).

Kant's representation of time as a successive order subscribes to a closed system of time-space causality and fails to articulate the nature of time as pure duration, which 'is nothing but a succession of qualitative changes' and cannot be measured unless it is 'symbolically represented in space'.¹⁴ Implicit in Beckett's German letter to Axel Kaun that he was interested in getting behind the veil of language is also the idea that there is a desire to get beyond representation, and this is examined further in the next section.¹⁵ For now, in the context of Beckett's stage plays, I postulate that the external time in which the characters are trapped resembles the Kantian time, and time of this nature governs the external worlds of both the Beckettian characters and the audience. In my perspective, the most obvious representation of this interminably sequential external time is Beckett's characters' physical state of decrepitude.

At the beginning of most of his plays the marked physical deterioration of the characters creates an early impression within the audience that a long period of time has gone by. In *Krapp's Last Tape*, for example, Beckett describes Krapp as a 'wearish old man' in a pair of trousers that are 'too short for him', and in addition to being 'very near-sighted (but unspectacled)' he is also 'hard of hearing'.¹⁶ The delineation of Krapp as wearing a pair of trousers that are too short for him could imply that he had outgrown his trousers. By portraying him as very near-sighted but unspectacled Beckett seems to be suggesting that the actor playing Krapp should perform this near-sightedness from the outset of the play in such a way that would induce the audience to notice the character's want for a pair of spectacles. By deliberately depriving his character of what he needs, in this instance a pair of trousers of the appropriate length and a pair of glasses, the playwright is setting up the premise of lack and consequently

¹⁴Bergson, *Time and Freewill*, p. 103-4.

¹⁵Ruby Cohn, '1937-40: No Trifle Too Trifling', *A Beckett Canon* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2004), p. 88-9.

¹⁶*Krapp's Last Tape*, in *The Complete Dramatic Works* (hereafter *CDW*) (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), pp. 213-23 (p. 214).

accentuating the degenerative physical state of his character right from the beginning of the play. The ailment of a deteriorating sight or outright blindness recurs in many of his dramatic works but the earliest play that presents this deterioration in a sequential order is *Waiting for Godot*.

In the first act, Pozzo puts his glasses on and takes them off three times. The first time is to inspect Didi and Gogo in order to ascertain condescendingly that they are of ‘the same species’ as he is and made in his ‘likeness’.¹⁷ He repeats this action again as he comments that their likeness to him is an ‘imperfect one’.¹⁸ Finally, he puts them on and takes them off for the third time to watch Didi as he urinates.¹⁹ Pozzo’s action of putting on and taking off his glasses is bound firstly to the highly memorable dark humour of his condescension towards the humanity of Didi and Gogo, then later to the slapstick humour of Didi’s weak bladder. These associations direct the audience to observe the wretchedness of Didi and Gogo’s physical appearance and weak constitution. But perhaps more importantly, the glasses also draw attention to Pozzo’s characterisation in the first act as a pompous observer in order to pave the way for his contrastingly helpless predicament as a blind man with absolutely no sense of direction in the second act. It is noteworthy that as he prepares to leave Didi and Gogo in the first act, he notices that the watch he was constantly checking to keep time is either missing or has stopped ticking. By the second act, Pozzo is completely blind and along with his sight he also loses his sense of time:

VLADIMIR I’m asking you if it came on you all of a sudden.
 POZZO I woke up one fine day as blind as Fortune. [*Pause*] Sometimes I wonder if I’m not still asleep.
 VLADIMIR And when was that?
 POZZO I don’t know
 VLADIMIR But no later than yesterday —

¹⁷ Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, in *CDW*, pp. 7-88 (p. 24).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

POZZO (*Violently.*) Don't question me! The blind have no notion of time.
 The things of time are hidden from them too.
 VLADIMIR Well just fancy that! I could have sworn it was just the opposite.²⁰

In the dialogue quoted above, Vladimir is almost certain that he saw Pozzo 'yesterday', which was in Act One. He seeks to verify this by asking Pozzo if he became blind 'no later than yesterday', but Pozzo's response seems to imply that he had lost his sight for a while now. He had confessed earlier in the first act that his memory is defective and shortly after the quotation above, he admits that 'tomorrow' he would not be able to remember he had 'met anyone today'.²¹ By juxtaposing Pozzo's line that '[t]he blind have no notion of time' with Vladimir's assumption that 'it was just the opposite' or in other words, that the blind have a notion of time through the use of other senses, Beckett seems to be questioning the validity of regarding time as a singularly visual experience of all phenomena.

Although it is stated clearly by Beckett in Act Two that the act takes place '*Next Day. Same Time. Same Place*' it is unclear to an audience whether the two acts represent two consecutive days.²² That Vladimir is the only character that believes it is the next day renders his testimony dubious to himself and the audience. As such, the shifting aspect of reliable/unreliable testimony would preoccupy the audience for the rest of the play. This indeterminable proximity of the two days can be attributed further to the tree in the play that is portrayed as barren in the first act and suddenly covered with leaves in the next. However, if we take Beckett's description of Act Two as it is (and consequently, Vladimir's assumption in this act that he met Pozzo 'yesterday' in the first act), then we will notice that there is a marked tension between the playwright's

²⁰ Ibid., p. 81.

²¹ Ibid., p. 82.

²² Ibid., p. 53.

portrayal of successive time through these two acts, his delineation of multiple subjective intuitions of time through his characters, and in his depiction of nature.

To elaborate the above idea further, the disruption of the characters' as well as the audience's sense of time in the context of *Waiting for Godot* seems at first to be effected by the loss of the ability to hear the ticking of the watch then followed by the loss of sight. With blindness specifically, Pozzo can no longer rely on the visual representation of his immediate surroundings to judge which direction he is heading or what time of the day it is. The common assumption, as articulated by Vladimir, that the blind possess a notion of time by relying on other senses, is reversed by Pozzo when he announces in an axiomatic tone that '[t]he things of time are hidden' from the blind.²³ This exchange between Vladimir and Pozzo seems to be Beckett's way of deriding a concept of time that is based on surface representation. In other words, Pozzo's ironic lines are targeted at the concept that time is the *a priori* condition by which all phenomena is represented to the visual sense as apparition and hence the representation of time can consequently only be visually perceived in the successive order of changes to the conditions of all these apparitions. Pozzo's lines sardonically suggest that without the ability to visually perceive these changes around us, we immediately lose our sense of time. As such, the view that time is perceptible only through the visual regard of the changes wrought by successive time to the representations of phenomena is rendered absurd in this exchange.

Notably, the audience's perception of time as successive is challenged since we may be inclined to side with Vladimir that the two acts are two consecutive days, but to every other character in the play the first act either never occurred or possibly happened a long time ago. This inclination to side with Didi may be the result of the audience

²³ Ibid., p. 81.

knowing Didi is right from the outset of the second act that the pair of boots belong to Gogo, who left them on the stage in Act 1 but has forgotten that he did that by Act 2. This could suggest to the viewers that Gogo's memory of events are unreliable and consequently induce them to adopt Didi's perception that the two acts represent two consecutive days. However, with the addition of Pozzo, Lucky and the boy as the act progresses, the audience become less certain of the consecutiveness of both acts as two days because, unlike Didi, these characters do not seem to remember having ever met Didi and Gogo. As such, our inclination to side with the supposedly rational explanation is upturned. (Nevertheless, in the third section of this chapter, time as perceptible only through a visual perception of the successive changes to representations of phenomena will be presented as the ultimate governing concept of time in the characters' experience of their diegetic world and most audience members' assumption of their extradiegetic world.)

Another way that the representation of external time is delineated as successive and sequential is the depiction of each Beckettian play as an enactment of a well-worn routine. This portrayal presents a repetitive process of conditioning in which sequential instants belonging to the external time order condition a series of actions that is regularly executed by the characters so as to form a pattern of human habit. Poignantly, the pegging of a repeated set of actions to time leads to Didi's reflection that '[h]abit is a great deadener'.²⁴ The character is referring to the stultifying effect of the repetitive pattern of human habit. As Ruby Cohn also observed, 'Much of [*Waiting for Godot*] dramatizes habitual routines, repetitions that stretch and flatten time to an eventless continuum.'²⁵ In addition, the barrenness of Beckett's dramatic landscapes lays bare his characters' reliance on habit to go on living under such sterile conditions. Eric P. Levy

²⁴ Ibid., p. 84.

²⁵ Ruby Cohn, *Just Play: Beckett's Theater* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 42.

asserts that in Beckettian time, '[n]othing more can happen in time but repetition of what has already occurred'.²⁶ What he means by this is that the future is extended by past moments that are indistinguishable from one another, as can be seen in the daily routines of the characters in *Act without Words II* that will repeat indefinitely and render each day to be indistinguishable from the preceding one. The commingling of these non-differentiable past moments results in a 'stagnation' in which 'the temporal passage betokens temporal fixity'.²⁷ That is, the forward movement of time only indicates the changelessness of a character's predicament because of repetition.

However, although Levy is right about the nature of Beckettian time's forward movement and the repetitiveness of each instant that gives way to the next, his assertion only identifies the external time illustrated by Beckett and seems to set up a cul-de-sac that impedes an understanding of Beckett's meticulous depiction of time as both quantitative and potentially qualitative in his plays. I postulate that Beckett's conception of time in his plays is not singular, but dual. The struggle is between an external time continuum and an internal duration. However, Levy posits that time is always portrayed as either a 'reduction of time to one continuous moment' or 'the reduction of time to the succession of identical moments' in Beckett's oeuvre.²⁸ This 'either/or' statement is tantamount to suggesting that time is always portrayed as singular in each Beckettian play. To Levy, the repetition of a routine or the reliving of a past is a 'futile compulsion' that is ultimately aimed at 'forgetting', which he deems is the 'fundamental repetitive act'.²⁹ His view of time as singular and his attribution of repetition of the identical as constituent of the linear isochron are consistent with a closed-system interpretation of

²⁶ Eric P. Levy, 'The Beckettian Mimesis of Time', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 80.1 (Winter 2011) <<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/utq/summary/v080/80.1.levy.html>> [accessed 23 April 2013], 89- 107 (p. 97).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

Beckett's oeuvre as a project that is aimed at articulating futility. For an essay that claims to be 'the first to examine the Beckettian representation of time in relation to the conceptual complexity of time itself – the cluster of concepts informing the idea of time, philosophically construed', Levy's perspective is limiting.³⁰ Nonetheless, his view of this ultimately futile flow of time is helpful in our understanding of the sequential nature of the external time continuum that we are examining in this chapter.

In the context of this analysis, I posit that repetition may be a means to forget but more can be excavated from its function to conceal and the object of its concealment. Repetition, when regarded as a repetitive pattern of habit, could potentially be a woven veil that conceals a desired object beneath the 'haze of our smug will to live'.³¹ I posit that this desired object could be self-destruction, as suggested by Bergson. As I will demonstrate later in the next section, the layers upon layers of habit that individuals, societies and nations have piled upon themselves and one another could potentially be the driving force that enables humankind to go on living. This will be examined further in the second section in terms of Bergson's concept of 'fabulation' and Beckett's delineation of his habit-governed characters. But let us now look at a few more examples of a Beckettian routine in order to firmly establish in this section the incarcerating nature of the external time continuum.

The opening scenes of *Endgame* and *Happy Days* offer a few more poignant examples of a Beckettian routine as representations of an external time. In *Endgame*, the blind and wheelchair-bound Hamm wakes up, asks Clov what time it is and receives the reply, 'The same as usual.'³² This 'usual' point in time hints at the precision of Clov's mechanical opening actions of drawing back the curtains, checking in the bins and waking Hamm from his sleep. Like Didi and Gogo's daily meet-up to wait for Godot,

³⁰ Ibid., p. 89.

³¹ Proust, p. 514.

³² *Endgame*, in *CDW*, pp. 89-134 (p. 94).

Clov and Hamm's exchange would appear to the audience as a well-worn one. Winnie, in *Happy Days*, opens the play with the line 'Another heavenly day.'³³ According to the lengthy stage directions, she begins her day by first praying, then taking out her toothbrush, a tube of toothpaste and brushing her teeth. This mundane sequence of actions would immediately be recognised by the audience as a representation of a daily morning ritual. However, what is visually incongruent to this implied mundaneness is Winnie's physical entrapment in a mound. Her physical limitation is emphasised when, after putting on her spectacles and attempting to read with great difficulty what is written on the handle of the toothbrush, she concludes that she will be 'blind next' and resignedly consoles herself that her 'old eyes' had 'seen enough'.³⁴ When her ongoing physical deterioration is juxtaposed with the representation of a morning ritual, the movement of time as a sequential and single-tracked continuum is clearly illustrated onstage as a steadily incarcerating process of physical degeneration.

In Gilles Deleuze's 'On Four Poetic Formulas That Might Summarize the Kantian Philosophy', he lauded Kant's conception of time as a 'reversal' that liberates time from the traditional role of being a measurement of movement in classical philosophy; that is, the perception of time as subordinated to phenomena is reversed in Kantian philosophy when Kant subordinated all phenomena to the order of time.³⁵ Nonetheless, in his lecture 'On Kant', Deleuze, following the lead of Bergson, maintained that Kant's philosophy is 'stifling' in that the system he imposes to explain our way of experiencing the world around us is rigid and limiting.³⁶

³³ *Happy Days*, in *CDW*, pp. 135- 68 (p. 138).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

³⁵ Gilles Deleuze, 'On Four Poetic Formulas That Might Summarize the Kantian Philosophy', in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. by Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 27-35 (p. 27-8).

³⁶ Deleuze, 'On Kant: Synthesis and Time', in *Les Cours de Gilles Deleuze*, trans. by Melissa McMahon (14 March 1978) <<http://www.webdeleuze.com/php/texte.php?cle=66&groupe=Kant&langue=2>> [accessed 3 May 2013].

For Deleuze, such a closed system prevents the new from occurring and leads us back to the concept of the organized system established in the previous chapter. With reference to the Organism that is governed by a systematic stratification examined in Chapter 3, the rigid Kantian time would permeate and structure the Organism, since according to Kant, all our human experience is in this organised time. John McCumber astutely points out that Kant did not claim that his own thought is true, ‘but that it is systematic’.³⁷ This observation is explained further in the following paragraph.

Notably, in his preface to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant asserted that

[...] pure speculative reason has a true structure. In such a structure everything is an organ, i.e., everything is there for the sake of each member and each individual member is there for the sake of all, and hence even the slightest defect, whether it be a mistake (error) or an omission, must inevitably betray itself when we use that plan or system. I hope, moreover, that this system will continue to maintain itself in this unchangeable state.³⁸

These ‘organs’ are the conditions that constitute one’s understanding of the organic world and any transgression of this structural arrangement would be deemed a ‘defect’. This relegation of difference to a ‘defect’ valorises organised stratification and disparages multiplicity. Deleuze noted that one of Kant’s greatest contributions was freeing phenomena from the ‘appearance/essence’ duality by establishing the ‘conjunctive couple’ that is the ‘apparition/ conditions of the apparition’.³⁹ Implicit in the ‘appearance/ essence’ duality is the idea that there is always something (essence)

³⁷ John McCumber, *Time and Philosophy: A History of Continental Thought* (Durham: Acumen Publishing, 2011), p. 21.

³⁸ Kant, ‘Preface [Second Edition]’, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Werner S. Pluhar, Unified edn. (Indiana: Hackett Publishing, 1996), p. 35-6.

³⁹ Deleuze, ‘On Kant: Synthesis and Time’, p. 5.

behind the appearance, but in the ‘apparition/ conditions of the apparition’ pair, we know that we cannot know anything beyond this apparition except for the conditions that orders our experience of the apparition. However, for Deleuze, Kant’s idea that we cannot know anything beyond the conditions of an apparition is problematic in so far as it denies the possibility of multiple systems of experience that can arise *a posteriori* or from experience, instead of merely *a priori* or presupposed in experience. Kant’s hope that his system would remain ‘unchangeable’ further explains Deleuze’s description of Kant’s philosophy as stifling.

Instead of setting unchangeable conditions on how we know, thinking in terms of difference and multiplicity opens up possibilities for the new. Following Bergson’s challenge to Kant’s concept of time by postulating that the understanding of time should be intuitive instead of rigidly analytical, Deleuze’s three empirical models of time in *Difference and Repetition* challenge Kant’s conception of time as an organised *a priori* time. Deleuze’s Habitual time, Memorial time and the Futural time can be regarded as a development from and opposition to the three Kantian modes of time, and these are Permanence, Succession and Co-existence. Let us first look at the three modes of Kantian time to establish how these might relate to Beckett’s portrayal of the external time as a trap.

None of the three Kantian modes of time are capable of defining time in isolation. They are instead strict rules of one system of time that govern all relations of phenomenal apparitions. Briefly, Permanence refers to that which is permanent in all phenomena. Kant maintained that ‘the permanent is the object *in itself*, that is, the substance (phenomenon)’ that renders the other two modes, Succession and Co-existence, possible.⁴⁰ What this means is that any object of experience can only be

⁴⁰ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p.125.

perceived as successive or co-existent if there is an unchanging foundation of permanence in that object. According to Kant, ‘it is only by means of the permanent that existence in different parts of the successive series of time receives a *quantity*, which we entitle *duration*.’⁴¹ Here, Kant was referring to the idea that it is only because permanence is a foundation of phenomena, that the successive transition from one moment to the next in time, or quantified duration, is perceptible by us.

With reference to the Beckettian landscape, despite the presentation of a seemingly unified actor/character blend of physical deterioration, a spectre of the Beckettian character coexists with but is distinct from the bodily actors’ deterioration and suffering in the audience’s perception; that is, I posit that the stories that a character is portrayed as narrating offer the audience members spectral glimpses of its lived life whereas the actor’s body anchors the character to its present physical reality through the presentation of deterioration and suffering. This effectively aligns the deteriorating body of the actor with the audience members’ spatial reality, in order that they may perceive time as a successive continuum. The spectre of a character in relation to the actor’s body will be elaborated further in the next section.⁴²

In terms of Succession, Kant posited that ‘[o]ur apprehension of the manifold of phenomena is always successive’.⁴³ To explain this point, Kant employed the analogy of a ship floating down the stream of a river. The ship’s movement from point A to point B, from a higher position to a lower position on the course of the river, cannot be perceived in a reversed order. This ‘order of apprehension’ is ‘determined’ and ‘regulated’.⁴⁴ The order is irreversible. Therefore, events in time are similarly perceived

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² See Section 4.2.

⁴³ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 128.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 130.

in a causally determined order in that each event of change must necessarily be preceded by a prior condition that allows the present state to be possible.

The on-going mental and physical degeneration of the Beckettian character presented by an actor occurs in an irreversible order that are reflected in Pozzo's line, 'They are given birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more.'⁴⁵ Even though the quotation may at first seem like the description of an instant, the fall from birth to grave is in itself a macrocosmic representation of an irreversible sequence of life despite it being a metaphorical representation of the brevity of life. Indeed, by breaking up the quotation into three sequential moments: birth, gleam, grave, we will see that the process of physical degeneration that pervades the Beckettian oeuvre occurs in precisely 'the light [that] gleams an instant'. Therefore, with reference to Levy's assertion that in some of Beckett's plays 'time is reduced to a single moment', I would suggest that the external time continuum is the sequence of succession that governs this 'light' and that it is precisely in this 'gleam' that the Beckettian habitual routines and corporeal deterioration unfold.

Finally, in his definition of Co-existence, Kant stated that 'all substances, in so far as they can be perceived in space at the same time, exist in a state of complete reciprocity of action'.⁴⁶ It is noteworthy that he regarded 'substances as phenomena' and the two terms are interchangeably employed here.⁴⁷ Therefore to rephrase his definition of Co-existence in the terms that this chapter has been employing thus far, a phenomenon is perceived to exist in terms of its relations with all the other phenomena which it exists with. The 'reciprocity of action' refers to how the possibility of perceiving one substance is dependent on the perception of another substance or how the possibility of perceiving one phenomenon relies on the perception of another

⁴⁵ *Waiting for Godot*, p. 83.

⁴⁶ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 138.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.140.

phenomenon. Against the barren landscape of the Beckettian drama, the actor's starkly localised and articulated physical and sensory afflictions are in themselves a web of reciprocal relations that is perceptible by the character (if it is a play involving a solitary character), by the other characters (if there is more than one character) and also by the audience.

For Kant, these three modes of time are 'principles of the determination of the existence of phenomena in time' and work together in unity to qualify time as *a priori* since these modes are '[valid] for all and every time' in relation to all phenomena.⁴⁸ He regarded these three modes of time as 'transcendental laws of nature' that anticipate experience and 'without which the empirical determination thereof as to time would itself be impossible.'⁴⁹ At this point, it should be clear that the rigidity of Kantian time is the premise from which I am led to postulate that the external time continuum in Beckett's dramatic works is an incarcerating temporal trap.

In summary, I have pointed out in the paragraphs above that the Beckettian characters are observed by the audience as physically subjected to the irreversibly successive time continuum through the Beckettian actors' presentation of the characters' physical degeneration and immersion in well-worn habits and sequential routines. As such, the only way out of the characters' predicament is, I posit, by a manipulation of their internal perception of time through storytelling. By seeking a 'way out', I am referring to the characters' delineated attempts to engage with an internal Bergsonian *durée* in order to effect an intuitive 'acceleration' through time towards the end of their seemingly interminable entrapment in the external time of their diegetic world. The next section of this chapter will examine the nature of the internal time in Beckett's

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 141.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 142.

plays and the final section will focus on the potentially accelerating effect of the intuitive *durée* and the sense of respite that is generated through storytelling.

4.2 OUTSIDE OF TIME

Relating Beckett's drama to Bergson's philosophy is important and necessary. Beckett scholars such as Anthony Uhlmann, S.E. Gontarski and Colin Gardner have observed that Beckett was familiar with Bergson's ideas.⁵⁰ To illustrate the playwright's familiarity with Bergson's work, specifically his work on Time, Gardner points out that the main theme of Beckett's 1931 Trinity Dublin Lectures on André Gide and Jean Racine was Bergson's "distinction between "spatial time" and "duration".⁵¹ More recently, in *Understanding Bergson, Understanding Modernism*, David Addyman, Paul Ardoin, and Dustin Anderson also point out Bergson's influence on some of Beckett's prose works.⁵² Although a consideration of Bergsonian concepts in relation to Beckett's prose is not new in Beckett scholarship, these essays in the volume imply that Bergson's philosophy has an important place in Beckett's oeuvre, and I hope to extend this understanding of Bergsonian influence to Beckett's stage plays. As I have postulated earlier, the focus of this chapter is Beckett's dual representation of time in his stage plays as a Kantian external time and a Bergsonian internal *durée*, and the tension that I seek to examine between these two concepts of time can be seen as the tension between what Bergson perceived to be Kant's spatialisation of time and Bergson's own concept of the simple intuitive *durée*.

In my subsequent analysis, Beckett's delineations of external time in his plays as Kantian and of internal time as Bergsonian will be elucidated with references to

⁵⁰ See Anthony Uhlmann, *Samuel Beckett and the Philosophical Image* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); S. E. Gontarski, 'Chapter 3 Trinity College, Dublin', in *Samuel Beckett in Context*, ed. by Anthony Uhlmann (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 29-41; Colin Gardner, *Beckett, Deleuze and the Televisual Event: Peephole Art* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

⁵¹ Gardner, p. 7.

⁵² See *Understanding Bergson, Understanding Modernism*, ed. by Paul Ardoin, S. E. Gontarski, and Laci Mattison (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014).

Deleuze's three empirical models of time but, ultimately, the focus will remain on Beckett's portrayal of the tension between Kantian and Bergsonian time in his stage plays. Deleuze's ideas will work as a means to elucidate Kant and Bergson's philosophies since he had written extensively on both philosophers and his own philosophical ideas were also to a large extent influenced by his interest in the arts. As Ian Buchanan and John Marks pointed out, Deleuze's 'interest in the "in-between" seems to have been reason why Deleuze was so drawn to modernist authors like Beckett and Joyce since they were the first to explore it self-consciously.'⁵³ The 'in-between' of Beckett's drama in relation to external and internal time will be elaborated in the next section.⁵⁴

To reiterate, Bergson's concept of time is the internal *durée*, which differs from a rigidly quantifiable time in that it is qualitative and malleable. This concept of time is significant as it challenges the successive and sequential time proposed by Kant. Bergson's *durée*, defined by Stephen Barker as 'the experience of time in subjectivity', is a personal internal duration that resides within each of us and can only be apprehended intuitively.⁵⁵ As opposed to the rigidly measurable external time, the *durée* is fluid and immeasurable. Measurable external time, to Bergson, is the 'ghost of space haunting the reflective conscious' and that only the internal 'pure duration is the [true] form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself live, when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states'.⁵⁶ In other words, Bergson is suggesting that 'time' is merely contrived to be quantifiable under the assumption that psychical states are separate and successive. The 'real' time or *durée* is

⁵³ Ian Buchanan and John Marks, 'Introduction: Deleuze and Literature', *Deleuze and Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp. 1-13 (p. 7).

⁵⁴ See section 4.3.

⁵⁵ Stephen Barker, 'Qu'est-ce que c'est d'après in Beckettian Time', in *Beckett after Beckett*, ed. by S. E. Gontarski and Anthony Uhlmann (Florida: UP, 2006), pp. 98-115 (p. 101).

⁵⁶ Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, p. 100.

fluid, ‘the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances’.⁵⁷ Letting one’s ego ‘live’ implies freeing the conscious mind from the constructed concept of quantifiable time. I posit that the *durée*’s trait of fluidity presents the possibility of sparing the Beckettian characters’ experience of time from the external rigidity of Kantian time.

This possible escape is attempted by creating pockets of opportunity through storytelling to effect the intuitive *durée*. The potential result is this: as a character turns its consciousness to the invention of a story, it also turns its consciousness away from the experience of the external time continuum. At the end of a story, the character would experience a leap forward in time when it emerges from storytelling and falls back along the external timeline to find that a significant amount of the seemingly interminable time has passed. I postulate that the only motivation that leads them to turn towards the attempt to effect the intuitive *durée* is this hope of speeding up their long-drawn wait for the end of consciousness, but what they are depicted as ultimately accomplishing is merely a temporary sense of respite.

Storytelling in Beckett theatre entails the conflation of imaginative inventions and reminiscences. Quoting from the *Robert Dictionnaire*, Ronald Bogue helpfully points out that although the French term ‘fabulation’ was first used to refer to “an imaginary representation of a set of facts”, it became associated in psychology with ‘mythomania and pathological lying’ by 1905.⁵⁸ He also notes that Bergson was the first to use the word as a philosophical term in his 1932 *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*.⁵⁹ In *The Two Sources*, Bergson regarded fabulation as the myth-making

⁵⁷ Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. by Arthur Mitchell (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1911), p. 5.

⁵⁸ Ronald Bogue, ‘Bergsonian Fabulation and the People to Come’, in *Deleuze’s Way: Essays in Transverse Ethics and Aesthetics* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), p. 91 n 1.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

function of the intelligence that '[counteracts] the work of intelligence' itself.⁶⁰ To Bergson, intelligence in an individual strives towards 'initiative, independence and liberty' or to put simply, the individual's self-interests, but carried too far, such endeavours may threaten to 'break up social cohesion at certain points, and assuming that society is to go on, there must be a counterpoise, at these points to intelligence'.⁶¹ Myth-making, which favours the individual's survival as a social being, comes into the picture to 'arouse an illusory perception, or at least a counterfeit of recollection so clear and striking that intelligence will come to a decision accordingly.'⁶² In short, myth-making, which is evident specifically, to Bergson, in the form of religion, is a 'defensive reaction of nature against the dissolvent power of intelligence' to self-destruct.⁶³ But Beckett's characters do not seem to seek either survival or social cohesion. As such, the function of storytelling in Beckett's drama is different from the fabulation function of constructing a coherent structure to guard against 'the dissolvent power of intelligence'. Instead, there is a marked distinction between fabulation and storytelling in Beckett's stage plays. The former is related to the habit-governed external timeline whereas the latter is related to the internal *durée*.

Bergson's negative regard for fabulation as responsible for the construction of what he deemed to be a closed-society governed by a static religion composed of the myth of supernatural and omnipotent beings reminds us of the Organism and Kant's closed system in which 'everything is there for the sake of each member and each individual member is there for the sake of all'.⁶⁴ Indeed, in Bergson's *Two Sources*, he suggested that in closed societies 'constituent part must be ready to sacrifice itself for

⁶⁰ Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (hereafter *The Two Sources*), trans. by R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd, 1935) <<http://www.archive.org/details/twosourcesofmora033499mbp>> [accessed on 14 Jan 2014], p. 98.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., p. 101.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Kant, 'Preface [Second Edition]', p. 35.

the whole' and this is in line with nature's partiality towards 'society than with the individual'.⁶⁵ Myth-making is nature's way of preserving societies and preventing man from self-destruction, but it is also a limiting impulse that impedes the formation of a truly open society. In order to break out of this closed system, Bergson brings in the concept of the Creative Emotion.

Whereas myth-making is an 'infra-intellectual' or instinctual impulse, the creative emotion is a 'supra-intellectual' or intuitive emotion that requires 'the artist to make a constantly repeated effort such as the eye makes to rediscover a star which, as soon as it is found, vanishes into the dark sky'.⁶⁶ Obeying this emotion would involve creating new ideas that is beyond writing and would be an 'attempt to realise the unrealisable.'

[The artist] will revert to the simple emotion, to the form which yearns to create its matter and will go with it to meet ideas already made, words that already exist, briefly social segments of reality. All along the way he will feel it manifesting itself in signs born of itself, I mean in fragments of its own materialization. How can these elements, each unique of its kind, be made to coincide with words already expressing things? He will be driven to strain the words, to do violence to speech. And, even so, success can never be sure; the writer wonders at every step if it will be granted to him to go on to the end [...].⁶⁷

The quotation above suggests that the artistic creation will have to come from the reversion to 'simple emotion' as opposed to established systems of reality and specifically a reality that is constructed by an existing language. The artist will have to 'do violence to speech' and I interpret this 'violence' in Beckett's drama as a revolt

⁶⁵ Bergson, *The Two Sources*, p. 98.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

against established linguistic expressions by inventing fragmentary forms of expressions that subvert the conventional use of language.

At first, the characters' tendencies to tell fragmentary stories, as delineated by Beckett, point precisely to a pursuit of the Creative Emotion in his dramatic oeuvre. This seems to exclude the concept of fabulation, which is targeted at the preservation of social cohesion and consequently, an impetus that does not seem to exist in the Beckettian world. Perhaps more importantly, in plays such as *Quad, Act Without Words I and II*, the desertion of speech poignantly points to an attempt to dispense with language altogether and, as a potential consequence, shirk off the baggage of established social system and its associated strictures. Nonetheless, I posit that both fabulation and the Creative Emotion exist in the Beckettian drama, but they are presented in the stage plays as existing in states that indicate the aftermath of an irreversible entropy and are inextricable from Beckett's representations of external time and the internal *durée*.

In Chapter 2, I have already established that should God exist in Beckett's dramatic landscape, He is characterised as a God that does not seem to act. Fabulation, in the context of Bergson's philosophy, is the basis of a static religion by which a closed society is constructed through myth-making. Bergson explained that religion has its roots in the myth of 'life after death' because man must be able to take comfort in the possibility of continuation in order to grapple with the certainty of death; thus, Bergson posited that 'religion is a defensive reaction of nature against the representation, by intelligence, of the inevitability' of death.⁶⁸ Although the 'multiplication of habits throughout the ages' for "'primitive" peoples' is deemed by Bergson to 'have occurred in a different way' compared to 'the civilised man', both types of belief systems are

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 109.

‘rational inasmuch as it was in the interests of the society’.⁶⁹ Therefore, implicit in such multiplication of habits is the instinctive goal of ‘social preservation’ in terms of ‘the good of society’ through the establishment of a ‘religious order’.⁷⁰ This religious order may be regarded as a system of rewards and punishment that promises, for example, life after death as a reward for obedience and eternal damnation for transgression.

If we accept that the God of the Beckettian dramatic diegesis is a static one and that his characters’ ultimate goal is to experience an end of their conscious existence, then their inclination to invent stories becomes untangled from Bergson’s concept that the human’s instinctual impetus is to construct a coherent narrative in order to guard against self-destruction. Indeed, the inaction and implicit impotence of God indicate the entropy of religion in the Beckettian landscape. Reduced to its bare bones, ‘religion’ is portrayed by Beckett as diminished to unavailing habit and routines, as opposed to the layers of habits that piled and are piling upon generation after generation of people in the process of human development as we continue to seek a sense of order and stability in societies and nations. Beckett’s characters’ habitual routines are representative of Bergsonian fabulation that is stripped of its layer upon layers of myth-based narratives of social preservation and cohesion.

The sequential and successive characteristics of routines, as stated earlier, share an affinity with Kant’s concept of a closed system of time, and this becomes more evident when we consider Bergson’s disparagement of such habit-based fabulation as constitutive of static religion in closed societies. In *Time and Freewill*, although Bergson criticised the mechanical time, he recognised the necessity of a closed system of time by stating that a successive and sequential representation of time in the systematic form of quantifiable time that is evenly divided into hours, minutes and

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 106.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 109.

seconds, is necessary for the '[adaptation] to the requirements of social life in general and language in particular'.⁷¹ I interpret this to mean that in order, for example, to make and fulfil social appointments, time has to be regarded as organised in a specific order so as to facilitate the day-to-day maintenance of life in general. In terms of language, Bergson's statement is fairly self-explanatory since every language is a system whether spoken or written; straying from the system would render verbal or written communication difficult to comprehend or completely unintelligible. This application of systematic time to the external world of social interaction and communication between humans cannot, however, be applied to the subjective experience of the qualitative *durée*.

To reiterate, Beckett's portrayal of external time in his plays as a closed system of interminable successive time is presented through the actors' performance of the characters' habitual routines and physical degeneration. In *Act Without Words II*, even though Beckett stated that 'A is slow, awkward (gags dressing and undressing), absent' whereas B is 'brisk, rapid, precise', he emphasised that both sequences 'should have approximately the same duration' as the two actors execute their respective routine in sequential order.⁷² The mime is intended to be performed 'on a low and narrow platform at the back of the stage' that is 'violently lit in its entire length' to present a '[f]rieze effect'.⁷³ This means that A and B will each take an approximately similar duration to perform along this single strip of lit path. Since each routine should be timed to achieve an approximately similar duration, A's performance would, according to Beckett's diagram, traverse the first half of the strip and B's routine would complete at the end of the strip. Of course, in a characteristically Beckettian move, before the curtain falls, the goad would enter again to suggest to the audience that A and B's routines will continue

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁷² *Act Without Words II*, in *CDW*, pp. 207-211 (p. 209).

⁷³ *Ibid.*

interminably. While the narrow strip of light and the actors' timed, linear and successive movements through it represent the quantifiable duration of the external time, the closing suggestion effected by the goad that the mime will continue indefinitely points to time as a continuum. Markedly, from the audience's perspective, the subjective *durée* may be experienced by an audience member when she watches A's 'slow' and 'awkward' performance and perceives it to be longer and more tedious than B's 'brisk, rapid, precise' performance; that is, even though both routines would take an approximately similar amount of quantifiable time to complete, the audience, without the aid of a mechanical watch, would qualitatively experience both timings as dissimilar.

Further, it is important to note that the sluggish character A begins his routine with a prayer whereas the energetic character B begins each action of his routine by consulting his watch. If we agree that the routines are respectively sustained by faith and the mechanical time, then the approximately similar amount of time that both routines take to be completed by the characters could suggest a similar contrivance between a system of faith and a spatialised temporal order of life. Nonetheless, the audience member's subjective experience of both structures, as stated in the previous paragraph, by witnessing the juxtaposition of the two routines on Beckett's stage poignantly indicates the existence of an intuitive form of time that eludes clearly defined sequencing and timing. David Addyman also points out, 'Bergson holds that action, or movement — is indivisible' and that to Bergson there is 'real space and spatialized space — conceived as interpenetrating movement, and space conceived as simultaneous, quantifiable succession.'⁷⁴ This corroborates with my interpretation that

⁷⁴ David Addyman, 'A New Landscape for Godot', in *Samuel Beckett: Debts and Legacies*, ed. by Peter Fifield and David Addyman (London and New York, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama: 2013), pp. 63- 84 (p. 70).

Beckett's audience members experience intuitive time as they view the two routines because the *durée* that is intuited is effected by their perception of the characters' contrasting enactments of interpenetrating movements in real space, rather than a contrived spatial time that is determined by extraneous systems that order life.

Indeed, even before *Act without Words II*, in *Waiting for Godot*, Didi and Gogo's exchange after Pozzo and Lucky leave them in the first act, already gesture to this difference between the quantitative and qualitative experiences of time:

[*Long silence.*]

VLADIMIR That passed the time.

ESTRAGON It would have passed anyway.

VLADIMIR Yes, but not so rapidly.

[*Pause.*]⁷⁵

In these three short lines, two conceptions of time emerge. Poignantly, Pozzo and Lucky's antics had offered Didi and Gogo a distraction from their external time and the result of this is Didi's perception that time passed 'rapidly' when his attention was turned away from it. Gogo's response that time 'would have passed anyway' refers directly to the irreversibly successive and sequential external time continuum whereas Didi's response to Gogo's observation is a reference to time that is experienced subjectively, in other words, a *durée* that is experienced internally. Therefore, in the context of this analysis, time, from the outset of Beckett's plays should not be considered as singularly quantitative, but should instead be regarded as quantitatively and qualitatively presented to the audience. The contrast between the two concepts of time in his plays crucially depends on the audience's expectation that time is a quantifiable and successive continuum, so that this expectation can be disrupted by the characters' incongruent experiences of time despite residing in the same diegetic space. Notably, the audience may not necessarily find the words to articulate this dual

⁷⁵ *Waiting for Godot*, p. 46.

representation of time, but their experience of temporal uncertainty is testament to the disruption of this specific expectation.

The intuitive Creative Emotion that Bergson postulated as an alternative to the instinctive fabrication of systematic and habitual routines deviates from the successive external time continuum and constitutes the internal *durée*. As I have explained earlier, an artistic creation, according to Bergson, will have to come from the reversion to 'simple emotion' as opposed to established systems of reality and specifically a reality that is constructed by an existing system of language. To reiterate, the artist will have to 'do violence to speech' and I interpret this 'violence' in Beckett's drama as a revolt against established linguistic expressions by creating fragmentary forms of expressions. Everyday language is employed in Beckett's plays but the characters' fragmented stories and reminiscences divert them from a focus on the diegetic present. The abstraction of the narrating character from the external timeline by immersing it into the creative recesses of its mind can be interpreted as the playwright's way of boring holes into the audience's habitual expectation of a linguistic narrative that is coherent with the successive timeline. Consequently, this effectively subverts the spectator's instinctive compulsion for narrative closure.

Plays, in general, are no strangers to the soliloquy or the dramatic monologue by which a character discloses to the audience, for example, a motive, suspicion, or an emotion that is unknown to the rest of the characters (in the case of the soliloquy), and sometimes pointedly directed at another character (in the case of the monologue). The dramatic monologue, when it is directed at another character, might involve bringing up the past by the protagonist that would entail entering the recesses of the mind to retrieve that memory. One might be curious if this act of recalling the past is what was earlier referred to as an abstraction of the speaking character from an external timeline, but that is not an abstraction. Similarly, the soliloquy that reveals the inner thoughts of a

character, and may perhaps be a deeper immersion into the recesses of a character's depicted mind since it is directed only at the character itself and may to a certain extent be considered a more accurate expression of the character's inner struggles, is also not an abstraction of the speaking character from the timeline. Soliloquies and dramatic monologues are generally complicit with the plot of its play's narrative. The word 'complicit' comes from the Latin *complicare*, which means to 'fold together'. These dramatic devices fold together with the rest of the dramatic work in order to create a coherent whole. Every articulated thought of the past is motivated to build up to a climax or a coherent resolution. However, the Beckettian storytelling, which is more often than not a likely mix of past and fiction, eschews the clarity and obvious coherence that an audience would expect from a dramatic work of art performed by speaking actors.

With reference to Bergson's understanding that a coherent system of language is necessarily pegged to the successive and sequential time, Beckett has 'done violence to speech' through his characters' fragmented stories that do not contribute to the coherence of each play and do little to drive the 'plot' to a climax or resolution. As a consequence, I postulate that in the moments when an actor engages with the act of telling a story, the character that she or he is presenting can be regarded as abstracted from the external timeline that governs the immediate diegetic world, although the actor's body continues to be grounded to the diegesis, as well as the audience's extradiegetic reality.

Michael David Fox asserts that the audience's empathy with the Beckettian characters is in fact empathy with the actors' suffering body because this suffering is 'staged in the *existential reality*' that is shared by both the audience and the actors'

bodies.⁷⁶ Although I would not go as far as Fox to assert that ‘Emotion created through the actor’s artifice would get in the way’ of evoking empathy in the audience because I aver that ‘carrying out the instructions precisely set forth in the text’ is in itself a process of creating an artifice, I would like to extend Fox’s interpretation by specifically adding that the actor’s bodily ‘existential reality’ is constituted by the same temporality in which the spectators occupy.⁷⁷ Anna McMullan has it that ‘[a]s spectators we are reminded of our own situatedness, and yet simultaneously of the strange tricks that theatrical perception plays via the faculties of vision and voice, transporting us into other worlds and other bodies.’⁷⁸ As the audience members empathise with the physical entrapment of the Beckettian actors in a mound, bin or vat, they are made highly aware of the temporal incongruence between the actor’s physical entrapment in an external time continuum and the characters’ anachronical stories. I posit that this is because the actors who reside in both the diegetic and extradiegetic spaces that are governed by the external time continuum are a persistent reminder to the audience members of their situatedness in the form of their habitual expectation of a temporally coherent narrative structure that can explain the reason for the depicted entrapment. The temporal incongruence is perceptible when the anachronical narratives that cannot explain the depicted incarcerations thwart the expectation of an easily discernible coherence.

Further, Fox suggests that Beckett’s theatre does not require ‘the actor’s presence to be subsumed into the representation of character’ in order to evoke empathy in the audience because ‘the process of negation and cancellation’ in his theatre ensures ‘that the fictional suffering of his stage figure is existentially present as the real physical

⁷⁶ Michael David Fox, “‘There’s Our Catastrophe’: Empathy, Sacrifice, and the Staging of Suffering in Beckett’s Theatre’, *New Theatre Quarterly*, 17.4 (November 2001) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0266464X00014998>> [accessed 21 June 2014], 357- 372 (p. 365).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 365 and p. 363.

⁷⁸ Anna McMullan, *Performing Embodiment in Samuel Beckett’s Drama* (New York, Abingdon Oxon: Routledge, 2010), p. 126.

and spiritual suffering of the actor'.⁷⁹ I agree that the Beckettian actors sustain a certain level of pain as they present the fictional suffering of the stage figure, but I maintain that this physical pain, fictional and real, is perceptibly distinct from the characters' spectral history as the spectator struggles to understand the anachronical stories that subvert her habitual expectation of narrative coherence and closure. I have stated earlier in the previous section that the stories unreliably offer the audience members a spectral mix of hypodiegetic fiction and glimpses of a character's lived history whereas the bodily presentation of physical entrapment onstage anchors them to the perception of the character's bodily present; as such, what is precisely abstracted from the external time continuum is the character's spectral existence as it engages with storytelling, which is distinct from the actor's presentation of the stage figure's physical entrapment.

In *Endgame*, Hamm's prophetic monologue which I find is worth quoting at length is directed at Clov and is a poignant example of how the spectre of a character is abstracted from the external time continuum:

HAMM In my house. [*Pause. With prophetic relish.*] One day you'll be blind, like me. You'll be sitting there, a speck in the void, in the dark, forever, like me. [*Pause.*] One day, you'll say to yourself, I'm tired, I'll sit down and you'll go and sit down. Then you'll say, I'm hungry, I'll get up and get something to eat. But you won't get up. You'll say, I shouldn't have sat down, but since I have I'll sit on a little longer, then I'll get up and get something to eat. But you won't get up and you won't get anything to eat. [*Pause.*] You'll look at the wall a while, then you'll say, I'll close my eyes, perhaps have a little sleep, after that I'll feel better, and you'll close them. And when you open them, there will be no wall any more. [*Pause.*] Infinite emptiness will be all around you, all the resurrected dead of all the ages wouldn't fill it, and there you'll be like a little bit of grit in the middle of the steppe. [*Pause.*] Yes, one day you'll know what it is, you'll be like me, except that you won't have anyone with you, because you won't have had pity on anyone and because there won't be anyone left to have pity on.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Fox, p. 370.

⁸⁰ *Endgame*, p. 109-10.

Here, Hamm is describing a future time in which he no longer has a place, but in his 'prophetic' description he seems to be melding a past experienced by himself with Clov's future experience of bleak solitude that is marked by a descent into catatonic paralysis. This intersection of a past in which Hamm had a role and a future in which he will be absent occurs in the present in which Hamm is both the subject who has lost his place in the past and the subject who will soon lose his place in the prophesied future. The melding of the past and future in the present moment of 'storytelling' renders Hamm outside of the sequential and successive time continuum since the storyteller is paying no conscious attention to his existence in the present moment, which is situated along the line of the external time continuum; he can be likened to a time-traveller who is visiting the past and a ghost haunting a future in which he has no part. Both the time traveller and the ghost do not reside in the present because they are characterised by a necessary inertia. That is, to be both time traveller and ghost is to possess an inertia that excludes one from the successive and sequential forward movement of the external time continuum.

In *Footfalls*, May's mother's monologue about the moment her daughter began pacing up and down the 'strip' of path is followed by May's 'Sequel' which involves the story of Mrs Winter and her daughter Amy.⁸¹ Although the correspondence between May, her mother, Amy and Mrs Winter is ambiguous, what the audience can be certain of when May utters the words 'Will you never have done... revolving it all?' is that the conversation between Mrs Winter and Amy resembles the exchange between May and the disembodied voice of her mother.⁸² In the closing lines of Steven Connor's 'About There or Thereabouts' at the *Catalysis Conference on Space and Time*, he states that, 'When Billie Whitelaw, playing the part of Amy, asked Beckett if he could explain who

⁸¹ *Footfalls*, in *CDW*, pp. 397-403 (p. 402).

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 403.

she was, and where she was, and in particular, whether she was alive or dead, Beckett replied, “let’s just say, you’re not quite there.”⁸³ Whitelaw played the role of May in *Footfalls*, but Connor is not wrong, whether deliberately or mistakenly, to describe Whitelaw as playing the part of Amy. In the ‘Sequel’, all the roles of the characters in May’s story were voiced by her and tracing backwards, Voice’s instruction to the audience to ‘let us watch [May] move, in silence’ suggests that May’s actions are subsumed within Voice’s narration too.⁸⁴ Indeed, like the Matryoshka doll, Voice is a disembodied conduit in which May resides and May is the container in which Amy resides. However, unlike the Matryoshka doll, Voice as a ghostly disembodied conduit in the play’s diegetic present renders its content, that is May’s physicality, ghostly too. A child bore by a ghost can only be a spectre.

Connor has it that ‘Beckett’s spectral imagery has much in common with the spirit-photographs that may have been a familiar part of his childhood’.⁸⁵ Although Connor does not elaborate how Beckett may have been familiar with spirit photography, the technique of superimposition is an interesting one with reference to *Footfalls*. If deemed as a fraud, the absence of genuine contact between the subjects in the picture, since the image of the client and the image of the deceased are taken from two separate pictures, becomes obvious. Both images appear in one present image but the people photographed were never really together at the moment when the picture was taken. The distance between the living and the deceased loved one in a superimposed photograph can be quantitatively measured by the difference between the times each picture was taken. Nonetheless, a pocket of imagined time and space outside of the external timeline is qualitatively created in this photograph in which the living is able to

⁸³ Steven Connor, ‘About There and Thereabouts’, at Catalysis Conference on Space and Time, Downing College, Cambridge (23 March 2013) <<http://www.stevenconnor.com/aboutthere/aboutthere.pdf>> [accessed 12 April 2014].

⁸⁴ *Footfalls*, p. 401.

⁸⁵ Connor.

experience the illusion of a reunion with his or her loved one retrospectively. Indeed, even within May's story, Cohn observed that 'fictional mother and daughter inhabit different worlds or times, for the daughter says that she was absent from evening prayer, and yet Mrs. Winter asserts that she heard her "Amen."'”⁸⁶

As such, I aver that the abstraction of the characters from the external timeline in *Footfalls* is similar to the superimposed images. The stage is the medium, upon which the three imagined subjects from three disparate time-dimensions are superimposed. When we consider the disembodied Voice to be the invisible envelopment of May and regard May as the ethereal source of the story of Amy, what the audience would see is the superimposition of three disparate spectres that are constituted by voices, being juxtaposed with the physical body of an actor. Although the actor delivers May's lines, the words leave the body to join the disembodied voices of the spectres that remain outside of the actor and the audience's existential present. Therefore, compared to *Endgame*, the characters in *Footfalls* may be regarded as an extreme case whereby all three characters are depicted as completely inhabiting a dimension that is outside of an external timeline; this external timeline that I am referring to is, I repeat, the one that governs the audience members and the actor's extradiegetic reality. Significantly, the concept of a time continuum that is external to one's subjectivity is effectively extended beyond the Beckettian diegetic stage to encapsulate the extradiegetic temporal space in which the actor and the audience reside. Perceiving the 'ghostly' quality of May is in effect intuiting the qualitative durée that lies outside of external time.

Having established what is meant by the abstraction of a character's spectre from an external time continuum through the actor's performance of storytelling, the Beckettian drama's challenge to the audience member's habitual expectation of a

⁸⁶ Cohn, *Just Play*, p. 56.

linguistic narrative that is coherent with the successive timeline should be apparent at this point. However, this is not to suggest that by challenging the audience's instinctive compulsion for order, Beckett successfully subverts the sequential and successive mechanical time which, even Bergson reluctantly agrees is a necessity to the social and linguistic order in our daily lives. Bergson's description of the internal *durée* as a qualitative time of multiplicity in which the past, present and future meld together is a revolt against the quantitative mechanical time, and Beckett seems to be articulating this rebellion in his stage plays as a dogged enterprise, though not necessarily an enduringly successful one. What this section has demonstrated, by postulating that the *durée* is an intuitive experience of time that lies outside of the external timeline in the context of Beckett's stage plays, is that regarding Beckettian time as singular is overlooking Beckett's nuanced delineation of time as a tensive relation between a quantitative external time and a qualitative internal *durée*.

As opposed to Kant's three laws that govern one system of time, Deleuze, following Bergson, suggests three models of time (Habitual, Memorial and Futural) or three syntheses by which time may be experienced. These three syntheses of time as opposed to Kant's limiting transcendental laws of time will be elaborated further in relation to Bergson's concepts of multiplicity and the *durée* in the following section. Deleuze's Futural time will be of particular significance to the context of my analysis since it would help elucidate Beckett's abstractions of his characters from the external timeline as potentially creating the effect of temporary respite.

4.3 RESPITE

I will briefly relate Deleuze's three syntheses of time to Kantian and Bergsonian time. This will hopefully help pave the way for a better understanding of the possible motive behind Beckett's delineation of the two forms of time in his dramatic works.

Firstly, Deleuze's Habit model points to a cyclical passing of successive instants such as the seasonal passing of time in nature. Such a successive movement of time can be regarded as governed by a natural law that is external to a subject's conscious mind. According to Deleuze, a subject experiences this habit of cyclical time as passive syntheses. A passive synthesis refers to a 'contraction' or 'fusion' of successive past instants into a present expectation of continuity and 'perpetuation'.⁸⁷ He adds further that habit does not only concern 'sensory-motor habits that we have (psychologically), but also, before these, the primary habits that 'we are'; that is, the thousands of passive syntheses of which we are organically composed'.⁸⁸ In other words, Deleuze seems to be suggesting that we are composed of a multiplicity of habits by virtue of our automatic expectation of continuity. In one example, Deleuze explains this expectation as the automatic anticipation of a 'tock' after we hear a 'tick'.⁸⁹

However, Habitual time to Deleuze is only the time of the living present due to its nature of rendering the past and the future as contracted dimensions of the present. He posits that 'there must be another time in which the first synthesis of time can occur' because the present in the first synthesis of time 'is a multiplicity of syntheses, of stretches or durations. This leaves open the difficulty of how all its stretches are related, a problem concerning order of priority and interactions in time'.⁹⁰ The Memory model resembles in form Kant's conception of time as a straight line and works with the Habit model, according to Deleuze, like 'the alliance of the sky and the ground'.⁹¹ Bearing in mind his praise for Kant's conception of time as a straight line as a great 'reversal' of time from the cyclical time established in classical philosophy, Deleuze seems to be

⁸⁷ Deleuze, 'Chapter 2: Repetition for Itself', in *Difference and Repetition*, trans. by Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 70-128 (p. 74).

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 79; James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time: a critical introduction and guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), p. 52.

⁹¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p 80.

combining the idea of the cyclical expectation of time and Kant's notion of the successive time in his reference to this 'alliance' in order to explain the passing away of the Habitual present into a second synthesis of time, the Memory. Memorial time is Deleuze's second synthesis of time which, according to James Williams, 'makes the present pass through a process' that would determine its representation as a 'pure past'.⁹² Williams goes on to explain that the word 'pure' implies an independence from 'particular experience of the presents'.⁹³ In other words, former presents are retained in the memory as a general past with the potential to be recreated as many possible representations in the future. It is this process of re-creation that brings us to the third synthesis of time, the Future.

The third synthesis of time is defined by Deleuze as successive presents. Unlike Kant's succession of equal temporal instants, Deleuze's succession of time is an 'order of time' that can be likened to the 'purely formal distribution of the unequal in the function of the caesura'.⁹⁴ It is a succession of events that do not have a uniformed beginning and end. It is an order because we are able to 'situate any event in relation to any other as before or after, not through an external reference to their position on a time line, but through reference to the before and after of each cut' of an event.⁹⁵ The central focus of the third synthesis of time is the creation of the new with the past and the present as dimensions of the novel future. Deleuze offers three examples to explain the complex mechanism of the third synthesis of time. With the help of Williams's guide, we will examine one of the three examples here.

Deleuze suggests that we regard the automatic expectation of continuity of the present (Habitual time) as an 'agent' and the past (Memorial time) as the 'condition' to

⁹² Williams, p. 57.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 62.

⁹⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 89.

⁹⁵ Williams, p. 15.

effect the creation of the new (Futural time).⁹⁶ This means that the present as agent must inevitably pass into the condition of the past to become memory and accumulate at a level of pure past from which it awaits an opportunity to resurface and contribute to the creation of the new in the future. Deleuze concludes that ‘each present’ is thus ‘no more than the actualisation or representation of one of these levels’ of pure past and the empirical life is ‘the ever-increasing coexistence of levels of the past’.⁹⁷ The return of these levels of the past is developed from Nietzsche’s idea of the Eternal Return and for Deleuze, it is defined as the return of difference. As Deleuze puts it, ‘what is produced, the absolutely new itself, is in turn nothing but repetition’ that ‘repudiates the *condition* and the *agent*’ after it has made use of them and asserts its ‘independence’ as ‘complete novelty’.⁹⁸

The tension between the Beckettian external time, which I had related to the Kantian time continuum earlier in this chapter, and the internal time, which I had related to the Bergsonian intuitive *durée*, resides at the point in which a character ‘retrieves’ the pure past from memory and weaves this past into the stories. However, I posit that instead of Deleuzean ‘retrievals’, these are depicted as slippages onto the levels of the accumulated past and are therefore also moments of a character’s self-abstraction from the external timeline. More accurately stated, it can be visualised as a spike in the linear external time continuum. Such a spike suggests that the Beckettian character is not completely abstracted from the timeline. Storytelling is a distraction that attempts to induce the effect of the internal *durée* by allowing a character to momentarily turn its attention away from the interminable time that it is trapped in. Each conscious emergence from storytelling to the external time is marked by pauses that subtly represent an anticipation that at least some of that seemingly never-ending external time

⁹⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.105.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 90.

has passed. If a significant amount of time is perceived to have passed then an intuitive *durée* has indeed been effected.

For example, in *Rockaby*, the long pauses at the end of Voice's repeated story about the arrival of a long awaited end are indicated in Beckett's stage direction '[*Together: echo of 'time she stopped', coming to rest of rock, faint fade of light. Long pause.*]'⁹⁹ Voice, presumably the Woman's, is interpreted as the internal monologue that is composing the story about her wait for and her arrival at the end of her life. By portraying the corporeal woman and her voice coming 'together' and echoing the line 'time she stopped', Beckett seems to be suggesting that this point of union is the moment when the internal mind emerges from within and is exteriorising as speech by passing through the Woman's lips. This emergence from internal story to external speech is followed by the Woman's utterance of 'More'.¹⁰⁰ The word can be regarded as an exasperated demand for more stories upon emerging from the internal storytelling and noticing that her end has not arrived. The process of degeneration which I established in the first section as representative of the external time continuum is, in this play, inferred from Beckett's instruction that the utterance of 'more' must become 'a little softer each time' which suggests that the character is getting weaker.¹⁰¹ Beckett's delineation of his character as consciously drifting in and out of storytelling and the external time line demonstrates his character's active attempt to invoke the intuitive *durée*. Although the engagement with this internal experience of *durée* is not immediately successful since the external time continues to seem interminable, his character's dogged repetition of this process nevertheless generates the effect of a temporary respite.

⁹⁹ *Rockaby*, in *CDW*, pp. 431- 42 (p. 436).

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 434.

Similarly, in *Ohio Impromptu*, the Listener and the Reader are to be ‘*as alike in appearance as possible*’ and this suggests that the two might be constituents of a single character.¹⁰² As the Reader tells the story of a man who moved to ‘a single room on the far bank’ so as to obtain ‘[r]elief he had hoped would flow from unfamiliarity’, he is frequently interrupted by the Listener’s knock on the table.¹⁰³ Following each knock, the Reader would repeat the last sentence he had read, and pause. He continues reading only after the Listener knocks again. What is of particular significance to the context of this analysis is that towards the end of the play, as the Reader closes the book, the Listener knocks again, but to no avail.

The knock, which at first seems to indicate that the Listener is directing the Reader’s narration, becomes helpless towards the end of the play as the book is closed. The final knock, which can be interpreted as the Listener’s desire for more, is met with ‘*Silence*’.¹⁰⁴ Following the poignant silence, ‘*Simultaneously they lower their right hands to table, raise their heads and look at each other. Unblinking. Expressionless. Ten seconds. Fade out.*’¹⁰⁵ Like the union between Voice and Woman in *Rockaby*, this is the point where the storyteller or Reader returns to the corporeal present or the external time line in which he who is the Listener physically resides. The notion that relief can hopefully ‘flow from unfamiliarity’ in the story that is being read may be perceived as the Listener’s search for solace in the composition of a doubly fictional story in an imagined book instead of remaining perpetually conscious of his immediate external reality. Although the fictional story in the imagined book may be a partial account of a past, its nevertheless fragmentary and possibly fictional parts render it incomplete hence ‘unfamiliar’.

¹⁰² *Ohio Impromptu*, in *CDW*, pp. 443- 8 (p. 445).

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 448.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

To understand the idea that the story fragments are ‘unfamiliar’ to the Beckettian storyteller, who is portrayed to be ambiguously inventing fiction and embedding past experiences in his stories, let us refer to Deleuze’s third synthesis of time. As stated above, the complete novel is the repetition of the past that abandons the retrieved past after making use of it in order to ‘assert’ itself as an independently ‘complete novelty’. The stories that the Beckettian characters tell either to themselves or to other characters are often ambiguous in that the audience member does not know which parts of the story are invented and which parts are from the character’s past. Regardless of the ambiguity, since the past that creates the new is eventually discarded at every moment, then the new must at every moment be unfamiliar to the storytelling subject. The very act of storytelling therefore may be perceived as a turn to the unfamiliar, which the Beckettian character is depicted as hoping would offer some ‘relief’ from the awareness of an interminable external time continuum.

Nevertheless, the stories do not offer the sought after relief, but merely temporary respite. Following Deleuze’s concept that the level of the pure past is retrieved to assert the new in the future, it seems that the level of the pure past must be retrieved from the internal memory and placed onto an immediate future moment. In the context of Beckett’s dramatic works, if we liken this immediate future to be lying somewhere ahead and along the external time line, then the new is successfully generated in the time continuum and permanent relief becomes plausible because every moment becomes new, hence every instant is perpetually unfamiliar. However, as I have demonstrated with the examples above, the stories do not satisfy the characters’ desire for relief from the interminable external time line. What Deleuze’s concept of time offers us is only an example of how the new is created from the melding of the past and the present in the future. In this analysis, the characters’ ‘retrieval’ of the past is instead ‘slippages’ onto the levels of the accumulated past because the self-abstraction

from the external timeline does not involve the reintegration of the past with the present along the progressing external timeline to generate the new.

In other words, the level of the pure past does not, for the characters, assimilate with the external time as a new moment that extends into the future, and this is why every moment of the external time seems like an uneventful repetition. The slip onto the level of the pure past is unfamiliar because it is a half-remembered fragment. Deleuze's example of the caesura to explain the unequal cuts before and after each event in a successive order of events is a luxury that the Beckettian characters do not seem to have. By applying to the external time line Levy's idea that Beckettian time is static because each moment is the repetition of the same, it is not difficult to see why the interminability of external time induces the character's desire to end their consciousness of it. The characters' internal levels of pure past are fragmentary because they are no longer capable of differentiating one moment from the next. This loss of capacity to distinguish between events, and the past from fiction may be attributed to mental entropy caused by their physical degeneration. Nonetheless, it is precisely this lack of clear order in the mind that allows for the melding of a fragmented past with invented fiction to create the temporary pocket of unfamiliarity that in turn offers the characters a moment of respite from their external reality.

The hoped for internal experience of the illusion of a 'sped up' external time is encapsulated by the beginning of each story and the moment of the character's emergence to their external reality. Externally, what the character experiences seems to be a successive sequence of the perpetual alternation between hope and disappointment. Nevertheless, this relentlessly disappointed hope (and I mean 'hope' in its grimmest hue) continues to be the Beckettian characters' persistent preoccupation because only the creative imagination, through storytelling, retains what little power a character has in its significantly weakened state to provide respite for itself.

Roland Barthes asserts that in a creative text ‘language is redistributed’ and that ‘such redistribution is always achieved by cutting’ from which ‘[t]wo edges are created’.¹⁰⁶ It is the ‘seam’ between the two edges or the in-between which is ‘the site of a loss’ and also where ‘bliss’ may be located.¹⁰⁷ To elaborate, the difference between the two edges is that one is a non-subversive edge, ‘an obedient, conformist, plagiarizing edge (the language is to be copied in its canonical state, as it has been established by schooling, good usage, literature, culture)’ and the other is the subversive edge ‘mobile, blank (ready to assume any contours), which is never anything but the site of its effect: the place where the death of language is glimpsed’.¹⁰⁸ Pleasure is derived from the seam between the two edges because here is the ‘site of loss’ as well as a moment of ‘bliss’.¹⁰⁹ Barthes’ original term for ‘bliss’ was *jouissance*, which connotes an orgasmic moment of abandonment. The storytelling Beckettian character, who is regarded in the context of this analysis as both the author and audience of their stories, invents fragments that are hardly comparable to the novels that Barthes attributed the power to generate Pleasure and bliss in the reader. As Graham Fraser also observes, ‘Little pleasure is available to the inhabitants of Beckett’s texts, let alone Barthesian *jouissance*.’¹¹⁰

Nonetheless, if we bring Barthes’s concepts of Pleasure and bliss down a notch to ‘Desire’ and ‘respite’ respectively, we will be able to demonstrate how respite is a miniature of bliss experienced by Beckett’s storytelling characters. In *The Pleasure of the Text*, Barthes differentiates Pleasure from Desire by stating that the latter is the

¹⁰⁶ Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. by Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975), p. 6.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹¹⁰ Graham Fraser, ‘The Calligraphy of Desire: Barthes, Sade, and Beckett’s *How It Is*’, *Twentieth-Century Literature*, 55.1 (Spring 2009) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40599964>> [accessed March 2014], 58-79 (p. 58).

former's 'victorious rival' insofar as Desire is never satisfied.¹¹¹ Whereas Pleasure is defined as a reader's relish in the site of loss where the non-subversive and subversive edges collide, Desire is defined as arising from a reader's experience of 'disappointment [and] deflation' immediately after an '[expected] scene occurs'.¹¹² Consequently, the 'books of Desire' would not afford the reader the experience of Pleasure and by extension, 'bliss'.¹¹³ Markedly, this disappointment can be seen in the Beckettian characters' persistently disappointed Desire for the end of consciousness, a Desire that is thematically reproduced in the fragmented stories as well as in the very act of storytelling. The characters cannot experience Pleasure in their fragmented stories because the subject of their focus is the '[expected] scene' of arriving at the brink of death (which is being perpetually disappointed), and not on relishing in the site of collision between the subversive and non-subversive edges of their stories.¹¹⁴ With this in mind, the Beckettian character's roles as storyteller and audience can only afford it Desire, instead of Pleasure.

Barthes sought to distinguish between Pleasure and bliss by maintaining that 'pleasure can be expressed in words, bliss cannot.'¹¹⁵ His definition of 'bliss' as 'unspeakable' is of particular relevance to the Beckettian respite that this section is attempting to (perhaps, paradoxically) articulate.¹¹⁶ The abstraction of a character from the external time line by turning its consciousness inwards into storytelling cuts the character from the play's exterior diegesis that is governed by the external time continuum. The result of this is the creation of a play-within-a-play or an internal narrative of Desire for an end of consciousness within an external narrative of

¹¹¹ Barthes, p. 58.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 21.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

interminability. As such, I posit that respite does not merely lie in the internal pocket of unfamiliarity that characterises the stories; it more precisely resides at the seam between the habit-governed external reality and the internal narrative of Desire.

In my understanding, the seam is a site of loss from which bliss or *jouissance* is experienced for Barthes because it entails a sense of abandonment or a loss of inhibition. At a much-reduced scale, the seam is the site of loss from which a Beckettian storytelling character experiences respite because it entails a momentary distraction from the interminability of the external time. In other words, what is lost momentarily at this site of loss for the Beckettian storyteller is the consciousness of interminability. As established above, their stories often freely give away their Desire for an end of consciousness, and their arrivals at the end of these story fragments represent subverted Desire. As such, respite is derived from the ‘in-between’ of the persistently simulated Desire (during storytelling) and thwarted Desire (at the point of emerging from storytelling to the external reality) for an end of consciousness. Like ‘bliss’, respite lies ‘between the lines’ or at the seam, because the experience of respite is an amnesiac abandonment of a character’s knowledge of its desired object’s unattainability.¹¹⁷

For the audience, however, the Beckettian characters’ fragmented stories do not offer respite, only the potential of respite. I postulate that although the audience member experiences both depictions of qualitative and quantitative time in Beckett’s stage play, their focus on finding a coherent narrative may hinder a lucid retention of the dual representations of time they had just witnessed. Significantly, the audience’s hoped for respite in terms of their expectation of some sort of narrative closure is different from the characters’ in that the characters’ respite is an *abandonment* of knowledge, whereas

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

the audience's is an *expectation* of knowledge. The audience member is resident in the external time line insofar as she is external to the character's internal turn to storytelling. More specifically her compulsion to seek out a narrative coherence from the outset of each Beckettian play and/or in the story fragments invented by the characters renders her an unrelenting subject of the stratified Organism.

Andrew Gibson offers a compelling perspective on the audience's expectation of knowledge.¹¹⁸ His terms 'pathos of intermittency' is directed at Beckett's focus on dramatizing the wait for the event. As the title of Gibson's work suggests, the 'event' he is referring to is Alain Badiou's rare event. The event promises a 'truth' in Beckett drama, but it rarely, if not never arrives and Gibson views *Waiting for Godot* as the epitome of the 'big non-event'.¹¹⁹ The 'intermittent' thus refers to Beckett's dramatization of and interest in the 'in-between' instead of the event that rarely occurs. As Gibson puts it, 'Beckett the dramatist does not think the event in relation to truth or truths. He thinks the possibility of the event from the side of its relation to the remainder. In this respect, his art remains sedulously, painstakingly liminal.'¹²⁰ The 'remainder' is the *déchet* or waste matter that is anything apart from the event and 'the pathos of intermittency is generated in the gap between events and their remainder.'¹²¹ He adds further that Beckett's 'pathos of intermittency, the melancholy of a world without truth . . . can precede the event' and that what the 'problem-creating rather than

¹¹⁸ It is worth noting that like Levy, Gibson points out that in both *That Time* and *Footfalls* "that time" and "another time" are no different 'than the units in a mathematical set' in order to suggest the singularity of time in these plays as 'one time which is any time at all'. See Andrew Gibson, 'The Sparkle Hid in Ashes: Beckett's Plays' in *Beckett and Badiou: The Pathos of Intermittency* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 240. As established earlier in this chapter, this is merely the feature of external time and regarding time as therefore singular in these plays is to overlook Beckett's presentation of the internal *durée* through the 'in-between', as a source of his works' destabilising effect on the audience.

¹¹⁹ Gibson, *Beckett and Badiou: The Pathos of Intermittency* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 40.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22 -3.

problem solving' dramatist conveys in his oeuvre is 'a sense of what the common experience of that world must be as an experience of the remainder'.¹²²

If we agree with Gibson that Beckett's plays are indeed dramatizations of the abject remainder, then the unfamiliarity of the Beckettian landscape to the modern audience is testament to their familiarity with 'a culture in which *jouissance* had become an imperative, a culture obsessed (but also obscurely tormented) by a dream of plenitude, the illusion of being able to square the circle and have it all. Its will to completion would be the reverse of the 'waiting subject's will'.¹²³ The *jouissance* that is referred to here is 'the limitless satisfaction of need' by subscribing to a systematic 'economy of *jouissance*' that promises 'unlimited access "to the goods of the world"'.¹²⁴ Such a system that might exist in the world outside of Beckett drama is also a world that the audience might reside in. It is worth noting that Gibson's focus is ultimately on establishing Beckett the artist's portrayal of the pathos of intermittency therefore it sheds little light on how an audience member might experience this pathos. However, it is not difficult to imagine this sensibility as transposable to the spectator. The 'will to completion' in the quotation above is especially relevant to the audience's experience of pathos reconstitution, which I will now elaborate further in the following final paragraphs.

In the depictions of the characters' ultimately futile obsession with invoking the intuitive *durée* through anachronical storytelling, the audience member's expectation of a coherent narrative that coincides with the experience of a successive time continuum is firmly thwarted at every turn. As the characters' attempts to invoke the *durée* are pulled to the forefront of the audience member's consciousness, her expectation of each

¹²² Ibid., p. 290.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 256.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 255. Gibson quotes from Lacan's *Seminar VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1956-1960*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. with notes by Dennis Porter (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 200.

play's dramatic narrative to be systematically coherent is disappointed. The intuitive *durée*, an in-between experience, is described as being pulled to the forefront of an audience member's consciousness while she is viewing Beckett's stage play, because on a regular day its potential for inducing the experiential leaps through time is often casually dismissed as a lapse of concentration. For example, the drive from home to the university usually takes thirty minutes, but an engaging conversation with a companion might take one's mind off the journey and render the drive to feel like a ten-minute journey. This intuitive experience of time as duration instead of successive moments is often written off as merely the result of being distracted and the mundane task of travelling to work from point A to point B quickly resumes its place within the clockwork of the organised time continuum.

However, set against the background of the barren Beckettian landscape, the playwright presents what the audience member would deem as mundane tasks in the form of his characters' grimly repetitive routines. These routines and habits are rendered unfamiliar to the audience because the characters are portrayed as wretchedly performing these tasks despite desiring an end to it all. Subjective time and an organised time are effectively portrayed as clashing in this contradiction between an incarcerating obligation to habit and the desire to escape it. Further, whereas unfamiliarity through story-telling is the source of respite for the characters, the unfamiliarity of the anachronical stories in addition to the depicted wretchedness that is associated with the characters' entrapment in their habitual routines are sources of destabilization for the audience. In a destabilised state, the audience member may experience Beckett's dual depiction of time in terms of temporal uncertainty. More significantly, this destabilization, which at first entails pity for the Beckettian characters' grim predicament, may also result in an audience member's reconstituted pathos for her entrapment as a subject that is bound to the stratified Organism.

In other words, reconstituted pathos in this context refers to the spectator's shift of focus from actor to character to self at the end of each play when she wonders, in addition to experiencing temporal uncertainty in the play, if narrative closure is deliberately withheld from her by the playwright or that she had not been able to appreciate the play adequately. The anxiety of not knowing could be translated into a sense of inadequacy. The trajectory of the audience member's pathos can thus be interpreted as shifting from stage to self, from destabilizing pity for the seemingly pointless suffering of an actor who is presenting the predicament of a character that is unavailingly waiting for a death that does not come, to self-pity.

'Self-pity' is employed here not as a banally self-absorbed sorrow over one's personal troubles but in terms of the spectator's disappointment in failing to recognise a familiar pattern of coherence in the drama. As a spectator watches a Beckettian play, she experiences an obstruction to the 'will to complete' or compulsion for coherence and closure. It is worth noting that there is nothing immensely transformative that results from this obstacle. Reconstitution in this context is not a transformative restructuring of the spectator from not knowing to knowing, but resumption from a destabilized state back to an organised state when the lights in the theatre are turned back on. Nevertheless, the perplexed spectator's reconstituted state as an organised subject is resumption with a difference. As she steps out of the theatre to resume her place in the Organism, the irrevocable loss of assumption that all phenomenological experiences must follow an organised coherence, is precisely the trace difference that a reconstituted pathos has left her.

To conclude this chapter, Time may be regarded as having two forms in Beckett's stage plays: an external time continuum and an internal *durée*. The Beckettian characters' delineated attempt to invoke the internal *durée* through storytelling in order that it may 'speed' them towards experiencing their end of consciousness entails a

temporary self-abstraction from the incarcerating sequential external time line that extends interminably. The endeavour is almost always unsuccessful, but the resulting moment of respite from their grim predicament is, what I posit to be, the main motivation that induces them to ‘Try again. Fail again. Fail better’ and feel better, at least for a short while.¹²⁵

Although the audience might experience the dual depiction of time, she might not be able to articulate it, since her compulsion for narrative closure and coherence would prevent her from clearly recognising that the temporal uncertainty that is induced in her by Beckett’s stage plays is the resulting effect of this depiction. Consequently, caught up in this unsatisfied compulsion for completion, she is barred from respite for the length of each play. However, as the audience member leaves the theatre, the exposure to such a destabilising experience might leave her with an inkling of her possible bondage to a stratified organism that resembles the one that the characters are portrayed in the Beckettian world as being bound to.

In the next chapter, I continue to examine the destabilising spectatorial experience of Beckett’s works by translating the television viewer’s inclination to disengage from his television plays as the effect of intuiting an inexplicably familiar sense of loss.

¹²⁵ Beckett, *Worstward Ho*, in *The Grove Centenary Edition: Poems, Short Fiction, Criticism of Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Paul Auster, Vol. 4, 1st edn. (New York: Grove Press, 2006), pp. 471-485 (p. 471).

CHAPTER 5 THE DISENGAGING BECKETTIAN TELEVISION AUDIENCE AND THE MONUMENT TO LOSS

This chapter explores how Beckett's television plays erect a monument to loss by leading the 'disengaging spectator' to experience a forgotten 'familiarity' as she gradually gives up trying to find an easily discernible 'point' in his plays. A number of Beckett scholars such as Linda Ben-Zvi and Jonathan Bignell have attributed the pedagogical effect and value of provoking new way(s) of seeing to Beckett's teleplays. The inclusion of his works by public service broadcasters such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ) in arts channels that positioned themselves as providers of educational programming might have influenced such an attribution to his teleplays. However, his teleplays' propensity to induce a non-specialised audience member to feel inclined to disengage herself from his work as she is viewing each play is often only cursorily acknowledged and insufficiently explored. I posit that this spectatorial inclination to disengage could potentially render the teleplays' assumedly educational function to raise the cultural standards of the general audience untenable.

Instead of understanding such an audience as unable or unwilling to appreciate Beckett's works, I attempt to examine the often-overlooked negative reception of Beckett's teleplays by suggesting that the viewer's desire to disengage (physically and/or intellectually) could be an intuitive response to the plays' evocation of a forgotten, and therefore, seemingly subject-less sense of loss.

With reference to historical events and studies that have been conducted on the television viewing experiences of the British public between the mid-twentieth century to the start of the twenty-first century, I hope to demonstrate in the first section of this chapter, how an average anglophone television viewer's expectation to be entertained and/or informed as she turned on the television might have been subverted by the minimal mise-en-

scène and lack of a clear plot in the television plays *Eh Joe*, *Ghost Trio*, *Quad I + II* and *...but the clouds....* I postulate that as a result of these disappointed expectations, an uncomfortable uncertainty was evoked within the viewer, which can be translated into an experiential sense of loss.

Following this trajectory, in the second section, I posit that Beckett's television plays subscribe to an aesthetic of loss, and I explore how this aesthetic of loss could potentially remind the audiences of their mass amnesia. Finally, the last section extrapolates from Tim Aspinall's opinion, 'All I know is that Beckett writes straight from the heart and the stomach. I don't think you have to understand him intellectually', to assert that the disengaging home viewer, despite her exasperation at not being able to understand the teleplays, was and still is the artist's unsuspecting corroborator in the establishment of a monument to loss.¹

5.1 THE DISENGAGING BECKETTIAN AUDIENCE

By the time Beckett's *Eh Joe?* was broadcast on BBC2 in 1966, the stageplay *Waiting for Godot* was already an international success and had itself been adapted into a television play. This, the first example of a television broadcast of a Beckett work, had been part of New York's WNTA-TV 'Play of the Week' project in the United States of America on 13 April 1961. Directed by Alan Schneider and performed by Burgess Meredith, Zero Mostel, Kurt Kasznar and Alvin Epstein, the *Waiting for Godot* teleplay was introduced by Barney Rosset, who was the president of Grove Press and the U. S. publisher of Beckett's works. The way that Rosset introduced the play is significant in that he clearly had in mind a television audience who were unfamiliar with Beckett's works. Stating that the play 'has become a classic of the modern theatre' and that it was being staged internationally in 'most of the great cities of the world', Rosset was not only informing, but also emphasising the

¹ Tim Aspinall, quoted in Jonathan Bignell, *Beckett on Screen: The Television Plays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), p. 186.

fact that Beckett was widely acknowledged ‘as one of the great writers of our times’.² Asserting further that ‘there has been almost as many interpretations of *Godot* as there have been members of the audience’, Rosset explained to the home viewer that ‘Samuel Beckett himself calls his play a tragic-comedy and leaves it at that’.³ He continued, ‘Perhaps *Waiting for Godot*, despite its seeming simplicity leads to a very personal experience for each of us. It depicts the human situation and its universal qualities reveal some of the elements both tragic and certainly comic of what life is all about’.⁴ From Rosset’s introduction, it is not difficult to notice a tensive awareness that the programme was going to reach out to mass audiences that were far more diverse than theatre audiences. His introduction sounds almost like a pre-emptive measure against the home viewers’ potential mental ‘walkout’, reminiscent of the physical walkout of the 1956 American premiere of *Waiting for Godot*, also directed by Schneider.

In fact, prior to the underappreciated American production in 1956, during the course of each of the 1955 London performances directed by Peter Hall at the Arts Theatre ‘approximately half the audience walk out, shouting abusively’, according to Vivyan Ellacott.⁵ Ellacott reports that

The trigger point at each performance comes when, after a very long pause, one of the characters onstage says ‘I’m bored’. Each night this line elicits strong reaction from the audiences. It usually takes just one angered patron to shout back ‘So am I’ to start a series of catcalls, hisses, protests, walk-outs

² *Waiting for Godot*, dir. Alan Schneider, WNTA-TV’s ‘Play of the Week’ (1961) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDCODtL5PG4>> [accessed 14 November 2013].

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Vivyan Ellacott, ‘1955: For *Godot*’s Sake! Audiences storm out’, in *Rogues and Vagabonds: A year-by-year history of British Theatre from 1567* <<http://www.overthefootlights.co.uk/1955.pdf>> [accessed 14 November 2013].

and scenes not witnessed in British theatre since the wilder days of the 18th Century.⁶

The negative reaction, which Beckett's play provoked in his early audiences, has certainly receded over the past few decades, following an increasing familiarity and better understanding of his *modus operandi* through the rise of Beckett scholarship and more importantly the spread of *Godot* performances around the globe. Nonetheless, even with the knowledge that Beckett was an acclaimed writer of novels and drama and was awarded The Nobel Prize in Literature in 1969, there are still members of the audience who do not appreciate his television works due largely to the perceived lack of easily discernible plots and narrative threads in the teleplays.

As Bignell also observes, 'From the early 1960s to the early 1990s, Beckett's work was frankly disastrous in terms of the audience ratings, competitive audience share, or retention of the audience across an evening's broadcasting.'⁷ In Colin Gardner's *Beckett, Deleuze and the Televisual Event: Peephole Art*, he suggests that the reason behind the negative reception of Beckett's television works could be their stark resistance to 'audience desire for character development, conventional plot and, well, drama.'⁸ By 'conventional' drama, Gardner may be referring to realist drama. The presence of realism as a contrast to the playwright's works has been contentiously asserted and refuted in Beckett criticism. Whereas Beckett scholars Jan Kott and Richard N. Coe argued persuasively that Beckett was a realist, critics like Theodor Adorno and Julie Campbell begged to differ.⁹ If Beckett

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Bignell, *Beckett on Screen*, p. 183.

⁸ Colin Gardner, *Beckett, Deleuze and the Televisual Event: Peephole Art* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 188.

⁹ Jan Kott, 'A Note on Beckett's Realism', trans. by Boleslaw Taborski, *The Tulane Drama Review*, 10.3 (Spring 1966) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1125170>> [accessed 15 November 2013], 156-9; Richard N. Coe, 'Beckett's English', in *Samuel Beckett — Humanistic Perspectives*, ed. by Morris Beja et al. (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1982), pp. 36 -57; Theodor Adorno, 'Commitment', in *Marxist Literary Theory*, ed. by Terry Eagleton and Drew Milne (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 187-203; Julie Campbell, 'Endgame and Performance', in *Samuel Beckett's Endgame*, ed. by Mark S. Byron (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 253-74.

was indeed a realist, he was an unconventional one, and it is almost certainly because of this unconventionality, which led some viewers to perceive his works as inaccessible.

In this section, I explore the extent to which the expectations of an average television audience of the 1960s and 1970s were ‘realist’, so as to demonstrate how these home viewers’ expectations were subverted by Beckett’s teleplays, and how this could have concurrently evoked in them an uncomfortable uncertainty that can be translated into an experiential sense of loss.

Members of an audience are not a group of undifferentiated and passive people, therefore there is no easy answer to the questions, ‘What is an audience?’ or ‘Who were Beckett’s audiences?’ Nonetheless, the fact that Beckett’s *Not I*, *Ghost Trio* and *...but the clouds...* were broadcast on ‘a specifically elitist, arts-oriented context on BBC 2’ as part of the ‘Lively Arts Series’ in Britain on 17 April 1977, suggests to me that its target audience could be people who were already familiar with the hermeneutic requirement of the channel’s programmes.¹⁰ An ideal audience would therefore be, in that context, a home viewer who was expecting thought-provoking televisual content and who, armed with a few ideas of what questions a work of art might ask, was prepared to engage with the teleplays on an intellectual level. Thus, such an ‘ideal’ audience of a Beckettian teleplay is also referred to in this chapter as the engaged audience. This does not then mean that the disengaging viewer whom I am specifically examining in this chapter was not ideal and did not possess the intellectual curiosity to engage with Beckett’s teleplays. Logically, by virtue of tuning to this channel at a specific time to catch the teleplay the home viewer was likely to be more or less prepared to intellectually interrogate a work of art presented by the programme. Nonetheless, the unfavourable ratings his teleplays received indicate that there

¹⁰ Gardner, p. 187.

is something about Beckett's works, which seems to have turned some of these viewers' curiosity into frustration.

Bignell has established that whereas some viewers found the ambiguity of his teleplays fascinating, others became unpleasantly agitated and inclined to disengage from their viewing experiences. I would like to examine this agitated desire to disengage from Beckett's teleplays as possibly caused by an acute empathy with the characters. Examining the concept of empathy in relation to a disengaging audience's negative reception of Beckett's works is important, in my opinion, because it might help to wrestle his television drama from assumptions that they seem only to have an effect on the intellectually engaged. In sum, what I hope to achieve by the end of this chapter is a demonstration of how Beckett's television works seem to be aimed at evoking a shared intuition of loss between the audience and his characters rather than at solely provoking intellectual engagements.

How might an audience empathise with Beckettian characters that reside in a diegetic world so starkly different from the accustomed realism that was employed in most television productions in the mid-twentieth century? We could begin to answer this question by first looking at the domination of realism on television from the late 1950s to the 1970s.

Britain's ITV appealed to popular preference for realism through the production of pre-digested news programmes, television series such as the soap opera *Coronation Street* which has been airing since 1960, as well as teleplays such as those collected in the hugely popular anthology series *Armchair Theatre*, which was broadcast between 1956 and 1974. Renée Dickason points out that '[b]y the early 1960s, television fictions were dealing with the lives and discontents of ordinary people by producing programmes which were examples of what Mal Young may have called British realism but which others, with varying degrees of sympathy for the classes represented and the mode of depiction, were inclined to dub

kitchen sink or social realism.’¹¹ The soap opera genre in particular exemplifies the popular form of realism.

As Andrea Millwood Hargrave and Lucy Gatfield put it, ‘The genre stands out from other television programme types as one in which the audience invests both time and involvement, building relationships with characters over time.’¹² The result, as Nick Perry has it, is that ‘through watching a particular soap opera over time [...] the notion of a soap community comes to be constructed and the audience becomes implicated in it.’¹³ The more the audience is familiar with the characters and their portrayed struggles, the easier it seems to retain the viewer’s interest in the programme for the duration of its run. Dorothy Hobson defines the soap opera as creating ‘the illusion that the characters and the location exist and continue whether the viewers are there or not. They invite their viewers to drop in and see the characters and share their lives, but the illusion depends on the credibility that life goes on, even when the viewers are not watching.’¹⁴ To maintain this credible realism, soap operas encourage a sense of familiarity in the viewer through props, costumes, the portrayal of characters discussing current affairs and their generally recognizable attitudes to issues that are more often than not scripted to mirror those that are prevalent in contemporary British life.¹⁵ The soap opera therefore becomes an illusory extension of the viewer’s immediate reality (hereafter, the immediate reality is also referred to as the extradiegetic world) and the television screen effectively becomes a window that opens to that extended ‘reality’ at a specific time of the day.

¹¹ Renée Dickason, ‘Capturing the “Real” in British Television Fiction: Experiments in/of Realism — An Abiding and Evolving Notion’, *Synthesis 3* (Winter 2011)

<http://www.enl.uoa.gr/synthesis/issue3_Dickason.htm> [accessed 1 Dec 2013], 103-117 (p. 106).

¹² Andrea Millwood Hargrave and Lucy Gatfield, ‘Soap box or soft soap?: Audience attitudes to the British soap opera’, *Broadcasting Standards Commission* (May 2002) <

<http://www.ofcom.org.uk/static/archive/bsc/pdfs/research/soap.pdf>> [accessed 3 Dec 2013], 1-54 (p. 1).

¹³ Nick Perry, *Hyperreality and Global Culture* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 28.

¹⁴ Dorothy Hobson, *Crossroads: The Drama of the Soap Opera* (London: Methuen London Ltd, 1982), p. 33.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

Further, television realism was also taking the form of the one-act drama during this period of time. According to Dickason, '[u]nder the direction of Canadian Sydney Newman, ITV'S *Armchair Theatre* (1956-68) moved away from productions of established classic plays towards contemporary and socially relevant works written specifically for television'.¹⁶ This impetus to engage with the realities of contemporary society was not overlooked when Harold Pinter's *A Night Out* (1960) was included in the anthology series. The realistic sets and portrayal of the relationship between a working class man and his dependent and controlling mother are deemed '[a]n exception' from Pinter's dramatic output by Ronald Knowles because in this play the motivations of characters are 'generally unambiguous' and to Knowles, the play's success could be attributed to 'its adherence to "kitchen sink" realism' which appealed to a general audience.¹⁷ Indeed, as a measure of its appeal, it is worth highlighting that the play, directed by Philip Saville in 1960, 'was viewed by an audience of 6.4 million, a record for a single television drama and, as the author admitted, considerably more than ever saw a Pinter play in a theatre.'¹⁸

Jeremy Sandford's *Cathy Come Home*, directed by Ken Loach as part of *The Wednesday Play* series and first broadcast in 1966 on BBC1, is a cross between realist drama and documentary. Also initiated by Sydney Newman, the then head of drama, and BBC director of television Kenneth Adam, *The Wednesday Play* developed into a series that 'was soon tackling contentious issues head-on, from apartheid and racial prejudice (*Fable*, tx. 27/1/1965), to homosexuality (*Horror of Darkness*, tx. 10/3/1965) and capital punishment (*3 Clear Sundays*, tx. 7/4/1965)'.¹⁹ *Cathy Come Home* follows the grim life of

¹⁶ Dickason, p. 106.

¹⁷ Ronald Knowles, 'Pinter and twentieth century drama', in *The Cambridge Companion to Harold Pinter*, ed. by Peter Raby, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 74- 87 (p. 75).

¹⁸ Mark Duguid, 'Night Out, A (1960)', *BFI Screenonline: The definitive guide to Britain's film and TV history*, <<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/946293/index.html>> [accessed 18 November 2013].

¹⁹ Oliver Wake, 'Wednesday Play, The (1964-70): Long-running, often provocative BBC drama strand', *BFI Screenonline: The definitive guide to Britain's film and TV history* <<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/454700/>> [accessed on 23 January 2014].

the titular character Cathy to broach pressing issues of unemployment, overcrowding, homelessness and the inadequacies of social services. The teleplay's discouragement of the view that homeless people are lazy and lesser citizens of the country suggests its attempt to influence public opinion, and this renders it consciously engaged with the social realities of that time.

Therefore, Pinter and Sandford's plays were very likely chosen to be shown on ITV's *Armchair Theatre* and BBC1 respectively in 1960 and 1966 because of the abovementioned allusions to elements of realities that affected or could potentially affect the audience. The working class protagonist of Pinter's *A Night Out* would appeal to the working class audience members who made up the majority of those who were tuned to ITV on nights when *Armchair Theatre* was televised, and the downward spiralling plight of Cathy from a hopeful working class young woman to a homeless victim of a severely flawed social system in Sandford's *Cathy Come Home* not only articulated but also brought the social issues of the 1960s to the forefront of the audiences' consciousness.

In 1938, Bertolt Brecht intimated that the terms 'popular' and 'realism' are inextricable from each other because "‘Popular’ means intelligible to the broad masses' and realism in literature refers to the representation of life as it is known by the masses."²⁰ Brecht went further to suggest that this however, does not mean that there are 'realist' models from which one can emulate in order to create a realist work. Brecht asserted that

One cannot decide if a work is realist or not by finding out whether it resembles existing, reputedly realist works which must be counted realist for

²⁰ Bertolt Brecht, 'The Popular and the Realistic', in *Brecht on Theatre: The development of an aesthetic*, ed. and trans. by John Willett (Reading: Methuen, 2001), pp. 107-115 (p. 112). Additional information: Originally published in 'Volkstümlichkeit und Realismus', from *Sinn und Form*, Potsdam, No. 4 (1958), and also in *Schriften zum Theater 4*, pp. 149- 61.

their time. In each individual case the picture given of life must be compared, not with another picture, but with the actual life portrayed.²¹

Although Brecht defined the concepts of ‘popular’ and ‘realism’ in the milieu of the interwar years, post-war British television’s appeal to the working class majority through depictions of life as it was known to these audiences evidently situated the spectatorial preferences in the mid-twentieth century in the kind of popular realism defined by Brecht, that is, comparable with ‘the actual life’. Indeed, from the late 1950s, this specific Brechtian influence on British theatre and television drama seemed to be quite significant. Martin Esslin pointed out the possibility that ‘future historians of English drama will describe the period since 1956 as an era of Brechtian influence’.²² This was the year when The Berliner Ensemble first visited London to perform *Mother Courage*. It is noteworthy that during this period of time many established playwrights such as the highly politically engaged Peter Shaffer and John Arden were crossing between theatre and television.

‘A realist work’ may therefore be understood in this chapter as that which the home viewers can relate to as they compare ‘the picture given of life’ with ‘the actual life portrayed’. A realistic representation does not have to be formulaically realistic to appeal to the audience’s preference for the ‘familiar’. Fundamentally, a work of realism needs to possess a distinct political, social and/or cultural relevance to its audience in order to induce and sustain spectatorial engagement.

As such, it is not difficult to see how Beckett’s television plays inadvertently elicited in some viewers the desire to disengage from his works. Unlike the forms of television realism discussed above, there is an absence in Beckett’s teleplays of an overt effort at creating the illusion of being a representation of the home-viewers’ reality, or of any marked interest in the headline events that were transpiring in the viewers’ daily lives. To take as an

²¹ Ibid.

²² Martin Esslin, ‘Brecht and The English Theatre’, *The Tulane Drama Review*, 11.2 (Winter 1966) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1125186>> [accessed 24 January 2014], 63-70 (p. 63).

example, *Ghost Trio*, which was televised on BBC 2's *Lively Arts* programme as a collection of three plays entitled *Shades* on 17 April 1977, opens with a voiceover instructing the viewer to 'Look' and regard the bare room as 'The familiar chamber.'²³ The incongruity here is that the minimalist set would be a stark contrast to an actual living room in which the audience would likely be sitting as the play was being broadcast. Ben-Zvi observes the voiceover that instructs the viewer to notice the rectangular form of the wall, floor and door as reflexively drawing the audience's attention to the rectangularity of the television screen. She adds further that by pointing out to the audience that the rectangular frames of these prosaic objects were similar to that of the television, Beckett was creating a 'world within world [that was] ever expanding – or receding'.²⁴ Here, the television is likened by Ben-Zvi to a window that opens into another world, be it an external or internal one.

By instructing the viewer to compare the objects of the diegetic world with those of their immediate reality, Beckett's play is teaching 'the viewer how to see' and his work, to Ben-Zvi, is essentially 'about the act of seeing'.²⁵ To prevent a reductive understanding of this inferred pedagogical function, Bignell is careful to highlight that what Beckett's television plays offer to the audience as pedagogy is a space that is open to interpretative possibilities.²⁶ Nonetheless, Ben-Zvi maintains that Beckett's media plays are intended to 'reveal' to the audience the 'fractures and fissures' of 'the whole'.²⁷ She asserts that 'media

²³ *Ghost Trio*, dir. by Donald McWhinnie, in *Shades: Three Plays by Samuel Beckett*, performed by Ronald Pickup and Billie Whitelaw, VHS cassette 61.31- 8006144A (British Film Institute, TX date 1977-04-17) [on video cassette].

²⁴ Linda Ben-Zvi, 'Samuel Beckett's Media Plays', *Modern Drama*, 28.1 (1985) <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/modern_drama/v028/28.1.ben-zvi.pdf> [accessed 23 January 2014], 22-37 (p. 34-5).

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Bignell, 'How to Watch Television?: Pedagogy and Paedocracy in Beckett's Television Plays', *Historicising Beckett/ Issues of Performance*, ed. by Marius Buning, Matthijs Engelberts, Sjef Houppermans, et al., *Samuel Beckett Today/ Samuel Beckett Aujourd'hui*, 15 (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2005), pp. 281-293 (p. 288).

²⁷ Ben-Zvi, 'Beckett and Television: In a Different Context', *Modern Drama*, 49.4 (2006) <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/modern_drama/v049/49.4benzvi.pdf> [accessed 25 January 2014], 469-90 (p. 479).

(film and television) are stripped down as far as possible to reveal the nature of the medium and to show what it *doesn't* do: provide clarity and wholeness to “the mess” of life or the world of the self.²⁸

As opposed to the more familiar forms of realist drama examined above, which primary objective seems to be to draw the audience into engaging with the extended or represented ‘reality’ through the depiction of elements that are familiar or relevant to the viewer, implicit in Beckett’s ‘instructive’ television plays, in the light of Ben-Zvi’s perspective, is that television audiences need to be made aware of the medium as a site of an illusory reality constructed by camera positions, sound and lighting effects. In other words, Ben-Zvi is suggesting that Beckett’s plays are aimed at revealing the diegetic reality as a constructed illusion to a generally unsuspecting audience. Bignell also points out that ‘the group most often thought to need this kind of awareness of medium is the child audience’, and referencing 1960s television pedagogy, he draws a connection between Beckett’s television plays and ‘the Modernist pedagogical aims to expand the audiences’ intellectual horizons with a paedocratic discourse that valued childhood and childlikeness as a mode of liberated perception’.²⁹ He suggests that BBC’s scheduling of Beckett’s drama ‘in arts programming slots’ in the 1970s gave Beckett’s works a further ‘pedagogic relation to its audience.’³⁰

In this context, contrary to the more familiar realism between the late 1950s and 1970s which mirrored or overtly reflected contemporary life, I infer from Ben-Zvi and Bignell’s views that Beckett’s television plays seem starkly indifferent to the necessity of pandering to the audience’s partiality to an onscreen illusion that was consistent with her immediate reality because, to teach new ways of seeing meant that his works were not intended to mirror what the audience already knew or expected to know. The vital question

²⁸ Ibid., p. 478. [Italics mine].

²⁹ Bignell, ‘How to Watch Television’, p. 292.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 289.

to ask at this point would be, would a viewer, without prior knowledge of Beckett's supposed Modernist pedagogical leanings, be able to perceive Beckett's purported intention to expose the medium's nature of 'fractures and fissures' as she watched the teleplays? Denis McQuail's work on 'Uses and Gratifications' Theory, which began in 1969 and continues to be influential in media studies today, may be useful in answering this question.

In general, when one turns on the television, one expects to be entertained and/or informed. In fact, according to McQuail, researches in 'Uses and Gratifications' Theory suggest that media usage can be compiled into a non-exhaustive list of 'Media gratifications sought and obtained'. For example, media may be employed for (a) 'Information and education', (b) 'Identity formation and confirmation', (c) 'Social integration' and (d) 'Entertainment'.³¹ Briefly, according to McQuail, (a) information is sought not only to satisfy one's curiosity and interest, but it also provides a sense of security as the audience becomes aware of events that are relevant to the world in which she inhabits.³² In terms of (b) personal identity, the audience may attempt to gain insight into herself or reinforce personal values and beliefs by comparing models of behaviour between her and the people or characters presented in the media.³³ By (c) 'social integration' McQuail is referring to media's provision of common topics from which conversations can be started and enable one to build relationships based on such social interactions.³⁴ In addition, it could also highlight acceptable cultural and social norms that would aid the viewer in developing appropriate social behaviours.³⁵ Lastly, audiences who seek (d) entertainment might use

³¹ Denis McQuail, 'Chapter 16: Audience Formation and Experience', in *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*, 5th edn. (London: SAGE publications, 2005), p. 428.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 490-3.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 493-4.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 494.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

media to attain emotional release, to achieve sexual arousal, or as a way to escape the immediate experience of his reality and particularly its associated stressors.³⁶

Although a significant number of viewers would perceive the entertainment value of Beckett's teleplays in its enigmatic appeal, it is quite likely that there would also be viewers who found it difficult to appreciate his works simply because the familiar gratifications that they were seeking in a television programme could not be immediately obtained from Beckett's television plays. Such perceived lack of appreciation in or intellectual engagement with Beckett's drama is usually cited as just another instance of negative reception that implies spectatorial inattentiveness in his early audience and consequently disengaged from further examination. Nonetheless, I would like to point out that viewers who were instinctively frustrated by their inability to comprehend his works might in fact be experiencing the same sense of loss as his more engaged audiences.

To state plainly, with reference to the spectator's expectations of the uses of media listed above, the rectangularity of the television's frame pointed out by Ben-Zvi, would be of little interest to some viewers and drawing their attention to its form as in *Ghost Trio* would gratify neither their expectation to be entertained nor their desire to be informed. Nonetheless, I am not discounting the possibility that this observation might subsequently help in a spectator's social integration: in that it might make for an entertaining conversation topic as the viewer attempts to move on from her initial frustration with the teleplay's seeming incomprehensibility to try to figure out the significance of the images presented onscreen with her fellow viewers and from there gain further understanding on what the teleplay could be suggesting, or that the perceived 'bizarreness' of the teleplay could become a basis from which a group of viewers establish solidarity in their shared disapproval of the work. However, it is noteworthy that these would only occur after the

³⁶ Ibid., p. 501.

immediate discomfort evoked by the plays and would therefore remain a potentiality that might occur *after* the viewers' initial expectations are disappointed. What this chapter is interested in is that moment of spectatorial discomfort that follows immediately after the audience's general expectations of the teleplays are disappointed.

For an instance of audience discomfort, we return to the opening instructive voice in *Ghost Trio*. Broadcast in 1977, Voice's address, performed by Billie Whitelaw, to the television audience directly might seem interesting to the viewer at first, but almost immediately after the voice's first few instructions, the audience would experience a sense of uncertainty even though the voice had indeed '[stated] the obvious' and the screen had, to a large extent, 'followed' Voice's instructions to present the 'obvious'.³⁷ To demonstrate this, close-ups immediately followed Voice's verbal gestures to the floor, wall and door. The audience would notice that Voice's directions were initially met with the images and movements without a hitch, but would still feel that something was amiss because of the sequence's blatant lack of subtlety. F's fruitless wait for a mystery woman simply referred to by Voice as 'her' would have exacerbated this sense of uncertainty.

At first, the act of waiting would seem to be in itself an unquestionable signifier of Voice's prescience that the mystery woman would not show. This foreknowledge could be inferred from Voice's anticipatory line to the viewer, 'He will now think he hears her'.³⁸ It indicated that Voice already knew that F had not heard 'her' and what swiftly followed was F, played by Ronald Pickup, checking the door and finding no one.³⁹ The words and the images were initially logically consistent in suggesting Voice's prescience, but when F defied Voice's anticipation that he would go to the pallet, by looking at himself in the mirror instead, Voice's unsettlingly protracted and questioning 'Ahhhh?' which lasted about three

³⁷ *Ghost Trio*, dir. by Donald McWhinnie.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Graley Herren, 'Beckett on Television', in *A Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. by S. E. Gontarski (West Sussex: Blackwell, 2010), pp. 389-402 (p. 392).

seconds would have indicated to the audience that she had not known everything beforehand; instead, she had merely been anticipating F's actions. This moment defied Voice's expectation that F would react according to her predictions and it also would have subverted the audiences' expectation that Voice was their authoritative guide in this piece of work. In addition, this significant point in the teleplay would have effectively invoked in the audience an impression of unpredictability that would lead her even further away from her overall expectation of the medium as a direct source from which the various forms of gratifications, as listed above, could be obtained.

The sense of unease inspired by Beckett's teleplays endures even in the stage plays that were adapted for television and this is evident in their incomplete broadcast in 2001. Aleks Sierz observes that, 'After hailing the project as a unique record of the work of a twentieth-century genius, Channel 4 belatedly realized that despite the hype, Beckett's work is not a ratings grabber, and the project was quietly dropped.'⁴⁰ As a result, only six films were televised between March to April 2001 instead of the nineteen that are collected in *Beckett on Film*.⁴¹ Sierz infers from this that Channel 4's solution to 'the tension between the widely perceived "difficulty" of Beckett's work and his fame as a cultural icon' was to '[abdicate] responsibility to the needs of the market'.⁴² I understand this to mean that audience preference ultimately took precedence over public service broadcasting's obligation to introduce the home-viewer to the works of a 'twentieth-century genius'.

Further, Bignell reports that when Channel 4 broadcast the television adaptations of Beckett's theatre plays in 2001, commercials were inserted between the two acts of *Happy Days* and *Waiting for Godot*.⁴³ In the modern age of consumer culture, it is conceivable that

⁴⁰ Aleks Sierz, "'A relevant and cinematographic environment": filming Beckett's plays', in *Three Dialogues revisited*, ed. by Marius Buning, Matthijs Engelberts, Sjef Houppermans et al, *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui*, 13 (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2003), pp. 137-49 (p. 138).

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Bignell, *Beckett on Screen*, p. 167.

the viewer might have felt a sense of relief as she was jolted back to a familiar extradiegesis when she viewed the advertisements that were inserted between Beckett's television plays. Also, consider how the shorter plays might blip from one advertisement to another or be followed by mainstream television programmes with the flick of a button by the viewer. The contrast between the Beckettian landscape and what the regular television viewer was familiar with would have been stark and this in turn would have contributed further to the sense of unease, which Beckett's works already evoked.

Returning to the mid-twentieth century, as indicated in the *Radio Times* BBC 2 TV schedule of 4 July 1966, *Eh Joe?* was televised at 10.20pm between the documentary *Leviathan: The story of the giant steamship 'The Great Eastern'* at 9.50pm and *Newsroom* at 10.40pm.⁴⁴ These programmes were essentially reality rooted in the audience's immediate present. *Shades: Three Plays by Samuel Beckett* in *The Lively Arts* series, according to the *Radio Times* BBC 2 TV schedule of 17 April 1977, was broadcast at 9.00pm between *News on 2: Weather* and the feature film *Medium Cool* at 10.00pm, which was promoted as a 'fictional story' based on the '[r]eal Chicago events of 1968'.⁴⁵ It may be inferred from the juxtaposition of mainstream televisual contents that were familiar to the audience, with the landscapes of Beckett's dramatic material, that the glaring incommensurability generated could be an important reason his works were unfavourably received by viewers who felt confused by and excluded from his unfamiliar images and open-ended narratives. Prompted by his international reputation as an enigmatic playwright, a preconceived expectation of his teleplays' incomprehensibility might have also contributed further to the unfavourable reception.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, it is quite possible that the playwright as well as the people behind

⁴⁴ *Radio Times*, Vol 171/2225 – 1966, British Film Institute (Great Britain: BBC Worldwide, 1966) [on microfilm].

⁴⁵ *Radio Times*, Vol. 215/2788 -1977, British Film Institute (Great Britain: BBC Worldwide, 1977) [on microfilm].

⁴⁶ Bignell, 'How to watch Television', p. 292. He also notes that audiences often found Beckett's works 'inaccessible and boring.'

the adaptation of his stage plays to television had not intended to completely alienate the audience.

Bignell suggests that Beckett did not strictly follow television drama's convention of coding the audience 'as an unacknowledged observer of the action which takes place in a space that is removed from the space of the audience and is not open to the response or reaction of the viewing audience or an audience represented within the programme.'⁴⁷ He observes that Beckett sometimes addressed the audience directly or provided stand-ins for the audience, thus effectively created a 'hybrid' of 'conventionally cinematic and televisual forms of spectatorship.'⁴⁸ Similarly, Sierz notes that Alan Moloney thought that the *Beckett on Film* collection would increase the 'accessibility' of Beckett's works while Michael Colgan felt that the filmed plays could 'reach a different audience, not necessarily a wider one but a different one'.⁴⁹ Both producers of the collection, in their own way, intended for the teleplays to reach out to instead of alienate audiences. Therefore, I think Bignell is right about the audience's hybridity in terms of the possible authorial intention behind the plays' inclusion and exclusion of the viewers at the same time. But to add on to this, I would like to suggest that it is therefore not difficult to imagine that such a hybrid Beckettian spectator would feel a significantly persistent sense of unease as she unknowingly takes on this ambiguous spectatorial position while she is viewing the teleplays.

John O'Neill's equation of the television viewing experience to the allegorical Plato's cave in his sociological examination of the television as a mirror to capitalism is significant at this juncture as it highlights the 'condition in which most of us are generally to be found'; that is, the condition of being prisoners to the shadows cast by the 'fire-light on the wall of the Cave facing them'.⁵⁰ Whereas O'Neill's main focus is on likening the

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Sierz, p. 142.

⁵⁰ John O'Neill, *Plato's Cave: Television and its Discontents* (New Jersey: Hampton Press, 2002), p. 3.

television to the play of shadows on the cave wall, I am interested in the allegory's depiction of the prisoner's adjustment of his eyes to the glare of the sun when he is first released to the surface of the earth and his adjustment to the darkness once he is brought back to the cave. Experiencing the glaring contrast, between the familiar televisual content that is usually produced with an explicit intention of meeting the audience's expectations and Beckett's works that are created with little indication of such intention, is akin to the transition between darkness and light.

This does not, however, necessarily mean that Beckettian television drama is offering the viewer some kind of clear truth against the constructed reality of television. Instead, like Socrates in Plato's *Republic* who hesitates to attribute going to the surface of the earth as 'the mind's ascent to the intelligible realm', Beckett's works do not provide any indication that it is presenting an interpretation of reality that is truer than the one that the audience is already experiencing through the medium.⁵¹ In other words, his works can be regarded as a stark contrast to the shadows on the cave walls, but his plays do not pretend to be more real than the shadows and his audiences are not expected to pick a side either. As I will elucidate further, later in this chapter, what his teleplays offer to the viewer is simulated emotional stimuli, with the firm purpose of inducing the audience to substantially experience a sense of loss as they make the transition between darkness and light. Ben-Zvi states correctly that Beckett's oeuvre is ultimately interested in Being, but it is doubtful, in the context of this chapter, that the television works were from the outset invested with a pedagogical inclination to teach the viewer 'new ways of seeing' as part of this exploration of Being; rather, what his teleplays seem to effect is an evocation of an intuitive fellow-feeling that is rooted in the concept of loss.

⁵¹ Plato, 'Republic, From Book VII', in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Vincent B Leitch et al. (London, New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 2001), pp. 64- 7 (p. 66).

While acknowledging the importance and value of regarding Beckett's television works as having a pedagogical effect, it is also important to be aware that the attribution of such functionality to his art could potentially overlook the non-specialised audience's feelings of being excluded from his teleplays. Thus, it might be useful to expand our understanding of Beckettian television drama outside of its pedagogical function of provoking new ways of seeing, by taking a step back (or inwards) to consider its stimulating effect of triggering a mirror mechanism in his viewers. The phrase 'new ways of seeing' supports the value of his teleplays in so far as it is able to candidly address the intuitive effect of his works on these viewers prior to discursively deriving from the teleplays a pedagogical effect on an ideal audience.

To explain my point further, let us consider the following:

All our appearances seem destined to begin and to end in appearances. This is the dilemma to which *Plato's Cave* is addressed. If we look behind our images we may find no solid reality. Yet, if we surrender ourselves to the "hyper-reality" of appearances, we shall lose the ability to discriminate light from darkness and thereby lose even our own shadow. We therefore desperately need some sort of *tele-vision* that is not a way of "seeing through" the media because of a refusal to be caught looking at them, but a way of seeing further, of seeing longer, and of seeing more steadily the risks we engage if ever we subordinate our intelligence to sensory modes of sight and sound whose own intelligibility has been colonized by agendas that waste the body politic.⁵²

⁵² O'Neill, p. 14.

O'Neill's observation of the uneasy relationship between Americans and the media concluded with a call, not to disavow the media, but for the imperative to be 'vigilant'.⁵³ Interpreting Beckett's television plays as taking part in a paedocratic discourse that exposes the constructedness of the televised images is, in my opinion, similar to suggesting that his works encourage a "seeing through" of these images, without first addressing the penetrative depth that the images of his teleplays are capable of effecting *within* the spectator. Further, I do not endorse a reading of his works as promoting in his viewer a preemptive seeing that is 'further' and 'longer' against the 'risks' of subordinating their senses to the medium either; instead, I posit that the Beckettian teleplays induce the audience to experience within themselves a forgotten condition of loss, or, in other words, induce them to experience a shared pathos that was forgotten or repressed.

O'Neill's idea that 'If we look behind our images we may find no solid reality' suggests that the 'opposite' of the usual way of seeing is the 'new way' of seeing, which would expose the media as incapable of providing, in Ben-Zvi's words, 'clarity and wholeness'. To put this in another way, Ben-Zvi and O'Neill seem to view exposure of absence to be the only alternative perspective to the usual way of seeing. Consequently, I interpret Ben-Zvi's argument as an assumption that the usual way of seeing is equivalent to the audiences' susceptibility to subscribe to a "hyper-reality" of appearances offered by television, and that Beckett's teleplays through exposure of absence are showing the audiences the way out of their perceptual subordination to the dictates of what is presented to them onscreen. However, the following paragraphs will be an analysis of how Beckett's works are not about offering an intricately mapped solution out of the audience's subordination, instead the teleplays seem more likely to be succinctly offering the audience a way to remember, not *what* they have lost, but that they *have* lost.

⁵³ Ibid.

Implicit in the term ‘hyperreality’ coined by sociologist Jean Baudrillard, is the idea of the simulated stimuli. According to Baudrillard, ‘To simulate is to feign to have what one hasn’t’.⁵⁴ He elaborated further that ‘to simulate is not simply to feign’, but also to take on aspects of the simulated subject so much so that the boundaries between the object (the “real”) and its simulation (the “imaginary”) are blurred.⁵⁵ In addition, Baudrillard distinguishes simulation from representation, in that the latter is ‘the reflection of a basic reality’ in which ‘the sign and the real are equivalent’ whereas the former ‘envelops the whole edifice of representation as itself a [pure] simulacrum’ in which ‘the sign as value’, or in other words equivalent to the real, is radically negated.⁵⁶

To Baudrillard, we are living in ‘the world of simulation’ where everything is ‘completely catalogued and analysed and then *artificially revived as though real*’.⁵⁷ Taking Disneyland as an example, he proposed that all of “real” America is contained within this amusement park and that Disneyland is constructed to surreptitiously cloak this “reality” under its childish appeal. As a result, visitors are convinced that the world outside of this ‘infantile world’ is therefore the “real” world, when in fact, ‘real childishness is everywhere’.⁵⁸ He went on to describe Los Angeles as ‘nothing more than an immense script and a perpetual motion picture [that] needs this old imaginary made up of childhood signals and fake phantasms for its sympathetic nervous system’.⁵⁹ The ‘need’ to feed the ‘sympathetic nervous system’ suggests to me that there is a human desire for the myth of reality to sustain a concatenation of meanings that have been and still are being derived from it, in order to render one’s existence logically meaningful. In this sense, if reality is indeed

⁵⁴ Jean Baudrillard, ‘The Precession of Simulacra’, in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Vincent B. Leitch et al. (London and New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2001), pp. 1729- 1741 (p. 1733).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1734.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1736.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1738.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1741.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

‘an immense script and a perpetual motion picture’, then what lies behind these images is possibly the absence of a solid reality, as pointed out in O’Neill’s quotation.⁶⁰

Explicit in the statement above is that the world seems to have lost sight of or lost its reality. To elaborate this further, Baudrillard’s point that people need Disneyland, to take as a hyperbolic example, to convince them that the world outside is “real” further suggests our inkling that reality is a myth. Nonetheless, being so deeply entrenched in an intricately woven script of images, it could be suggested that most of us are unable or reluctant to see that ‘the real’, should it have existed, is irrevocably lost. The Beckettian teleplays, I argue, seem to be primarily concerned with this ‘reluctance to see’ as a sort of collective amnesia, rather than to rhetorically put into question the existence of ‘the real’ or to fruitlessly teach the audience how to see that there is no ‘real’.

In the final line of O’Neill’s chapter ‘Televideo Ergo Sum’, he states that ‘No one knows whether or not TV is real’.⁶¹ If we take into account television programmes’ tradition of attempting to appeal to the audience’s preference for the types of realism defined earlier in this section of the chapter, it is not difficult to see that the distinction between reality and the narratives onscreen is often blurred when one is watching a television programme, be it a single-act play, a soap drama or the evening news. If Beckett’s plays are offering new ways of seeing, it follows that these new ways would to a certain extent aim to clarify the boundaries between reality and representation. However, taking this perspective into consideration, those who have seen Beckett’s works would agree that his television drama raises more questions than it provides answers. To insist that by raising questions, the general audience of his television plays would be immediately inspired to see things in a more intellectually enriched light is akin to suggesting that Beckett’s works could potentially inculcate new habits or criteria of distinguishing reality from representation. In

⁶⁰ O’Neil, p. 14.

⁶¹ O’Neill, p. 183.

my view, Beckett's television drama is fundamentally incapable of being pedagogically functional in that context; instead, his teleplays are interpreted in this chapter as subscribing to an aesthetic of loss, which adopts the simulation effect offered by the medium in order to remind and reflect back to the viewers *their* mass amnesia.

With reference to Andreas Huyssen's work on the "monument" as "a substitute site of mourning and remembrance" in the context of the Holocaust, Mark Taylor-Batty has it that Sarah Kane's *Blasted* and Harold Pinter's *Ashes to Ashes* '[activate] acts of remembrance' by leading the audience to contemplate ethical issues related to events happening around them 'without overtly relating the action of their plays to contemporary political events'.⁶² In other words, the audience member's engagement with the contemplation of ethical issues is facilitated by theatre rather than directed by it. As such, a 'pathetic space' within the spectator is created to allow her to consider these issues with empathy *and* objectivity.⁶³ However, like the reflective screen of the television, I observe that Beckett's monument to loss in relation to his teleplays, mirror the audience's state of amnesiac loss. Unlike Kane and Pinter's dramatic works' covert engagement with politics through the activation of their audiences' contemplation of ethics in the 'impossible events' that are set up in the diegetic worlds, Beckett's engagement is with the reflection of loss as it is, subject-less, save for a residual inkling that it once *was*.

This monument to loss therefore does not offer any direction or facilitation as to how the audiences could recover from the collective loss of memory in relation to the ability to distinguish between representation and 'the real'. Instead, by persistently thwarting the audience's expectations of the teleplays, Beckett's television plays induce the spectator to consciously experience her amnesiac condition through an embodiment of a sense of

⁶² Mark Taylor-Batty, 'How to Mourn: Kane, Pinter and Theatre as Monument to Loss in the 1990s', in *Ethical Speculations in Contemporary British Theatre*, ed. by Mireia Aragay and Enric Monforte (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 59-75 (p. 69 and p. 74).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

uncertainty and futility. Baudrillard's example of a psychosomatic's production of disease symptoms without being really sick, indicate the human potential to simulate certain qualities of the real without being the real. In the next section of this chapter, I posit that Beckett's television plays exploit the medium's capacity to influence the audience through precisely such an enactment of an embodied emotional simulation in order to remind the audience of their loss.

5.2 THE AESTHETIC OF LOSS AND THE AUDIENCE'S COLLECTIVE AMNESIA

'Habit is a great deadener' that leads to the audiences' amnesiac condition.⁶⁴

Episodes of amnesia occur frequently in the fictional worlds of Beckett's oeuvre, but the 'reminder' as a recurring motif distinctly permeates his television plays. It is important to note that the reminder does not only convey nostalgia for the past, it is more often than not a decentering jolt that reminds the habits and routines obsessed characters and audiences that this nostalgia is for a partially or completely forgotten past. It is precisely through this reminder in the form of disembodied voices, futilely repetitive movements and/or worn objects, that the often-clueless protagonists and the always-uncertain audience are induced to experience a discomfiting sense of irretrievable loss.

Beckett's interest in tramps and the notion of loss, as evident in his works, might have been reinforced by the post-World War II influx of *Les Autres* into Paris. As pointed out by Christopher Heathcote, the displaced drifters were an eclectic bunch, 'young or old, fit-to-work or hobbling-and-crippled, on the streets, underfoot'.⁶⁵ Tellingly, their war-wrought displacement from their own communities and their exclusion from the Parisian society rendered them an unwanted reminder of a bloody war which most would rather forget. As a result, like a scab that reminded one of a wound and how it was inflicted, these

⁶⁴ Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, in *The Complete Dramatic Works* (hereafter CDW) (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), p. 84.

⁶⁵ Christopher Heathcote, 'When Beckett Commissioned Giacometti', *Quadrant Online* (2013) <<http://www.quadrant.org.au/magazine/issue/2013/1-2/when-beckett-commissioned-giacometti>> [accessed 20 September 2013].

people were a nuisance to a society that was not only anxious to move on from the horrors of war, but also to overcome the economic and political hardships that inevitably followed immediately after the war. In fact, the extent of post-war France's determination to get back on her feet can be gleaned from her swift economic recovery within two years after her liberation from the Germans. Despite the 'wave of strikes' which began on 10 November 1947 against the new policies that increased the prices of, just to name a few, gas, electricity, railway and subway prices, by 1946 the country was well headed towards *Les Trente Glorieuses* ('The Glorious Thirty').⁶⁶ But in the midst of progress, the displaced were pushed to the back of society's consciousness, which was also the site of forgetting.

In the next few paragraphs, I attempt to distinguish the shared amnesiac condition of loss propounded in this chapter from the 'social amnesia' that might have induced the perspective that Beckett's teleplays are pedagogically instructive. Russell Jacoby defines 'social amnesia' as 'memory driven out of mind by the social and economic dynamic of society' and associates it with the notion of reification in Marxism. He explains that:

Reification in Marxism refers to an illusion that is objectively manufactured by society. This social illusion works to preserve the status quo by presenting the human and social relationships of society as natural — and unchangeable — relations between things. What is often ignored in expositions of the concept of reification is the psychological dimension: amnesia — a forgetting and repression of the human and social activity that makes and can remake society. The social loss of memory is a type of reification — better: it is *the* primal form of reification. "All reification is a forgetting."⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Samuel Beckett to George Reavey, 18 November 1947, in *The Letters of Samuel Beckett: 1941-1956*, ed. by George Craig, Martha Dow Fehsenfeld and Dan Gunn (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 64-5 (p. 65 n 3).

⁶⁷ Russell Jacoby, *Social Amnesia: A Critique of Contemporary Psychology from Adler to Laing* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1997), p. 4.

He goes on to suggest that reification has its roots in capitalism whereby “needs” purported by the system of commodity exchange are quickly becoming reified as products offering instant gratification to the masses. These commodities once consumed become obsolete and are swiftly forgotten to give way to newer products with the same aim to temporarily gratify the desires that are constructed by the system.⁶⁸ The television is also included in Jacoby’s list of culpable capitalist devices that encourage a conformist psychology by turning people away from the individual and towards state and media manufactured illusions of needs that can supposedly be satisfied through mass production and consumption. Although Jacoby is criticised for his pessimistic perspective of his twentieth-century contemporary women and men, as well as for his nostalgic and almost utopian view of the nineteenth century, his concept of ‘social amnesia’ highlights the significant assumption of ‘audience passivity’ that is shared by late twentieth century media effects studies.⁶⁹ The assumption of media effects on the passive audience is referred to as research that is ‘conducted within a “hypodermic needle” paradigm’.⁷⁰ Writing in the year 2012, Jonathan Gray and Amanda D Lotz suggest that ‘[t]he style of such work should be familiar to all readers, since it is still going strong to this day, and the press has long been fond of reporting on it’.⁷¹

Reports on media effects usually takes the form of ‘such-and-such a university has “proven” that television leads to more permissive ideas of sex or violence, for instance, with X percent of those studied showing a prominent change in sexual or aggressive behaviour’.⁷² Therefore, in the context of the quotation above taken from Jacoby’s work, the ‘social loss of memory’ as ‘a type of reification’, could be a reference to the concept that humans have lost their capacity to resist objectification as they and their social relationships are being reified into commodities by the capitalist system. In the perspective that is based on the

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Jonathan Gray and Amanda D Lotz, *Television Studies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), p. 58.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., p. 58-9.

'hypodermic needle' paradigm, the passive viewer's subscription to messages of mass culture could have induced the forgetting of what it means to possess autonomy and to experience non-conformance. Thus, it follows that a sign of social amnesia can be inferred from the discomfort that the seemingly passive audiences experience as they watch a Beckettian teleplay because it does not conform to the usual televisual contents that they are conditioned to be familiar with. One perspective that has been extended from such an interpretation is that Beckett's television plays thus offer a pedagogical opportunity for the audience to examine the constructedness of the daily narratives that are being propagated by a state and media with their own agendas.

However, such an assertion neglects the penetrative mirror effect of Beckett's plays that seeks first and foremost to reflect back and consequently remind the audience of their mass amnesia; that is, rather than offering an exposé on what is wrong with societies and their array of ideologies, Beckett's works might be a reminder to the hybrid audience of her habit-ridden state of amnesia. To reiterate, in the following paragraphs, I will demonstrate that Beckett's teleplays do not seem to be offering a critique of or solution to this amnesia; instead, his interest in displaced people whom the amnesiac audience is likely to overlook in their daily lives suggests that the teleplays might be implying that the amnesiac spectators are as displaced as the Beckettian tramps since what they have in common is a shared condition of loss.

In *Eh Joe*, the possibility that Voice represents Joe's guilty conscience would not escape the viewer since this is implied in Voice's haunting reminder to him of his culpability in the suicide of a girl. But there is definitely one more factor that would emotionally influence the viewer to arrive at a more empathic response to this culpability and these are the close-ups on Joe's facial expressions as he is being derided by Voice for his past mistakes. According to Beckett's specific directions regarding Joe's facial expressions, the actor playing Joe should be

Practically motionless throughout, eyes unblinking during paragraphs, impassive except in so far as it reflects mounting tension of *listening*. Brief zones of relaxation between paragraphs when perhaps voice has relented for the evening and intentness may relax variously till restored by voice resuming.⁷³

Together with Joe, played by Jack MacGowran in the 4 July 1966 broadcast of the teleplay on BBC 2, the audience might experience the ‘mounting tension of *listening*’ to Voice (Siân Phillips).⁷⁴ The close-ups would have significantly contributed to the viewer’s feelings of unease as the disembodied voice continues her bitter description of Joe’s misdeeds. Not surprisingly, the importance of the close-up on Joe’s facial expressions did not elude Atom Egoyan, the director of *Eh Joe* at the 2013 Edinburgh International Festival. The television play was adapted for theatre and Joe’s face, played by Michael Gambon, was projected onto a large screen house-right of Joe and his bed. One audience member commented that ‘When you’re watching his tears, when you’re watching the expressions on his face, you can’t help but be there with him [...]’.⁷⁵

In Beckett’s theatrical notes, the lines ‘Out of sight, reach. Fear of dark.’ are according to the editorial notes ‘the dramatic spine’ of *Eh Joe*.⁷⁶ When Voice sinisterly uttered the words, ‘You’re all right now, eh?... No one can see you now No one can get at you now.... Why don’t you put out that light?... There might be a louse watching you’ in the 1966 teleplay directed by Alan Gibson and by Beckett himself (uncredited), the audience would be aware that Joe was under the assumption that by being out of sight, he would be out of the reach ‘of any potential perceiver, and so be still, at peace’; but Joe was

⁷³ Beckett, *Eh Joe*, in *CDW*, pp. 359- 67 (p. 362).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ ‘*Eh Joe* – audience reaction’, *Edinburgh International Festival 2013* < <http://www.eif.co.uk/ehjoe> > [accessed 8 December 2013].

⁷⁶ Beckett, *The Theatrical Notes of Samuel Beckett: The Shorter Plays*, ed. by S. E. Gontarski, Vol. 4 (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1999), p. 266.

nonetheless confronted by yet another problem as a result of being out of sight, he must face his fear of darkness, and it was the vindictive Voice's taunt that would make this fear apparent to the viewer.⁷⁷ As the sound of the voice and Joe's facial expressions were being heard and watched by the viewer, the television audience would be implicated in Joe's experience of guilt and fear. Joe was depicted as caught between the contradictory desire to be alone and the fear of being alone in the dark, whereas the audience might be caught between the contradictory inability to know for certain the point that the play was trying to get at and the, not fear but, discomfort of experiencing an inexplicable sense of empathy for the character as the mirror mechanism was triggered in her. In other words, the 1966 audience would be caught in a contradictory empathic response to a predicament they could not completely understand, and I posit that this could be likened to the condition of the retrograde amnesiac, who is caught between the frustrating states of knowing and not knowing.

As established in the first section, McQuail's observation that we monitor ourselves through television might lead us to see and search for ourselves in representations onscreen. Such representations in mainstream television often come in the form of general narratives that allow us to compare ourselves with different characters based on their depicted circumstances and actions. Lev Kuleshov's experiment, also known as the Kuleshov effect, not only attests to the audience's propensity to project their own emotions on images, but also their suggestibility in the face of a montage sequence composed of one recurring close-up on an unchanging expression and the juxtaposition of this with close-ups on emotive subjects (a child in the coffin and a beautiful woman on a divan) and non-emotive objects (a bowl of soup). Applying this understanding of reciprocal projection between the audience and filmic sequences to the possible spectatorial experience of viewing Joe's close-ups, as

⁷⁷ *Eh Joe?*, dir. Alan Gibson and Beckett (uncredited), performed by Jack MacGowran and Siân Phillips (British Film Institute, tx. 4/7/1966) [on video cassette].

performed by Jack MacGowran in 1966, it is conceivable that the teleplay's audience would be emotionally influenced by the actor's expressions of 'mounting tension' and relaxation just as the 2013 audience member referenced above could not 'help but be there with [Joe/Michael Gambon]'.

Giacomo Rizzolatti and Laila Craighero's neurophysiological data backed findings that '[w]hen we observe others, we enact their actions inside ourselves and we share their emotions' supports the idea that humans are endowed with a 'mirror mechanism'.⁷⁸ In the case of the television viewer, this mirror mechanism could influence her to experience her interpretation of how Joe is feeling. The attentive audience member might experience 'identification', which Jonathan Cohen defines in mass communications studies terms as a 'mechanism through which audience members experience reception and interpretation of the text from the inside, as if the events were happening to them.'⁷⁹ The term brings to mind Sigmund Freud's concept of 'libidinal investment' and Jacques Lacan's concept of 'identification'. Cohen sums up Freud, Richard Wollheim and Bruno Bettelheim's concepts of 'identification' as 'an imaginative experience in which a person surrenders consciousness of his or her own identity and experiences the world through someone else's point of view' and that 'the varying intensity of identification reflects the extent to which one exchanges his or her own perspective for that of another and is able to forget him- or herself.'⁸⁰ Thus, to a certain extent, it might be possible to simplistically interpret Joe's guilty and fearful expressions as capable of evoking similar emotions in the attentive audience and perhaps a mild sense of discomfort in the less engaged viewers. Indeed, such an interpretation would not neglect to take into account that the intensity of these emotions evoked by Beckett's

⁷⁸ Giacomo Rizzolatti and Laila Craighero, 'Mirror neuron: a neurological approach to empathy', in *Neurobiology of Human Values*, ed. by Jean-Pierre Changeux et al. (Berlin: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2005), pp.107-123 (p. 119).

⁷⁹ Jonathan Cohen, 'Defining Identification: A Theoretical Look at the Identification of Audiences with Media Characters', *Mass Communication and Society*, 4.3 (2001) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S15327825MCS0403_01> [accessed 8 December 2013], 245-64 (p. 245).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 248.

works would vary depending on the audience's intellectual and emotional investment in the teleplays.

However, Bignell points out that television analysis has gradually abandoned 'notions of the spectator's identification with the projection apparatus as a source of vision, identification with the camera as perceiving subjectivity, and identification with on-screen characters as fantasised and desired subject-positions for the spectator' because the television audience is considered to be 'a glancing and often inattentive spectator.'⁸¹ He asserts that Beckett's drama 'involves the intense engagement of the addressee with the programme as a text, largely detached from the extended social reality of the viewing experience and dependent on the viewer's absorption and concentration on the programme.'⁸² Therefore, identification would not be possible if the spectator is unable to, in Cohen's words, surrender her consciousness in exchange for the characters'.⁸³ Nonetheless, contrary to Bignell and Cohen's assertion of a need for an audience to surrender her consciousness in exchange for a character's point of view so as to effect identification, I would argue that since the amnesiac condition which the viewers share with most of Beckett's characters is already residing within her, she is not required to give up her consciousness of her immediate reality in exchange for the characters'. Instead, her amnesiac condition is elicited from its state of repression and brought into her consciousness by the teleplay through 'empathy' with the characters. The frustration that is normally associated with incomprehension could have been induced by the mentally juxtaposed discordance between an inexplicably empathic sense of loss evoked by the teleplays and her existing state of a habit-driven consciousness.

Bruce McConachie employs the terms 'empathy' and 'conceptual blending' to describe the audience's viewing experience. By 'empathy', he is referring to how

⁸¹ Bignell, *Beckett on Screen*, p. 166.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Cohen, p. 248.

theatregoing spectators ‘put themselves in the shoes of many other people, past and present, in order to understand and judge their actions’.⁸⁴ In addition to the actors, these ‘people’ also include the playwright, director and designers. Attributing these terms specifically to the theatregoing experience, he elaborates further that ‘[b]y themselves, characters have no bodies’ and the spectators do not empathise with them directly; instead, empathy with the characters depends on the spectator’s ability to ‘blend’ the ‘flesh-and-blood actor with the author’s character’.⁸⁵ Conceptual blending is therefore a combination of a spectator’s ‘mental concepts of a specific actor with a specific character to create a blended actor/character’.⁸⁶ Nonetheless, McConachie does not seem to go far enough to suggest that conceptual blending and empathy would also allow the audience to concurrently embody the actor/character in her mind and her body as she views a play.

In other words, the blended result is in fact actor/character/spectator. More significantly, when confronted with a faceless or fragmented Beckettian actor/character, the spectator’s intuitive propensity to subsume this ambiguous Beckettian blend into her mind and subsequently attempt to understand the character through the actor’s motor significances, further suggests that the Beckettian fragments are capable of luring the spectator into physically empathising with the characters as though the subject of her empathy is herself. As opposed to identification, empathy does not require the audience to efface her consciousness from the spectatorial experience. This will be elaborated further in the following paragraphs.

I agree that it is important to address the possibility that in the experience of the Beckettian drama-induced state of uncertainty, the audiences might experience varying degrees of empathy with the predicaments of the characters depending on the extent of their engagement with the teleplay. However, it is noteworthy that contrary to ‘identification’,

⁸⁴ Bruce McConachie, *Theatre and Mind* (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), p. 55.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

‘empathy’ as it is discussed in the context of this chapter is not invoked because the characters are seen by the audience as occupying an intellectually surmised ‘desired subject-position’; rather, empathy is invoked because the audiences are, unbeknownst to them, *already* intuitively occupying the same amnesiac positions as the characters. Taking into account the variable intensity of the audience’s investment in each play, one could perhaps point out that the erudite audience would experience an intense empathy with the characters, whereas the less informed spectator would experience empathy in a lesser degree.

Nonetheless, if we are too caught up with an elitist or self-defeating perspective, which maintains that only the learned are capable of receiving what Beckett’s teleplays have to offer, we run the risk of not articulating the audiences’ direct and intuitive experience of a shared sense of loss regardless of their level of intellectual engagement with the teleplay.

More importantly, although this intuitive experience may occur in snatches as the home viewer’s attention fluctuates between engagement and disengagement, this does not mean that the audience member who experiences a mounting desire to disengage from the teleplay is being inattentive. Frustration as an expression of confusion can be a strong indication of a failed attempt to know, instead of inattentiveness. The audiences’ inherent capacity to simulate or in Baudrillard’s words ‘to feign to have what one [thinks one] hasn’t’, in order to then experience their amnesia could occur during these oscillations between a vague understanding and utter confusion. That is, as an amnesiac who has forgotten her amnesia, the viewer may be inclined to empathise with the characters onscreen once she slips herself into a Beckettian character’s shoes and experiences the ambiguity of that character’s motor significances through the conceptual blending of actor/character/spectator. Consequently, having an inexplicable empathy for an ambiguous subject results in a frustrating sense of loss, which is understood in this chapter as the kind of frustration that is normally associated with an amnesiac’s emotional state.

In addition, steep with audience expectations of immediate gratifications, it is conceivable that the television might have been a mass medium employed by Beckett for its immense potential of triggering the viewer's mirror mechanism from the immediate outset of any television programme. But this mirror mechanism is not maintained by a representation of the surficial familiar in Beckett's teleplays; instead it is reconstituted into empathy by way of subversion. As such, it is possible that Beckett might have expected that his audience would assume even before the teleplay began that the characters would be potentially familiar or pleasure-giving objects. This assumption is then subverted by the play in order to push the audience into trying to understand the actor/character's movements and lines by way of conceptual blending. As a result, the spectator is induced to experience their forgotten amnesiac condition through the blending of actor/character/audience. The spectator's experience of the amnesiac state will be elaborated more specifically as similar to the experience of the prosopagnosic in the later part of this section.

For now, the important point to bear in mind is that although as a result of the blending the audience might begin to register a keener sense of familiarity in the characters' predicaments, Beckett's teleplays do not offer any certitude. A viewer would remain unable to completely bridge the obvious disjunction between the Beckettian characters' disjointed narratives and her relatively coherent state of being. In the next two paragraphs, I explain the spectator's assumption of a personally coherent life narrative by examining the intersection between Lacanian Identification and consumer culture. From there, I propose that it is likely that Beckett was aware of the television's important role as a medium that drives a society's metanarrative, and that he exploited its influence, rather than questioned its function, for the purpose of evoking a fellow-feeling of loss in his viewers.

As I have established in Chapter 3, in Lacan's concept of the identity formation stage of the infant, a 'fictional' ideal-*I* that is reflected by the mirror as a total form of a body which is contrary to the infant's actual 'motor impotence and nursling dependence', is

created.⁸⁷ This illusion of wholeness will then become an important goal to achieve through the individual's social interactions and relations later in his life.⁸⁸ As I have stated earlier in this chapter, the consumerist culture, which is mainly regulated and perpetuated by mass media, promises the viewer that the desire for wholeness can be gratified through the consumption of commodities. Thus, juxtaposing this notion with Lacan's concept of identification, it is not difficult to infer that consumerism could be reinforcing and sustaining the illusion embedded early in our lives that self-cohesion is attainable.⁸⁹ To indicate the potential intensity of identification in the context of consumerism even further, Siegfried Zepf observes that an "identity of commodities" could form in an individual if he is influenced by the commodified figures portrayed in mass media to develop his identity through a process that is mediated by commodities instead of through more personal means.⁹⁰ In addition, Yannis Stavrakakis's work on the relationship between consumerism and psychoanalysis provides an even clearer picture on how the beginning of consumerist culture was supported through an 'appropriation of psychoanalytic ideas' to better understand consumer behaviour and develop 'some of the most important pillars of contemporary capitalism'.⁹¹

Although the debates regarding the relationship between consumerism and psychoanalysis fall outside the scope of this chapter, it is important to point out that this climate of doubt against consumer culture and its perpetuation by mass media has persisted since at least the mid-twentieth century. Therefore, I suspect that since Beckett's works were written, performed and broadcast against this backdrop of suspicion of the radio and

⁸⁷ See Chapter 3, Section 2.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ See Siegfried Zepf, 'Consumerism and identity: Some psychoanalytical considerations', *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 19.3 (2010) <<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/08037060903143992> >[accessed 18 February 2014], 144-54 (p. 144).

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Yannis Stavrakakis, 'Objects of Consumption, Causes of Desire: Consumerism and Advertising in Societies of Commanded Enjoyment', *Gramma/Γράμμα: Journal of Theory and Criticism*, 14 (2006) <<http://www.enl.auth.gr/gramma/gramma06/stavrakakis.pdf> > [accessed 18 February 2014], 83- 105 (p. 85).

television's powerful influences, he might have been aware of the potential power of mass media to reach out and influence the minds of the viewers. Ulrika Maude also seems to support the perspective that Beckett's interest in television might have been influenced by its reach to a larger audience when she points out that Beckett's first television play *Eh Joe* was not commissioned by BBC and that 'although relatively pleased with *Film*, [he] was disappointed with its limited distribution, which may in part have triggered the turn to the far more popular medium of television, whose potential for close-ups had interested Beckett for some time.'⁹²

Further, in his 1959 RAI Prix Italia prize acceptance speech for his radio play *Embers*, Beckett mentioned that he did not 'ordinarily write for radio, but [he thought] that it is a medium which has not been fully exploited and that there are great possibilities for writers in this form of expression.'⁹³ Although the television as a medium was not mentioned and he did not write for that medium until 1965, it is conceivable that his statement about radio could be transposed to the television as a medium that he would like to 'exploit' as 'a form of expression'. As Beryl S. Fletcher et al point out, when *Eh Joe* was first broadcast in 1966 the play initially was not very well received, '[s]ince then, however, most people have congratulated Beckett on his success, his first attempt, in exploiting the medium to the full.'⁹⁴ Effectively, these perspectives support my assertion that the medium might have been of interest to Beckett because it offered the opportunity to be exploited as a vehicle of artistic expression, rather than as a politically or socially scandalous instrument that was ripe for a dramatic exposé. Thus, in terms of his employment of the television

⁹² Ulrika Maude, "Crazy Inventions": Beckett on TV', *Journal of Beckett Studies*, 18 (2009) <<http://www.euppublishing.com/doi/pdfplus/10.3366/E0309520709000235>> [accessed 1 December 2013], 1-9 (p.1).

⁹³ Beckett, '1959 RAI Prix Italia prize acceptance speech', *The Paris Review* <<http://theparisreview.tumblr.com/post/67861547345/listen-to-samuel-beckett-accept-the-prix-italia>> [accessed 1 December 2013].

⁹⁴ Beryl S. Fletcher and John Fletcher, *A Student's Guide to the Plays of Samuel Beckett* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), p. 186.

medium, it is possible that instead of trying to go against the grain, he was trying to embrace its influential reach so as to lead his audience to intuitively experience a fellow-feeling of loss.

Unlike images in mainstream televisual content which tend to assert a normative social influence on the viewer, the Beckettian images are bare with neither social conformity as an answer to the viewer's search for cohesion nor the promise that self-cohesion is even possible. Consequently, instead of the fictional image of wholeness that the Lacanian infant is seeing in the mirror, the mirror mechanism that is reconstituted in the audience as she is watching Beckett's television plays may set in motion the Beckettian viewer's recognition of her own fragmentation. The attribution of prosopagnosia, or face blindness, to the relationship between the audience and the Beckettian characters mentioned in an earlier paragraph stems from the idea that it is an incurable condition, which entails the forgetting of a very specific aspect of one's physical being, namely, the face, while leaving everything else intact. Its incurability is significant in its association with Beckett's teleplays because it highlights my postulation that his works do not propose a solution or a cure to mass amnesia; instead, what his works seem to be articulating to *both* the engaged audience and the audience who edge towards disengagement is an amnesiac loss, as it is. Whereas the engaged audience may arguably excavate more meaning from Beckett's television plays than the ones who feel frustratingly excluded, I maintain that this inescapable and intuitive sense of loss would influence both sets of audiences.

Following Peter Fifield, Dustin Anderson also observes the similarity between Beckett's characters and the sufferers of Cotard's and Capgras's syndromes, and briefly mentioned prosopagnosia in relation to these conditions.⁹⁵ Sufferers of Cotard's syndrome

⁹⁵ Peter Fifield, 'Beckett, Cotard's Syndrome and the Narrative Patient', *Journal of Beckett Studies*, 17 (2008) < <http://www.eupublishing.com/doi/pdfplus/10.3366/E0309520709000120> > [accessed 30 January 2014], 169-186; Dustin Anderson, 'Remembering to Forget: The Event of Memory in Joyce and Beckett'

believe that they are dead, do not exist or had all of their blood and organs removed from the body, whereas Capgras's syndrome refers to the condition whereby patients believe that a doppelganger or an imposter has replaced himself or someone close to him. Pointing out that both syndromes sometimes entailed prosopagnosia, Anderson goes on to suggest that O in *Film*, the Speaker in *A Piece of Monologue* and Moran who does not recognise himself as Molloy in *Molloy*, display this 'dissociation' like the kind that can be found in the abovementioned syndromes.⁹⁶ To Anderson, prosopagnosia in Beckett's oeuvre can be observed in the characters' inability to recognise the faces of others and/or one's own face, but I would like to point out that the kind of prosopagnosia that metaphorically connects the viewers with Beckett's characters in his teleplays involves the viewers' inability to recognise themselves in the characters.

Extending this condition to the context of this chapter's analysis of Beckett's teleplays, face blindness is employed here as a metaphorical condition that occurs between the audience as the prosopagnosic and the characters as the unrecognisable self-image. In addition, my earlier examination of expectations of televisual content that are entrenched in the minds of the viewers indicates that her inclination to see herself in the television characters and her inability to completely identify with Beckett's characters may be described as an *acquired* prosopagnosia. As opposed to congenital or developmental prosopagnosia which may or may not involve an impairment in the ability to recognise emotions, the audience's metaphorically acquired inability to completely recognise themselves in the Beckettian characters shares an affinity with prosopagnosia research on the idea that 'identity recognition and emotion recognition are performed by separate

(unpublished doctoral thesis, Florida State University, 2010) <
<http://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3636&context=etd>> [accessed 30 April 2014], p. 19.
⁹⁶ Anderson, *ibid.*

processes.⁹⁷ The audience member empathises with the emotions of the characters, but is unable to completely see that the characters are images of themselves in a bare state of fragmentation. Intriguingly, the viewers' contradictory experience of this dissociated recognition could be similar to the amnesiac's frustrating retention of a sense of familiarity in experiences that she can no longer remember, like a half-remembered dream.

5.3 EMPATHY

In Trish McTighe's description of Beckett's portrayal of the imagined hands in the right-hand corner of the screen in *Nacht und Träume*, she points out that Beckett had adopted a 'Chinese box effect, where images exist within images'.⁹⁸ The 'dream box', which opens up within the play is also likened by McTighe to a window opening within the window of the television screen 'that emphasises the meta-filmic quality of Beckett's television plays.'⁹⁹ I agree with her description, but one important question that ought to be asked is 'what is the significance of an extended box of images (right hand corner scene) within a box of images (the diegetic scene) that is within a box of images (the extradiegetic scene of the living room in which the television resides), if it is not to demonstrate that the diegetic world is an extension of the audience's immediate reality?' Just as how towards the end of a gyre is a diminished section of the same coil, the arrangement of the Beckettian television images allows the viewer to retain a bizarrely nostalgic sense of the familiar precisely because it is an extremely diminished form of the familiar. Despite the seeming unfamiliarity of the Beckettian universe on the television screen to an audience who had no prior exposure to his works, I posit that the dramatic landscape is not an opposite, but a

⁹⁷ Bradley C Duchaine et al, 'Normal recognition of emotion in a prosopagnosic', *Perception*, 32 (2003) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1068/p5067>> [accessed 26 September 2013], 827-838 (p. 828); see also Marius V. Peelen et al, 'Emotional attention in acquired prosopagnosia', *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 4.3 (2009) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/scan/nsp014>> [accessed 26 September 2013], 268-77.

⁹⁸ Trish McTighe, '*Noli Me Tangere*: Haptic Certitude in Beckett's *Eh Joe* and *Nacht und Traume*', *Modern Drama*, 55.2 (2012) <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/modern_drama/v055/55.2.mctighe.pdf> [accessed 30 December 2013], 216-229 (p. 226).

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

reduced state of the familiar. The type of realism that can typically be found in mainstream television from the mid-twentieth century to the present day therefore differs from Beckettian works in terms of form, but not necessarily content in its entirety. Hobson points out that ‘Two familiar but contradictory statements are often heard about soap operas. Apparently "nothing happens" in them, they just crawl along from one banal situation to another. Conversely, they are said to thrive on continual crises, leaping from one terrible scene of domestic trivia to another.’¹⁰⁰ I think something similar but much more pared down could be said about Beckett’s television plays.

Daniel Albright observes that *Eh Joe* ‘feels like a melodrama performed under intense light in a sterile operating room’.¹⁰¹ Although Albright goes on to assert that after this play, Beckett’s later teleplays lost the melodramatic quality to become more abstracted, I posit that *Ghost Trio* (1975), *...but the clouds...* (1976), *Quad I & II* (1981) and *Nacht und Träume* (1982) arguably retain diminished spectres of melodramatic affects. In Benjamin Kohlmann’s examination of the relationship between melodrama and modernist theatre, particularly the works of Brecht, W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, he observes that following Adorno’s assertion that modernist texts demanded a ‘detached “aesthetic experience” (“ästhetische Erfahrung”)’ which ‘excludes sentimentality and the “simulated feelings” of commodified “kitsch”, much scholarship about modernism has bracketed questions of affect and emotion.’¹⁰² It is an ongoing (or, to some, now deemed unnecessary) debate whether Beckett was a modernist, postmodernist, or an artist residing at the cusp between the two, but Kohlmann’s observation is significant regardless of one’s scholarly persuasion since Beckett criticism has never strayed too far from an understanding that the Beckettian universe is tragic. Understated sentimentality and opportunities for audience

¹⁰⁰ Hobson, p. 35.

¹⁰¹ Daniel Albright, *Beckett and Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p 132.

¹⁰² Benjamin Kohlmann, ‘Awkward Moments: Melodrama, Modernism, and the Politics of Affect’, *PMLA*, 128.2 (2013) < <http://www.mlajournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1632/pmla.2013.128.2.337>> [accessed 12 February 2014], 337-352 (p. 339).

empathy abound in Beckett's oeuvre, and, in my perspective, should not be 'bracketed' off.

In his essay *Proust*, Beckett defined tragedy:

There is no right and wrong in Proust nor in his world. (Except possibly in those passages dealing with the war, when for a space he ceases to be an artist and raises his voice with the plebs, mob, rabble, canaille.) Tragedy is not concerned with human justice. Tragedy is the statement of an expiation, but not the miserable expiation of a codified breach of a local arrangement, organised by the knaves for the fools. The tragic figure represents the expiation of original sin, of the original and eternal sin of him and all his "socii malorum," the sin of having been born.¹⁰³

Beckett rejected the 'miserable expiation of a codified breach of a local arrangement, organised by the knaves for the fools' because the expiation of 'the sin of having been born' is more miserable in extent since nobody has a chance to avoid the predetermined 'breach' of a predestined arrangement. His idea that 'Tragedy is not concerned with human justice' implies that his notion of tragedy is one that is not partial to specific social or political injustices that are plaguing 'the plebs, mob, rabble, canaille'. It is noteworthy that Beckett's description of Proust as momentarily ceasing to be an artist when he joined the masses in articulating his views on 'the war', might at first connote a dissociation between artistic concerns and the issues that 'the plebs' are concerned with. However, to my mind, severing the connection between art and the politics of a society could be his way of emphasising the non-specificity of our tragedy. That is, if we transpose Beckett's interpretation of Proust's works to his own plays, tragedy to Beckett seems to lie in the unjustifiable 'sin' that haunts us all. Effectively, this relation between tragedy and universality further supports my hypothesis that Beckett's plays are not offering an instructive solution to or constructive

¹⁰³ Beckett, *Proust*, in *The Grove Centenary Edition: Poems, Short Fiction, and Criticism of Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Paul Auster, Vol. 4, 1st edn. (New York: Grove Press, 2006), pp. 511-554 (p. 540).

criticism of any specific audience's perception of a mediatized reality.

Without conflating melodrama with tragedy, I assert that spectres of melodramatic affects are evoked by the tragic landscape of Beckett's teleplays in order to appeal to the emotions of the mass audience. Kohlmann suggests that Brecht, Kurt Weill and Elisabeth Hauptmann's *Happy End* was an attempt 'to incorporate melodrama's commodified affects into the structures of modernist drama' so as to 'negate the negativity of bourgeois-capitalist false consciousness on its own terms by blowing melodramatic sentimentality out of proportion.'¹⁰⁴ Brecht's epic drama may sit more or less comfortably in this description, but Beckett's television drama seems to merely seek to set itself apart from the familiar televisual content that forms a part of the audience's 'false consciousness', without overt criticism. It does so by appealing to the viewer's emotions without giving them a defined plot from which to infer a clear context for feeling these emotions. In so doing, specificity is excluded from his works. Like the *Yohaku*, which is the undrawn space of the Zen monochrome paintings, Beckett's exclusion of specificity could be aimed at including the everyman viewer by excluding overt cultural, societal and political specificity in his works; yet, unlike the *Yohaku*, the blank space in this context is not an invitation to the audience to 'partake in [the] shaping of the whole' image.¹⁰⁵ Instead, the absence of a clear context is part of the amnesiac condition that the teleplays might be alluding to.

Ben Singer points out that 'a common element of melodrama, particularly as it is understood in contemporary film studies' is the 'presentation of strong pathos (i.e., the elicitation of a powerful feeling of pity)'.¹⁰⁶ Singer agrees with Eric Bentley that the pity that is elicited is mainly the *audience's pity for themselves* because pathos is derived 'from a

¹⁰⁴ Kohlmann, p. 344.

¹⁰⁵ Junko Matoba, 'Religious Overtones in the Darkened area of Beckett's Later Short Plays', in *Beckett and Religion*, ed. by Marius Buning, Matthijs Engelberts and Onno Kusters, *Samuel Beckett Today/ Aujourd'hui*, 9 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2000), pp. 31-42 (p. 31).

¹⁰⁶ Ben Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity: Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p. 44.

process of emotional identification or, perhaps more accurately, of association, whereby spectators superimpose their own life (melo)dramas onto the ones being represented in the narrative.¹⁰⁷ However, Beckett's television drama hardly has a distinct narrative for the audience to associate with, therefore the audience cannot identify with the characters through such superimposition. Empathy is the furthest that Beckett's teleplays would take his audience.

The suffering body of the Beckettian character as it is represented by an actor is almost certainly the most distinct aspect of each television play that might perhaps resonate with the audience through the actor/character/audience blending established in the previous section of this chapter. Martin Esslin's attribution of 'absurdity' to Beckett's works, though it is now widely regarded as an overused term in Beckett criticism, implies further that the Beckettian world is, in the first instance, held as a contrast to the audience's assumedly 'logical' extradiegetic world.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, it seems that the most poignant aspect of Beckett's drama that the audience would be able to associate with any certainty as a common quality, is the Beckettian character's embodied *capacity* to experience suffering. However, as I have established in the second section of this chapter, since the amnesiac condition which the viewers share with most of Beckett's characters is already intuitively residing within her, she is not required to give up her consciousness in exchange for the characters'. Therefore, she cannot and there is no need for her to consciously 'superimpose' her own life onto the ones being represented in the narrative in order to identify with the characters. By virtue of spectatorially embodying the actor/character/audience blend, she is empathetically experiencing the play *with* the actor/character. Therefore, instead of the full-blown melodramatic affects invoked through a process of identification, Beckett's viewer may experience spectres of poignant affects through empathy.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd*, 3rd edn. (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), pp. 29- 91 (p. 45).

The characters' experience of bodily suffering through physical deterioration is usually brought on by a profound sense of disappointment, which seems to be the predominant cause of suffering that is invoked by all of Beckett's television works. Even in the world of *Quad I & II*, where there is no dialogue and no distinct faces, the mark of disappointment is apparent. According to Steven Connor, one 'story' has it that when Beckett was watching a playback of the original one-part *Quad* in black and white and in slow motion by technicians who were 'testing the image quality' of the teleplay, he 'suddenly exclaimed: My God, it's a hundred thousand years later!'¹⁰⁹ As a result, he decided to add a second part to the play, *Quad II*, in which the drastic duration that elapsed between the two parts is, I observe, expressed by the loss of colour, a slower pace and a greater arch in the four actors' hunch. Most viewers would not be aware of this 'story' about Beckett's reaction to the playback, and therefore would not know that the two parts that were eventually broadcast represented, for Beckett, the passing of such a colossal amount of time. However, it would not be difficult for the audience to notice the stark contrast between the two parts, especially since Beckett the viewer was the one who added the second part in order to possibly replicate in his audience his experience of the poignant visual contrast between the two parts.

Interestingly, as I was watching *Quad I*, I was more aware of E, or the 'danger zone' when all four actors were pacing about on the screen. The demeanour of each actor only received my attention before and after the other three had entered and exited the screen to leave the lone figure pacing in its consistently anxious yet methodical way. This does not mean that they were less anxious when they were pacing together, but individually, the anxiety became more pronounced and, even without knowing the context, the strange

¹⁰⁹ Steven Connor, 'Slow Going', *Critical Beckett* conference held at the University of Birmingham, 26 September 1998 < <http://www.stevenconnor.com/slow.htm> > [28 September 2013]. This 'story' was told by Reinhart Müller-Freienfels, the director of Süddeutscher Rundfunk, and reported in Katherine Weiss, *The Plays of Samuel Beckett* (London: Methuen Drama, 2013), p. 126.

predicament of the solitary character became more pitiable. Without spoken words, the intermittent loss and gain of companionship in this television play reminded me of Estragon's unforgettable line, 'Don't touch me! Don't question me! Don't speak to me! Stay with me!'¹¹⁰

The four characters in *Quad I & II* hurry pass one another without any form of contact despite being committed to the same routine. The frantic drumbeats of *Quad I* are no longer present in *II* and only the sound of the shuffling feet of the characters remain. In the absence of music and colours, the characters unavailingly persist in their routine. The mysterious E to which the characters seem to converge, remains elusively unreachable since it is both 'a danger zone' in which they might collide and a safe zone that prevents their collision. If we interpret these characters as abstract reflections of our state of existence, the characters' futile movements could be regarded as their search for a 'point' in life that assumedly would eventually bestow respite on the dogged seekers. Nevertheless, representing both danger and safety, E seems to be a dangerous goal that repels and compels the characters at the same time, rendering their movements self-cancelling and resulting in their entrapment within their repetitive movements.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty had it that 'to move one's body is to aim at things through it; it is to allow oneself to respond to their call'.¹¹¹ In the case of *Quad I*, the 'call' is from E and it is possible that the drumming represents its call to the characters. Following this understanding, 'a hundred thousand years later' when the drumming has stopped, the movements in *Quad II* may be interpreted as having become a habitual routine that is heeding the call of nothing. The disappointed endeavour is drained of colours, music and physical energy as the characters shuffle their feet with their heads bowed even lower, not searching anymore, but just simply moving.

¹¹⁰ Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, p. 54.

¹¹¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. from French by Colin Smith, reprint edn. (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 160-1.

Merleau-Ponty also distinguished between the habit-body and the body by stating that:

[...] our body comprises as it were two distinct layers, that of the habit-body and that of the body at this moment. In the first appear manipulatory movements which have disappeared from the second, and the problem how I can have the sensation of still possessing a limb which I no longer have amounts to finding out how the habitual body can act as guarantee for the body at this moment. How can I perceive objects as manipulatable when I can no longer manipulate them? The manipulatable must have ceased to be what I am now manipulating, and become what one can manipulate; it must have ceased to be a thing manipulatable for me and become a thing manipulatable in itself. Correspondingly, my body must be apprehended not only in an experience which is instantaneous, peculiar to itself and complete in itself, but also in some general aspect and in the light of an impersonal being.¹¹²

The habit-body is a projected body, whereas ‘the body at this moment’ is synonymous with the ‘living body’.¹¹³ The ‘impersonal being’, which is the habit-body, is a projection from ‘the living body’ in that the latter acquires a habit through a ‘bodily comprehension of a motor significance’ then incorporates the acquired habit into the body by projecting an assimilated habit-body.¹¹⁴ For example, ‘to learn to type or play an instrument, to become accustomed to a vehicle or a cane or a feathered hat, “is to be transplanted into them, or conversely, to incorporate them into the bulk of the body itself”’.¹¹⁵ This means that the

¹¹² Ibid., p. 95.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 87.

¹¹⁴ Monika M. Langer, *Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1989), p. 47.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

living body is an ‘expressive space’ by which acquired motor knowledge can be incorporated into the body through the power of projection.

According to Colin Smith’s translation, Merleau-Ponty stated that ‘[t]he cultivation of habit is indeed the grasping of a motor significance, but it is the motor grasping of a motor significance.’¹¹⁶ The emphasis on ‘motor grasping’ suggests that motor significance is acquired by the body and not solely by the intellect. The significance of the quotation above to *Quad I & II* lies in Merleau-Ponty’s analysis of the phantom limb. In the quotation, ‘the manipulatory movements’ which ‘the habit body’ could still perceive ‘have disappeared from’ the living body. The living body in the quotation is specifically a body that has lost a limb and therefore no longer has access to the motor functions relevant to that limb. Nonetheless, a subject’s ability to perceive the manipulatory movements between the phantom limb and the object despite no longer possessing the necessary manipulatory movements suggests that the body subscribes to projection and effectively comprises of two layers, the lived body and the projected habit-body.

In the second part of *Quad I & II*, the omissions of music and colour may be interpreted as the removal of potentially symbolic elements that might shed some light for the audience on the characters’ puzzling enterprise. The symbolism is not only potentially significant to the audience but may also have a hidden significance for the characters. Regardless of what they stand or stood for, their removal from the second part of the play is akin to the characters’ as well as the audiences’ loss of potential points of inferences. Whereas the loss of colours and physical speed can be likened to the amputation of a limb with reference to Merleau-Ponty’s analogy, the loss of music to signify the call of E, in particular, may be likened to the removal of the ‘manipulatable object’. Thus, more severe than the case of the phantom limb, the Beckettian characters are effectively deprived of both

¹¹⁶ Merleau-Ponty, p. 143

limb and object. As a result, the characters' tedious persistence in their pursuit of and repulsion from the absent E in part *II* definitively represents to the audience an automatic response built up by habit. Intriguingly, if *Quad II* is indeed a 'projection' of *Quad I* then the characters in *Quad II* may be interpreted as habit-bodies that have lost their lived bodies to the, so far, disappointing reach for E. The fact that part *II* was never written down by Beckett to be published alongside part *I* contributes further to the immateriality of the projected habit-body as spectre. Monika M. Langer has it that, to Merleau-Ponty, it is the power of bodily projection from the living body to the habit-body 'which determines one's entire way of being-in-the-world'.¹¹⁷ Conversely, the elimination of the 'living body' as ground from which to project the exhausted 'habit-body' in the Beckettian play renders the characters' 'way of being-in-the-world' indeterminately suspended, hence interminably disappointing.

It is important to note that, also referencing Merleau-Ponty, Anna McMullan observes in *Performing Embodiment in Samuel Beckett's Drama* that 'Beckett's drama presents embodiment as site and condition of subjectivity, and as performative, constituted through an intercorporeal network of perception and interpretation, of interchanges between selves and others, including between the stage, screen or radio broadcast and the spectator/listener.'¹¹⁸ I understand the 'intercorporeality' examined in her work as largely grounded on interpretations of corporeal performativity and the corporeal reciprocity between Beckett's characters and between the actors/characters and the audience. This seems to lend support to the actor/character/spectator conceptual blending in which imagined embodiment can traverse the space between the television screen and the audience. To expand this further, I maintain in the following paragraphs that an empathic sense of loss is evoked in the trans-corporeality between the characters and the television audience.

¹¹⁷ Langer, p. 45.

¹¹⁸ Anna McMullan, *Performing Embodiment in Samuel Beckett's Drama* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 13.

For the audience, by virtue of our ability to recognise and imagine movements, we engage in a bodily recognition of the actors' weary movements on the screen in our imagination. The audience's discomfort that is caused by the uncertainty of the play's 'point' could in actuality be triggered by the uncertainty of the motor significances of the characters' movements around the stage. As stated in the previous paragraph, the colours and music in the first part of *Quad* offer at least two features (however vague they are) from which the audience could attempt to infer the significance of the characters' movements as well as the function of E. Nonetheless, the deprivation of the second part of these already ambiguous elements of the play further indicates the possibility that the playwright could be intent on depriving the audience of the opportunity to construct meaning out of those now lost elements. Although the contrast of both parts would inevitably continue to allow scholars to establish their interpretations of the significance of the colours and the music to the characters' movements, the viewer's immediate experience of the television play during transmission would not allow an in-depth contemplation of these elements. There is no playback button. Instead, I posit that the point of transition between the coloured part *I* and the black and white part *II* could be the main segment of the play that would stand out the most to the television audience.

With this in mind, if Beckett had anticipated that his audience would be struck by the visual contrast when he decided to add the second part to the first, it would follow that this transition could be the moment of loss that *Quad I & II* was ultimately put together to invoke. In this sense, the moment of loss can therefore be interpreted as residing in the cusp between the two parts, and also as the absent incarnate of that colossal ten thousand years that, if not for Reinhart Muller-Freienfels, would have been silently (though rather aptly) lost to Beckett scholars and irretrievably forgotten.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ See note 109.

Moving from the subtle change of posture and pace to indicate the characters' weariness of their interminably disappointing enterprise in *Quad I & II*, we will now examine the audience's embodied search for motor significance in the seemingly incorporeal voices of Beckett's television plays, with a specific focus on ...*but the clouds*.... McMullan has it that in ... *but the clouds*...

the interplay between visions of the body and the spoken text, between the embodied subject and the face of the other, between poetry, drama and technology, between male and female gender, subverts the mechanisms of cognitive and perceptual control associated with the dominance of "mind over eye and body", maintaining an irreducible margin, whether one terms this the space/body of difference, intertextuality, the sublime, or the imagination.¹²⁰

McMullan is right to point out that dualities and the demarcation of the physical from the abstract in Beckett's teleplay is never clear despite the recurrent motif of a subject's divisibility in most of his works. Division through disembodiment of his characters can be observed in his portrayal of ghostly voices without bodies, for example, as in the disembodied voices in the television plays ...*but the clouds*..., *Eh Joe* and *Ghost Trio* as well as through the presentation of fragmented bodies, as in the loving pair of hands imagined or remembered by the protagonist in *Nacht and Träume*, the fragmented speaking mouth in the theatre piece *Not I*, and the floating faces of Beckett's televised *What Where* (1986). But despite these depictions, his works' subversion of the Cartesian duality indicates an inherent inseparability between the mind and the body, and by extension, the physical and the abstract. In addition, it is crucial that this subversion of duality is understood as not just

¹²⁰ McMullan, 'Versions of embodiment/Visions of the body in Beckett's ...*but the clouds*...', in *Samuel Beckett: Crossroads and Borderlines/ L'oeuvre Carrefour/L'oeuvre Limite*, ed. by Marius Buning, Matthijs Engelberts and Onno Kusters, *Samuel Beckett Today/ Aujourd'hui*, 6 (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1997), pp. 353-364 (p. 362).

about articulating the indivisibility between one's private mind and body; it could, I posit, more specifically be about the intuitive human inclination to 'embody lack' or in Gestaltian sense, fill in the blanks by incarnating the missing pieces in one's imagination, that contributes to the inseparability between the mind of the spectator and the body of the Beckettian actor/character.

Following this understanding, it is noteworthy that although disembodied voices are often regarded as voices in the heads of Beckett's protagonists, the gendered disembodied voices in Beckett's television plays almost always hint at or point to the speakers' possible identities. In *Eh Joe*, the vindictive Voice (Philips) could be the voice of one of Joe's (MacGowran) ex-lovers, in *Ghost Trio* the narrator's voice (Whitelaw) could be the voice of the woman whom the protagonist F (Pickup) is waiting for, and in *...but the clouds...* the female voice (Whitelaw) that utters the titular line could be the protagonist's (Pickup) lost lover and muse, whose facial features are all that are left in his mind. If we regard these women as indeed figments of the protagonists' imagination or memory, we will notice that their voices are nonetheless tied to their bodily identities as, for example, the once sexualised then abandoned lover in *Eh Joe*, the woman whose bodily presence is expected to arrive in *Ghost Trio*, and the woman whose voice, 'eyes and mouth' are a sensual personification of poetic inspiration in *...but the clouds...*

Despite their seeming immateriality, the Beckettian voices are corporeal in the minds of his protagonists as much as they are corporeal in the mind's eye of his television viewers. It is possible that the audience is led to mentally visualise and experience the heartbreak and death of the girl described by Voice in *Eh Joe*, the woman who was expected but did not arrive in *Ghost Trio*, and the Woman as an autonomous and infrequent muse who may or may not visit M despite him begging 'to her, to appear' to him every evening in *...but the*

clouds....¹²¹ Compared with the bound bodies of the male protagonists in the three teleplays: Joe who is stuck in his cell-like room with his guilt, F who is tied to his appointment with a woman who never arrived, and M who is bound to his daily routine which includes begging for his muse to appear to him every evening, the disembodied voices are depicted as more mobile as they fluidly traverse between a textual image constructed by the spoken text and the spectatorially reciprocated corporeal image that is viscerally conjured in the audience's mind.

Supporting the phenomenon of visual thinking, Rudolf Arnheim borrowed Edward B. Titchener's description of "visual hints" and "flashes" to characterise Impressionist paintings as provoking the viewers to respond with 'a pattern of visual forces' that approximates, for example, a human figure or a tree, rather than offering them a precise duplicate of the subject.¹²² The disembodied voices in Beckett's plays may to a large extent be likened to an Impressionist stimulus that invites the viewer to approximate and attribute a bodily presence to the voice in their mind's eye. However, with reference to Arnheim's work, I postulate that the imagined corporeality of these voices is not completely abstract and intangible. Although I would argue that the direct perception of a play in a theatre would render the imagined corporeality of disembodied voices more tangible by virtue of the spectator's proximity to the live action that is enacted on the stage and/or behind the stage by the actors and actresses, the pre-recorded television play can also offer tangibility to the imagined corporeality through the concept of synaesthesia. Arnheim had it that even when the stimulus is not visual, the mental image conjured as a result of its stimulation could 'reflect an almost automatic parallelism among attitudes of the mind and events in the physical world [... as] the body produces a physical equivalent of what the mind is

¹²¹ *...but the clouds*..., dir. by Donald McWhinnie, in *Shades: Three Plays by Samuel Beckett*, performed by Billie Whitelaw and Ronald Pickup, VHS cassette 61.31- 8006144A (British Film Institute, TX date 1977-04-17) [on video cassette].

¹²² Rudolf Arnheim, 'Chapter 6: The Images of Thought', in *Visual Thinking* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 108.

doing'.¹²³ Thus, the disembodied voice in a Beckettian teleplay, which is perceived by the audience's sense of hearing, can be translated into an image in the mind's eye that may be embodied by the viewer's memory of the image's motor equivalent.

As we have seen in the above paragraphs, over the course of each teleplay, the imagined corporeality of the voices are repeatedly disappointed by the non-arrival of the visual whole that would correspond to the spectator's imagination. Consequently, in stark contrast to mainstream televisual contents' promise of hours of fleeting entertainment as well as enriching pre-digested information, Beckett's peculiarly barren dramatic landscape that is littered with unclear motor significances of the disembodied voices' imagined corporeality may be a contributing factor to the frustration of an audience member because there is no clear indication as to how she should interpret their roles in the teleplays. Nonetheless, although such a television viewer may find the incomprehensible and unverifiable motor significances of a conjured image a negative experience, the fact that it was empathetically experienced (for example, the viewer would be able to register Voice's tone of contempt for Joe despite not being able to understand her role in the teleplay) renders the experience an intuitively significant one in the context of what we have examined so far; that is, the frustration of not knowing despite her empathy with the characters' delineated attitudes point to an intuition of loss that seems to be subject-less.

Having established the viewer's propensity to attribute motor significances to the Beckettian characters, it should be clear by now that the spectator through empathy could mentally embody each character, including the disembodied voice, in each Beckettian play. In this process, the characters' motivations and emotions are analysed by the audiences from the outset through a set of motor significances that is familiar to them. However, in Beckett's television plays, the audience's attempts at attributing motor significances are

¹²³ Ibid., p. 112.

often encouraged through a vivid portrayal of precisely timed movements and repetitive physical routines, only to be disappointed by the seeming ineffectuality of these painstakingly executed actions. By considering the characters, including the voices, as being mentally embodied by the spectator, I am asserting that the viewer is effectively experiencing the sense of disappointment that may be inferred from the fruitlessness of the characters' dogged endeavours. That is, I postulate that, in the context of an audience who may feel compelled to disengage from Beckett's teleplay, experiencing the non-arrival of the woman in *Ghost Trio* for instance would be akin to experiencing, by the end of the play, a sense of disappointment in the characters' depicted actions, such as the protagonist's futile *wait*, the woman's *failure to turn up* and, on a more structural level, the play's overall lack of a discernible close-ended sequence of actions.

In ...*but the clouds*... experiencing the man's entrapment in his daily routine of *waiting* and *supplicating* for the *arrival* of the woman who is referred to only as the pronoun 'her' would produce an expectation of the physical arrival of a woman, for an audience who is unaware of the play's allusion to W. B. Yeats's poem *The Tower* and therefore misses the idea that the expected 'she' could be a personification of the protagonist's poetic inspiration. The subsequent flashes of her eyes and mouth, and her utterance of the titular fragment of a line, would do nothing to satisfy the viewers' uncertainty regarding her role in the play. Nonetheless, even if her motor significance remains ambiguous to a viewer who does not recognise her mouthed line's allusion to Yeats's poem, the audience member would still attribute an imagined corporeal presence to the woman in her mind's eye just as the protagonist has personified his poetic inspiration as an elusive female muse. More importantly, I would like to point out that such an inclination to attribute corporeality to a character is a similar response to that of a television viewer who may be more informed of the play's allusion.

To elaborate, towards the end of *...but the clouds...*, V, which is the protagonist's voice, is able to continue to recite or compose synchronously with W, as she mouths but does not utter the concluding lines of Yeats's poem. To the well-informed audience, understanding the man's closing utterance of '...but the clouds of the sky...when the horizon fades...or a bird's sleepy cry...among the deepening shades...' might occur in two phases.

In the first phase, being aware that these last few lines are the concluding lines of Yeats's *The Tower*, the viewer might at first infer that M is finally inspired enough to fulfil his endeavour to complete the poem with these words. An audience engaged with this inference might liken M to Yeats the poet and consider from such an association that the play might be about the artist's determined preoccupation and isolating struggle to create a work of art. At this point, the audience who is well acquainted with the poem and Beckett's oeuvre may ascend the second phase to examine the intertextual significance between the Yeatsian poem and its role in the Beckettian teleplay. As Katherine Weiss and Daniel Katz both point out, M seems to have remembered the poem 'by rote' and is depicted in the play as trying to recall the poem rather than compose a poem.

Weiss explains her concept of 're-materialisation' by interpreting M as merely repeating after the Woman as he 'murmur[s], synchronous with lips' of W instead of composing the words himself, so as to 'bring her back to life' from being an 'object of remembrance' by 'disrupt[ing] [her] dreamlike quality' through speech.¹²⁴ The ghostliness of Beckett's characters, which Weiss asserts, is gleaned from M's failure to materialise his mental image of his muse. To Weiss, both M and W remain as spectres despite M's efforts 'to bring her back to "life"' with speech because M too is an object of the camera and so he too is 'one of the ghostly images he tries to re-materialise through the act of [narrated]

¹²⁴ Katherine Weiss, 'Animating Ghosts in Samuel Beckett's *Ghost Trio* and *...but the clouds...*', *Journal of Beckett Studies*, 18 (September 2009) <<http://www.eupublishing.com/doi/abs/10.3366/E0309520709000302>> [accessed 8 April 2014], 105-122 (p. 117).

reproduction'.¹²⁵ Significant to the context of what I have postulated thus far are Weiss' intuitive recognition of M's desire to 're-materialise' the disembodied W, and her intriguing assertion that his desire cannot be satisfied because he does not have a bodily presence. Weiss's interpretations are demonstrative of an erudite spectator's awareness of the human inclination to desire to materialise one's thoughts of a lost Other, just as the disengaging audience is inclined to attribute an imagined corporeal form to an unintelligible image of a character or voice. Weiss' overall idea that M's attempt to 're-materialise' W through vocalisation is a failed endeavour, further suggests Weiss' attribution of imagined corporeality to M by seeing the motor significance behind his physical act of vocalisation and subsequently interpreting this action as a futile one. Thus, the spectatorial experience of embodying Beckett's characters and voices in one's mind to experience a sense of futile loss may be considered a definitively intuitive effect that the teleplays have on the audience, regardless of the extent of one's intellectual investment.

Brecht perceptively pointed out

The intelligibility of a work of literature is not ensured exclusively by its being written in exactly the same way as other works which people have understood. These other works too were not invariably written just like the works before them. Something was done towards their understanding. In the same way we must do something for the understanding of the new works.

Besides *being popular* there is such a thing as *becoming popular*.¹²⁶

Beckett's works were and continue to be regarded as inaccessible by many. To my mind, his television plays articulate a realism that might have been intuitively felt but negated by the efforts of public services to place an emphasis on the pedagogical value of his works. By emphasising how much of an enigmatic giant the playwright was in the field, the

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Brecht, p. 112.

introductory openings by Rosset in 1961 for the television adaptation of *Waiting for Godot* and by Martin Esslin as well as Melvyn Bragg in 1977 for *Shades*, might have discouraged an audience to trust her intuitive experience of the teleplays. Notably, Bragg's explanation that 'Beckett has become the property of critics, scholars and experts of all sorts, but he's also a playwright whose work is regularly performed by companies amateur and professional all over the world' might have had the effect of confining Beckett's works to the domain of interpretations resulting from specialised analyses. The contrasting clause which asserted that amateur companies were also interested in performing Beckett's works would not have improved audience inclusivity as it implied that *in addition to* specialised experts who were drawn to his works, theatre practitioners whether professional or unprofessional were also interested. Instead of providing a prelude to ease the audience into experiencing what they were about to watch, such introductions might inhibit a non-specialised and non-practicing audience's readiness to rely on their intuitive responses to the teleplays as a basis for experiencing the fellow-feeling of loss that the teleplays evoke. Therefore, applying Brecht's concept that there is a difference between *being popular* and *becoming popular* to this context, the fame of Beckett's works for the stage and the reputation of the playwright should not be employed as premises to promote acceptance of his teleplays. Perhaps that 'something' that has to be 'done to the understanding' of Beckett's television drama is entreating the home-viewers to trust and pay attention to their intuitions so as to encourage them, from the outset, to regard Beckett's teleplays as an experiential process that is accessible to the everyman.

In sum, the monument to loss in the context of the television plays is therefore the spectators' mental incarnation of a sense of loss. There is no subject of loss because the amnesiac's inability to retrieve what she has forgotten would render her loss subject-less. A reflection of this condition of loss, Beckett's television plays can be interpreted as seeking to appeal to the intuitive emotions of the spectators rather than their intellect by depriving the

viewers of a close-ended plot from which to construct an intellectually derived pathos. As a greatly reduced state of immediately recognisable mainstream televisual contents, the teleplays retain just enough traces of melodramatic affects to evoke within the spectator an empathic desire to restore the missing pieces to an assumedly knowable wholeness. However, this evocation is established in order to be disappointed. Ultimately, the viewers' embodiment of the Beckettian fragments in their imagination could result in either the television audience's appreciation of having participated with the playwright in the joint incarnation of a sense of loss, which is evident in the proliferation of Beckett scholarship and performances, or the spectator's often neglected and unarticulated but equally important sentiment of having futilely constructed a monument to an irretrievable loss.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The main focus of this dissertation is to demonstrate how selected works from Beckett's dramatic oeuvre invoke an intuitive effect in the audience members as they are experiencing these plays and film. Having charted the processes of how an audience member's habitual way of understanding could be frustrated by Beckett's radio, film, stage and television plays, I have shown the ways by which each medium could have been exploited to reconstitute the audience's 'pathos' from directed judgements that are led by familiar narratives to an experience of an inherent but often-neglected intuition of a seemingly subject-less loss.

6.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

When radio plays were first introduced to the public, the listeners' 'blindness' to their immediate surroundings by closing their eyes or switching off the lights was deemed an ideal condition in which one might enjoy listening to a radio play. By examining the radio plays *All That Fall* (1957), *Embers* (1959), *Words and Music* (1962), *Cascando* (1964) and *Rough for Radio II* (1976), I have shown that this condition which was once considered ideal by broadcasting stations is thematically appropriated in Beckett's radio plays as 'blind faith' to highlight the audience's entrapment in their habitual framework of understanding, and their habitual relinquishment of the possibility of leading a more intuitive existence that could be free from the tyranny of a repeatedly extended distortion. More importantly, contrary to Steven Connor's postulation that radio affords Beckett the 'possibility of writing without ground', I argued that the audience's mind space is the ground upon which the

imaginative spectacle of Beckett's radio plays is collaboratively composed with the listener.¹

Further, by explicating the engagement of Beckett's *Film* (1964) with Sergei Eisenstein's concept of 'pathos construction', I established that *Film* offers the audience an ecstatic perspective that is uniquely Beckettian; that is, it provokes a differentiation within the audience member that, by way of the deterritorializing effect, reconstitutes her from a habit body to an ecstatic being. With reference to Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concepts of 'becoming' and 'deterritorialization', I have demonstrated that the spectator's habit body becomes a chained body of perceptual passivity as she gives up trying to decipher the film based on her habitual framework of understanding. As a result of this submission to bodily passivity, the mind and body of the spectator is temporarily deterritorialized from the habitual framework of understanding and reconstituted as an ecstatic being who is open to a decentralised intuition that is characterised by lateral multiplicity rather than stratified limits. The postulation that a reconstitution of the spectator can only ever be temporary is elucidated in the fourth chapter on Beckett's stage plays, where habit is analysed as bound to a successive time continuum that governs the diegesis of each play as well as the audience's extradiegetic reality.

Whereas Beckett criticism seems to remain intrigued by the depiction of time as either circular or static in Beckett's dramatic oeuvre, I have shown that time is portrayed as dual in Beckett theatre by mapping out the tension between Immanuel Kant and Henri Bergson's concepts of time in relation to Beckett's stage plays *Waiting for Godot* (1955), *Endgame* (1957), *Act Without Words II* (1957), *Happy Days* (1961), *Footfalls* (1976), *Rockaby* (1981) and *Catastrophe* (1982). More specifically, the Kantian

¹ Steven Connor, "'I Switch Off': Beckett and the Ordeals of Radio", in *Broadcasting Modernism*, ed. by Debra Rae Cohen, Michael Coyle and Jane Lewty (Florida: University of Florida, 2013), pp. 274- 294 (p. 275).

continuum is attributed to the external time that governs the diegetic space of the characters, whereas the Bergsonian *durée* is employed to describe the intuitive experience of time within the narrated stories, and between the beginning of the act of storytelling and the characters' emergence from it in order to check whether their anticipated end has arrived. That the audience members are implicated in the experience of the tension between the two depictions of time is supported by my assertion that the spectators' habitual 'will to completion' is destabilised when they ineffectually try to make sense of the characters' stories because there is no discernible temporal order to these narrated stories. As a result of this, narrative closure is withheld from the audience. The external time continuum which governs the physical stage in which the actors/characters reside and the audience's known reality is tied to this compulsion for narrative closure, whereas the internal time, which governs the anachronical story fragments is that which invokes the audience's intuition of subjective time. Further, I demonstrated that this anachronical nature of internal time affords the characters temporary respite from the incarcerating external time continuum while it deprives the audience member of any relief as it destabilises her habitual framework of understanding, which expects narrative closure.

This destabilised compulsion for narrative closure is also analysed in terms of how Beckett's television plays subvert the television viewer's expectation to be informed or entertained. More specifically, I examined these expectations in relation to the domination of realism on television from the late 1950s to the 1970s, and established that the primary objective of the more familiar forms of realist drama during that period of time seems to be to draw the audience into engaging with the extended or represented 'reality' through the depiction of elements that are familiar or relevant to the viewer. That Beckett's television plays were not very well received according to audience ratings, is analysed in this dissertation as attributable to the possibility that

they did not directly satisfy a list of viewers' expectations that were identified in a non-exhaustive list of 'Media gratifications sought and obtained' in Uses and Gratifications Theory. Through this analysis, I discovered that the teleplays are a greatly reduced state of the immediately recognisable mainstream televisual contents, and that they retain just enough traces of melodramatic affects to evoke within the spectator an empathic desire to restore the missing pieces of each play to an assumedly knowable wholeness. However, this empathic desire is set up in order to be disappointed. Contrary to the pedagogical function of teaching the audience new ways of seeing as suggested by Jonathan Bignell, I have shown that these works are not pedagogically functional in that context. Instead, by frustrating the viewers' compulsion for narrative closure, I concluded that what the teleplays are offering to the viewer is an intuitive reminder of a forgotten sense of loss. The portrayal of this loss as seemingly subject-less in the television plays highlights to the viewers that their reliance on their habitual way of knowing has rendered them amnesiacs who cannot remember *what* they have lost, except that they have lost.

In sum, I have shown how Beckett's radio plays emphasise the audience's entrapment in their habitual gaze. Following this trajectory, I have also demonstrated that *Film* offers an ecstatic perspective that is both within and outside of the spectator's habitual conceptual frame. Further, I examined the stage plays as depictions of how an internal *durée* and external time continuum characterise intuition and a habitual way of knowing, respectively, so as to afford the characters and deprive the audience members of temporary respite. Lastly, I have illustrated how the television plays could evoke the intuition of a subject-less sense of loss in the viewer instead of merely provoking intellectual engagement. In essence, these findings highlight the processes by which Beckett's dramatic works could temporarily reconstitute the audience's habitual framework of understanding to an intuition of loss.

6.2 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE PLANS

Throughout the dissertation, I have maintained that regardless of the extent of one's intellectual investment, the audience member would experience an intuitive sense of loss when her habitual framework of understanding is frustrated by Beckett drama. The Beckett and Brain Science project which explores how the portrayal of subjective experiences of mental disorders in Beckett's oeuvre could provide 'new narrative frameworks to express the experience of chronic and life-limiting conditions', may be helpful in shedding more light on how his works could also challenge or subvert established frameworks of understanding the suffering body.² More specifically, this project could potentially be fertile ground for developing a more in-depth understanding of how Beckett's dramatic works could evoke an empathic intuition of loss in the audience members; by extension, findings from such an exploration may be applied to a clinical setting to consider how physicians or caregivers may develop a more empathic response to the suffering body. Nevertheless, the Beckett and Brain Science special issue of the *Journal of Medical Humanities* has not been published yet at the time when this dissertation was submitted. As such, I do not have the opportunity to engage with the results of this project in Beckett studies yet.

In addition, although I have listened to the original radio broadcast and watched the television plays that were recorded by the British Broadcasting Corporation, the fact that I did not experience these works directly based on the cultural codes and conventions that are particular to the time in which these plays were broadcast, means that my analysis of these works is limited to what I have researched about the time period in which they were written and produced.

² Elizabeth Barry, 'Case Study: Beckett and Brain Science', *Arts Humanities Research Council: Science in Culture* (August 2013) <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funding-Opportunities/Research-funding/Themes/Science-in-Culture/Documents/Elizabeth_Barry.pdf> [accessed 14 August 2014], 1-2 (p. 2).

Further, having viewed the 2001 television adaptation of the stage plays that are collectively titled *Beckett on Film*, I am also keen to analyse each of these cross-medium adaptations to see the extent by which the evocation of the intuition of loss is retained or neglected. For example, Damien Hirst's television adaptation of *Breath* (2001) seems to have taken a huge liberty with the original play and it would be interesting to examine how the replacement of scattered rubbish with medical waste impedes the evocation of the intuition of loss by being too specifically themed. However, I limited the scope of this dissertation to only the works that Beckett was actively involved in producing, so that I could consider in parallel his documented editorial participation and authorial decisions, as I attempt to articulate the processes by which the original plays could have invoked an intuitive effect in the viewers.

Even though these more recent cross-medium adaptations are outside the scope of this dissertation, an analysis of how or whether each adaptation in the *Beckett on Film* collection retains the intuitive effect on the audience could be a potential topic for my next research project. As a follow up to this dissertation and therefore in relation to the intuitive effect that has been established in this thesis, it would be fruitful to compare the evolution of these stage plays that Beckett was directly involved in, with the 2001 television adaptations of the stage plays by directors such as Atom Egoyan, Anthony Minghella and Neil Jordan. The following is a brief example of what I mean by the evolution of a stage play in the context of the intuitive effect defined in this dissertation.

In the German and American television adaptations of *What Where*, the megaphone was abandoned and replaced with a 'distorted death mask' of Voice.³ The mysterious disembodied voice now issues forth a mask on television instead of a

³ Quoted in Graley Herren, 'Beckett on Television', in *A Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. by S.E. Gontarski (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), pp. 389-402 (p. 400).

mechanical device on the stage. Nonetheless, its narration sustains the mechanical nature of Voice by beginning with ‘I switch on’, ending with ‘I switch off’, repeating the phrase ‘I start again’ and maintaining a sequential report on the season in which each interrogation takes place. This integral mechanical nature of Voice renders the diegetic space in which the play is enacted on television and on the stage, a space that continues to be governed by a successive linearity of time, although the compressed seasons underscores the narration as a summary account of an event that occurred in the past.

In effect, Voice can be regarded as residing in the diegetic space that is closer to that of the audience member whereas his narrated memory of the interrogations represents the hypodiegetic space in which the account is enacted. As I have established in Chapter 4, the characters of Beckett’s stage plays are delineated as attempting to invoke the internal *durée* through storytelling by abstracting themselves from the incarcerating sequential external time line that extends interminably. Similarly, the narration in *What Where* clearly abstracts Bam to a hypodiegetic space from his diegetic Voice. That is, since every time Voice utters the words ‘In the end I appear, reappear’ Bam fades into the screen, the viewers are led to interpret Voice as the voice of Bam who is recounting a past in a temporally linear order from Spring to Winter. However, a seeming paradox arises when we consider Voice’s subjective existence in this point of time like a locked groove of a vinyl record.⁴ Saying the words ‘Time passes’, does not necessarily mean that this sequence of repeated time indeed elapse for Voice. By revisiting the past when he was once Bam, time for Voice is dual, in that it is paradoxically a linear external time continuum and a non-linear internal *durée*. By

⁴ A locked groove is the continuous loop of music that spans the length of a record's one full rotation.

retaining the mechanical quality of Voice in the television adaptation, this dual depiction of time is kept intact.

In my view, it is possible that the megaphone is no longer necessary on television because the television itself is already a mechanical device that transmits the voice of Bam. An additional device would overlay the mechanical nature of an organic habit that the play might be alluding to, and as a result too clearly demarcates the divide between the mechanical nature of habit and its embeddedness in the habit-body. As I have stated in Chapter 3, despite our inherent state of fragmentation that results in our predisposition to divide within ourselves, there is no clear divide between the habit body and the ecstatic being.

Moreover, a physical device is more provocative when its presence is maintained on the stage rather than on the television screen. That is, the physical device (and the physical bodies of the actors) that is designated for the stage would serve as a reminder of the external time continuum to the audience, and the disembodied narration would imply a hypodiegetic temporal dimension that is out of sync with the external time of the diegesis in which the megaphone and the audience reside. As such, the stage play seems to highlight the audience member's bondage to the stratified organism and offers her no respite through the presence of this concrete object. However, as established in Chapter 5, given the emphasis of Beckett's teleplays on a subject-less loss, it is plausible that the reduction of the characters/ actors' bodies to mere heads is a way of employing the television medium to shift the focus of the play from a physicality that is bound by the habitual framework of understanding, to a more abstract intuition of a subject-less loss.

More significantly, Voice's revisitation of the past is depicted as compelled by the unanswered titular questions 'What?' and 'Where?' The unknown subject and place that these two questions are meant to elicit are not 'there' to be found from the very

beginning of the play. The sequence of unavailing interrogation and torture represents a habitual way of knowing that is absurdly reduced to Bem's unaffected exchange with Bam in the final part of the play, when he asks Bam the same questions that he had asked before he was to interrogate Bim. As the one who is going to be interrogated and tortured next, the repeated questions are reduced to a compulsive act of habit that is devoid of any effectual purpose. In the evolution of *What Where*, from the stageplay to the German and American television plays, Beckett's increasing minimalism, as can be seen most directly in the reduction of the full-bodied stage characters to floating heads in the teleplay, is not an increasing abstraction that renders his work even less comprehensible to the general audience. Instead, it is an increasing emphasis on the audience's intuitive comprehension of his work as opposed to their intellectual comprehension.

Indeed, this analysis of the concept of habit in relation to the intuition of loss in Beckett's dramatic works contributes to Beckett studies a new way of understanding the discomfiting effect that his works have on his audiences. Instead of attributing this discomfort to a lack of intellectual engagement on the part of the audience member, I have shown that it is fruitful to consider this discomfort as a significant reaction to Beckett drama. The intuition, which I have established as a simple feeling that Beckett's audience member experiences, is the most immediate impression that one could have of a work of art. Given Beckett's love of paintings, he could well have been very aware of the delicate intuition that is involved in the appreciation of art. As another potential area of research, it would be intriguing to examine the relation between the intuitive feelings of viewing a painting and the intuition of loss that is invoked by Beckett's drama within the audience member.

As it should be apparent by now, this dissertation's demonstration of the processes by which the selected dramatic works invoke the audience's intuition of loss

could form the basis from which future research on Beckett and Intuition develops. To date, Uhlmann is the only critic who has written about the intuition in direct relation to a Beckett work. However, the ‘intuition image’ that Uhlmann defines in the context of *Film* does not delve into the intricate processes of reconstitution that I have elaborated here as the evocation of an intuition of loss by Beckett’s drama as they frustrate the audience member’s habitual way of understanding.

In conclusion, the primary aim of this dissertation has been to demonstrate the audience member’s process of reconstitution from a habitual framework of understanding to an intuition of loss as she is experiencing a Beckett play or film. As such, through my analysis of the intersection between the concept of habit, and the philosophical and psychological contexts in which the film and selected plays were written and first performed, Time and Loss are presented in this dissertation as the motifs that facilitate the reconstitution of the audience members from a sense of pity for the characters to an ecstatic empathy as she intuits a loss that coincides with the Beckettian characters’ habit-wrought sense of loss. While recognising that more research can be done to better understand how the audience member’s intuition might be affected in cross-medium adaptations, the processes of reconstitution which I have established in this dissertation lay a significant groundwork from which Beckett studies may develop further critical directions on the topic of Beckett and the audience’s intuitive reception of his drama.

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