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Samuel Beckett in Virtual Reality.

ANNETTE CAROLINE BALAAM.

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements for award of the degree of PhD in the Faculty of Arts, Graduate School of Arts and Humanities, October 2019.

Word Count: Eighty-Five Thousand, Four Hundred and Fifty-one.

Abstract.

Samuel Beckett's death occurred at the inauguration of the digital age in 1989 activating certain latent tendencies within Beckett's work and de-activating others, provoking this project's investigation into how Beckett pre-figures our experience in the digital and virtual world. Returning to the source text and Beckett archives reveals the unique ontological locus of any Beckett text and its creative genesis, identified as a locus for being human in the digital and virtual realm. The second part interrogates this principle through contemporary practitioners of Beckett's work. Both lines of enquiry will draw on Beckett's, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's, Paul Cézanne's and Pierre Lévy's questions regarding the nature of what constitutes subject and world construction, in the process of bringing a world into being.

Chapter one proposes that Beckett's work pre-figures our experience in the digital and virtual world through embodying an interpretation of Merleau-Ponty's principles. Chapter two explores how Beckett and digital and virtual reality exists in a space in-between being and nothingness, through Pan Pan's 2011-2016 high-tech productions of Beckett's radio plays *All That Fall* (1956) and *Embers* (1959). Chapter three investigates the degree of separation in-between the actual and virtual realms within this locus of process, through Company SJ's 2009-2017 site-specific productions of Beckett's plays. Chapter four explores the notion that the body has become site and subject of meaning making, through Gare St. Lazare's productions 1998-2019. Chapter five interrogates the contemporary designation of 'live' through UNMAKEABLELOVE (2008), a mixed reality production by Jeffrey Shaw and Sarah Kenderdine. This chapter develops the notion that it is the holistic nature of the body to body and world relationship that is the act of creation. The conclusion suggests that in identifying the lineage of the ontological genealogy of the digital and virtual human, points forward to a Quantum human and world.

Dedication and Acknowledgements.

This project has taken me on the most extraordinary journey, through many varied and as yet undiscovered lands. Realms that were revealed through the most extraordinary teacher and guide, my Supervisor Professor Simon Jones. I have been incredibly lucky, honoured and privileged to have taken this journey through some breath-taking landscapes with such a teacher and guide. I will be forever grateful to Professor Simon Jones for this journey.

And grateful to the University of Bristol who gave me the honour and privilege of being able to go on this journey through awarding me a University of Bristol Scholarship, thank you. And many thanks to my Secondary Supervisor Dr Ulrika Maude, whose time was always gratefully received.

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And a great debt of gratitude goes to the *Beckett on Film* (2001) artists for the extraordinary interviews that they gave to me, some of whom are quoted here.

And last but not least many, many thanks to the Samuel Beckett community itself, which is always open, generous and patient with its students. The knowledge you have and freely share is the future, thank you.

For Raine, for getting me to this place.

Author's Declaration.

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: Annette Balaam.

DATE: 20th October 2019.

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List of Abbreviations

Samuel Beckett

Theatre, Radio, Television & Film

WfG.....*Waiting for Godot.*
EG.....*Endgame.*
HD.....*Happy Days.*
ATF.....*All That Fall.*
AWW I.....*Act Without Words I.*
AWW II.....*Act Without Words II.*
KLT.....*Krapp's Last Tape.*
RT I.....*Rough for Theatre I.*
RT II.....*Rough for Theatre II.*
E.....*Embers.*
RR I.....*Rough for Radio I.*
RR II.....*Rough for Radio II.*
WM.....*Words and Music.*
C.....*Cascando.*
P.....*Play.*
F.....*Film.*
CG.....*Come and Go.*
EJ.....*Eh Joe.*
B.....*Breath.*
NI.....*Not I.*
TT.....*That Time.*
FF.....*Footfalls.*
GT.....*Ghost Trio.*
btc.....*but the clouds....*
PM.....*A Piece of Monologue.*
RB.....*Rockaby.*
OI.....*Ohio Impromptu.*

Q.....*Quad*.
Ca.....*Catastrophe*.
NT.....*Nacht und Träume*.
WW.....*What Where*.

Prose, Essays & Criticism.

WHBeckett, Samuel. *Company, Ill Seen Ill Said, Worstward Ho, Stirrings Still*. ed. Dick Van Hulle. London: Faber and Faber, 2009b.
———......*Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*. ed. Ruby Cohn. London: John Calder, 1983.
FL.....*First Love*. London: Calder and Boyars, 1973.
HIS.....*How It Is*. London: John Calder, 1964.
M.....*Molloy*. ed. Shane Weller. London: Faber and Faber, 2009d.
MD.....*Malone Dies*. ed. Peter Boxall. London: Faber and Faber, 2010a.
NK.....*No's Knife: Collected Shorter Prose 1945-1966*. London: Calder & Boyars, 1967a.
———. *Proust*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1931. Reprinted with *Three dialogues Samuel Beckett & Georges Duthuit*. London: John Calder, 1970.
———. *Proust and Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit*. London: John Calder, 1967b & 1987.
———. *Samuel Beckett Novels I: Murphy, Watt, Mercier and Camier*. New York: Grove, 2006a.
———. *Samuel Beckett Novels II: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable, How it is*. New York: Grove, 2006b.
———. *Samuel Beckett: Poems, Short Fiction, Criticism*. New York: Grove, 2006c.
TfN.....*Texts for Nothing and Other Shorter Prose, 1950-1976*. ed. Mark Nixon. London: Faber and Faber, 2010b.
TU.....*The Unnamable*. ed. Steven Connor. London: Faber and Faber, 2010c.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

CD.....‘Cézanne’s Doubt’ in *Sense and Non-Sense*, (1948).

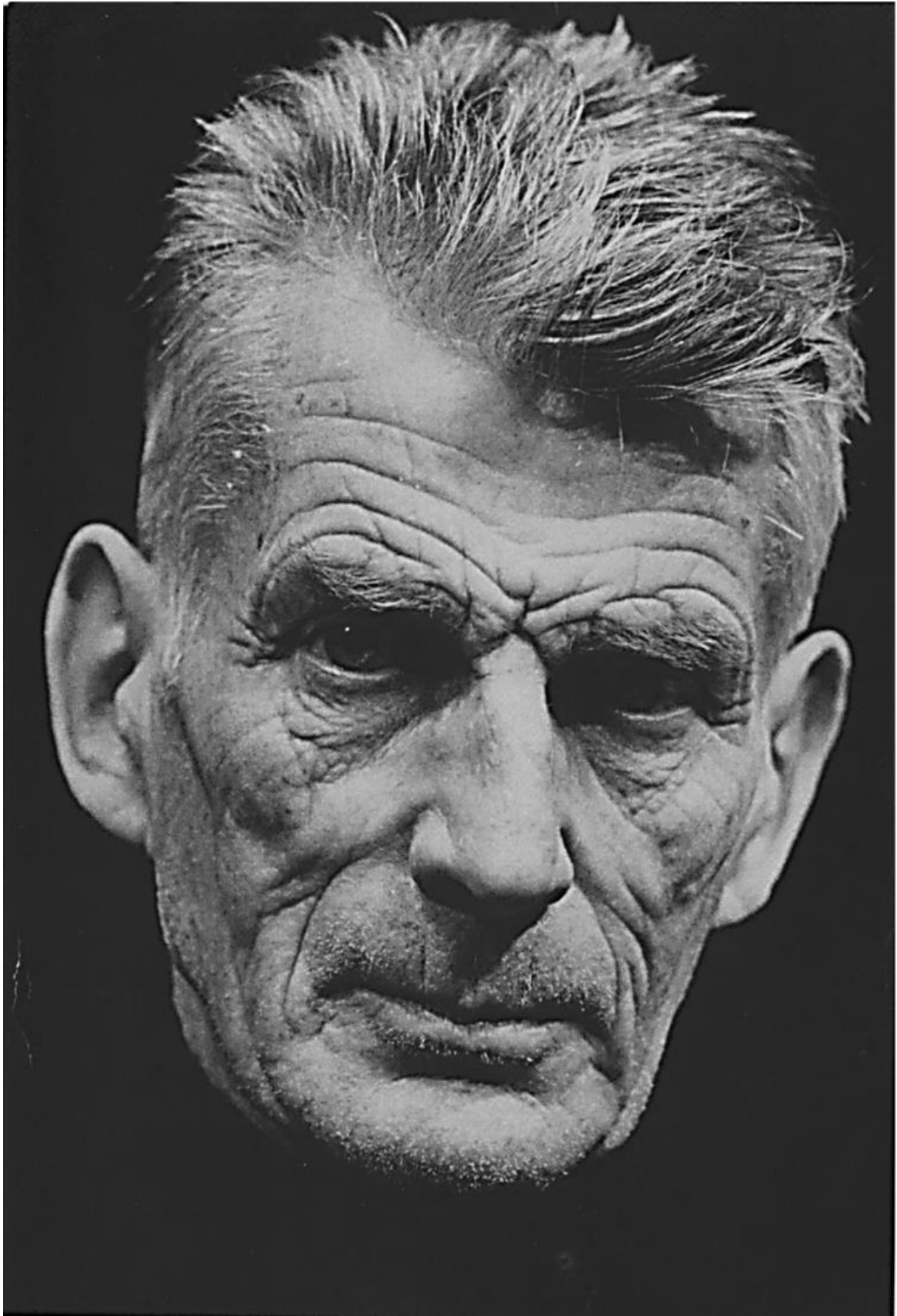
EM.....‘Eye and Mind’ in *The Primacy of Perception*, (1961).
N.....*Nature – lecture sources of 1956-7, 1957-8 & 1959-60.*
PP.....*Phenomenology of Perception*, (1945).
PrP.....*The Primacy of Perception & Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology
the Philosophy of Art, History & Politics*, (1961).
SNS*Sense and Non-Sense*, (1948).
S*Signs*, (1964).
SB.....*The Structure of Behaviour*, (1963).
TC‘The Chiasm’ in *The Visible and the Invisible*, (1959).
VI*The Visible & the Invisible*, (1959).

Arthur Schopenhauer

WR I & WR II *The World as Will and Representation, vols I & II.*
FR*The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason.*

Time passes.
That is all.
Make sense who may.
I switch off.

What Where (1983)



Samuel Beckett. Photograph by John Haynes. (UoB MM/REF/PE/WR/11).

Samuel Beckett in Virtual Reality.

‘Virtual’ is derived from the Medieval Latin *virtualis*, itself derived from *virtus*, meaning strength or power. In scholastic philosophy the virtual is that which has potential rather than actual existence.

(Lévy 1998: 23)

‘exist’ is derived from the Latin *sistere*, to cause to stand or place, and *ex*, outside of. Does existence therefore mean being in a place or leaving it?

(Ibid: 28-29)

Chapter One

Samuel Beckett's Reality TV.

hallucinating oneself into being ... happens when we “re-realize” the self-alienation at the core of subjective being? A second-order mirror-stage perhaps – that re-death of the self that was already fundamentally dead? And to re-realize ourselves as such entities is also to realize that our own personal histories, our personal trajectories and formulations, are themselves equally hallucinatory – equally unchosen – as the “I” that spawned them.... And, in this spirit could we not assert that: *to be human is to be alienated; to be posthuman is to be self-alienated?*

(Ted Hiebert quoted in Effinger 2011: 377; emphasis in the original)

Post-Beckett.

After Samuel Beckett's death in 1989 I argue that a fundamental shift occurred in the aesthetic of performance practitioners of Beckett that has largely gone unnoticed by scholars, and seems to have been assimilated so completely by the Beckett estate as to be paradoxically part of the 'establishment' of the Beckett estate aesthetic. When Beckett was alive, he had a huge capacity for self-translation and self-direction, he was deeply involved in as many productions of his work as possible whether in person or from a distance. Beckett made himself available to partake or to comment on the performance process, often changing, re-interpreting or re-contextualizing his own purportedly exacting directions in the published text. Since his death, Beckett can no longer inform the performance process of any production of his work. And since Beckett's death performance practitioners of Beckett's work, under contractual obligation and condition, are obliged not to deviate from the published Beckett text as Beckett himself would have modified the text. In the following chapters I examine some of the most renowned proponents of contemporary post-Beckett practice, all of whom deviate from the printed text in various degrees and methods, and all had permission for their productions. This reveals that the practitioners of Beckett's work after his death, interpret as Beckett practised, by deviating from the written text and thereby sticking to their contractual obligation.

Beckett's death occurred at the inauguration of the digital age in 1989, activating certain latent tendencies within Beckett's work and de-activating others. Is the overt change from a fluid to a fixed understanding and interpretation of the Beckett text, the result of this new emphasis on certain ideas latent within Beckett's work? In retrospect is the change from a fluid to a fixed interpretive stance symptomatic of a larger question concerning the changing human condition and sense of being experienced as we move incessantly in-between the actual, and the digital and virtual worlds? These questions concerning the continuing influence of Beckett's work on our understanding of the evolving human condition, provoke this projects investigation into how Beckett pre-figures our experience in the digital and virtual world. I argue that within the Beckett and the digital and virtual realm our sense of being oscillates in-between being and nothingness, communicating with a multitude of people, places and times simultaneously, and equally with the only certain materiality of the singular 'I' body. I simultaneously function on Facebook, Twitter, I Skype,

email, Game, Google, text and talk and yet I only have one material body. Oscillating in-between the actual and virtual, fixed and fluid, precise and imprecise, the Beckett text only comes into being in the moment and process of performance; the Beckett text is a performance text. Therefore, existence within Beckett's realm is simultaneously and continuously in a place as we are leaving it, always emerging and always 'becoming' and being a mirror of the changing times, and therefore of greater significance to that audience.

In a return to the source text and the Beckett archives reveals that this unique ontological locus in-between being and nothingness exists within any Beckett text, and its moment of creative genesis. A location identified as a possible locus for being human in the digital and virtual realm. The second part of this project interrogates this principle through the practice and critical reception of contemporary practitioners of Beckett's work. Both lines of enquiry will draw on Beckett's, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1943-1961), Paul Cézanne's, and Pierre Lévy's questions regarding the nature of what constitutes subject and world construction, in the process of bringing a world into being.

The philosophical consequences of mixing and merging the human and machine in Beckett's oeuvre has been investigated by single, interdisciplinary and Beckett scholars such as: Daniel Albright (2003), Herbert Blau (2000), Giles Deleuze (1987), Garin Dowd (2007), Graley Herren (2007), Ulrika Maude (2009), Anna McMullan (2010) and many more. I develop this body of work by creating a new locus for being human that exists in the *movement* in-between the actual and virtual worlds. Both McMullan and Maude are performance theorists that focus on Beckett and the human condition in *either* the actual or technological virtual realm. And both reject the concept of human disembodiment in relation to Beckett and technology. Maude expanded the borders of the body to account for technical prosthesis (2009), McMullan likewise, but included inter- and cross-cultural histories and contexts as part of the prosthetic body being-in-the-world (2010). I develop these theories by concluding that Beckett's body and world is not a fixed thing; it is not *either* subject or object, actual or virtual, self or other, embodied or disembodied, it is simultaneously both. Beckett's realm has no borders, it exists in the *movement* in-between the actual and virtual space, layering or producing a simultaneity (singularity?) of ontological states and bringing into being Beckett's 'Third way' of being in the world.

The human condition and sense of being experienced in this new locus for being human, is a reality that other theorists from many other disciplines have touched-on: Adam Alston (2016), Philip Auslander (2008), Jean Baudrillard (1983), Broadhurst & Machon (2009), Manuel Castells (1996, 2007), Jacques Derrida (1978, 1998), Gabriella Giannachi (2004), Brian Greene (2020), Katherine. N. Hayles (1999), Nick Kaye (2000), Marshall McLuhan (1964), Penrose & Hameroff (2017), Richard Schechner (2006), and many more from a multitude of disciplines such as: theatre and performance studies, Beckett studies (a multi-discipline subject in its own right), philosophy, presence studies, art, architectural, the Virtual and technological, neurological, cognitive, cultural and Quantum sciences. In the field of Performance Studies there is a certain recognition that the incursion of virtual, digital and intermedial technology into live performance merges the actual and virtual realm, which for some blurs ‘the boundaries between actualization and commodity reification’ (Lévy:1998) of human life: Alston, Auslander, Causey, Broadhurst & Machon, Pine & Gilmore, Schechner. Yet for other scholars the discovery of this new locus for being human offers positive future possibilities, that I suggest points forward to a Quantum philosophy based on a merged AI human: Castells, Giannachi, Hayles, Lévy.

This debate concerning the pros and cons of blurring the boundaries in-between the actual and virtual realms Media theorists have contemplated: ‘Our life is lived *in*, rather than *with* media – we are living a *media life*’ (Deuze 2007: 242; emphasis in original), in which the new tools of contemporary digital and net-worked media have been voluntarily (Denis McQuail 2010) assimilated into, and become part of the body due to their ubiquity, immediacy and disappearance from human consciousness (Friedrich Kittler 2009). A disappearance ultimately implying an unconscious inevitability and lack of human control and responsibility in the use of these new tools; the ‘soft techno-determinism’ (Stalder 2006: 153), of McLuhan and Castells. Castells techno-determinism argues ‘for an emerging culture of “real virtuality” (1996: 364ff), where reality itself is entirely captured by mediated communication’ (Deuze 2011: 138), making possible ‘mass self-communication’ (Castells 2007) of ‘unlimited diversity’, from a ‘largely autonomous origin [...] that construct, and reconstruct every second the global and local production of meaning in the public mind’ (Ibid. 248). Oscillating in-between the actual and virtual, singular and multiple I body, there are no fixed a priori conditions, thus meaning and media are everywhere, and therefore nowhere (Deuze 2011: 139). This is a locus of *movement* in-between states, Beckett’s ‘third way’, and a locus of *process* ‘where reality is ... permanently under construction’ and we are

exposed ‘to endless alternatives to and versions of ourselves’, (Ibid: 145). And in the Digital Age to live life *in media* Deuze ends where I begin, suggesting that ‘to be at peace with the endless mutability of that reality’ is to ‘have individual and collective control over reality’ (Ibid. 144). Offering up a media life-based ontology founded on Humberto Maturana’s (1997) principle on the relationship between humans and technology which ‘is about our desires and about whether we want or not to be responsible of our desires’ (Ibid. 143). A responsibility that I suggest creates consciousness that our sense of being oscillates in-between being and nothingness, actual and virtual, fixed and fluid, and results in an awareness that our reality is permanently under construction. This thesis compounds and develops this body of work by constructing a philosophical model of practical use to the digital and virtual human. An everyday model that creates continuous consciousness not only of the fact that the only reality that exists is the one that the human is responsible for bringing into being, but also that this world is not a fixed thing, but continuously comes into and out of being in varying degrees of cohesion along a continuum.

Tracing a path backwards to the text’s moment of creative genesis, forward through the practice and critical reception of Beckett’s work, creates a continuum throughout this project that attempts to quantify and qualify this locus for being human in the digital and virtual world. This is a temporal continuum investigating how the changing reception of Beckett’s work reflects the evolution of the human understanding of this unique ontological locus in-between being and nothingness. Chapter one proposes that Beckett’s work pre-figures our experience of bringing a world into being in the digital and virtual world through embodying my interpretation of Merleau-Ponty’s principles. I will be testing my theories through the original texts, archival material on their creative genesis, and the premiere production and critical reception of: *Not I* (1972), *Rockaby* (1979-1980), *The Lost Ones* (1972), *Ghost Trio* (1975), ... *but the clouds ...* (1976), *Quad* (1980-81) and *Nacht und Träume (Night and Dreams)* (1982). Before ending the chapter at the contemporary end of this temporal continuum by comparing the BBC’s version of *Not I* as part of *The Lively Arts: Shades* programme premiered on 17 April 1977, with an analysis of the *Beckett on Film* version of *Not I* produced in 2001 and directed by Neil Jordan. Chapter two explores Pan Pan’s 2011-2016 high-tech ‘live’ theatrical productions of Beckett’s radio plays *All That Fall* (1956) and *Embers* (1959). This investigates how Beckett, digital and virtual reality, and the concept of an immersive world exists in a space in-between being and nothingness that exposes human presence in the shape of *process*. A principle that suggests that the human

sense of becoming situated and immersed in a world is a constantly becoming-other, more a process or an event, potentiality rather than a fixed thing. Chapter three will continue to explore this locus of process within an immersive continuum, in relation to measuring the degree of separation in-between an actual and virtual reality through Company SJ's site-specific productions of Beckett's plays in-between 2009-2017. Chapter four travels across the whole landscape of Gare St. Lazare's productions in-between 1998-2019, serendipitously shadowing the evolution of the digital ecology which began around 1989 at the time of Beckett's death. This chapter explores the possibility that the body rather than the site has become the centre of creation and emanation of a reality. Ending the project in chapter five's exploration of the contemporary designation of 'live', through the digital art of Jeffrey Shaw and Sarah Kenderdine through their revisioning of Beckett's prose *The Lost Ones* (1970), for a mixed reality of Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), Telepresence and reality, in their production UNMAKEABLELOVE (2008). This chapter develops the proceeding two chapter's contentions that it is *either* the body or space that creates an immersive performance. Interrogating the notion that it is the intrinsically holistic nature of the body to body and world relationship that is the act of creation. The conclusion suggests that in identifying the lineage of the ontological genealogy of the digital and virtual human we can point forward to a Quantum human and world.

The Text's Creative Genesis.

This chapter initially investigates how Beckett pre-figures our experience of bringing a world into being in the digital and virtual world through embodying my compounding and interpretation of Merleau-Ponty's principles. Then moving on, I will then test these theories through an analysis of a selection of original texts, archival material on their creative genesis, and the archival material on their premiere productions and critical reception, before finally ending in the performance and reception of these texts at the contemporary end of this continuum, to explore the development of Beckett's aesthetic practice through media. Beckett explored and refined the process of placing an audience into the experience of continuously bringing a world into being, through a progression of increasingly complex media technology. Beckett moved from prose, through to theatre, radio, and ended in the world of the screen, initially through film before finally ending within the television screen. Exploring the creative genesis, production and critical reception of Beckett's media progression

examines how successful Beckett was in placing the audience into the experience of bringing their own world into being. The case studies in this chapter will touch on the stage plays *Not I* (1972) and *Rockaby* (1979-1980), the radio adaptation of the prose piece *The Lost Ones* (1972), the television project created in collaboration with the BBC and supervised by Beckett, namely *The Lively Arts: Shades* project transmitted in a world premiere on 17 April 1977, which includes the plays *Ghost Trio* (1975), *... but the clouds ...* (1976), and a filming of the stage play *Not I* (1972), and finally the later television plays *Quad* (1980-81) and *Nacht und Träume (Night and Dreams)* (1982). This continuum explores the principle that through the use of increasingly complex media technology Beckett was able to refine his aesthetic practice of placing the audience into the process of bringing their own world into being, through tessellating our sense of being in-between being and nothingness, actual and virtual, and into the process of bringing a world into being. This process and moment of genesis pre-figures our contemporary experience of being in the digital and virtual world.

Comparing the *Shades* production aesthetic to a later film project called the *Beckett on Film* (2001) project, which is a filming of all nineteen Beckett stage plays by Blue Angel Films/Tyrone Productions for Radio Telefís Éireann and Channel 4, with specific reference to both the *Shades* and Neil Jordan's film version of *Not I* for the *Beckett on Film* (2001) project, explores how this latent action within Beckett's work pre-figures our contemporary experience within the digital and virtual realm. This chapter consequently touches on the tensions between 'the archive and repertoire' (Diane Taylor 2003, quoted in Schechner 2006: 322). By linking the scholarship on Beckett and performance with recent practices and methodologies, I intend to trace the degree of human integration and assimilation of the digital and virtual world, and the potential consequences on the human experience of the actual world, exposing the wider social, cultural and political impact.

Through his work as a director from the 1960s onwards (reflected in the selection of plays in this chapter) Beckett recognizes the changing conditions of staging, and integrates an interpretive strategy into the text which results in a paradoxical locus of the text as both fixed and fluid, actual and virtual. For example, Mouth in *Not I* (1972) may have a definite 'vehement refusal to relinquish third person' (Beckett 2009c: NI 83; emphasis added) but is very vague in: 'With rise of curtain ad-libbing from text as required leading when curtain fully up and attention sufficient into' (Ibid. NI 85; emphasis added). Beckett was not looking for slavish adherence to the text because of the fundamentally unfixed and fluid nature of the

text, which ultimately results in a performance that can both adhere to the text in the same moment as contextualizing to that particular time and space. But this interpretive strategy reaches back beyond his practice as a theatre director. This is demonstrated by his move from writing prose to a career in the theatre, revealing an interest and conscious recognition that performance is a more fluid, unstable and volatile medium than the relatively controllable and stable printed text.

Beckett writes ‘adaptation’ into the process of performance, which suggests that there are no absolutes within the text, and that it is the action that performs the utterance and the action is in a very specific body and a priori conditions (space, time and causality; cause and effect), thus re-contextualizing and re-historicizing Beckett’s work simultaneously. *Not I* is one example of Beckett adapting to the circumstances as well as modifying for aesthetic reasons. The Auditor in the play appears and disappears according to medium, context and aesthetic. In the film version of *Not I* within the *Shades* (1977) and *Beckett on Film* (2001) productions the Auditor is discarded for the obvious reason that the camera is in extreme close-up of Mouth. The world premiere of the staging of *Not I* in New York on 22 November 1972, and the UK premiere on 16 January 1973 both included the Auditor. The stage productions Beckett directed in France, the first of which opened in 1975 at the Théâtre d’Orsay, abandoned the Auditor because as Beckett stated, it may have been a possible ‘error of the creative imagination’ (Knowlson 1996: 617). The April 1978 Paris staging that Beckett also directed restored the figure of the Auditor, but the ‘simple sideways raising of arms from their sides and their falling back’ (Beckett 2009c: NI 83) is replaced by the ‘covering of the ears with the hands’ (Knowlson 1996: 814). The deeper and more fundamental reasons for the ability of the text to adapt to space and time will be explored in depth.

The Curious ‘Continuous Incompletion’ of the Beckett Text: Part 1.

It is now an accepted fact within Beckett studies that in his role as director and writer Beckett made changes and cuts in production that were never reproduced in the printed texts (Dick van Hulle 2011, Chris Ackerley 2009, S. E. Gontarski and Anthony Uhlmann 2006). A situation van Hulle explores in relation to the ‘ontological status’, stability and security of modern manuscripts, noting that Beckett’s manuscripts:

dangle between completion and incompleteness. This textual situation ... reflects an important thematic aspect of Beckett's work. As a consequence, the textual and genetic analysis of Beckett's manuscripts and typescripts can be usefully brought into play in the interpretation of his work in general.

(van Hulle 2011: 802)

Summing-up two Raymonde Debray-Genette terms that explore textual genetics, where the ideas came from and how they are incorporated, van Hulle uses the term 'epigenetic' to denote the process of 'continuous incompleteness' of the Beckett manuscript due to the fact that 'Beckett's capacities as self-translator and self-director led to many textual changes *after* the first publication' (Ibid. 804). Epigenetics as a discipline appeared in the 1990s and relates to the study of changes arising from, or relating to, non-genetic influences on gene expression. Changes in the environment create changes in the DNA codes that can be passed on and inherited. These are latent tendencies in the DNA that can be switched on and off under certain conditions; there is a bi-directional interchange between the past and future self and world. Under extreme trauma, for example: famine, disease or severe weather conditions, the latent genetic codes can be activated and the present ones de-activated. Van Hulle uses the term 'textual epigenetic' to express the concept that certain ideas and different emphases are foregrounded and backgrounded constantly.

Applying epigenetics, the environmental change in relation to Beckett was his death in 1989. This led to the activation of certain latent tendencies within Beckett's work and the de-activation of other elements. In confluence with the inauguration of the digital media age at around the same time, again another environmental change, in hindsight brought to the fore a new emphasis and certain ideas latent within Beckett's work for performance practitioners. Beckett's latent interest in the ill-fitting relationships in-between the self, other and world, responds to, and entirely describes the ill-fitting relationships in-between the self, other and actual world, and the digital and virtual realms. As the physical world has become less problematical for practitioners, it is the ill-fitting apparently 'complete' digital and virtual realm that has become the challenge to explain and express.

Van Hulle uses the concept that the utterance performs the action to demonstrate the multiplicities of meanings from textual genetics, and the performative nature of textual epigenetics: 'Beckett's use of his extensive reading can be regarded as a form of performativity' (Ibid. 806). Extending this performativity, because Beckett's changes only happen in the *process* of self-translation or self-direction after the publication of the same, it

is the action that performs the utterance of Beckett's work and therefore influences, and the action is in very specific a priori conditions. This performance epigenetic solves the temporal paradox in-between Beckett and the contemporary reproduction of Beckett, by simultaneously re-contextualizing and re-historicizing Beckett within performance; the Beckett text is alive, and open to indefinite reinterpretation. Through the combined study of the creative genesis of the text, the text itself, and the performance and critical reception, any emerging latency that pre-figures our experience in the digital and virtual world can be revealed.

Ways of Seeing Samuel Beckett, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Paul Cézanne.

Beckett pre-figures our experience in the digital and virtual world through the principle that it is the performance and action of a particular body in a particular space that brings a world into being. This enacts Beckett's own exploration into the intrinsically interconnected nature of the body and world relationship through exposing how the body and space mutually affect each other, inducing meaning as direction. This symbiotic and holistic relationship between the body and world is a principle that Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) was developing in his last and unfinished work *Nature* (1960). This principle investigates the concept that it is the movement of the human body in its environment that has evolved the human as a species. This directly relates the moving body to the development of the human being; movement creates growth, and development creates behaviour. A notion whereby the body and space mutually affect each other, inducing meaning as direction.

Beckett shared the post-World War II intellectual and cultural climate in Paris with Merleau-Ponty, as they shared the recognition that it is the body's inherence in the world that motivates meaning (McMullan 2010, Maude 2009). Although there is no direct evidence of Merleau-Ponty's influence on Beckett, Lois Oppenheim (2000: 98-107) explores their commonalities (McMullan 2010: 10, 146). Merleau-Ponty belonged to the philosophical movement of Phenomenology that started with Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and analyses: 'the subject's lived experience of both consciousness and phenomena' (McMullan 2010: 10). The phenomenological movement included Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre. Merleau-Ponty also co-founded *Les Temps Modernes* in 1945 with Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. Jean Beaufret, a friend of Beckett at the *École Normale Supérieure* was a defender of Merleau-

Ponty's arguments in the debate section of *The Primacy of Perception* (Merleau-Ponty 1964b: 41-42). Merleau-Ponty himself moved away from Husserl's transcendental phenomenology towards a subject that has a 'situated bodily perspective on the world' (Carman & Hansen 2005: 14), and is a principle that resonates with Beckett's own ideas of the subject.

I will explore this deeply interconnected body world relationship through my compounding of Merleau-Ponty's early and late principles regarding the nature of what constitutes subject and world construction, ultimately creating a system that demonstrates how the human brings a world into being. This system will be applied to Beckett's world, and the digital and virtual realm to investigate technology's impact on the human sense of being in a world. The differentiation and development of Merleau-Ponty's work into early and late periods has been lightly touched on by contemporary criticism due to the incomplete nature of his final works, therefore the 'ontological turn' in this late thinking is fragmented. Merleau-Ponty's dramatic second turn to science allowed him to overcome the impasse in *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) where he made the body the solution and locus of meaning in the fundamental dualism of consciousness and object. Merleau-Ponty's later ontological turn in his thinking produces the body as 'a concept of organism or living body as a unitary phenomenon constituted by the identity of behaviour and development' (Carman & Hansen 2005: 232).

Merleau-Ponty states that phenomenology investigates 'what the world is before it is a thing one speaks of and which is taken for granted, before it has been reduced to a set of manageable, disposable significations' (VI, 1968: 102). For Merleau-Ponty: 'Philosophy is not the reflection of a pre-existing truth, but, like art, the act of bringing truth [a world] into being' (*PhP*, 1945: xx). One of Merleau-Ponty's principles used in my proposed system demonstrating how the human constructs a world is the principle of 'Hyperreflection' (*surréflexion*) found in *The Visible and the Invisible* (VI). Hyperreflection is this pre-subjective act that unifies consciousness and object, and demonstrates through the reversibility of the subject and object within the body the fundamental manifestation of being:

“To reflect in thought cannot mean to coincide with the object precisely because thought is *re*-flection, *re*-turn, *re*-conquest or *re*-covery” (VI, 45; VI, 69). Reflection is retrospective, therefore a temporal beat behind the genesis of its object; reflection is the activity of a self-in-genesis *in relation to an object*, therefore a temporal beat behind the genesis of itself [...] Hyperreflection is the effort to take seriously these spaces of genesis ... that remains sensitive to the silence of what cannot be said ...

(Johnson 1993: 46)

the words *not* spoken, the choices *not* made, the multitude of worlds *not* created, but always present as possibilities and probabilities. Hyperreflection is an act of comparison and compromise with the world, an act that decentres the authority of the subject, which allows for the system of exchanges between the body and the world, creating the reversibility of the role of subject and object *in* the body (‘flesh’). A reversal in which:

[the] seer and seen are capable of reversing their roles as subject and object ... The body seeing becomes the body looked at; the body touching becomes the body touched. Things ... become an annex or prolongation of self ... incrustated in its flesh ... “made from the same stuff as the body”

(Johnson 1993: 47 (*PrP*, 163, *OE*, 19; *EM*, 125))

Combining the subjective and objective experience produces a body (‘flesh’) that I suggest becomes a *chiasm* or crossing-over in-between the subject and object; the body becomes the site and subject of meaning making intrinsically intertwined with the world.

The Prosthetic Flesh.

Both Beckett and Merleau-Ponty were interested in the artist Paul Cézanne because his use of space visualizes this pre-subjective process of bringing a three-dimensional world into being through the ‘flesh’. Cézanne aimed to recapture and show the moment a world emerges for the human, to show the experience of a world as it comes into being. For Cézanne this pre-reflective world is experienced in the innocence and eyes of a new born child: to “See like someone who has just been born!” he stated to Jules Borely in 1902 (Cézanne quoted in Smith 2013: 102). For Merleau-Ponty and Beckett, Cézanne presents us with a paradigm for this pre-subjective and pre-scientific perceptual experience of the world in his paintings: ‘the lived perspective, that which we actually perceive’ (*SNS*, 14; *SNS*, 23; *CD*, 64). Merleau-Ponty states that pre-scientifically normal perception cannot make the figure-ground distinction, thus the objective world is seen as a two-dimensional mass and blur of colour: pre-subjectively ‘The world is a mass, without gaps, a system of colors across

which the receding perspectives, the outlines, angles, and curves are inscribed *like lines of force*; the spatial structure vibrates as it is formed' (*SNS*, 15; *CD*, 65; fig 1.2 & 1.3). For Beckett this pre-subjective experience of the world is a moment that sits on a knife-edge in-between something and nothing, being and nothingness, actual and virtual, object and subject; a borderland of refugees from any coherent reality, a realm that Beckett called an “incoherent continuum”, constituting “the mess”, or “the chaos”, or simply “nothingness” that sits behind the Hindu “veil of Maya” or Thing-in-itself (fig. 1.1).



1.1 *Mont Sainte-Victoire* c.1902-1906, size 73 x 91.9 cm. final period. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Cézanne.



1.2 *Bather Entering the Water*. c.1885, mature period. Private Collection. Dimensions unknown. Cézanne.
 1.3 *Still Life with Carafe, Sugar Bowl, Pomegranates and Watermelon*. c.1900-1906. 31.5x43.1cm. Musée de Louvre, Paris. Cézanne.

To visualize a world as it comes into being Cézanne refuses the habitual way of seeing which fixes a single defining outline around an object, but instead: ‘paints a multiplicity of outlines around a figure to undermine the visual impression that the edges of things exist prior to our sense-making perception of them’ (Gilmore quoted in Carman & Hansen 2005: 296; figs. 1.2 & 1.3). For Merleau-Ponty, Cézanne recaptures the moment a world emerges through ‘the vibration of appearances which is the cradle of things’ (*SNS*, 18; *CD*, 68). Through a multiplicity of oscillating outlines a world is brought into being, as ‘Rebounding among these [lines], one’s glance captures a shape that emerges from them all, just as it does in perception’ (*SNS* 20/15; *AR* 65; figs. 1.4 to 1.5).



1.4. *Still Life with Carafe, Sugar Bowl, Pomegranates and Watermelon*. c.1900-1906. 31.5x43.1cm. Musée de Louvre, Paris. Cézanne.

1.5. Digital Photo Shop Replica.

Pre-subjectively perception cannot make the figure-ground distinction, thus the human cannot separate itself from its milieu (fig. 1.4); an experiential ambiguity which:

[is] characterized by a pre-subjective level of involvement with the world of things, an entanglement with the “nonself” which subjectivity presupposes and upon which it is contingent ... subjectivity confronts a pre-subjective field in which it is grounded but which both eludes and invades it.

(Garner 1994: 30)

An experiential ambiguity where the body becomes both subject and object, and the site and subject of meaning making, a body Merleau-Ponty calls the ‘gap which we ourselves are’ (PP 1962: 207). To resolve the experiential ambiguity and separate ourselves from our milieu, I argue that a phantom limb or pre-subjective phantom ‘nonself’ contained in the totality of the projecting practices of the body’s sensory array, or ‘Flesh’, is projected out and into the other and world to define and outline an objective self and world (from fig. 1.4 to fig. 1.5):

The living being reaches beyond itself, exists in excess of itself ... internally, it experiences itself as out of phase with itself, as haunted by “foreign bodies”, by what within itself is *nonactual, potential, to come*.

(N 207/155-6; emphasis added)

The body (‘flesh’) is the ‘gap’, *chiasm* or crossing-over, oscillating in-between the objective and subjective experience, being and nothingness, actual and virtual world. The ‘flesh’ is not the imaginary projection of the body as in the Phantom Limb phenomena, which is a limb that an amputee still feels; I argue that the flesh is the projection of the imagination and corporeal memory *in the flesh in the world*. The ‘flesh’ is the projection of all probabilities and possibilities, the *‘potential, to come’*:

[the] imminent, the latent or hidden meaning interwoven with the real. This conception comprehends imagination as an intentional act, therefore an act in relation to some feature of the world and not trapped in our minds, but a feature previously unnoticed or forgotten or repressed and unexpressed. Imagination remains a variant of perception, [...] between visible and invisible, real and imaginary.

(Johnson 1993: 30 (*S*, 67; *S*, 83; *ILVS*, 103-4))

The imagination as flesh as corporeal memory, contains the imminent, latent, or hidden; a past, present and future. The flesh is permanently suspended in an emerging reality in-between being and nothingness, and is an ontological state that Beckett embodies and Merleau-Ponty proposes in his theories on time.

Vertical Time.

As one of his later principles, published in *Eye and Mind* (first published in *Art de France*, January 1961), Merleau-Ponty suggests that the human experience of time runs vertically rather than laterally. Generally, it is considered that time runs in a line stretching back into the past, through to the present and forward into the future. That the past gradually fades and disappears and that the future is a vague, hazy or an invisible non-presence, and it is only the present that has a solid existence and presence. Merleau-Ponty's principle of 'Vertical time' suggests that because the time line runs vertically, the experience of each moment of time is a compound of the past, present and future. And contained within this compound all possible realities exist: 'Vertical time with layers and depths that remain *latently present*, as opposed to linear time with its vanishing present and specious notion of progress' (Johnson 1993: 42, emphasis added). The human experience of one moment of time contains a reality based on the past, present and future, extending the logic of this I propose that as a consequence, each moment of time must be simultaneously augmented, haunted and ghosted by all the other latent phantom possibilities of that compound of time. One moment of life experience, simultaneously contains our birth, life and death; *Krapp's Last Tape*, *Act Without Words II*, *Footfalls*, *Rockaby*, *Play*, *Breath* I argue that all those latent possible realities are dissolved but never resolved into one realm being as a palimpsestuous overlaying and mutually interrupting times. This is a world that comes into and out of being in various degrees of cohesion along a continuum, according to the highest probability that 'this continuously incomplete reality can exist here'.

The flesh acts as an unknown, undefined projection of all probabilities, all possibilities, intertwining, crossing-over, bridging the actual and virtual realms, real and unreal worlds, the visible and in-the-visible. The flesh becomes transparent, capturing and containing self, other and world in the process of bringing a world into being. For Merleau-Ponty this projecting and merging of self, other and world is:

[a] good or profound “narcissism” in which the seer is caught up in the seen, not to see in the outside the contour of one’s own body, but to emigrate into the world ... “so that the seer and the visible reciprocate one another and we no longer know which sees and which is seen” (VI, 139; VI, 183) ... this anonymity is called Flesh.

(Johnson 1993: 47 (*PrP*, 163, *OE*, 19; *EM*, 125))

Unable to separate itself from its milieu the ‘flesh’ projects, vibrates, gyrates, oscillates, and ripples out in concentric circles into the world in a ‘multiplicity of outlines around a figure’ (Gilmore quoted in Carman & Hansen 2005: 296; figs. 1.2 & 1.3), ‘inscribed *like lines of force*; the spatial structure vibrates as it is formed’ (*SNS*, 15; *CD*, 65; fig 1.2 & 1.3), and ‘Rebounding among these, one’s glance captures a shape that emerges from them all, just as it does in perception’ (*SNS* 20/15; *AR* 65; figs. 1.4 to 1.5). Our sense of being oscillates in-between the pre-subjective and subjective field, object and subject, actual and virtual, self and nonself, habitual and present body, and the world emerges through ‘the vibration of appearances which is the cradle of things’ (*SNS*, 18; *CD*, 68):

perhaps that's what I am, the thing that divides the world in two, on the one side the outside, on the other the inside [...] I'm neither one side nor the other, I'm in the middle, I'm the partition [...] perhaps that's what I feel, myself vibrating, I'm the tympanum, on the one hand the mind, on the other the world, I don't belong to either.

(*The Unnamable* 2010c: 100)

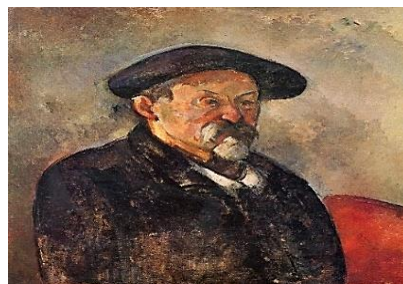
Pre-subjectively the human and its world are a projection before an actualization; the human rehearses the projective act of constructing a stable world and I before determining which one has the highest probability of coming into being. This phantom pathfinder embodies Merleau-Ponty’s principle of Hyperreflection in which the human and its world are a projection before an actualization. This process and space of genesis in-between being and nothingness mean that ontology is possible only indirectly, after the comparison and projective event. I and my world are a projection before an actualization: ‘hallucinating oneself into being ... happens when we “re-realize” the self-alienation at the core of subjective being [...] *to be human is to be alienated; to be posthuman is to be self-alienated*’ (Ted Hiebert quoted in Effinger 2011:

377; emphasis in the original). In hindsight is this re-realization a post-millennium re-creation of the post-World War II existential crisis, and symptomatic of the same locus of being, sitting somewhere in-between something and nothing, actual and virtual?

Adding two later Merleau-Ponty principles to this projected flesh I can demonstrate a system for bringing a world into being. The first of which stems from G. E. Coghill who states that movement creates growth and growth creates movement; that it is the moving body that develops and evolves the human being. The second principle is based on Arnold Gesell's theories of 'dynamic morphology' which claims that the body confronts the world at an angle; that behaviour is asymmetrical. An asymmetry that determines that it is ontologically impossible for the body to have any sense of resolution, because if there is no symmetry there can be no completion, only movement. Through my compounding of these principles the human is simultaneously projecting and receiving projections and perpetually oscillating towards a norm, and the reality of a three-dimensional 'I' in 'this place', is a habituated consensus of changing norms, constructed instant-by-instant, the individual is the consensus as the consensus is made-up of the individual. A state of being where we are 'simultaneously in a state of relative equilibrium and in a state of disequilibrium' (*N* 199/149) and it is only the *potential* for equilibrium, something Merleau-Ponty calls 'embryonic equipotentiality' (*N* 207/155-6) that creates the possibility of creating a stable world and I. This de- and re-habituating the self to self and world, is the process of de- and re-composing the single defining objective outline that separates the human from its milieu, and is one of the aesthetic principles of Cézanne, Merleau-Ponty and Beckett.

The 'metamorphosis of subject into object and back' occurs through the projecting practices of the senses carried in the medium of the Flesh, a Flesh that I propose acts as a tool or phantom augmentation, an Ur-text and primitive device or new mode of perception constructed and shaped by the projecting practices of the totality of the bodies sensory array. The flesh is the prosthesis to self as technology is a prosthesis to self that is used as a tool to habituate the self to world: 'There is a human body when, between the seeing and the seen, between touching and the touched, between one eye and the other, between hand and hand, a blending of some sort takes place' (*PrP*, 163; *OE*, 21; *EM*, 125). An intertwining, inversion and reversibility of the flesh, and it is this reversing of the subject and object in our body, between the self and non-self that is the fundamental manifestation of being. A reversal in Merleau-Ponty's *The Visible and the Invisible* taking us back to Art, Cézanne, and the flesh

as technology: “the flesh is a mirror phenomenon and the mirror is an extension of my relation with my body” (VI, 255; VI, 309) I both see and see myself seeing’ (Johnson 1993: 48). There is a reverse gaze in-between the self and projected Flesh, the left-right reversibility as in a mirror, and the asymmetrical tessellation and metamorphosis of subject into object and back: ‘This doubling with difference (*eécart*) between self and world is the meaning of Flesh’ (Johnson quoted in Galen 1993: 49). In ordinary self-portraiture because of the mirror stage the eye is centred and the ‘viewer has the sense of being caught in a face-to-face stare. The eyes are looking at me ... he is trying to tell me something. Yet he is only looking at himself in the mirror. The viewer ... is in fact an intruder’ (Silverman quoted in Galen 1993: 271). But in the 1898-1900 last available self-portraits, Cézanne uses two mirrors and ‘The apparent right is the actual right – the double mirroring corrects the inversion’ (Ibid.). Cézanne ‘makes the mirror invisible and his specular image visible’ thus ‘for Cézanne, the self-portrait is the self as other reflecting itself as the same’ (Ibid. 271-72; fig. 1.6).



1.6. *Self-portrait with beret* 1900, 63x50cm oil/canvas, Private Collection.
http://art-cezanne.com/cezanne_1900_14.html

The self as other, is the self; disembodiment, distancing and objectifying the self. Looking at digital self-portraiture in the *Selfie* a similar effect is achieved partly through the same de-centring of the eyes. The image becomes ‘the self as other reflecting itself as the same’. Consequently ‘the self is displayed, made visible, drawn out, extracted, projected, and rendered as a version of itself’ (Ibid: 277). This conceptualization and abstraction of the self makes possible the multiplication, dilution and objectification of the self. If the self as other, is the self, the external projecting practices of sensory perception are internalized and reversed, creating a self as other and world. Thus, the only thing I can know is the self.

Merleau-Ponty states normal perception cannot make the figure-ground distinction, our sense of being tessellates in-between the actual and virtual *lines of force*, bringing a world into being in various degrees of cohesion along a continuum, as the single defining outline forms and refines itself into an objective world (fig. 1.7 to 1.8). However, digital and virtual technology *can* make the figure-ground distinction. Through the use of high-definition digital

technology the object-figure is pre-defined and pre-formed with a defining outline (fig. 1.8). If the single defining outline is already formed the object exists ‘prior to our sense-making perception of them’ (fig. 1.8). The participator does not create the world that they inhabit. Our sense of being no longer oscillates in-between being and nothingness, actual and virtual to create the world it inhabits, the *lines of force* have lost their constituting power, there is no ‘vibration of appearances which is the cradle of things’ (*SNS*, 18; *CD*, 68). The world is pre-defined and outlined, and comes pre-constructed, pre-formed, pre-packaged and presented as the completed process (fig. 1.8).



1.7. *Still Life with Carafe, Sugar Bowl, Pomegranates and Watermelon*. c.1900-1906. 31.5x43.1cm. Musée de Louvre, Paris. Cézanne.

1.8. Digital Photo Shop Replica.

Again, Cézanne demonstrates this pre-constructed world with the extra gold highlighting around the blue star on the left arm of the chair (fig. 1.9). Here the object is at the reverse end of the continuum of seeing the world come into being; the single defining outline, therefore object, exists ‘prior to our sense-making perception of them’. The human sensorium takes no active part in creating an objective world, as it has already been created. As Cézanne describes this pre-constructed experience of a world through Art producing a prosthetic flesh as technology, so Beckett achieves the same. Beckett pre-defines and outlines our objective world through manipulating sensory extremes, by visually setting a concrete body against a void, or the textual extremes of precision and latitude creating the same pre-constructed experience of a world. The sensory extremes force the prosthetic ‘flesh’ or bodies total sensory array into oscillating in-between being and nothingness, actual and virtual, fixed or fluid in an attempt to create and stabilize an objective world. The same act of genesis created by Cézanne’s oscillating blue lines and Beckett’s extremes, pre-figure our experience of being in the digital and virtual world, through tessellating our sense of being in-between being and nothingness, actual and virtual, and into the continuously incomplete process of bringing a world into being. Beckett, as Cézanne, keeps this a reflexive, metadramatic response, in that the audience/reader is forced into a conscious awareness that they create the

world that they inhabit, whereas digital and virtual reality normalize this process, making it invisible and unknown.



1.9. Cézanne, *Madam Cézanne in a Red Armchair*, c.1877, oil on canvas, 72.4x55.9cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, bequest of Robert Treat Paine, 2nd, (artwork in the public domain; Photograph © 2013 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

In the digital and virtual world, the same projecting practices oscillate our sense of being in-between and communicating with a multitude of people, places and times simultaneously, and equally with the only certain materiality of the singular 'I' body. I simultaneously function on Facebook, Twitter, I Skype, email, Game, Google, text and talk and yet I only have one material body. In the digital world, it is normal to oscillate in-between the multiple and singular I, body, flesh, world; normal to exist in a locus of process somewhere in-between the real and unreal, where a priori conditions of space, time and causality are unclear; normal to feel a permanent sense of existential angst in a locus of process that has no beginning, end or answer. Normal to see a high-definition, pre-defined, outlined figure and world, pre-constructed, pre-formed, pre-packaged and presented as the completed process (fig. 1.8). And if it is normal it is unknown and unnoticed.

Beckett's 'Third Way'.

Ultimately the 'metamorphosis of subject into object and back' results in a 'unity of opposites' (Johnson 1993: 49). Although my theories on Vertical time define this locus for being human as experiencing simultaneity (singularity?) of object and subject, based on a temporary coalition of opposites coming into and out of being in varying degrees of cohesion along a continuum, that Beckett proposed in his 'third way', which he felt would resolve the crisis of object and subject relation existing in the strict dualist view. In the *Three Dialogues* Beckett proposes a need to accept the failure to separate and define either the object or subject, to accept the *failure* of any strict defining objective outlines defining our reality, to accept the presence of what is *not* [t]here:

All that should concern us is the acute and increasing anxiety of the relation itself, as though shadowed more and more darkly by a sense of invalidity, of inadequacy, *of existence at the expense of all that it excludes, all that it blinds to ...* van Velde is the first ... to admit that to be an artist is to fail, as no other dare fail ... I know that all that is required now ... is to make of this submission, this admission, this fidelity to failure, a new occasion, a new term of relation, and of the act which, unable to act, obliged to act, he makes, an expressive act, even if only of itself, of its impossibility, of its obligation.

(*Disjecta* 1983: 145; emphasis added)

The failure to define an objective reality simultaneously results in the appearance of an equally overwhelming subjective realm, where all the unspoken possibilities that could, but are *not* said in that situation are simultaneously present. Beckett's 'third way' produces a temporary coalition of opposites in varying degrees of cohesion along a continuum embodied in his use of language. Beckett produces a simultaneity of opposites through using the opposing principle of what *is* said represses what is *not* said, through embodying, actioning and spatializing as experience what is *not* said as equally as what *is* said. In Beckett what is *not* said has the presence of projected echoes, ghosts, dreams and whispers of other selves, realities, possibilities and probabilities – in-between what *is* said and what is *not* said is a Quantum universe of probabilities. Through maximizing the presence of the unutterable and minimizing the presence of the spoken: 'if all that is not factitious or illusory is unutterable, the choice is not between illusion and reality but between varieties of illusion' (*The Residual Beckett TLS* 1981: BC MS3023). Beyond the veil of Maya or illusion of physicality, there lies a field or matrix of energy and information, a seeming nothingness and void, in which all possible states are possible and probable, the void is never empty. This is a borderland of pure potentiality where we can see with the eyes of a new born child 'like the naivest realist, a composite of perceiver and perceived, not a datum, an experience' (*Beckett* 1983: 138). In-between ontological states there is only the moving moment of experience, as Georges Duthuit explains to Beckett:

The world a flux of movements partaking of living time, that of effort, creation, liberation, the painting, the painter. The fleeting instant of sensation given back, given forth, with context of the continuum it nourished.

(*Ibid.* 138)

In this no man's land forever on the cusp of emerging, where existence lives on the pre-subjective moment, the anticipatory moment of potentiality, the objective world exists as a 'fleeting instant' along a continuum perpetually coming into and out of being in varying

degrees of clarity in a process of continuous creation where ‘All things flow’. For a refugee from any stable a priori conditions a singular ‘I’ has yet, if ever, to be solidified and ‘nothing is more real than nothing’. This is a pre-subjective land where all is potential and nothing is stable. Beckett actualizes the dichotomy in-between the I and the Not I. Does this actualization of the phantom Not I make Mouth in *Not I* the manifestation of the not spoken in-between being and nothingness: ‘unable to stop, not knowing what it wants to tell, denying that the story it utters is its own’ (*The Residual Beckett TLS* 1981: BC MS3023)?

The expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express.

(Beckett 1983: 139)

In a universe of probabilities and process what is *not* said has as much presence as what *is* said, neither dominates.

Beckett’s visual extremes of: a concrete body set against an ambiguous black or shadow, visual de-centrality and repetition against the void, the textual extremes of precision and latitude, are some of the techniques that create this genesis and metamorphosis of being. Oscillating the projecting practices of sensory perception in-between being and nothingness, actual and virtual, object and subject Beckett’s audience/reader is placed in the continuously incomplete process of bringing a world into being. Beckett’s techniques draw reflexive attention to the mechanisms of the medium creating that reality. We see and know that we are in a locus of process, creating a stable self and world out what Beckett called “the mess” the “incoherent continuum”, “the chaos” or simply “nothingness” behind the Hindu “veil of Maya” or Thing-in-itself (fig. 1.10).



1.10. *Mont Sainte-Victoire* 1902-1906, 65x81cm oil/canvas, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Beckett’s principle of oscillating sensory perception in-between the realms of being and nothingness and into the act of creation, is the principle that I have applied to the digital and virtual world, and is the principle that has guided a re-definition, re-application or re-

invention of the definitions used to define the experience of a ‘real’ world. These definitions are used throughout the thesis. These four definitions of the ‘real’ are not absolute but exist in varying degrees of cohesion along a continuum. The ‘actual’ world is that which is actually and physically present on the stage, radio or screen. The ‘virtual’ is the term I use to define the technologically reproduced virtual other-worldly-world, that is present on stage with the actual world, but is a realm that is produced by technology. The ‘imagined virtual’ world, is again a second realm that is present in the performance with the actual physical world, but it is a world that comes out of the imagination and is not produced by technology. Beckett’s characters bring a world into being through the imagination and stage it alongside the actual physical world. Coming out of the dark of the mind and black void, Beckett’s characters concretize and make actual the virtual imagination. The realm of the ‘possible’ are all those virtual worlds that Beckett’s ambiguity suggests could exist but never come into being. They are the imagined virtual worlds that never become concrete, never become actual and present on stage. These worlds are never seen, but they are heard in the whispers and echoes of the choices not made, worlds not created; these are all the possible worlds that live in the shadows of the mind and ghost the actual world. They are all the possible latent realities that must exist within the actual world:

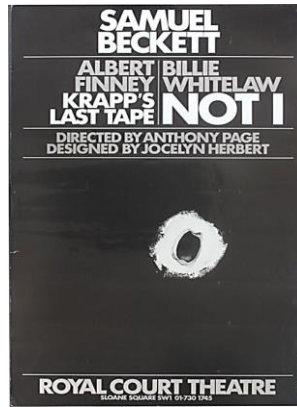
The possible is already fully constituted, but exists in a state of limbo. It can be realized without any change occurring either in its determination or nature. It is a phantom reality, something latent.

(Lévy 1998: 24)

I will now explore this continuum of the ‘real’ through testing my theory that Beckett’s work pre-figures our experience of bringing a world into being in the digital and virtual world through embodying my interpretation of Merleau-Ponty’s principles. I will briefly analyse a series of Beckett’s original texts, archival material on their creative genesis, and the premiere production and critical reception of: *Not I* (1972), *Rockaby* (1979-1980), *The Lost Ones* (1972), *Ghost Trio* (1975), ... *but the clouds ...* (1976), *Quad* (1980-81) and *Nacht und Träume (Night and Dreams)* (1982). Before ending the chapter at the contemporary end of this temporal continuum by comparing the BBC’s version of *Not I* as part of *The Lively Arts: Shades* programme (1977), with an analysis of the *Beckett on Film* version of *Not I* (2001) directed by Neil Jordan. This temporal continuum investigates how the changing reception of Beckett’s work reflects the evolution of the human understanding of this unique ontological locus in-between being and nothingness.

This textual and archival case study will trace the development of Beckett's script writing processes, and how this progress is expressed through the use of technology in producing his own plays. The more Beckett directed his own plays the more he wrote possible variations and adaptations into the script itself due to the co-creative nature of performance. Beckett's aesthetic is one of continuous incompleteness in a locus of process and thus open to any amount of adaptation and transmediation forever. Beckett pre-figured our experience of being in the digital and virtual world through tessellating our sense of being in-between being and nothingness, actual and virtual and into the process of bringing a world into being. Beckett refined this process through a progression of increasingly complex media technology up to the point that it becomes an unnoticed and invisible process. Until the conjunction of Beckett's death and the inauguration of the digital media age in 1989 embodied this emerging latency in performance practitioners of Beckett. How does Beckett pre-figure our experience of being in the digital and virtual world?

Exploring Beckett's original text and its performance in comparison with contemporary Beckett performance could indicate the degree that the human process of creating the world that it inhabits, has not only been taken over by digital and virtual technology, but in the reciprocal and reverse process questions whether the cognitive processes of sensory perception replicate the technological methodologies of reproducing a world to inhabit. Have the principles of the virtual replaced those of the actual world in the human process of bringing a world into being, producing new and different cultural codes, spatial organization, temporal frames, and a priori conditions of space, time and causality? Later in the chapter I will compare the BBC version of *Not I* (1977) with the *Beckett on Film* version of *Not I* (2001), to determine whether it is the principles of the digital and virtual world, rather than the principles of Beckett's and Merleau-Ponty's actual world, that creates the experience of bringing a world into being for the viewer, and the consequences for the viewer's sense of being in both the actual and the virtual other-worldly-world.

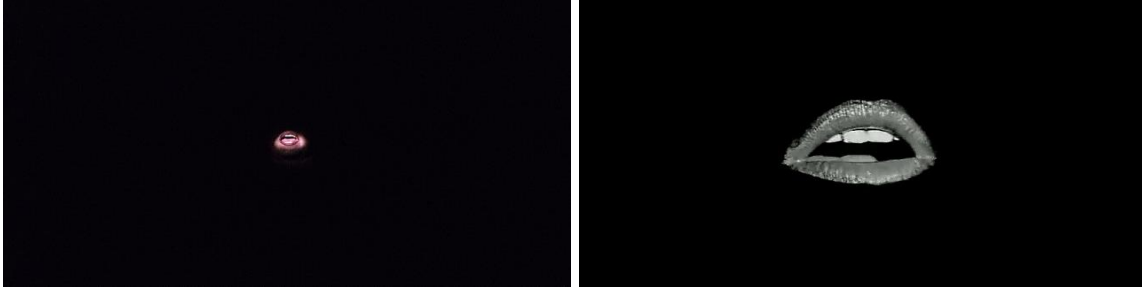


1.11. Poster of the London premiere of *Not I* at the Royal Court Theatre, 16 January 1973. Picture by Avigdor Arikha, 'Self Portrait Shouting One Morning', Ink and brush on paper, 38 x 46cm. 1969.
<http://moicani.over-blog.com/>

Not I (1972).

Not I is a prime example of Beckett's aesthetic evolving through his practice of directing theatre from the late 1960s onwards. Through an increasingly complex use of theatre technology Beckett is able to place the participator deeper into the process of bringing their own world into being. This genesis moment is embodied in the script, its moment of creation and premiere production. The script of *Not I* was written in 1972 and was first performed at the Forum Theatre of the Lincoln Center, New York, in September 1972, with Alan Schneider directing and Jessica Tandy as Mouth. The text of *Not I* presents a female, disembodied mouth floating high above the stage and defined by the darkness it is set against, spewing out a stream of consciousness and watched by a very tall hooded figure in silhouette. What the audience see and hear is that Mouth may have a definite sense of the 'I' in the 'vehement refusal to relinquish third person' (Ibid. *NI* 83; emphasis added) but is very vague: 'With rise of curtain ad-libbing from text as required leading when curtain fully up and attention sufficient into' (Ibid. *NI* 85; emphasis added). Everything oscillates in-between an 'undeterminable', faintly lit', 'unintelligible', 'invisible', and vague 'about', and yet the 'about' is definitely '8 feet above' and 'about 4 feet', as the 'unintelligible' 'ad-libbing' is precisely '10 seconds' long (Ibid.). The audience are placed in the impossible position of constantly receiving conflicting signals that sit somewhere in-between the fixed and fluid interpretation, as it passes through both an actual and virtual realm. Nothing is entirely certain as audience sensory perception oscillates in-between the only certain materiality of the singular 'I' fleshly mouth, and a black empty void that could contain anything or nothing. The text, performance and audience perception of the play literally oscillates in-between being and nothingness. And in-between something and nothing there are no fixed a priori

conditions, and our sense of being is placed in a continuous process of emerging but never fixing or defining itself into a singular ‘I’ body. Beckett’s apparently very specific and exacting stage directions leave everything to that particular body in that particular space in the process of performance.



1.12. Bríd Ni Neachtain in “Not I”, *Beckett in the City: The Women Speak*. Company SJ. 2017. Photograph Emon Hassan for *The New York Times* 25 September 2017.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/25/theatre/beckett-in-the-city-the-women-speak-review.html>

1.13. Billie Whitelaw as Mouth in *Not I*, Royal Court Theatre, London, 16 January 1973.

<https://www.bing.com/images/search>

Apart from the continuous use of ellipsis which perform the silences on stage and leave everything to the audience’s imagination in an attempt to fill in what is *not* there, Mouth continually negates the narrative half completed, with questions ‘What?’, denials ‘no’, and in a combination of both, contained in the four ‘what? ... who? ... no! ... she! ... [*Pause and movement I.*]’ that act as scene divisions, and trigger the AUDITOR into a vague ‘gesture of helpless compassion’ (Ibid. *NI* 83-93). Among the precise details are vague dismissals: ‘no matter’ and ‘so on’, options of ‘or’, ‘or other ... or for the lot ... or no particular reason ... for its own sake’ (Ibid. *NI* 86-87). And in a juxtaposition of both the precise and vague: ‘suddenly realised ... gradually realised’, ‘oh long after ... sudden flash’, ‘so like her ... in a way’ (Ibid.). Beckett metadramatically places the audience in Mouth’s experience of creating the world that they inhabit, through literally tessellating perception in-between the fixed and fluid, actual and virtual realm, and into the very act of creation, by also explicitly *telling* the audience to ‘imagine’ consistently throughout the play. Going so far as to tell the audience *what* and *how* to imagine a world coming into and out of being, through the narrative itself: ‘and a ray of light came and went ... came and went ... such as the moon might cast ... drifting ... in and out of cloud’ being ‘like moonbeam ... but probably not ... certainly not ... always the same spot ... now bright ... now shrouded (Ibid.). Beckett also brings that imagined virtual narrative into a more immediate presence for the audience, through a *visceral* experience: ‘should she feel so inclined ... scream ... [*Screams.*] ... then listen ... [*Silence.*] ... scream again ... [*Screams again.*] ... then listen again ... [*Silence.*]’ (Ibid. *NI*

87). The audience experience the same oscillation in-between being and nothingness and into the process of bringing a world into and out of being as Mouth.

Due to aesthetic arguments concerning the speed of performance with the original director Anthony Page, Beckett ended-up directing his iconic actress Billie Whitelaw in the role of Mouth, in the London premiere of *Not I* at the Royal Court Theatre, 16 January 1973. Looking at Billie Whitelaw's annotated typescript rehearsal script of *Not I* (BW A/2/1) and her edition of *Not I* (BW A/2/4) from the archives, she details and charts the challenges and methods of performance involved in the collaborative process with Beckett. The most obvious annotation that speaks of the legendary precision of Beckett, but also of the adaptability and fluidly of his aesthetic practices, are the '/' strokes or breaks in Billie's text that speak of contextualizing to the performance moment. The astonishing thing is that the '/' strokes are placed between ellipsis, requiring precision of non-speech, requiring rhythm within the silences: './.. but the brain still ...'

(Beckett 2009c: NI 86). How can an actor perform the '/'?

The notes Beckett wrote for Billie on Hyde Park Hotel paper (BW A/2/3), also break the script into five scenes, and add changes to the script, for example: the second repeat of 'in a merciful ... [*Brief Laugh.*] ... God ... [*Good Laugh.*]', Billie crossed out the '[*Brief Laugh.*] ...' and the '[*Good Laugh.*]' (Beckett 2009c: NI 87). These changes were only relevant to that performance with that actor in that place, as none of these changes are included in any printed text, they are aides-memoir. The archives demonstrate that Beckett's aesthetic practices replicate the actions of his text, performing the same oscillation in-between the fixed and fluid interpretative possibilities, in-between a being and nothingness and into the process of creation itself, through the continuously incomplete processes involved in the relationships in-between director, actor and context. It is in the relationships in-between self, other and world that creates a world.

Rockaby (1979-1980).

Rockaby moves into a more complex use of theatre technology than *Not I*, which steps-up Beckett's aesthetic evolution another level in his ability to place any participator into a genesis moment. *Rockaby* is an aesthetic development of *Not I* in that it is a world that is

seen in the continuously incomplete process of both de-(re)creation. A realm metadramatically and methodically deconstructed as it is simultaneously and habitually (re)constructed. Beckett still oscillates sensory perception in-between the light and dark, foreground and background, being and nothingness, actual and virtual, presence and absence and into the process of bringing a world into being, but now the audience also disassemble, deconstruct, and take a world out of being, just as it comes into completion. Existence in Beckett's realm is simultaneously and continuously in a place as we are leaving it, always emerging and always 'becoming', something other than what is before us.

W's deconstructive process in *Rockaby* is clearly embodied in the construction of the text. Beckett deconstructs the conventional habits of meaning making through language, by writing *Rockaby*'s dialogue as verse and by taking away any punctuation to indicate phrasing. These techniques are used by Beckett in a prelude to *Rockaby*, the stage play *That Time* (1974-75), which was first staged with *Footfalls* (1975) in 1976, which is also considered a prelude to *Rockaby*. A condition that invites a brief comparison, or performance epigenetic, within this analysis of *Rockaby* with the contemporary version of *That Time* for the *Beckett on Film* (2001) project. Within these two plays if there is no punctuation would the actor use the line ending as punctuation or until the breath runs out? Is the line ending a change of intention for the actor, as each actor will perform the verse text differently? There will be a mean, due to the words themselves forming rhythmic alliteration, assonance, sibilance, etc., or discord or harmony – and notably in *Rockaby* – even a waltz as the verse text begins, but within this space there is a great deal of room for interpretation and adaptation. Both the visual and textual deconstructive techniques create an ambiguity that demands contextualization, fitting the materiality of that body into that space, making the body the site and subject of meaning making. Beckett's technique of oscillating sensory perception in-between being and nothingness, light and dark, material body and black void and into the process of bringing a world into being, is a design tool that Charles Garrad discusses when designing his production of *That Time* for the *Beckett on Film* project (2001) 'which has absolutely no background or context at all' (9 March 2017).

Deconstructing the conventions of meaning making also metadramatically emphasises the habitual processes used to (re)construct a mean and normal world. Beckett places all participants into the same process of oscillating in-between the actual and virtual and into the process of bringing a world into being. An interpretive strategy dependent upon the

contextualization of the text. It is only these specific participants in that moment of engagement with the text, in that particular space and time that the Beckett text comes into being, simultaneously re-contextualizing and re-historicizing the Beckett text within performance. This performance epigenetic creates a moment of autogenesis, in which the texts recreate themselves, forever: ‘Beckett’s theatre is for our understanding of contemporary times’ (Tubridy 2012: 14). An autogenic moment that allows any recreation to touch the moment of genesis of *Rockaby*. This instant of vertical time Garrad discusses in relation to his motivation for the camera filming the head from left or right, or in close-up or distant focus in his version of *That Time*, his reaction, was ‘literally an intuitive response to the content, to the lines’, ‘it responds to the words’ (9 March 2017). An autogenic reaction creating a fluid, ‘intuitive response’, ‘what the word is saying in that moment’, but simultaneously meaning and interpretation are fixed and defined by ‘the word’ within ‘the lines’ (Ibid.). The text, as any reproduction of the text, oscillates in-between the fixed and fluid interpretation, in-between restriction and freedom, actual and virtual possibilities:

all of Beckett’s plays have instructions don’t they, they’re about how every single detail and how many seconds the pauses should be and all that sort of thing. But of course, there was a great liberty taken with moving the camera ... It was just me responding.

(Ibid.)

Creating literal and actual de- and re-constructive moments:

The way we recorded the voice, Niall Buggy did the voice and the part – the silent man listening to the voice – we recorded ... all of the A’s, all of the B’s and all the C’s [separately].

(Ibid.)

The script was disassembled into the separate characters A, B and C, and then recorded ‘And then I reassembled – cut them up and put them back again in the right position to be shot’ (Ibid.).

Through the same use of language in *Rockaby* and *That Time* an instance of performance epigenesis appears and I return to Beckett’s textual ‘Notes’ on *Rockaby* (Beckett 2009c: R 125-6), which equally oscillate a sense of being and ontology in-between the ‘there’ and the ‘not there’. Creating a reality that flickers with varying degrees of cohesion in-between being and nothingness, light and dark. The spot *Light* (Ibid. R 125) stays precisely ‘on face constant’, but is a ‘Subdued’ (Ibid.) vague measurement. The width of the light beam

is a vague ‘Either’, ‘or’ and ‘slightly’ swaying (Ibid.). The ‘fade-up’ (Ibid.) has no measurement of time or degree of intensity. These technical strategies within the script leave the interpretation open to contextualization. The ‘*Costume*’ (Ibid.) defining W is precise, yet the ‘Jet sequins to glitter when rocking’ (Ibid.), flickering W in and out of being as she rocks through the stage light and darkness. Drained of any defining colour and meaning, W is a vague ‘grey’, ‘expressionless’ and indeterminate ‘White’, yet is definitely ‘Prematurely old’ (Ibid. R 125). The ‘*Chair*’ is exact (Ibid. R 126), yet ‘*downstage slightly off centre audience left*’ (Ibid. R 127), which would fit any width and depth of stage. The ‘*Rock*’ is an imprecise ‘Slight. Slow’ and yet precise in its operation: ‘Controlled mechanically without assistance from W’ (Ibid. R 126). Momentarily synchronizing the movement of *that* rocking body in *that* space with *that* voice: ‘[*Pause. Rock and voice together*]’ (Ibid. R 127), forms a relationship between a trichotomy of body, world and other which produces, and fixes *a* life *in that* world, as the ‘Lines in italics spoken by W with V.’ (Ibid.) state ‘*time she stopped*’ (Ibid. R 127-32). W is literally spoken and rocked into and out of being, through the stage light and actual existence, and the stage dark of an imagined virtual realm, as the unseen voice of V narrates her into and out of being through a story of her life. The general critical consensus being that this is a deconstruction of W’s life as she dies at the end of the play, although there are no stage directions to indicate this. Equally for the original director it is not absolutely clear that the recorded voice is her mother, even though W is dressed in black and sits in what is assumed to be the:

V: [...] mother rocker
 where mother rocked
 all the years
 all in black
 best black
 sat and rocked

(Ibid. R 132)



1.14. Billie Whitelaw as W in *Rockaby*
<https://www.bing.com/images/search?>

1.15. “Rockaby” in *Beckett in the City: The Women Speak*. Company SJ.
<https://s3.amazonaws.com/tm-photos-production/129473.jpg>

The director of the premiere Alan Schneider states: 'It could be her mother, but that's not clear,' (*The New York Times* 17 December 1980: JEK A/8/1/45). The audience oscillate in-between the light and dark, actual and virtual realm, and experience a fully formed precise, concrete world described down to the smallest degree, and in the next moment the world begins to evaporate and disappear, becoming a memory, imagined, or dreamed and ghosting the stage and mind. To make any cohesive meaning of the reality they are experiencing, the audience are forced to oscillate in-between being and nothingness and into the process of bringing a world into being. Within his use of stage technology Beckett is able to refine the audience experience of bringing a world into being, through developing techniques used in *Not I*: here, staging a whole body against a black void, deconstructing the text, and through the use of stage lighting forcing a metadramatic response and experience for the audience. This results in a de-(re)constructive process of bringing the worlds that they inhabit into and out of being. This consequently places the audience further into the processes of creation, whether de- or re-creation. The next literary case study investigates Beckett's move back into utilizing the more obvious media technology of the radio.

The Lost Ones (1972).

During this period of stage experimentation Beckett also returns to interacting with a progression of increasingly complex media technology. Beckett's aesthetic progress in refining the audience experience of bringing a world into being through technology, moves from the stage briefly back into radio technology before ending in the television. This textual analysis also goes back to the archive to the radio adaptation of the prose piece *The Lost Ones* (1972), and its first transmission on BBC Radio 3, 2 January 1973, to explore the creative genesis of the text, the text itself, and its adaptation and transmediation. This explores the degree that technology increases Beckett's ability to place his audience into the act of creation. Who or what creates the world that we inhabit?

Beckett began writing *The Lost Ones*, the longest of the 'Residua' at 1000 words, in October 1965 and abandoned it in May 1966. Beckett told John Calder in a letter dated 21 March 1970 that he would publish the work unfinished, and the text appeared as *Le Dépeupleur* from Les Éditions de Minuit in September 1970, after Beckett had written an ending in May 1970. Beckett translated (revised, adapted?) *Le Dépeupleur* into English

between September-November 1971 and it was published as *The Lost Ones* in January 1972 by Calder in London and then by the Grove Press in New York. This constantly moving creative practice of oscillating in-between the whole and parts of his oeuvre defines the content and form of Beckett's work, typified in one of Beckett's writing processes of 'faux départs' ('false starts'), as Mark Nixon states: 'Beckett would start one text, lay it aside to start another, and then return to the original, or amalgamate the two, or abandon both' (*Beckett* 2010b: vii). This ultimately creates not only transgeneric works, but arguably works still in the process of creation or 'continuous incompleteness', the Joycean 'Work in Progress' reduced to Beckett's minimal 'work in regress with usual vanishing point in view' (BC HER/016).

Beckett's compositional processes will affect any re-interpretation of the work in a direct way. The 'faux départs' ('false starts'), and his inclination to use 'Residua' from a greater whole, not only produces an 'Art of Process' in which the creative process itself is the art, this 'process' in-turn produces a performance epigenetic that directly links any reproduction of the art with its origin. Not only do Beckett's original texts exist in a locus somewhere in-between something and nothing – on a knife edge of ontological probability, dependent on the highest possible odds that a reality will emerge, but the contexts of their reproduction re-enacts and concretizes the fact that with a Beckett text the only certainty is uncertainty based on 'law of probabilities' that a man and wife will meet in *The Lost Ones* (*Beckett* 2010b: TLO 117).

Replying to the critic Brian Finney's question of why he named them 'Residua', Beckett 'is frank and precise: "They are residual (1) Severally, even when that does not appear of which each is all that remains and (2) in relation to whole body of previous work"' (*The Residual Beckett TLS* 1981: BC MS3023). A situation and action repeated in *The Lost Ones* self-contained world where beings are searching for their lost one, the absence of which empties the world of humanity. In this interview Beckett pointed out to Finney that the title was meant to refer the reader to a famous line in Lamartine's *Méditations Poétiques*: 'Un seul être vous manqué et tout est dépeuplé' (one human being is missing and everything is emptied of people) (*Ibid.*; my translation). Oscillating in-between the actual and imagined virtual world, what is *not* there has an equal presence to what *is* there, revealed in Nixon's summary of the prose piece: the 'narrative describes a cylinder containing roughly 200 "little people", all seeking their *lost ones*, or seeking *an exit*. The scrutiny of the *space* itself, as well

as the *rules and behaviour* governing its inhabitants, is scientific in procedure and impersonal in tone, and further explores the closed spaces of *All Strange Away* and *Imagination dead imagine*' (Beckett 2010b: xv; emphasis added).

My analysis oscillates the *The Lost Ones* text in-between the whole and part, actual and virtual, being and nothingness. The environment literally oscillates in-between the extremes of heat, simultaneously being a precise and vague 'measured beat', of 'about four seconds'. The light 'Its dimness' is vague, 'sound is *scarcely* heard' and yet 'A kiss makes an *indescribable* sound'. Again, forcing and literally telling the reader/participator to 'Imagine then', as in *Not I*, a world that is as personal as it is universal (Beckett 2010b: *TLO*). Amongst the precise measurements of the world of the cylinder, a 'flattened cylinder fifty meters round and sixteen high' an indeterminacy creeps in the area 'some twelve million' 'square centimeter[s]', where the ladders are 'not less than six meters' but 'vary', 'some' have an extension. An ambiguity embodied in words such as: 'enough', 'some', 'perhaps', 'or', 'moments', 'more or less' and is an imprecision where every decision is enacted by the reader/participator in a process of comparison and compromise with the other and world (Beckett 2010b: *TLO*). This is a hyperreflexive act that exists in vertical time, forever in the continuously incomplete process of creation: 'It is *perhaps* the end of their abode' (Beckett 2010b: *TLO* 101; emphasis added).

Analysing the BBC archive demonstrates that even the initial process of decision-making within the BBC process of adaptation and transmediation, is racked with the same ambivalence, ambiguity and indecision as the text and critical reviews. Forcing such questions as how much agency does the re-interpreter have over the re-creation of a Beckett text if the work is so intrinsically entwined in the process of creative genesis? If the creative genesis is the text, then any recreation of the text *is* the text. In relation to the negotiations between Beckett, the BBC and John Calder, Beckett's prose publisher Calder and Boyers Ltd, in-between 1972-1973, in respect of Martin Esslin 'reading', 'approximately 75-mins. [minutes] from THE LOST ONES', 'in Radio 3 on a date *to be decided*' (emphasis added) is a small example of the interpretability and inconclusive nature of Beckett's reality and its consequences (18 August 1972: all refs. BBC WAC RCONT 31 00343). One of which is Beckett's tendency to usurp his agent's ability to negotiate for him. The copyright department of BBC 'Drama (Radio)' sent an internal memo to 'Organiser, Drama (Radio) Play Library' (David Gower) stating in the 'COMMENTS: HD(R) already has Mr. Beckett's *personal*

authorisation for this' broadcast (17 August 1972) (emphasis added). Five months later (18 January 1973) in another internal memo 'Mrs. Boyars [partner of the above publisher] ... still have to get Beckett's agreement'. Yet a hand written note dated '2/11' added to the bottom of this memo states 'Would not have to ask Beckett'. Complicating the uncertainty of the situation of obtaining copyright permission in respect of adapting a prose piece, the BBC are unaware that 'with Beckett texts, some of which go through Curtis Brown' the publisher of Beckett's plays (11 August 1972). Also, the BBC 'Copyright Department' and 'Library' (David Gower) specifically dealt with '*Drama*', '*Radio*' and '*Play Library*' not the prose (emphasis added). Which may not only account for the difficult negotiations concerning Beckett's fee, not only for *The Lost Ones* 'reading' (performance?), but also for Beckett's translation into English from the original French? In a letter from Calder and Boyars to BBC copyright (12 April 1973) a hand written note debates with the BBC's Gower, who believed that *The Lost Ones* was a play, which was the reason that Beckett was paid an 'enhanced by 25%' fee and why the prose works of *First Love* 'enhancement should be + 1/6 (not 25% which is for plays only)'. Uncertainty not only in the literary status of the work in relation to transmediation, but also in Beckett's ambiguous relationship with adaptation, deeply effects any reinterpretation and representation.

What the radio listeners hear and interpret to be Beckett's work, recorded and archived for posterity by the BBC and used by re-interpreters whether literary or performance practitioners of Beckett's work, is dependent on the vagaries of what Esslin and the BBC deem to be a '*reading*' in terms of, for example: the degree of vocal inflections and intentions in the work's 'performance', the editing and thus length of the piece, and the context of its broadcast; what day, time, or programmes bookend its transmission, first on Radio 3, 2 January 1973 at the length of 57' 17" (57:17). Beckett's work is based on a process of continuous incompleteness and exists somewhere in-between the unfixed and fluid, precise and concrete. Adding the fact that each new performance of Beckett is unique and based on a process of contingency (as performance itself), then any reproduction of a Beckett text is true to the text. A return to the source text and the Beckett archives reveals the unique ontological locus of any Beckett text and its creative genesis, identified as a possible locus for being human in the digital and virtual realm.

The Lively Arts: Shades project (1977).

Throughout this period of radio adaptation and experimentation Beckett also returns to directing theatre, before a decisive move into the most obvious complex media technology of his time, the television, initially through *The Lively Arts: Shades* project (1977). I argue that the technology of television allows Beckett to place his audience deeper into the process of bringing a world into being, through oscillating our sense of being in-between being and nothingness, actual and virtual, fixed and fluid and into the process of creation itself. The same ontological locus and process that this thesis argues pre-figures our experience in the digital and virtual world. This project constantly returns to the archive to explore Beckett's moment of creative genesis, aesthetic practices, and original text(?) to demonstrate that these creative processes exist in the same unique ontological locus, performing the same processes of oscillation that exist in the digital and virtual world. And it is this movement of return or moment of performance epigenesis existing in vertical time, that creates a text that is autogenic – it recreates itself every time it is engaged with. This thesis demonstrates that it is through the continuously incomplete, embryonic processes involved in the relationships in-between director, actor, audience/reader, researcher, context, and the creative act itself, that creates the world we inhabit. Beckett wrote to the exigencies of the moment, tailoring, contextualizing, changing, and producing art to order, but not strictly for, or in collaboration with the BBC, it appears to be a more intimate co-creative relationship.

An analysis of the BBC archive reveals that Beckett's co-creative relationships progress his aesthetic practices into the increasingly complex media technology of the television screen, where his work also finally ends. *The Lively Arts: Shades* project was a co-creation with BBC television that Beckett supervised, and allowed him to further explore and refine his process of bringing a viewer into the experience of continuously bringing a world into being. *Shades* is a collection of two television plays that Beckett purportedly wrote especially for the project, called *Ghost Trio* (1975) and *... but the clouds ...* (1976), and a filming of the stage play *Not I* (1972). They were collectively transmitted in a world premiere on 17 April 1977 on *The Lively Arts: Shades* television programme broadcast on BBC 2. Critics have previously thought that both *Ghost Trio* and *... but the clouds ...* were written by Beckett especially for the *Shades* project and thus specifically for television. The contract Beckett had with the BBC concerning *Ghost Trio* and *... but the clouds ...* was called

‘AGREEMENT RELATING TO THE COMMISSIONING OF SPECIALLY WRITTEN MATERIAL FOR TELEVISION’ (BBCWAC T51/350 25 February 1977) and includes the rights to a full script, that for Beckett was never fixed or stable. This mis-apprehension concerning how specifically the plays were written for the context stems from the suggestion made by Beckett to the BBC ‘that I try to write a new piece for TV to be directed by Donald [McWhinnie]. If this agreeable to BBC I need to know what length is required. If I don’t succeed we can then consider in tranquillity the adaptation of existing material’ (BBCWAC SB to McWhinnie, 22 December 1975). This was Beckett’s response to the editor of the BBC *Second House* (later *The Lively Arts*) not wanting to use another single actor piece, as they were already using *Eh Joe* and *Not I* for the BBC’s television celebration of Beckett’s 70th birthday on 13 April 1976 (BBCWAC T51/350). This mis-apprehension that Beckett wrote the ‘new piece’ – *Ghost Trio* – especially for, not only ‘TELEVISION’ but also for the BBC, was perpetuated by the BBC using phrases such as “especially written for”, “us”, “me”, “the BBC” in all of its correspondence internally and externally and in all publicity material (BBCWAC T51/350 & BBCWAC 1952-1984). The mis-understanding also spread to Beckett’s agents (Spokesmen) using these phrases in its correspondence and financial negotiations with the BBC and beyond (Ibid.). Beckett actually had ideas on *Ghost Trio* in January 1968 (Knowlson 1996: 555), and started preliminary work at the beginning of 1975, continuing its development into January 1976. The BBC received various ‘final scripts’ from Beckett’s agent (Spokesmen) over the period 18 May 1976 – 26 July 1976.

Again ... *but the clouds* ... was not strictly written for the BBC *Shades* project. After completing the filming of *Ghost Trio* Beckett was asked by Tristram Powell (BBC) to write a new script (BBCWAC 20 October 1976) to *replace* the film of the Royal Court Theatre production of *Play* that was intended to join *Ghost Trio* and *Not I* for *Shades*, because Beckett ‘was so unhappy with the poor quality of the film’ (Knowlson 1996: 633). The BBC suggested the parameters of the script in the same letter as asking Beckett to write it: ‘(it needn’t be as long)’ as *Play*, as it will ‘become the first act of a three part programme’, in which ‘for most of the TV audience it will be a first experience of your work’, and ‘I’ve made a provisional booking for filming’, ‘envisioning something on the same sort of scale as “*Ghost Trio*”’ (BBCWAC 20 October 1976). The BBC may report that Beckett ‘offered to write us an alternative’ (BBCWAC T51/350 6 January 1977) and that ‘Samuel Beckett was given complete freedom to let his imagination roam in the making of the two films’ (BBCWAC T51/350 20 April 1977) but in practice Beckett did not ‘offer’ to write a

companion piece to *Ghost Trio*, it was as a *replacement*, as *Ghost Trio* itself was a *replacement*, and he was given a menu of what the BBC required. It also provokes the question of whether writing a *replacement*, and for a specific context effects what is written? Beckett was very aware of the conditions of filming in Ealing Studios and the constraints this would place on the piece; in writing to Jocelyn Herbert Beckett states: ‘Thoughts [were] jostling in my head for something to replace *Play*. Rejected one after another as too complicated for Ealing [i.e. for the film studios there]. Hope to find something simple in the end’ (Knowlson 1996: 634). Beckett’s creative genesis and aesthetic practices in the creation of his worlds are founded on co-creative relationships, existing in the same unique ontological locus somewhere in-between being and nothingness, fixed and fluid, in the process of continuous incompleteness.

Ghost Trio (1975).

The same ontological locus and co-creative process extends into the construction of the text. Returning to the two original texts of *The Lively Arts: Shades* project demonstrates that writing adaptation into the process of performance, suggests that there are no absolutes within the text, and that it is the action that performs the utterance and the action is in a specific body and a priori conditions, thus re-contextualizing and re-historicizing Beckett’s work simultaneously. Analysing the text again places it in the same unique ontological locus and process of tessellating in-between an exacting and imprecise text, and into the process of (re)creation itself. Within *Ghost Trio* and ... *but the clouds* ... there is the continuation and variation on the theme of a small man in a large room (void). Illustrating this theme is a pithy remark Beckett made when he saw the 1960s attempt by the BBC to record a television version of *Godot*: “‘My play”, he said, “wasn’t written for this box. My play was written for small men locked in a big space. Here you’re all too big for the place”” (Knowlson 1996: 487-88 & *Sunday Business Post* 1 April 2001: BC MS4951). The small male figure in *Ghost Trio* appears to be waiting for a visit in an extremely large and sparsely furnished room. The room and its furniture are made of grey rectangles. The man never speaks or makes any sound and only moves or responds to a female voice-over in three separate sections called ‘Pre-action, Action, Re-action’ (Beckett 2009a: *GT* 123).

The text of *Ghost Trio* juxtaposes an exactitude and precision with the general and imprecise. The character and voice are an unidentifiable 'V' and 'F', the point of view (POV) of the camera is 'general', 'medium' and 'near' shots (*Ibid. GT 123*). Sound is 'faint', tuned 'accordingly', the precise music is precisely fractured and choreographed (*Ibid. GT 125*), but 'Faint', 'progressively fainter' and only comes into being as a cohesive whole, with the reflection of 'F' in the mirror, near the end of the play (*Ibid. GT 125-26*). Light is 'faint', 'No visible source', 'Faintly luminous' creating 'No shadow', if there is no shadow there is no substance, no life (*Ibid. GT 125*). The room's furniture maybe unidentifiable and a generic 'some kind' with no functional identity or reality; no knobs, handles or switches, yet it works. It has a precise size in a precisely sized room and is shown for a precise amount of time. The speed and the objects in that room are more important than precisely where the window, door, pallet, mirror, chair and camera are in that room. The body's temporal relationship with the space and its objects, whether past, present or future, is more important than fixing one space and time. This allows each new production to contextualize the materiality of a moving body in that place; the corridor has a specific width '(0.70m.)' (*Ibid. GT 129*) but no length and can fit any stage. As with ... *but the clouds* ... this is a projection of F/M's/ mind's eye and ear; a projection of F's experience of his world, his reality.

... *but the clouds* ... (1976).

Beckett's texts, as his creative processes tessellate in-between being and nothingness, fixed and fluid interpretive possibilities and into the act of creation itself, the same process that that I argue pre-figures our experience in the digital and virtual world. Another male figure in the text of ... *but the clouds* ... tries to evoke a past female lover, in a similar way to Henry in the radio play *Embers* (1957-58), but this time Beckett is able to visualize the memory and imagination through the more advanced technology of television, instead of 'visualising' within the mind's eye of radio. M projects an image of himself M1 from past memory into a spot-lit circle surrounded by darkness on screen, he begs the woman to appear. The text, as the programme oscillates in-between an imagined virtual realm and an actual world; a possible world comes into and out of being, as the woman briefly appears and disappears as an ethereal face mouthing the words to W. B. Yeats 1929 poem *The Tower*. ... *but the clouds* ... produces the same experience of oscillating in-between exactitude and

imprecision, creating a fluid, unfixed and indeterminate experience in an ambiguous space, place, identity, history and relational contexts.

Again, within the text the timing is precise, M1's movement is exact, and yet there are no identities for M, M1, V or W. W's 'face reduced as far as possible' (Beckett 2009a: *btc* 135; emphasis added). Voice has no locus, the set is 'about 5m.', lighting is 'gradual' (Ibid. *btc* 136; emphasis added), everything bends to allow contextualization and thus adaptation. M is seen as a disembodied trunk of a body in the video of the BBC television version, filming M in his director's chair from a close-up, side-on point-of-view (BC MS5531 C/1/1). The video of the German television version that Beckett directed following the BBC recording, films M's trunk in a straight-on POV, hiding the chair and any means of physical support (*Schatten* JEK C/6/3/16). Beckett also tones down the black and white contrast to produce an image that is a great deal darker and more ambiguous than the BBC *Shades* version. Beckett's German version produces a vague, ambiguous image, literally oscillating the viewers sensory perception in-between anything that can be perceived and defined, of the actual M in the foreground, into what cannot be perceived in the black backgrounded and void of his imagined virtual world. Tessellating sensory perception in-between what is *not* there and what *is* there, induces the process of bringing a world into being. In changing the angle of perception Beckett changes the possibility of self-creation, embodying Merleau-Ponty's principle that the body and space mutually affect each other, inducing meaning as direction. This change is one example of Beckett's aesthetic progress through media, to improve the viewer's experience of bringing a world into being.



1.16. Antony Minghella's 'Play' for the *Beckett on Film* project, 2001.
<https://archerstudio.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/play2.jpg>

The belief in Beckett having a high level of authorial involvement, control and inflexibility in the production of his works, not only hides the freedom and fluidity of his aesthetic, but is a belief that stems from the oft repeated narratives that trace out extreme examples of Beckett's control, based on a few examples from his later life, and is an issue

that James Knowlson discusses (1996). This idea of control may also stem from the fact that Beckett's personal involvement would lend a sense of authority, authenticity and legitimacy to any project including the BBC *Shades* or *Beckett on Film* projects (for the *Beckett on Film* project this meant sticking religiously to the text). Even though exploring the communications between Beckett, the BBC and Beckett's agents reveals an author quite prepared to be fluid, even to the extent of relinquishing responsibility of the creative process to the BBC co-creators. Going back to the BBC archive, writing to Tristram Powell, Warren Brown includes a message he received in a note from Beckett (BBCWAC 26 July 1976):

2) Regarding the filming of PLAY, Mr. Beckett says, "About a week ago I sent Donald, at his request, *suggestions* as to use of camera in PLAY. I *hope* he will adopt them, but he must consider himself *free*. I *proposed* brief close-ups of three faces with only necks of urns showing, but no individual close-ups. The togetherness should never be lost." (emphasis added).

In the one and same letter Beckett is vague, general and non-committal and then proposes a specific '*suggestion*' or proposal. And it was the invisibility of the 'necks of urns' (BBCWAC 6 January 1977) that originally forced Beckett to reject the filming of *Play* not the reported transmediation and quality of the film, and for the BBC to order another play as noted earlier (... *but the clouds* ...).

Again, Beckett can be very precise and incredibly vague in his instructions to collaborators; in writing to his German collaborator Dr. Rhinhart Müller-Freienfels about the German television version of *Shades*, *Schatten* Beckett states: 'The main problem is Klaus Herm's availability. Though *not expressly stated*, the man in ... *but the clouds* ... is the same as in *Ghost Trio*, in another (later) situation' (Beckett 2016: 445; emphasis added). This is an incredibly important piece of casting information which affects the aesthetic of the screenplay and needs to be stated. Beckett's 'NOTES ON TRYST' (BBCWAC 1976) also contain words such as: 'perhaps', 'thing's', 'if possible', 'suggest', and 'could', leaving important aesthetic decisions to his co-creators, allowing an adaptability to the context, a fluidity to the text that becomes the responsibility of others. It continues into 1977 (BBCWAC T51/350) *after* the broadcast of *Shades*, when any changes would seem to be irrelevant. On the 15 July 1977 Beckett wrote to Tristram Powell about changing the last four-line quote of *The Tower* in ... *but the clouds* ..., to the whole fifteen-line final section (Ibid.). This had been done in the Stuttgart version but as Beckett wrote:

did not hear/see extended text on M and so all still in some doubt as to whether this is an improvement or not ... I agree the point is more clearly made if the text is given in full. But I feel it is perhaps a mistake from the purely formal point of view. And is it technically feasible for you? *I leave it to you and Donald and Roland to decide.*

(Beckett 2016: 466-67; emphasis added)

Beckett actually relinquishes responsibility to the extent that he not only actively encourages directors, producers, and BBC department heads to become active collaborators but he also relinquished responsibility of the creative processes to the BBC collaborators. They in fact become the co-creators, involved in the decision-making process concerning fundamental aesthetic choices. The vagueness and indecisiveness allow the text to bend and flex to the context. Beckett's texts oscillate in-between being and nothingness and are as unfixed, fluid, adaptable and in a state of 'continuous incompleteness' as Beckett himself.



1.17. *Quad* (*Quadrat 1 + 2*). Süddeutscher Rundfunk (SDR), 1981.

Quad (1980-81).

Quad (1980-81) is a later television play that demonstrates how Beckett's use of technology progressively improves the audience experience of bringing a world into being through the act of tessellating sensory perception in-between being and nothingness and into the act of creation, pre-figuring our experience in the digital and virtual world. *Quad* is 'A piece for four players, light, and percussion' (Beckett 2009a: 141) and, as with many other Beckett plays, was written for a specific reason and request. Written and produced for the German television company Süddeutscher Rundfunk (SDR), with Dr Reinhard Müller-Freienfels as the Head of Television Drama behind this institution, persuaded Beckett in a 'kind and irresistible' letter (Knowlson 1996: note 81; 825) to supervise (Ibid: 673) 'with Beckett's collaboration' (Bignell 2009: 80) its production, although it is also accepted to have been exclusively 'directed by Samuel Beckett' (Beckett 2009a: 181, JEK C/6/3/14, BC MS21-GER & Bignell 2009: 81). This is a small discrepancy which is curious and contrasts

well with the historical weight of ‘precision and perfectionism’ accorded to Beckett’s working practices.

Quad was performed by the Stuttgart Preparatory Ballet School and first broadcast on the German RFA channel with the title *Quadrat 1 + 2* (after adding the *Quad(rat)* and *Quad(rat) 2*) on 8 October 1981 with Samuel Beckett as director. This SDR production was transmitted by BBC 2 on 16 December 1982 entitled *Quad*, its duration 13:30 (Beckett 2009a: 181) or as the above duration of 13:10 (BBCWAC RCONT 22/106/1). As with other Beckett plays, such as the mimes *Act Without Words I & II* (1956), the silent film *Film* (1963), the *tableau vivant* or living picture *Breath* (1969), and *Ghost Trio* (1975-6) the dramatic text of the play is effectively pure stage direction or ‘technical instructions rather than dramatic texts’ (Klaver and Hiebel in Bignell 2009: 179) ‘there is no real script, only the pretext of one’ (Brater 1985: 53). This would again imply a seemingly precise, prescriptive production of the text that cannot be adapted or performed in any other way, particularly as it is fixed on videotape in ‘the impermutability of screened presentation’ (Brater 1985: 53). Thus ‘The performance we see on television is the text’ (Brater 1985: 53), but each new performance and recording becomes the text.

The text of this non-verbal teleplay or ‘telemime’ (Frost in Beckett 2009a: xx) consists of one long single shot from a straight-on POV ‘*Camera: Raised frontal, Fixed*’ (Beckett 2009a: 145) of four mimes, interestingly ‘not dancers’ (Fehsenfeld 1982: 360), moving around the sides and diagonals of a lighted rectangle marked out on the floor surrounded by darkness (fig. 1.17). The mimes cross each other but do not collide at the empty square in the centre: ‘E supposed a danger zone. Hence deviation. Manoeuvre established at outset’, determining the convention and proceeding habituation of the repetitive paths (Beckett 2009a: Q 145). Each of the ‘*Players*’ (1, 2, 3, 4) are defined by, in the instance of *Quad I*, the colour of the djellabas ‘1 white, 2 yellow, 3 blue, 4 red’ (Ibid.), with the ‘Gowns reaching to ground, cowls hiding faces’ and identity, as with the ‘AUDITOR’ in *Not I*, and the gowns hiding the means of locomotion as in *Footfalls* and *Ghost Trio* (Ibid.). Again as in *Footfalls* the arms are crossed over the chest ‘as if they were resisting a cold wind’ (Fehsenfeld 1982: 360-1), and their heads are bowed down, becoming anyone or no-one, vague and ‘like the pieces in a chess game ... are indistinguishable, so they are open to interpretation as parts of one identity, as individual characters, or as allegorical representations’ (Bignell 2009: 98). Again, as with May in *Footfalls*, each coloured character

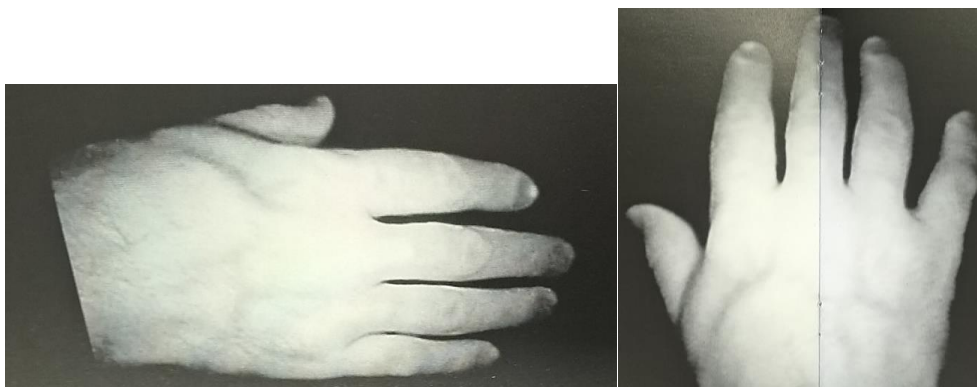
creates the world that they inhabit through ‘pace[ing] the given area, each following his particular course’ (Beckett 2009a: Q 143). A fixed, pre-determined formula that defines them, as the ‘Four types of percussion, say drum, gong, triangle, wood block. Each player has his particular percussion, to sound when he enters, continue while he paces, cease when he exits’ (Ibid: Q 144; emphasis added).

Quad II moves further into an indeterminate zone of ‘(5) No colour, all four in identical white gowns, no percussion, footsteps only sound, slow tempo, series 1 only’ (Ibid: Q 146), but still repeating the fixed, pre-determined formula of movement. *Quad II* was a serendipitous ‘variation’ (Ibid: Q 145) added to *Quad I* through the process of rehearsals at the SDR studios in Stuttgart. Checking the colour print of *Quad I* on the studio monitor to confirm that it would work on black and white television sets at the end of the shot, Müller-Freienfels told Beckett how impressive it looked in black and white and: ‘A friend then proposed that they show the colour version first, then the black and white version. Beckett ... asked if they might record another version the next day at a slower speed and in black and white’ (Knowlson 1996: 674). The most important change within *Quad* was co-created, a co-production between Beckett and his collaborators. A perfect replication of the Beckett text in performance is not only impossible because the text exists somewhere in-between something and nothing, but also because the texts creative genesis exists in the same locus, depending on serendipity as much as on the fixed written word. Equally since Beckett’s death in 1989 the question concerning whether the contractual obligations for reproducing Beckett’s texts have been strictly enforced has to be asked, or is it only a few high-profile token productions that are stopped? Has permission for a multitude of adaptations and transmediations been given (as Beckett did) but the public only hear of the transgressions against a Beckett contract – thus these minority examples become the norm and symbolic of a greater issue concerning artistic freedom and not a representation of the amount of adaptation post-Beckett or what Beckett himself sanctioned?

When Beckett viewed the new black and white *Quad II* Beckett is reported as saying ‘Marvellous, it’s 100,000 years later’ (McMullan 2010: 101, Esslin to Brater 1983, in 1985: 54, Brater 1985: 52 & 1990: 109, Frost in *Beckett*: 2009a: xix), or was it ‘ten thousand years later’ (Bignell 2009: 99, Knowlson 1996: 674, Esslin 1987: 44), and again does this small discrepancy matter? These small discrepancies are weighted against the monumental reputation for ‘perfectionism’ and ‘precision’ accorded to Beckett, which can also be

undermined by the vagueness and imprecision of the script/stage directions, in this case of *Quad* itself: ‘the given area’ of the ‘Square’ is determined by ‘6 paces’ (Beckett 2009a: Q 143), allowing anyone, whatever their length of pace to determine the size of the square. There is no precise measurement for lighting in the script, as this was ‘(2) Abandoned’ (Ibid: Q 145) for the Stuttgart production. There is a vague and fluid ‘fading out’, ‘fade out’ or ‘Dim’ lighting, and the ‘All possible’ suggests that all the combinations are discovered through the rehearsal process and not fixed in the script (Ibid: Q 144). The *Percussion* is a suggested ‘say’, ‘Say’, and again all the combinations are found through the rehearsal process of ‘All possible’. The ‘Percussionists barely visible’ and ‘at back of set’ on a ‘raised podium’ of indeterminate height; these are vague suggestions not precise instructions (Ibid: Q 144). The *Time* is ‘approximately’, ‘approx’ and the ‘*Problem: (4)*’ suggests an alternative in the ‘Or’ (Ibid.). The ‘*Players: As alike in build as possible. Short and slight for preference. Some ballet training desirable. Adolescents a possibility. Sex indifferent*’ (Ibid: Q 145; emphasis added) are suggestions not definite instructions, and are written for adaptation.

Analysing the video of *Quad* that Beckett directed for German television *Suddeutscher Rundfunk* (BC MS 21-GER & JEK C/6/3/14), the image oscillates in-between the actual and the virtual realms, as the figures disappear and re-appear in momentary jump-cuts a nanosecond long as they turn their backs on the empty centre, and as they blur into a streaming comet of colour along the leading edge of the square to re-appear as they ascend the right-edge of the square, these special effects are not accidental but calculated failures. The human self-generating algorithmic machine bringing a world into being in *Quad* fails and falters in its power to generate life in its multitude of colour, and in that failure has the possibility to recreate the world anew.



1.18. Photographs from a pamphlet for a collaborative work for the Barbican Centre’s *Beckett Festival*, September 1999 called ‘GODFORSAKEN HOLE/FREE HAND’ by Smith/Stewart, referring to *Nacht und Träume*.

Nacht und Träume (1982).

Beckett's final short teleplay *Nacht und Träume* (*Night and Dreams*) (1982) ends his experiments to improve the audience experience of bringing a world into being, through tessellating sensory perception in-between being and nothingness and into the act of creation through using increasingly more complex media technology. The text of *Nacht und Träume* was also written for, and at the request of Müller-Freienfels at SDR. Written in English in 1982 and recorded in Stuttgart late October 1982, it was directed by Beckett. At first entitled *Nachtstück*, *Nacht und Träume* had its premiere on 19 May 1983 broadcast on German television with an audience of over 2 million viewers (Knowlson 1996: 683). *Nacht und Träume* as with *Ghost Trio* and ... *but the clouds* ... repeats a theme, as Beckett explained to Jack MacGowran in 1968, in reference to *Eh Joe*: 'the idea of a man waiting in a room seen first at normal remove then investigated in detail' (Knowlson 1996: 555). Oscillating the image through the fore- and background, repeating the slow camera close-up and slow remove, 'forces a very intense kind of intimacy' immersing the viewer further into the experience of bringing a world into and out of being (Ibid. Beckett to Josette Hayden). Beckett uses the sensory extremes in-between being and nothingness to *force* the viewer into an experience of hypersensory intensity and reflexive awareness of creating the world that we inhabit.

Examining the text, this is another possible 'telemime' and play with no spoken text, consisting entirely of an ambiguous 'script' of '30' scripted directions (Beckett 2009a: NT 149-50). Although a male voice in instruction '2. Softly hummed, male voice, last 7 bars of Schubert's *Lied*, *Nacht und Träume*' (Ibid: NT 149), an ambiguous hum that 'sets to music a slightly *modified* text by the Austrian poet, Heinrich Josef von Collin' (Knowlson 1996: 681; emphasis added), becoming instruction '4. Softly sung, with words, last 3 bars of *Lied* beginning "Holde Träume ..."' (Ibid.), finishing 'kehret wieder!', the translation of which is 'Sweet dreams, come back again! (Frost in Beckett 2009a: 182), or is it 'Return, O you sweet dreams' (Knowlson 1996: 682), or 'Lovely dreams O come again' (Esslin to Brater July 1984 in Brater 1985: 48)? In-between being and nothingness, nothing is certain, although Beckett did specify that the 'text of song of course in German and to be left so in eventual translations', and to keep the German title (Beryl & Fletcher 1978: 268). This thesis argues that Beckett pre-figures our experience in the digital and virtual world through using

increasingly more complex media technology, to bring the participator into the process of tessellating in-between being and nothingness and into the act of creation.

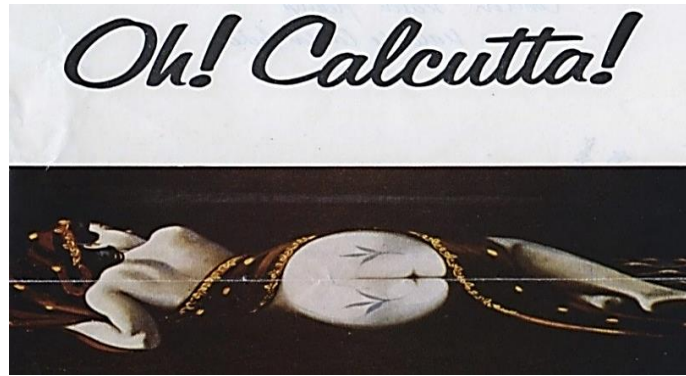
The *Beckett on Film* project (2001).

An analysis of the critical reception of both the 1970s *Shades* project, and the *Beckett on Film* project in 2001 after Beckett's death (1989), demonstrates this oscillation and its simultaneous moment of creative genesis. The performance epigenetic principle is seen in action. Due to the text existing in a locus in-between the actual and virtual realms any engagement with a Beckett text throws the participator back onto its moment of creative genesis, simultaneously existing in the present moment and a possible future, an action in vertical time that forces the principle of autogenesis – the text (re)creates itself. Thus, all possible, probable and future latencies are not only ghosting the (re)creation, but are also being revived and layered onto contemporary concerns. Beckett's realm exists in vertical time, always emerging and always 'becoming' and being a mirror of the changing times, exposing any contemporary social, political, cultural or economic concerns. A particular latency that appears in both the *Shades* (1977) and *Beckett on Film* (2001) project, attempts to fix any latitude within the works by subsuming it within an absolutism, but the fundamental exactitude and imprecision within the texts still emerges. The 2001 critical reviews reveal a functional hyperbole appearing to solve the 'how' of Beckett through the use of the precise language of control: 'tyranny', 'zealous', 'strict' and 'severely', 'sanction', partly through a 'notoriously', 'prescriptive', 'meticulously', 'absolutely true' text, although the imprecise, vague and 'mysterious', 'inscrutable Samuel Beckett' still produces an indeterminate 'faith' that 'freed' (all refs. BC MS 4807,4836, 4706). An oscillation in-between the extremes of being and nothingness that matches the 1977 superlative abstract metaphors placing the performance of the *Play* text in a precise, 'Purgatory' and 'eternal prison', 'befouling' in 'terror', through an imprecise 'Poetic', 'Pure', 'Incomparable', 'genius' and 'Masterpiece' of a text (all refs. JEK: A/8/1/22, A/8/1/37, A/8/1/5, A/8/1/9, A/8/1/48, A/8/1/40).

Critical commentators of both periods reveal a desire for a physical materiality to reconcile and stabilize the sense of being oscillating in-between the actual and virtual body, space and time. Both periods fix the fluid a priori conditions within the body of the director, thus the body of the director, and not the text, becomes both site and subject of meaning

making. The 1977 ‘elusive’, ‘shy’, ‘retiring’, ‘so-private’ Beckett is elided and located within his ‘specially written’ plays for the BBC by the critics, locating the elusive Beckett within and as a representation of a BBC aesthetic (BBCWAC T51/350). In 2001 this becomes the public star director elided and located within their own production itself (not within Channel 4). For the critics, the film itself is an embodiment of that directors ‘bold’, ‘subversive instincts’ with a ‘major film face’ (BC MS 4807, 4951, 4836, 4707). It is this ill-fitting relationship between the myth and the reality of the aesthetic, that is apparently resolved by embodying the purity of the aesthetic in the director/actor (2001), or the artist/aesthetic (1977). This form of re-embodying Beckett may fix a material body into stable a priori conditions, but for this project, it means in a locus of continuous incompleteness.

I am arguing that Beckett’s understands that our sense of being oscillates in-between being and nothingness, communicating with a multitude of people, places and times simultaneously, and equally with the only certain materiality of the singular ‘I’ body. Beckett’s bodies no matter how reduced have an actual fleshly, material corporeality, even if that means staging just two inhalations and exhalations in *Breath* (sent to New York 1969) written for the erotic revue *Oh! Calcutta!* (fig. 1.19). These bodies project and swap virtual selves with others and other worlds, to create the possibility of bringing a stable world and I into being, no matter how undefined, vague and grey. This fluid relationship in-between the actual and imagined virtual realms embodies ‘Beckett’s most cherished themes: an absence of an identifiable self; man forced to live a kind of surrogate existence, trying to make up his life by creating fictions or voices to which he listens’ (Knowlson 1996: 602). Never entirely born Mouth in *Not I* is a ‘tiny little thing ... [born] before its time’ (Beckett 2009c: NI 85) and never entirely there, forced to escape the ‘buzzing’ (Ibid. NI 86-93) of the conventional construction of existence and live in the imagined virtual realms spoken into temporary existence through a disembodied Mouth on stage. The self that is *not* there may explain Beckett’s stock response ‘if you ask him about a character or a motivation, he’ll just say “I have no information about that”’ (Anthony Page in an interview on *Not I* (Hayman, *The Times* 19 January 1973)). Oscillating in-between the actual and virtual, precise and imprecise there are no fixed a priori conditions, thus no fixed answers and anything is possible.



1.19. Image from an original A5 poster. The Royalty Theatre, Portugal St., Kingsway, WC2.

Neil Jordan's *Not I* (2001).

Neil Jordan's premiere of his production of *Not I* for the *Beckett on Film* project (2001) was reported to be an entirely self-censored Beckettian cinematic correlative in its rigor of aesthetic construction: 'there aren't many people who can execute the instructions of Samuel Beckett with such flair' (*The Independent* 6 April 2001). An epithet equally attributed to the premiere of Anthony Minghella's *Play* for the *Beckett on Film* project (2001), being the 'closest to pure Beckett' (*Sunday Independent* 4 February 2001). This eliding of Beckett's aesthetic practices with Jordan and Minghella is due to both *Beckett on Film* directors drawing reflexive attention to the mechanisms of the medium, and thus to the constructedness of the reality experienced; Minghella states that 'the audience's attention is constantly drawn to the mechanisms of film. You can hear every camera movement, every focus pull. You are *forced* to feel the presence of the camera' (*The Observer* 19 November 2000; emphasis added). The *Beckett on Film* viewer is increasingly made aware that the technology creates the world that they inhabit. This is a metadramatic response forced onto the audience by the technology, and is technique that is fundamental to Beckett's aesthetic principles.

Drawing on a conversation with Jordan and an analysis of his production of *Not I*, reveals both an analogue and digital methodology of drawing attention to the constructed nature of the world experienced. Julianne Moore plays the role of Mouth in the *Beckett on Film* version of *Not I*, and is shown walking into camera shot and placing herself into a torturer's chair before the play begins. This is a simple analogue act that pre-figures the meaning of the play through a pre-performance performance. This pre-act is based on showing the 'real', ordinary and actual Julianne Moore before, and as she moves into the character that she plays. The 'real' actual world and actual person are superimposed over, and

ghost the ‘unreal’ virtual character and play. This superimposition of the actual and the virtual realms stimulates the comparative process of hyperreflexivity, whereby the viewer quantifies and qualifies the degrees of veracity of the realities shown. There is a constant oscillation in-between the actual and virtual realms measuring how ‘real’ the worlds are before deciding which one to inhabit. Hyperreflexivity is the process of constantly quantifying the degree of veracity of the world revealed and part of the process of how the human brings a world into being. But equally if the virtual becomes the actual realm due to the superimposition, then are the projecting practices of sensory perception are made obsolete, because the world we inhabit is already complete? The virtual has become actual. Beckett draws attention to the constructed nature of the experience of the reality revealed, by oscillating our sense of being in-between the actual and virtual realms and into the act of creation. This metadramatic referencing equally reveals the ‘Truth’ of the reality revealed, through the medium and technology of the backstage tools and mechanics used to create that reality. In Jordan’s *Not I* the pre-performance performance determines the reality the viewer inhabits; thus, the human no longer creates the world that they inhabit.

Another analogue pre-performance performance that Jordan uses that determines the reality the viewer inhabits, again places the interpretation of *Not I* in a specific experience of that contemporary reality. Jordan sticks to Beckett’s aesthetic rigour, but also resolves Beckett’s textual ambiguity; as Jordan discusses:

all of his stage instructions ... he [Beckett] gives very specific instructions as to how the performer should play ... I *showed* the context in which the actor has to place herself to deliver Beckett’s piece ... and that was an illustration of his stage directions.

(17 June 2017; emphasis added)

This process of showing the context, rather than Beckett’s black void, refines, defines and fixes a priori conditions. Simultaneously defining a continued sense of a complete body, identity and narrative, within and through the body. The body solves the Beckettian ambiguity in a priori conditions through becoming both the site and subject of meaning making. What is *not* there in the black Beckettian void, is not only transposed onto any object present in terms of making meaning through the chair and the body, but the now identifiable body also carries the external world into the realm of the film, defining, refining and fixing the meaning of the play. The body becomes both site and subject of meaning making, *pre-*defining, and determining meaning and world. The body is both the site and subject of

meaning making with *no* external influences. The body becomes the only context in the experience of my world, producing a solipsistic narcissist that automatically objectifies and automatizes a body which has the power of constructing the world that I inhabit.

This pre-performance performance reveals ‘how’ that constructed reality is created. And if we know how a reality is created, we appear to have some control over the construction of that reality, and in a digital and virtual world of no fixed a priori conditions any control ameliorates the existential crisis situated in-between something and nothing. These concepts appear to give control of the process of creating the virtual other-worldly-world that I inhabit to the viewer. The digital methodology Jordan uses recreates the principles used by digital and virtual technology to produce meaning as direction and thus a three-dimensional realm, and a digital and virtual ontology of space such as: maximizing the processing speed of information, working in conjunction with producing ever-more visual detail, appears to prove the reality of the image seen, demonstrated through Jordan’s and Minghella’s use of the camera. Minghella used excessively fast editing when moving the cameras from character to character in *Play*, provoking mass incomprehension from the cultural commentators which was equally applied to Jordan’s *Not I*: the ‘editing was so distracting as to destroy concentration on what was being said’ (*Observer* 19 November 2000, *Daily Telegraph* 6 February 2001 & 26 June 2001, *Irish Times* 21 January 2001 & 31 March 2001, *Irish Independent* 7 April 2001, *Financial Times* 27 June 2001). Jordan uses five fixed cameras on Moore’s lips, producing multiple points-of-view (POV), and digital post-production editing allowed:

Jordan [to] choose an equally hectic and distressed style of camera work to mirror the machine-gun delivery. Multiple cameras were shooting Moore’s mouth from different angles, and the finished film is a fast and furious edit between different cameras, [a literal]: “I don’t think anybody can receive the whole piece,” Jordan says.

(Worth quoted in Oppenheim 2004: 221-222)

Oscillating our sense of being in-between being and nothingness we see a world in the continuously incomplete process of coming into being, like Cézanne’s ‘multiplicity of outlines around a figure’, ‘*like lines of force*; the spatial structure vibrates as it is formed’; ‘the vibration of appearances which is the cradle of things’. Is my contemporary understanding of Jordan’s ‘hyper’ visual vibration through multiple POV’s, the same aesthetic as Cézanne’s, as Beckett’s, producing the same pre-subjective and pre-scientific

perceptual experience of the world, and a reflection of the current understanding of how the human constructs a world to inhabit? Any engagement with Beckett's work is autogenic; it produces itself. Consequently, producing a multiplicity and infinity of interpretive viewpoints – literally in this case. In-between the actual and virtual realms everything is indeterminate, never fixed, always fluid, always potential, never actual. Jordan discusses aiming for a three-dimensional, sculptural experience of seeing a 'real' world come into being: 'I wanted to see how many different perspectives I could get on a woman's mouth [...] If there were a 105 ways of photographing a woman's mouth I would have explored them' (17 June 2017). Jordan explores meaning as direction as Beckett had when filming *M* in ... *but the clouds* ... from the side, and then straight-on to improve the audience experience of bringing a world into being, through the process of oscillating the projective practices of sensory perception of the viewer in-between the actual *M* in the foreground, set against a virtual black background containing everything or nothing.

The *Shades* version of *Not I* uses a straight-on, and static camera angle on Mouth's lips, which creates a mouth that has a single defining outline set against a black background. Beckett's black void creates a two-dimensional image of Mouth, placing the object at the reverse end of the continuum of seeing the world come into being; the single defining outline, therefore object, exists prior to our sense-making perception of them. But this two-dimensional objectification of the world seen, also produces the reflexive drawing attention to the mechanisms of the medium creating that reality, whether body or technology, preventing an immersion into that seen world. Beckett's black void around very defined and painted lips, oscillates the viewers projective practices of sensory perception in-between the actual Mouth in the foreground, and a virtual black background containing anything or nothing. Also, the contrasting extremes create the optical illusion of the lips floating in space and constantly oscillating towards the viewer, forcing the viewer to push them back into the background through projecting the self into the image. Both principles demand the projecting practices of the body, project *into* the image.

In Jordan and Minghella's productions the projecting practices of the body are given over to the camera technology, thus the technology has the ability to construct the reality the viewer inhabits. The camera/viewer POV in Minghella's *Play* has the function of the spotlight which activates the characters. In Jordan's *Not I* the camera/viewer POV has the function of punctuation throughout the stream of consciousness; the camera angle changes

with speech, activating the character. Both elide the speed of the visual with the aural and the life of the character. This linking of the visual with, and triggering the aural appears to give the entire agency and focus to the viewer. Linking the fast editing to the camera/viewer POV links the viewer and character temporally. Linking the camera/viewer POV with the activation of the character solves causality; the viewer causes the character to speak.

The camera's fast and furious edit through multiple POV's, sensory superimposition, in continuous and complete a priori conditions, appears to replicate and externalize the internal and mechanical projective practices of sensory perception, that the human uses to bring a world into being. The camera's fast and furious edit imitates how the senses triangulate in the actual world, testing, projecting, oscillating in-between the self, other and world finally fixing on one *passing* sight, sound, smell, touch and taste, creating the illusion that the viewer chooses the POV and thus the world that they inhabit. The natural projective practices stem from a body moving in space; we move and see in the same space, time and body. Jordan initially recreates this experience of space, but deconstructs our way of seeing through the radical series of shifts of POV which no human could possibly achieve in real life. These visual perspectives disembody the viewer and moves their sense of being into the virtual realm. The image seems to solve Beckett's spatial, temporal and causal discontinuities. But it is the camera technology that creates the POV and sense of being in a *pre-constructed* other-worldly-world – the viewer does not construct the world that they inhabit.



1.20. Billie Whitelaw as Mouth in *Not I*, Royal Court Theatre, London, 16 January 1973.

<http://mindmotor.biz/Mind/?cat=4&paged=6>

1.21. Julianne Moore as 'Mouth' in *Not I*, the *Beckett on Film* project, 2001.

<http://moicani.over-blog.com/>

The principle of excess within the digital and virtual world continues beyond the processing speed of information, and into the logical assumption that the more information and detail obtained, the greater the truth of the reality of the objective world seen. This information is obtained through the vehicle of foregrounding the image through extreme

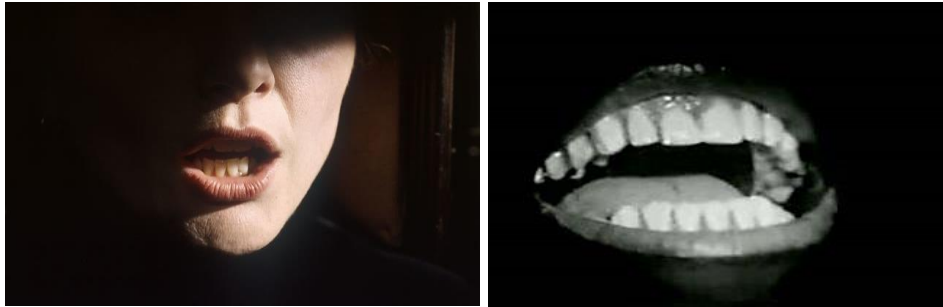
proximity providing extreme details and thus proof of the totality of the reality seen. The five fixed cameras in the *Beckett on Film* production of *Not I* are placed as close as possible to Moore's mouth, revealing incredible detail in the individual wisps of hair on Mouth's upper lip, as Jordan discusses: 'It's the closest we could get' (17 June 2017). Is the desire for revealing evermore detail in the digital high-definition image a logical conclusion or apogee of the 'less is more' real principle of the Minimalist project that Beckett is associated with?

I think it's because the writings so ... condensed, reduced, you know just the bare bone, so I think we felt *in* there ... the smallest thing is huge ... the smallest changes are so significant, and the smallest gestures are of course so significant.
(In conversation with Gary Lewis, 7 March 2017; added emphasis)

The smallest thing condensed, contains everything, and becomes the most significant gesture. A gesture that both the actor Gary Lewis in *What Where* and Niall Buggy in *That Time* share in the *Beckett on Film* project is the shedding of a tear: 'A tear would seem retrospectively, can be inappropriate, like "Oh, God, that isn't in the bloody text"' (Ibid.). A text that fundamentally oscillates in-between being and nothingness, actual and virtual, in the continuous process of creation in an act of performance epigenesis. A performance that immerses the artist in vertical time, in-touch with Beckett's moment of creative genesis of the text, simultaneously recreating the text in their time, creating an instant of autogenesis where the texts recreate themselves, as Niall Buggy spoke of the creative moment: 'doing on the moment', 'thinking on the moment', 'let it happen in the moment', 'I just did it, whatever came out, came out', 'I just did it', 'It's between you and Beckett' (13 June 2017). The Beckett text is a living text, available to indefinite technical innovation and reinterpretation. Are these spontaneous tears, intense, unwritten 'violent reactions' a reflection of that time (Charles Garrad, 9 March 2017), and a result of the condensation and distillation of the information, and does this force an excessively intense sensory focus onto the participant? A focus not only onto the 'smallest thing', because that is all there is, but also because of what is *not* there, forcing an intense desire to dilute the distillation and reveal the 'truth' of the hidden information?

Jordan's angle of camera/viewer POV for Mouth in *Not I* is slightly below the chin revealing the hidden pink, visceral, fleshly internalized mouth and body; the tonsils, tongue and teeth are seen in extreme detail. The mouth is also lit beyond the boundary of the lip line revealing the surrounding pale flesh of the lower part of the face, giving a different 'relationship between the agency of the voice and its body' (Bignell 2009: 147; fig. 1.22).

This again gives a continued sense of a complete body, identity and narrative, again *showing* the context and making the body both the site and subject of meaning making. The *Shades* version of Mouth also shows the tonsils, tongue and teeth, but the internal pink, fleshy body, is a black void, again forcing sensory perception into tessellating in-between being and nothingness and into the process of bringing a world into being (fig 1.23).



1.22. Julianne Moore as 'Mouth' in *Not I*, the *Beckett on Film* project, 2001.

<http://exeuntmagazine.com/features/not-i/>

1.23. Billie Whitelaw as Mouth in *Not I*, Royal Court Theatre, London, 16 January 1973.

<http://mindmotor.biz/Mind/?cat=4&paged=6>

Every principle of the digital and virtual world is to replicate the actual process of bringing a world and I into being, through technological means. Jordan's *Not I* demonstrates this through: externalizing the internal and vice versa, as part of the principle of excess, through a surfeit of information and detail, extreme proximity, and the foregrounding of experience, maximizing the speed of processing information, and technology producing the POV. But one effect of the principle of excess, as seen in Jordan's excessive speed of changing the image, overloads the ability of the cognitive processes of visual sensory perception to process the information, preventing any possibility of meaning making in what is seen. The excess of detail also negates the need for sensory cognition. And in making the body both the site and subject of meaning making, stabilizes a priori conditions through the body, which *pre-figures* meaning and *pre-fixes* an 'I' here, negating the need for the body to create the world it inhabits. The body is complete and the projecting practices of sensory perception are obsolete. Who or what creates the world we inhabit? The viewer becomes a passive spectator as any conscious reflection on the reality created is neutralized by the excessive sensory stimulation overwhelming cognition. The screen projects toward a reactive spectator rather than an active viewer, which produces an in-screen subjectivity in which the external projecting practices of the body are internalized, producing a solipsistic narcissist able only to communicate with the internalized self/other and world. Who or what creates the reality that we inhabit?

Within the Beckett text there is an extraordinary amount of freedom and liberty for the actor and director as noted in the script changes that Beckett made and Billie Whitelaw incorporated into her *Not I* scripts: split ellipsis, divide the monologue into five scenes, cut vocal reactions, cut words and shorten ellipsis. The speed of the performance changes with the actor, as they go as fast as they can go, emphasize, interrupt and give importance to different words or sections, that change the interpretation of the narrative scenes – create your own importance of the story. The changes and instructions Beckett wrote on the Hyde Park Corner Hotel notepaper were, and are not added to the published text, but they are fundamental to one version – and an important version of the script. One in which Beckett finally directed and worked with his iconic actress Billie Whitelaw for the Royal Court Theatre, which becomes the version for the *Shades* project. Should this Royal Court version be used, is this the right version, if so, there are changes and modifications that are not in the published text and thus not performed, thus can we say that the *Beckett on Film* version is the wrong one? Before his death Beckett adapted all of his work to the co-creator, actor, context and medium, precisely the artistic aesthetic of Neil Jordan. Because Beckett writes an elastic text it can be adapted, modified and transferred to different mediums and still be Beckett's text. Beckett's performance epigenetic closes the temporal gap between then and now, leading to a new view of something old. A recent and radical Edinburgh Festival Fringe production of *Not I* starring Jess Thom (fig. 1.24) who has the condition of Tourette's, questions the apparent inflexibility of the contractual obligations of contemporary reproductions of Beckett. Contacting her theatre company *Touretteshero* (8 August 2017), they stated: 'We have been working closely with the Beckett estate who have been helpful and supportive with our production' (Matthew Pountney).



1.24. Jess Thom as Mouth in *Not I*, Touretteshero 2017.
[//edinburghshowcase.britishcouncil.org/directory/artist/touretteshero/2017](http://edinburghshowcase.britishcouncil.org/directory/artist/touretteshero/2017)

In the compounding of Merleau-Ponty's principles I offer a system that demonstrates how the human brings a stable world into being. Tracing how Beckett brings a world into being tests these principles, and investigates how they pre-figure our experience in the digital

and virtual world. Through linking the scholarship on Beckett and performance with recent practices and methodologies, traces the degree of human integration and assimilation of the digital and virtual world. In understanding how technology and the human interact the next stage of the human evolutionary process may also be predicted. Identifying the lineage of the ontological genealogy of the digital and virtual human points forward to a Quantum human and world and is the realm of the conclusion.

In-between being and nothingness, the actual and virtual is a locus of process, that can only indicate a future; a future that contains only possibility, potentiality and latency, unfixed and fluid and based on probability. This points forward to an aesthetic based on a *consciousness* that in-between being and nothingness we exist in a state of existential chaos, a position theorized by philosophers from Nietzsche and Sartre onwards, and an aesthetic Beckett was the first to concretize into an artform, especially in his use of media. A future aesthetic based on a *consciousness* that the construction of a stable self and world is based on the relationships in-between the self, other and world, relationships founded on contingency and in a constant process of emergence, constantly fitting and assimilating each to the other, in a locus of ontological probability. This thesis ultimately takes a non-catastrophic point-of-view of the future co-existence of man and machine, exploring new and different cultural codes, spatial organization, temporal frames, and a priori conditions of space, time and causality with a view to realising a digital and future ontology of space.

Chapter two will return to the beginning of Beckett's use of technology, to explore in finer detail Beckett's progress in refining the experience of bringing a world into being, through his first use of communicating technology, the radio. Focusing primarily on the radio play *All That Fall* (1956) will facilitate a detailed investigation of this progress through the: published text, archival material on the original radio broadcast, and the original critical commentary. This will then project forward in time in a comparative process that investigates the possibility that a continuum exists that represents Beckett pre-figuring our experience in the contemporary digital and virtual world, through the 'live' high-tech reproduction of *All That Fall* by the theatre company Pan Pan.

Chapter Two

Beckett in Multiple Media: Immersive Reality.

All That Fall is a specifically radio play, or rather a radio text, for voices, not bodies. I have already refused to have it “staged” and I cannot think of it in such terms. A perfectly straight reading before an audience seems to me just barely legitimate, though even on this score I have my doubts. But I am absolutely opposed to any form of adaptation with a view to its conversion into “theatre”. ... to “act” it is to kill it. Even the reduced visual dimension it will receive from the simplest and most static of readings ... will be destructive of whatever quality it may have and which depends on the whole thing’s *coming out of the dark*.

... I can’t agree with the idea of *Act Without Words* as a film. It is not a film, not conceived in terms of cinema. If we can’t keep our genres more or less distinct, or extricate them from the confusion that has them where they are, we might as well go home and lie down.

Samuel Beckett to Barney Rosset his American publisher. (*Beckett* 2014: 63)

The Continuing ‘Continuous Incompletion’ of the Beckett Text: Part 2.

The next three chapters focus on the ‘live’ theatrical performance of Beckett’s work since his death, to retrospectively investigate any emerging latencies within these interpretations that pre-figure, and measure the human assimilation of the digital and virtual realm. This chapter starts with the most obvious high-tech version before moving onto the most ‘live’ and least technological productions. This continuum exists in order to explore the contemporary designation of ‘live’ and ‘live’ performance. This in-turn investigates the degree of human assimilation of technology and the wider consequences on our sense of being human and being in a world. Chapter two begins the assimilation investigation with the most obvious high-tech live theatrical performance since Beckett’s death, with the Dublin, Ireland based theatre company Pan Pan, and their ‘live’ theatrical reproductions of Beckett’s radio plays *All That Fall* (1956) and *Embers* (1959) in-between 2011-2016. This analysis of Pan Pan’s productions is based on a review of a multitude of material from the archives: video recordings, critical and academic reviews, photographic evidence, and in the comparative process of analysis, archival material on; the genesis of the text, the text itself, and its premiere performance.

This chapter, as the epigraph suggests, again re-examines through contemporary live performance the apparent discrepancy concerning the unbounded innovation and aesthetic freedom of Beckett’s theatrical performative poetics conflicting with the author’s apparently precise prescriptions in the published text. An aesthetic discrepancy symptomatic of the human condition in the contemporary digital and virtual world. This unresolved and now ‘live’ aesthetic gap lies not only within the conflict between Beckett’s own directorial practice of a meticulousness of control *and* a very flexible approach in changing and contextualizing his own very explicit textual instructions, but also as previously discussed within the requirement for performances after Beckett’s death not to deviate from the published text – as Beckett himself would have modified the text. These adaptations happen in the context and process of live performance – even more so than in the recorded media – again suggesting that it is the action that performs the utterance and the action is in a very specific body and a priori conditions, thus re-contextualizing and re-historicizing Beckett’s work simultaneously. This performance epigenetic links the creative genesis of the text with its contemporary reproduction – in perpetuity. This not only allows the text to be a reflection

of a contemporary society, but also to be infinitely adaptable to changing a priori conditions, thus acquiring an aesthetic of ‘continuous incompleteness’. Again, this oscillation in-between a fixed and fluid interpretation of the text and performance world, will be explored as symptomatic of the larger ontological condition and sense of being human in the contemporary digital and virtual realm. Within the Beckett and the digital and virtual world, our sense of being oscillates in-between being and nothingness, actual and virtual, communicating with a multitude of people, places and times simultaneously, and equally with the only certain materiality of the singular ‘I’ body. A performance and process that is a reflection, and part of a greater whole and still emerging latency within Beckett’s aesthetic practice that pre-figures the ontological condition of the digital and virtual human.

The Text of *All That Fall* (1956).

All That Fall is one of the texts that Beckett wrote at the invitation of the BBC (written 1956, first broadcast by the BBC 13 January 1957). Examining the published text with the concept of its infinite adaptability opens up new horizons in understanding the text. Though adding an exploration of the mass of duplicate ‘flimsies’ or carbon copies of Beckett’s ‘Writers’ and ‘Copyright’ contracts with the BBC (1952-1984) – held in the BBC Written Archives Centre, and the published reviews of *All That Fall*’s first broadcast of the play (1957), will help to focus a reappraisal of the methodology we use to quantify and qualify the reality of the world with which we are presented. In a moment of performance epigenesis I finally come forward in time to the present, to facilitate an assessment of how we bring a world into being in the digital and virtual realms. The archival documents do demonstrate the commonly accepted fact of Beckett’s reluctance to allow a work written for a specific medium to be transferred to another – but they also evidence, to a greater degree the contractual acceptance by Beckett for his whole oeuvre to be transferred to multiple media that a particular work was not written or intended for. This not only demonstrates the infinite interpretability of the fundamentally unstable and unfinished Beckett text, but also that it is in the performance of the Beckett text that creates the Beckett text, and that each performance adapts to its own particular context, thus revealing contemporary concerns. Concerns reflected in the still emerging latency in contemporary readings of the text, that are revealed through the broad, fluid and multiplicity of meanings that could easily be applied to the apparently very fixed and exacting dialogue and stage directions in *All That Fall*.

The medium of radio is a very subjective medium and relies on the listener's own imagination to complete the text of the play. Therefore, the auditor creates their own interpretation of the 'Poor woman' and 'ruinous old house' (Beckett 2009a: ATF 3). The image in the imagined virtual world of the 'mind's eye' will be simultaneously as specific for the individual, as it is a general culturally contextual one. The two concepts collide to produce one imagined image. Beckett does try to direct the auditor's imagination by pre-figuring what the text wants the auditor to hear and 'see' in the mind's eye. The auditor does not hear Mr. Tyler cursing under his breath as there is no direction for this in the text:

MR. TYLER: Nothing, Mrs. Rooney, nothing, I was merely cursing, under
breath.

(Ibid. ATF 6)

But the listener is prepared by the text to hear this in the aural imagination by being prompted by Maddy's preceding line:

MADDY: ... I beg your pardon?

(Ibid.)

Beckett creates a possible world through appealing to linguistic commonalities when Maddy hints that she has heard Mr. Tyler mutter, and simultaneously to individual personal interpretations as to what and how that sounds. The effect of this apparent paradox appears to allow the auditor to construct, and to experience the construction of a world in the same moment and process as Maddy. But fundamentally there is no fixed Beckett script, as it seems to depend on cultural commonalities and a personal experiential imagination; where is the Beckett text?

For a different effect and reason, but with the same result, Beckett requires the character to state what the sound world will be before the actual sound happens:

MADDY: ... listening to the cooing of the ringdoves. [*Cooing.*]

(Ibid. ATF 7)

There is a gap between the construction of an imagined world, and the actual sound world. This gap creates the distance in-between the actual and virtual realm, which allows the auditor to metadramatically experience the construction of the world that they inhabit. A gap that allows Beckett to reflexively comment on the constructed nature of radio, thereby

circuitously controlling how the temporal imagination works, but not what it imagines. Exploring the openness of radio Beckett demonstrates the construction of a reality though sound. The realm created seems to be a natural construction but Beckett reminds the listener that it is a pre-constructed world. Does Beckett control the listener's imagination as they construct a world in the 'mind's eye'?

This is a pre-constructed world embodied in the very precise visual stage directions which are written for a radio drama, which consequently invites a visual adaptation. A visual adaptation contemplated by a director of Beckett's work Donald McWhinnie who wrote to Michael Barry on 23 October 1957 of 'the possibility of a television treatment of *All That Fall* and I believe there may be a way of doing it' (BBCWAC: RECONT 1: 1953-1962). Although looking at the text, the listener cannot see or know that '[*Mr Tyler prepares to mount his bicycle.*]' (Beckett 2009a: ATF 8), or that Maddy '[*Pause as she consults her watch.*]' (Ibid. ATF 13), but it would help the actor creating the character and the director of the radio production, and in the planning of a possible staging or filming of the radio play. But there is a limited amount of control Beckett has over the exactitude of how and what the actor imagines for the character. The imagined interpretation is as subjective and as contextual as the literal '[... *grinding of gears.*]' (Ibid. ATF 10) demonstrates; this sound would have to change with the development of the car otherwise it would be unintelligible to an audience. Equally how can a listener determine directional sound as precisely as the text states: '[*Sound of car coming up behind her. It slows down and draws up beside her ...*]' (Ibid. ATF 8), or that '[... MR. TYLER *coming up behind her ... abreast her ...*]' (Ibid. ATF 5), or that '[*MISS. FITT proffers her arm.*]' (Ibid. ATF 15). The audience cannot know that '[*Attracted by the noise a group, including MR. TYLER, MR. BARRELL and TOMMY, gathers at top of steps.*]' (Ibid. ATF 16). These directional sounds could with some imagination be recorded in a sound studio by the actors according to the script, but I am uncertain as to the degree of difference or comprehension of direction the listener could differentiate in a radio broadcast in 1957.

Beckett gives the actor a great deal of freedom in the interpretation of the text, again through a paradox centred in a certain degree of precision, embedded in a vagueness of how the character articulates the script, as MR. SOLCUM has '[... *His violent unintelligible muttering ...*]' (Ibid. ATF 9), or MR. ROONEY'S '[*Calculating mumble.*]' (Ibid. ATF 21), or the '[*Confused noise of their descent. Panting, stumbling, ejaculations, curses. Silence.*]'

(Ibid. ATF 22), and what is a '[*Reverent pause.*]' (Ibid. ATF 12; emphasis added)? Beckett's 'third way' of blending the objective and subjective world, merges opposition through action. An action that oscillates in-between the precise and imprecise text and never rests, continually producing an autogenic moment; an instant of creative genesis anytime it is engaged with, as Niall Buggy discovered in his performance of *That Time* for the *Beckett on Film* project (2001). In conversation Buggy stated: 'I think the only way I could personalize it [...] was by obeying [the text]' (13 June 2017). An autogenic moment stemming from the same precise imprecise paradox. Buggy goes on to say that: it is 'very disciplined. In that the freedom of Beckett is in its lack of freedom. Obeying him is very important; I think that is where the freedom lies' (Ibid.). Is it the imprecise human failing to reproduce Beckett's ambiguous text exactly, that reproduces a space and moment for re-creation? Does the moment of failure create space for re-creation; is a moment of creative genesis born? Is it also that within any restriction, boundary or prison there is the possibility of freedom residing in relinquishing the responsibility of choice? As Buggy states: 'you get it all from Beckett', 'it's through him and just obeying it as you went along', 'Absolutely on the moment' (Ibid.), an autogenic moment that puts the artist in-touch with the moment of creative genesis of the work; the Beckett text is alive. Beckett is able to translate art, as Beckett himself states of James Joyce's work 'Here form *is* content, and content *is* form ... His writing is not *about* something; *it is that something itself*' (1983: 27).

Including the frequent use of '*etc.*' from page 19 onwards (*Beckett* 2009a: ATF), which defines everything and nothing, Beckett's text allows a great deal of latitude of interpretation that contradicts the apparent exactitude of the text. This oscillation in-between the precise and imprecise, fixed and fluid text also exists in the inexplicitness concerning the length and volume of the sounds which compared to the precise timings within *Play* (1964), and precision of movement within *Happy Days* (1961), is astonishingly imprecise. There is an exact description of the action, but no indication of how long or loud the '*Dragging feet*' should be, or the difference between the precise '*Dragging feet*' and '*Dragging steps*'. How long and loud is the '*murmur*' (Ibid. ATF 3), and '*muttering*' (Ibid. ATF 9), how high the '*steps*' (Ibid. ATF 10), what are the '[... *Children's cries.*]' (Ibid. ATF 23), and how long and loud, and from what direction are the '[*Cries.*]' (Ibid.). Beckett allows a hum '[MISS FITT hums *her* hymn.]' (Ibid. ATF 15), which is a very general vocal intonation, equally Beckett does not specify what hymn is hummed '[... *humming a hymn.*]' (Ibid. ATF 13). There are

also some moments where there is no sound effect for the statement that is made, which implies a multiplicity of meaning:

MRS. ROONEY: ... Mercy! What was that?

(Ibid. ATF 4)

There is no sound to answer or confirm what she heard, or for the noise of the 'up mail' train:

MRS. ROONEY: Hist! [*Pause.*] Surely to goodness that cannot be the up mail
I hear already.
[*Silence. ...*]

(Ibid. ATF 3)

Yet through such general, and yet simultaneously quite specific exclamations informing the actor's performance, such as '[*In marvelling aside.*]' (Ibid. ATF 16), '[*In rueful afterthought.*]' (Ibid. ATF 17), '[*With vehement sadness.*]', or '[*Enthusiastically.*]' and '[*Horried.*]' (Ibid. ATF 18), the Beckett script can travel in time and space to a specific actor in a specific place. Beckett's *All That Fall* is a set of aesthetic conventions of 1950s radio that the audience would expect to hear in a normal play: realistic dialogue, realistic sound-off and Foley effects. Initially *All That Fall* appears to fulfil the expectations of a mainstream and conventional production, in comparison with the obscure *Fin de Partie* (*Endgame*) that Beckett was trying to stage in Paris at the same time. As Donald McWhinnie's first impression of *Fin de Partie* summarises: it is 'A shattering experience on the page; in the theatre I should think it would pulverize them.' (BBCWAC 19 March 1957).

Initially Beckett appears to create a naturalistic play in *All That Fall*, which allows the listener to be immersed into the other-worldly-world of the radio play, making actual the imagined virtual realm. But it is only in retrospect that the listener realises that they have not merged, converged and assimilated the world of the play. The constant metadramatic referencing in the play continually throws the auditors sense of being out of the world of the play, and back into a material, physical and actual world. Oscillating in-between being and nothingness, actual and virtual, Beckett's reflexivity creates a gap in-between the listener and the play, allowing the construction of the radio world to be consciously experienced by the auditor: 'His writing is not *about* something; *it is that something itself*' (1983: 27).

All That Fall at the BBC.

Beckett produced extremely complicated and highly sophisticated phenomenological soundscapes for the six radio plays he created throughout 1957-1961, which assisted in the creation of the Radiophonic Workshop at the BBC, as Beckett director Donald McWhinnie and Martin Esslin (1981) note, and as Clas Zilliacus states: ‘There is little doubt that the Workshop ... would have been set up even without Beckett’s script ... The fact remains that *All That Fall* started the era of radiophonic drama in Britain, and helped bring the instruments that made it flourish’ (1976: 73). Beckett wrote *All That Fall* (written 1956, first broadcast by the BBC 13 January 1957) at the invitation of the BBC for the ‘minority’ audience of a radio program called ‘The Third’ which started broadcasting in 1946, but was eventually absorbed by Radio 3 in 1970.

When considering the conceptual, practical and actual ‘acoustic scenography’ of Beckett’s performative work for radio, Everett Frost (2017) coined the term ‘acoustic scenography’ because by itself ‘scenography’ (lit.: scene writing) refers to the visual component of performance. For Frost acoustic scenography is the sound design that cannot be achieved by verbal, textual or visual scenography. Responding to this I would describe acoustic scenography as the placement of a particular sound in three-dimensional space (without binaural technology) – which for Julia Monks, critically reviewing the original *All That Fall* broadcast, meant superimposing the aural onto the visual imagination in the mind’s eye, when bringing a world into being: ‘For the characters were almost Three D-ishly alive ... I hope for an even more three-D-ish one than the BBC’s [from ‘RE’ Irish Radio station]’ (*The Irish Press* 21 January 1957: BBCWAC RCONT 1: 1953-1962). Travelling with Maddy Rooney on her journey to and from the railway station in Boghill to collect her blind husband, the listener exists in a blind medium creating an imaginary world for increasingly blind and deaf characters.

Returning to the files from the BBCWAC (1952-1984) archive, specifically BBCWAC RCONT 1: *Samuel Beckett Scriptwriter File 1 1953-1962*, demonstrates an ontological instability and vulnerability within Beckett’s texts that creates the ability of the text to adapt to any space and time. An instability created by the text tessellating in-between being and nothingness, fixed and fluid in a continuous process of bringing a three-

dimensional world into being. The files reveal a long list of Beckett's acquiescence to the texts adaptation and moving mediums or 'adaphatroce'; a term Beckett used in a letter to Alan Schneider concerning the idea of filming *Waiting for Godot*: 'Berlin wasn't too bad in the end. We were nearly there. There will be a film of a performance, purely documentary, *no adaphatroce*' (Harmon 1998: 324; emphasis added). Apart from moving mediums and changing the text, extracts of Beckett's work were used aplenty with and without the author's explicit permission. But for the purposes of this chapter I will focus on the period concerning *All That Fall*, the first transmission on Sunday 13 January 1957 at 9.35pm, and the repeat Saturday 19 January 1957 at 6.55pm, both on the Third Programme.

While giving permission for a radio adaptation of a stage play called 'HAAM', and refusing a television version of a mime piece called 'Soif', both of which were destined for and then withdrawn from the Marseille Festival August 4 -14 1956, Beckett wrote *All That Fall* his first play specifically for the radio. The script for *All That Fall* does not finish once it has been sent to the director Donald McWhinnie for recording, Beckett continuously changes and develops it. After he has sent the script Beckett writes to McWhinnie with 'An absurdly slight change ... Instead of "all alone in that old crazy house" read "all alone in that ruinous old house"' (Beckett 2011: 677). Even after broadcast McWhinnie reports back to Head of Drama (Sound) Val Gielgud that Beckett 'feels that he could improve on the text and is anxious to achieve a tighter and more integrated script next time' (BBCWAC 21 February 1957). But equally Beckett acquiesces to a fundamental aesthetic change that reduces the reflexive impact of the plays central theme of the unnaturalness of the apparently ordered nature of the reality we create. McWhinnie wrote to Beckett stressing that 'more and more I feel that all the animal noises must be done by humans. I hope you will agree' (BBCWAC 13 December 1956). In reply Beckett tried to explain that his aesthetic embodies experiencing how unreal the constructed nature of the 'real' world is: 'I do not see why the animal utterances by mere humans ... Perhaps your idea is to give them the unreal quality of the other sounds. But this, we agreed, should develop from a realistic nucleus. I think the absurd apropos with which they occur, and their briefness, are enough to denaturalize them' (Beckett 2011: 687-88). Unfortunately, McWhinnie misses the minimalist, absurd aesthetic and concentrates on the practicalities:

I am sorry to disturb you about the animals. Of course, we have realistic recordings, but the difficulty is that it is almost impossible to obtain the right sort of timing and balance with the realistic effects. By using good mimics I think we can get real style and shape into the thing. The other factor is that existing recordings are very familiar to our listeners and I do feel that, without being extreme, we need in this particular case to get away from standard realism. (Beckett 2011; Note 1: 688-89)

Unfortunately, the whole point was to make the ‘very familiar’ real animals, sound unreal and unfamiliar in the real context. Beckett wanted to ‘denaturalize’ the natural animal noises, which he nevertheless still managed to do temporally, but perhaps with less impact. For all his reputation of precision, exactitude and refusing to transpose mediums the evidence points to this reputation being based on the examples from his main plays. Going back to the source reveals a much more fluid, open and generous dramatist who gave an enormous amount of aesthetic freedom to those he collaborated with, not only within the text but also within the medium within which the work was produced.

Exploring the communication between Beckett, the BBC and Beckett’s agents in relation to *All That Fall*, the creative decisions are shown to be made as much by the collaborators or co-creators as by Beckett himself, demonstrating the unfixed, fluid and holistic nature of the creative process of bringing a world into being. At the beginning of the creative process Beckett sent John Morris (Controller, Third Programme) the *All That Fall* script, writing: ‘It calls for a rather *special* quality of bruitage [sound effect], *perhaps not quite clear from the text*. I can let you have a note on this *if you are interested*’ (Beckett 2011: 656; emphasis added). The ‘special’ aesthetic element of ‘bruitage’ is not explained, and Beckett is vague and unconcerned about giving specific information on the ‘bruitage’ to the BBC. It follows that John Morris actually has to ask Beckett for information on the ‘special quality of bruitage’, ‘Perhaps you would let me have a note of your ideas on this’ (BBCWAC 5 October 1956). Beckett replies and relinquishes responsibility for its interpretation to the BBC:

I find it difficult to put down my thoughts about the bruitage. And I am not sure that what I want to say is worth saying. I feel it might be no more than an amateur’s statement of what is common radio practice. For the moment I think I had better hold my peace. By far the best would be for us to meet, or for me to meet the braiteur, before production, and talk it over.

(Beckett 2011: 675)

After meeting the 'braitteur' Donald McWhinnie, Beckett wrote to John Morris: 'his ideas about the sound *agreed with mine* and I am sure he will do a very good job' (Beckett 2011: 675). McWhinnie writes: 'I am at the moment *experimenting* furiously with the various sound complications' (BBCWAC 13 December 1956; emphasis added). To which Beckett replies, concerning the animal noises in *All That Fall* being made by humans: 'I do not think this point arose when we met' (Beckett 2011: 687-88). This vital aesthetic element of *All That Fall*'s construction (as noted above) is never discussed. The letter proceeds to note why they should not be human imitations in a firm, authoritative and extended paragraph, and then summing-up with a dismissal of the whole argument: 'Do not the above weigh with you unduly' (Ibid.). Beckett's unfixed, fluid and ill-fitting aesthetic attitude oscillates in-between latitude and laxity and fierceness and fixity existing in a locus of process, creating relationships built on guesswork, where Beckett risks his aesthetic form due to co-creators naturally responding to the latitude by taking responsibility. Therefore, the mis-conception concerning Beckett the aesthetic tyrant demanding obedience to a very fixed and specific text is not as straightforward as it first it appears.

Reviews of *All That Fall* 1957.

In-between something and nothing the critical reviews of the original broadcast of *All That Fall* (BBCWAC RCONT 1: *Samuel Beckett Scriptwriter File 1 1953-1962*) stress the fact that *All That Fall* was written especially for the medium of radio but that it was totally incomprehensible, which curiously seems paradoxical. A paradox that Neil Jordan discussed, when producing *Not I* for the *Beckett on Film* project (2001): 'it resists meaning on so many levels' (15 June 2017). But Beckett was bringing a new, alien style of radio drama to a known and familiar medium. This creates a friction in the relationship in-between the body and technology, due to breaking the habitual horizon of expectations. In particular the aural habits and expectations of the listener, and by extension creating the same friction in the body, other and world relationship. A friction that creates the metadramatic referencing and self-conscious construction of the world that the auditor inhabits. As with Maddy, the auditor constantly tries to assimilate, habituate and normalise these relationships in the process of the performance.

Most of the original reviewers did not assimilate and normalise the body, technology and world relationship as seen in the fact that many bemoaned the fact that through a medium of communication the play failed to communicate and: ‘a failure in communication and this failure is the authors’ (*New Statesman & Nation* 26 January 1957), ‘Will Mr. Beckett not communicate what he has to say?’ (*The Socialist Leader* 26 January 1957), ‘don’t ask me what it was about. Ask me only if I thought it good radio and I’ll say “Emphatically, yes!”’ (*The Irish Press* 21 January 1957). Thus, Beckett’s lack of a definitive statement, as with Maddy’s lack of definition in content and form: ‘makes fruitless attempts at communication’ (*Tablet* 19 January 1957). This lack of assimilating Beckett’s world places the listener in a parallel dilemma to Maddy in the ambiguous construction of a self and world. But the failure to communicate the specific, equally embodies a greater penetration of the universal, for Philip Hope-Wallace *All That Fall* became a ‘miraculous web of sound effects’ that ‘had a tiresome way of penetrating one’s aural imagination all next day’ (*Time and Tide* 19 January 1957), ‘The cumulative effect was positive, however blurred the component parts’, ‘It is a synthesis of fleeting moods, not an analysis of elusive ideas’ (*The Spectator* 18 January 1957). Thus ‘As Mr. Beckett repeatedly insists that he does not understand his own plays himself’ (*Irish Times* 18 January 1957), the auditor, character and Beckett share the same construction processes of bringing a world into being as ‘this becomes one more image of the journey we all have to make through life’ (*The Tribune*) and an example of the body as site and subject of meaning making, thus ‘form *is* content, content *is* form’.

After Beckett Textual Analysis of *All That Fall*.

The co-dependent nature of the relationship in-between the self, other and world in the construction process of bringing a world into being, is not only evidenced in the moment of creative genesis of the text and its premiere performance, but coming forward into the present, is evidenced through a contemporary reading and reception of the text that focuses on the processes of creating a three-dimensional world to exist in. This analysis sees sound become space for Beckett (acoustic scenography), and in *All That Fall* sound forms the three-dimensional architectural theatre space in the imagination and memory; through the medium of radio it becomes a theatre of aural sculptured space, seen with the ‘eye of the mind’ (Worth quoted in Drakakis 1981: 193). Beckett creates a theatre of aural sculptured space not through mixing or creating a synesthetic shift in the senses, but through superimposing or

swapping the senses. Thus, the ear sees an imagined virtual world come into being in the mind's eye. Focusing the inner eye/ear as a camera lens, in, out and around the characters, the listener, as Maddy Rooney, self-consciously summons-up a three-dimensional world to exist in. The technological equivalent of the slow camera close-up and slow remove in the teleplays such as *Ghost Trio* (1975). An action James Knowlson notes in Beckett's *Imagination morte imaginez* (1965): 'the imagination shifts its own position in relation to the various elements, going in, moving out, ascending, examining, descending and returning inside the rotunda like some versatile, miniature camera eye' or microscope (1996: 532), and of *Le Dépeupleur* (1970), *The Lost Ones* (1972) world described 'as precisely as the "eye of the mind" (or the lens of a camera) will allow' (Ibid. 536). In *All That Fall* Beckett describes a three-dimensional world coming into being as he imagines it, and presents this emerging world to the listener. There is no fixed text, as the text is the moment of creative genesis. For Beckett the ontological stability of the subject or environment is in direct relation to a physical fleshly body located in dimensional space – whether an imagined virtual, or actual space.

Even though Beckett's first radio play *All That Fall* is considered to be his most realistic play because it is based around the norms of everyday life in his childhood home of Foxrock, Dublin, Beckett manages to communicate the commonalities of the human condition from the personal details through the metadramatic device of drawing attention to the conscious construction of a self and world out of thin air. Beckett thought as an architect in seeing in his mind's eye the human process and experience of bringing a three-dimensional self and world into being, and then staged that process of construction. The fact that Beckett manages to translate his own naturally occurring, heightened sensory awareness and highly introspective phenomenological experiences into his work, results in an audience experiencing the same process of bringing a three-dimensional world into and out of being as Beckett, as the character. One of the tools or techniques that Beckett uses to manage the audience's process of bringing the imagined world into being is embodied in the precisely written details of the narrative journey within his oeuvre, whether poetry, prose or performance text, literalized in the case of *All That Fall*, as Knowlson notes Beckett transposing his own: 'extraordinarily acute sense of hearing that he ascribed to the narrator in *Malone Dies*' (1996: 17):

I could tell from one another, in the outcry without, the leaves, the boughs, the groaning trunks, even the grasses and the house that sheltered me ... There was nothing, not even the sand on the paths, that did not utter its cry.

(*Malone Dies* 2010a: 32)

Through managing the imagination of the audience, the visceral experiencing of the narrative journey is also controlled and conveyed by Beckett through the tool and vehicle of the character's experience, in this case of Malone. This is a technique that allows Beckett to manage the physical and visceral experience of the imagination of the participator, that avoids directly telling the participator to 'imagine', which Beckett frequently does, as in *Not I*, *The Lost Ones*, *Eh Joe* (Beckett 2009a: EJ 116-19), and in one of Maddy Rooney's moments of metadramatic referencing in *All That Fall*: 'Do not imagine, because I am silent, that I am not present, and alive, to all that is going on' (Beckett 2009a: ATF 17).

Seeing in his mind's eye the world of *All That Fall* coming into being Beckett immediately realized the potential of visualizing sound and silence, writing in a letter to Nancy Cunard, Beckett states:

Never thought about Radio play technique, but in the dead of t'other night got a nice gruesome idea full of cartwheels and dragging feet and puffing and panting which may or may not lead to something.

(Beckett 2011: 630-31)

The inner eye of the imagination describes a body moving through near and far dimensional space in the continuously incomplete process of creating the world it inhabits. As we only see what we look at as we move through space, the actual reality experienced is not just what is focused on and chosen out of the plenitude of the surrounding objective world – but in movement, that choice of world is a fluid and continuously incomplete process of passing and passing through worlds. And is a choice that is augmented by memories, habits and the imaginative construction of the world we inhabit, that is as equally fluid. Moving through space the body creates the world it inhabits, and in constant motion the body continuously brings a world into and out of being in varying degrees of cohesion along a continuum, in the experience of passing and passing through. Our sense of the passage of time and being in an actual world is in fact the world being deconstructed and instantly re-constructed in the smallest instant of eventuality possible. And while at every point this process is instant the untold billions of universes created in passing and passing through, are stored in the body as experience, inducing meaning as direction and an ontology of space. Which consequently

resolves any ambiguous a priori conditions through a body that is both the site and subject of meaning making. Beckett describes this continuously incomplete process of bringing a world into and out of being through oscillating the audience's perception in-between an imagined virtual realm in the mind's eye/ear, and the actual narrative, dialogue or sound world. A oscillation in-between the actual and virtual and into the process of bringing a world into being, as the narrative moves through dimensional space. The scene setting sound of this radio play begins:

Rural sounds. Sheep, bird, cow, cock, severally, then together. Silence. MRS ROONEY advances along country road towards railway station. Sound of her dragging feet. Music faint from house by way. "Death and the Maiden." The steps slow down, stop.

(Beckett 2009a: ATF 3)

Oscillating the listener in-between sound and silence, being and nothingness, precise and imprecise, Beckett states '*Rural sounds*' but not precisely what they are, but exactly what animals should sound, and how they should be precisely brought into being. The audio '*Silence*' that immediately follows, acts as the black background and void in the visual image, deconstructing the realm momentarily constructed in the aural imagination. Following the '*Silence*' with the entrance and sound of MRS ROONEY's footfalls re-constructs a world, as the '*Sound of her dragging feet*' is the only actual sound in the black void of '*Silence*'. Beckett forces the projective practices of sensory perception into action through the act of comparison or hyperreflexivity, measuring what *is* there against what is *not* there – and thus into the act of creation. A genesis moment born in silence, discovered by the mime artist Marcello Magni as he discussed his role in *Act Without Words II* for the *Beckett on Film* project (2001):

“the word” said Lecoq “is born in silence” and the word is the crown of the body, in the end. If there was no silence there would be no word – you have to have a moment of noticing, of recognition or “what the hell” reaction in order for the world to be born, there must be a moment of impulse in order for the words to start; “Mama!” is the child's needs ... It's the situation that makes the word to be born.

(18 September 2017)

Tessellating in-between being and nothingness, actual and virtual, brings the participator into the process of re-creating the world that they inhabit. MRS ROONEY enters an anechoic landscape with no dimensional defining sounds, other than the '*Sound of her dragging feet*'

as she ‘*advances along country road*’. As she advances the sound of her dragging feet are physically brought forward into the foreground of the sonic landscape not only because of what is not there, but also through the simple method of recording the feet approaching the recording microphone, and into an immersive experience of MRS ROONEY’S world. The sound of her feet falling defines her, moving her through and dimensionally defining the experience of her world.

Silence on the radio acts as an empty (dark) stage in the theatre, there is no objective world, nothing exists. Consequently, anything that is presented to sensory perception immediately before or after the void is more cognitively prominent, due to triggering the act of comparison in-between being and nothingness. Beckett pre-figures our experience in the digital and virtual world through foregrounding an actually defined, objective world and character, set against a black background and void. The listener does not expect an excess of silence on the radio. Beckett uses the habitual horizon of expectations of sensory perception of the listener as a metadramatic device drawing attention to the conscious construction of a self and world out of thin air. Deconstructing the habitual construction of a sensory world Beckett places the auditor into the process and act of (re)creation in-between the actual and virtual realm. The digital and virtual world habituate and normalize this process. And if it is normal it is unnoticed and unknown, and our sense of being exists in an existential void, rather than in the process of creation. For Beckett the ontological stability and sense of being of the subject or environment, is in direct relation to a physical body located within two- or three-dimensional space.

Beckett’s themes are based around an exploration of what comes between the self and the world in the construction process of a self and world. Whether that be the technology or tool of the radio, or vehicles of transport in *All That Fall*, or the technology and tool of conventional ideology coming in-between the construction of an identifiable self and world, again as in the text *All That Fall*. Technology is a tool that extends the capabilities of the body, and the type of technology determines whether that tool replaces the functions of the body – as a car could be said to extend and replace the walking body. All the vehicles of transport in *All That Fall*, whether the horse and cart, car, or train, are just one of the tools replacing or extending the character’s walking body, thus potentially creating the world that Maddy inhabits. If it is the moving body that creates the world that we inhabit, then the body is another tool and technology that exists at one end of a continuum of technological

invention extending indefinitely. And the body becomes a technology that comes between the self and the world in the construction process of a self and world. Maddy's body is another tool and technology and the medium through which Beckett conveys the process of bringing a world into being for the listener, and as a radio play Maddy herself is again the tool, technology and medium. Oscillating in-between being and nothingness the technology creates the world that the auditor inhabits.

This process of exploring the relationships involved during the act of assimilating technology, or habituating the world, is most obviously reflected in the degree of assimilation Maddy achieves with the increasingly complex technology of the vehicles of transport. It is noticeable that Maddy de-familiarises all the methods of transport making 'strange' the body/technology relationship. This process of both de- and re-familiarizing the body/technology relationship, is a metaphor for the degree of assimilation Maddy achieves in her relationships in-between the self, other and world. Maddy materialises and de-materialises a fleshly, corporeal body depending on how well her flesh converges or habituates and assimilates the self, other, vehicles, and world. Maddy subjectively experiences herself both as a decomposing blurred, corporeality, as a 'big fat jelly' (Beckett 2009a: ATF 5) 'quivering like a blancmange' (Ibid. ATF 21) equally accompanied by a corporeality that is constantly defined through her '*Dragging feet*' (Ibid. ATF), that speaks of the weight of gravity. The listener is told one thing but experiences the opposite. Maddy's excessive corporeality and moments when she speaks to herself bring her forward into a defined foregrounded experience of the sonic landscape, and into a hyper-introspective almost objectified two-dimensional immersive cognition for the auditor. But the actual soundscape of the moving body and vehicles of transport also creates a three-dimensional world and theatre of aural sculptured space seen in the mind's ear/eye of the listener. The auditor swings between presence and absence – as equally as Maddy – materialized into a physical body occupying a two- or three-dimensional soundscape. The production of the Beckett text is in the process of performance in collaboration with the auditor, there is no fixed Beckett text which consequently results in the text being able to jump, mix and create new genres.



2.1. Pan Pan's *All That Fall*.

<http://static01.nyt.com/images/2012/12/21/arts/21ALLTHAT/ALLTHAT-Jumbo.jpg>

Pan Pan's *All That Fall* and *Embers*.

Investigating the contemporary productions of Beckett's radio plays *All That Fall* (1956) and *Embers* (1959) through critical reviews, videos, and photos of Pan Pan's high-tech 'live' theatrical staging, I will explore the degree that digital and virtual technology has replaced the human process of bringing a world into being. These productions ran for various lengths of time, from one night at The Beckett Theatre, Dublin (2013) to eighteen nights at The Arts Theatre, London (2012), touring various countries including Dublin, Edinburgh, London, New York, and Australia throughout 2011-2016.

Blending artistic categories Pan Pan blend theatre, sculptural and installation art with an immersive 3D cinematic screen experience in a variation of the Stan Gontarski term 'generic androgyny' (McMullan 2010: 131) or Beckett's 'adaphatroce'. This mixes categories of 'participatory', 'experiential' or 'immersive' theatre to create new categories of theatre that have sensory transposition at its heart, where we have one possibility of 'seeing' sound in a 'theatre of aural sculptured space'. This mixing of separate artistic categories was the norm for Beckett as he mixed art, music, theatre, film, radio, mime and sculpture, as evidenced in the BBCWAC archives, even though, as the epigraph to this chapter reveals, a contrary Beckett exists that states in the letter to his American publisher, August 27 1957: 'If we can't keep our genres more or less distinct, or extricate them from the confusion that has them where they are, we might as well go home and lie down' (Beckett 2014: 63-4).

Merging artistic categories forms part of the same emerging latency within Beckett's work that pre-figures our experience in the digital and virtual world. And exists in the same ontological locus as Beckett's 'incoherent continuum' or 'no-man's-land', in-between being and nothingness, subject and object, producing his 'third way' of being in the world that exists beyond any metaphysical binaries such as presence an absence, and moves into a realm

of metaphysical multiplicity, where our sense of being simultaneously exists everywhere or nowhere. The joining and jumping of genres inevitably lead to a process of adaptation within the text, as the text moves or joins one genre to the next. This Beckettian swapping, merging or superimposition of artistic categories, or genres, is of great concern to the directors and actors of the *Beckett on Film* project (2001) as they film all nineteen Beckett stage plays. Finding a ‘cinematic correlative’ (in conversation with John Crowley, 6 March 2017) of Beckett’s stage directions was a main drive for their film creations, spurred-on by the perceived obligation not to deviate from the published text. Discussing his filming of *Come and Go* John Crowley states is:

[a] cinematic correlative of Beckett’s wish in the stage directions to have the characters merge gradually but completely into darkness as they walk offstage. That’s a conceit that works really well onstage but struck me as being a bit airless and literal in a film context. So, I came up with the notion of the characters disappearing and reappearing like a photograph dissolving or being developed.

(Ibid.)

On film, as on stage, the viewer sees the world come into and out of being. Charles Garrad the director of *That Time* spoke about:

The liberty I took was in order to, in a way to animate it, because in a way it is quite an uncinematic sounding thing. When you picture it being a static face, with his eyes shut for 20 minutes, it doesn’t sound very promising, from a film point of view – so I decided to create a space around it ... I wanted to articulate the space with the camera ... because it’s the space that created the surroundings for the expression of the ideas through the words ...

(9 March 2017)

Thus, the body in space becomes the Merleau-Ponty site and subject of meaning making (Ibid.). Garrad’s ‘Landscapes of Beckett’ (Ibid.) exist in-between the artistic categories of sculpture and film, it ‘was an opportunity to do something that was between two worlds in a way’ (Ibid). In-between something and nothing, Beckett’s texts re-create themselves through the actor, as Niall Buggy discovered in *That Time*, through transcending any defined meaning or category and personalizing the universal: Buggy ‘found that it is so truthful, the whole experience of looking back on your life and whether something was true or not, because we all do that don’t we?’ (13 June 2017). Creating an autogenic moment that simultaneously re-contextualizes and re-historicizes Beckett within performance; the Beckett text is alive, through the ability to make themselves available to technical innovations and thus open to indefinite reinterpretation and the pre-figuring of the human move further into the virtual

realm. These processes facilitate the ability of the text to produce a new awareness of the sensory transposing, superimposing, layering, separating and swapping (but not synthesizing) of sensory abilities that is the part of the human condition – allowing radio sound to replace vision, and for the inner eye of the imagination to construct and ‘see’ a three-dimensional world come into being.



2.2. Samuel Beckett, *All That Fall*, ca. 1956. Pan Pan Theatre company production. <http://static01.nyt.com/images/2012/12/21/arts/21ALLTHAT/ALLTHAT-Jumbo.jpg>

Pan Pan’s *All That Fall*.

Exploring the critical reviews, videos, and photos of Pan Pan’s immersive environment will analyse how they attempt to recreate an experience of being in a virtual other-worldly-world of the play. And how this landscape embodies the experience in digital and virtual technology, which is pre-figured by Beckett’s work. All three systems attempt to bring the participator into the process of bringing a world into being, through the action of tessellating the projecting practices of sensory perception in-between being and nothingness and into the process of creation. Beckett keeps this process of bringing a world into being a reflexive and conscious creation for the audience. Pan Pan and digital and virtual technology replace or habituate this process, placing the participator into a completed pre-constructed world, negating the participators ability to create the world that they inhabit. The critical commentary on Pan Pan’s ‘live’ high-tech theatrical productions recreates the ecology and experience of this system of bringing a world into being, revealed through the tension the body experiences in the perception of spacial dimensions. The foundation of Pan Pan’s technological landscape replicates Beckett’s use of space, placing the visual experience in a two-dimensional, foregrounded actual world, and sound appears to physically surround in an all-encompassing black void, seeming to oscillate the participator in-between being and nothingness and into the act of creation.

Analysing the critical commentary reveals Pan Pan promenading the audience/participants of *All That Fall* through the auditorium, behind the main theatre

(*theconversation.com* 14 January 2014), and into a black box ‘Listening chamber’ (*musingsinintermissions.blogspot* 2011, *theguardian.com* 2013, *roomsmagazine.com* 2015); a three-dimensional room within a room, or world within a world, where they are ‘Told to fill [the seats] from the *front* of the space’ (Ibid. emphasis added). Once there, the participants sit in scattered rocking chairs *surrounded* and bathed in the light of ‘Low hanging light bulbs emitting a warm amber glow’ (Wilkinson 2014: 128). The *foreground* contained a ‘wall of light’ and ‘an enormous bank of technological equipment’ (Ibid. 129), yet the audio speakers were set in the ceiling and fixed on poles *surrounding* the participants. The ‘pre-recorded’ actors and sound effects were also projected into the space from ‘behind’ the audience, ‘from a powerful point in one corner of the room’ (*australianstage.com* 14 January 2014). The sound expanding out in an ever increasing cone or wave front from this focus point, works in conjunction with the audio speakers *surrounding* the audience to seemingly immerse the auditor into a three-dimensional world of surround sound (*theconversation.com* 14 January 2014). The black wall of technology visually dominates through a lateral placing, creating a two-dimensional visual field. Spatially situating the wall of technology in front of the audience creates a proscenium framing for the performance of the multi-media technology. In placing the small audience (sixty) close to the alternating black, flat wall of light, there was ‘no need for a stage’ (*TVBomb* 28 August 2013) ‘or a cast’ (*International Theatre Review* 15 December 2015) as ‘The audience is invited on stage’ (*australianstage.com* 14 January 2014) to perform with the technology – assimilating it in a posthuman immersive experience. Oscillating the projecting practices of sensory perception in-between being and nothingness, actual and virtual dimensions of space, through an actual foregrounded visual world and the intangible void and unseen realm of surround sound, seemingly brings the participator into an immersive experience of creating a world to inhabit.

Oscillating sensory perception in-between the dimensional planes of space, invites the participator to triangulate sensory perception to identify the main source of sound and vision to create the ‘norm’ of a centred POV and stable world. Thus, the participator ritually immerses the self by moving the rocking chair to face the front of the lateral wall of light to create a ‘more’ stable immersive experience. This process of focusing and stabilizing sensory perception is interestingly a forward and foregrounded experience of the body in the process of bringing a world into being. A process, or *gestalt* structure or pattern of thought that embodies Merleau-Ponty’s principle that movement creates growth and growth creates movement. This is a dimensionally dependent symbiotic relationship in-between the body

and world in the process of creating a stable world, and is a pre-subjective experience, in which Pan Pan's participator focuses sensory perception in a forward and foregrounded gestalt. The compounding of Merleau-Ponty's principles states that pre-subjectively the body is not at the center of, and surrounded by a world. Pre-subjectively the body experiences the world as a flat, foregrounded experience where the space behind the body does not exist – space and time collapse. It is only in the process of creating a world that the realm behind the body, and a temporality of the past, comes into being as a three-dimensional world. Does Pan Pan's surround sound pre-figure the process of bringing a world into being? Does the technology create the world that I inhabit?

Pan Pan's surround sound in conjunction with the close proximity to the actual, visual two-dimensional proscenium framing of the 'performance' of the multi-media, attempts to situate the audience 'within' and constituting the world of the image and performance itself. As with digital 3D (D3D) interactive interfaces and cinema the participator is 'invited' to expand, project forward, and make permeable the borders of the body, and to stretch and project her perceptual and cognitive capacities into the constitution of the image itself (Josette Féral in Giannachi et.al. 2012: 37-42). The dramatic field and performance of Pan Pan's high-tech production is created in the process of an apparently collaborative encounter between the technology and the body of the participator.

But the excessive use of surround sound and volume of sound, and the extremes of light and dark overwhelm any sensory or cognitive comprehension – shutting down these systems as eyes and ears close in defence. The projecting practices of the sensory body cannot habituate and assimilate the world it inhabits. Therefore, the human is constantly in the process of trying to resolve the alienated relationship between the body and technology, and the body, self and world relationship. In the continuously incomplete process of creation or continuous non-assimilation, our sense of being exists in an ontological locus simultaneously containing no, or an infinite possibility of a priori conditions.

Pan Pan's excessive and thus intense volume and visual stimulation in the use of the technology of sight and sound, projects the high sound and vision towards, and penetrating the participator. The audience do not create the reality they inhabit through the forward projecting practices of sensory perception, the technology projects, penetrates and produces the imagined virtual world for the audience. The status of 'invitation' and the notion of

choice within immersive reality is questioned. But equally the audience pre-condition themselves to submit to, and to lose control of the sensory and cognitive body to the technology due to entering into a commonly known ‘immersive’ experience. The horizons of expectation of sensory perception of the participator have been pre-set and habituated by the conventional understanding of what it means to be in an immersive experience. Once the body is within the environment the choices of the participator actions are not only pre-set by how the audience are staged themselves, or how the technology controls the audience’s sensory perception, but also by how the participator pre-sets and pre-conditions their own sensory perception and reception of the world surrounding them.

As the technology and performance itself is predicted, a further analysis of the critical reviews of Pan Pan’s *All That Fall* also shows a pre-programming of the spectator’s imagination, as the wall of lights illuminates in different permutations that ‘incites our sensory capacity for resemblance’ (*musingsinintermissions.blogspot* 28-30 August 2011). Literally using and working within the boundaries of the participator’s horizons of expectation of sensory perception, Aedín Cosgrove’s lighting patterns a crucifixion cross, the circle of a car headlight or the ‘diamond shape compilation of lights paired with the loud sounds of rattling metal *forcefully* brings the 12.30 train crashing into our minds. Jimmy Eadie’s sound design lands us in the centre of a violent storm at the play’s end’ (Ibid.; emphasis added). This seems to destroy the myth that there is freewill and choice within immersion (Adam Alston 2016) or immersive theatre, as the environment demands that the spectator body in that space, even before the performance begins, is put in the position of *having* to create the experience, through such small actions as choosing their own seating (*roomsmagazine.com* 22 June 2015) and positioning themselves in that space. Once the participator has willingly and with freewill entered the space, any responsibility for the somatic and cognitive effects are relinquished by the participator to the producing technology. The technology creates the world I inhabit. The human no longer participates in the projecting practices of the body, and no longer creates the world that they inhabit.



2.3. Pan Pan, *All That Fall*.

<http://static01.nyt.com/images/2012/12/21/arts/21ALLTHAT/ALLTHAT-Jumbo.jpg>

Pan Pan's Sound.

Examining the video and critical review material of Pan Pan's visual image of *All That Fall*, is primarily a Beckettian foregrounded, lateral and two-dimensional proscenium/screen experience, with the audience 'in front of' and 'being before' an enormous bank of lights. The sound designer Jimmy Eadie discussed with critic Judith Wilkinson (2014) how he achieved what he believed would be a more immersive and therefore 'real' experience of being in the virtual other-worldly-world. For Eadie sound and vision become inter-changeable within the dimensional planes of the imagination due to the manipulation of the recorded sound. Eadie first of all erased any ambient background noise, including the echoes and reverberations from the room of the recording, creating an anechoic soundscape. This erases the constant background noise that the human hears from the cradle to the grave, and is a noise that is one of the means by which a transposition of the senses brings the world that I inhabit into being.

Within this anechoic, empty sonic landscape Eadie could manipulate the pure recorded sound into any depth or sonic spatial configuration within its dimensional planes, creating his own interpretation of an actual three-dimensional world. Eadie interpreted the sound of the 'real' world as the moments when Maddy spoke to herself silently in her mind. For Eadie as for Wilkinson, there seems to be an assumption that the inner voice happens without the intrusion of the sound of the outer world, the self hears the inner self in a silent mind. Consequently, deleting the dimensional defining sounds creates a two-dimensional sound and experience that felt 'real' as if someone was 'speaking directly into one's inner ear' (Wilkinson 2014: 133). This is also equating 'reality' with proximity. But it is by being able to place objects in an imaginary depth of sonic landscape that the defining figurative outlines are drawn and pictures form. The white noise of the world is ever present even when speaking to one's self, even when hearing one's own inner pulse or heartbeat, even if one is deaf, the sonic resonances of the body are heard/felt to be able to place an 'I' in 'this three-dimensional place'. Without the white noise of ambient reality which echoes and resonates within the body, there would be no dimensions to place an 'I' 'here'. Thus, the anechoic subjective experience of reality becomes an objectified, disembodied, disconnected and discontinuous experience.

Beckett's text creates a two-dimensional foregrounded experience by defining Maddy's corporeality through her '*Dragging feet*' and the actor playing Maddy being very close to the recording microphone when speaking to herself, but still counterpointed by a depth of dimensional defining reality in the recording room's sound. The combination of the one hundred and seventy-eight pauses and silences in *All That Fall* and Pan Pan's anechoic aural soundscape results in the loss of the natural three-dimensional ambience of sonic space. Without the bleeding of the sound of space that is a continuous physical presence resonating within the body, a discontinuous bodily experience result. Thus, there is a conflict in the participator's experience of Pan Pan's production between the natural resonances within the specially designed room and the anechoic pre-recorded soundscape, until the volume is increased to a 'painful' level which drowns-out the natural room resonance. These excesses stimulate the sub-conscious productive participation of the audience, encouraging a heightened anticipation and therefore production of a 'more' hyper-sensory and therefore 'real' experience. Both Matthew Causey (2017) and Adam Alston (2016) would argue that in 'producing more' heightened experiences of the human senses, results in an outsourcing, farming and commoditisation of the human senses. Also, the day-to-day experience of sensory perception is a dull, dampened down, muted experience of habitual norms; otherwise the human would be in constant sensory overload and in a persistent state of wonder or terror at the sights, sounds, smells, taste and touch of the world. The participator's overwhelmed senses cannot triangulate for the source of the sound and vision. Equally Pan Pan's sound and vision has no locus, as it seemingly (and does) come from everywhere. Pan Pan's excesses overwhelm the sensory capacity of the body, creating sensory dampening, detachment, and disembodiment rather than immersion.

Beckett's own radio sound effects were created by a non-diegetic but ambient experience. There is a gap between the real and the imagined experience for Beckett, and the ambient noise would be in the right dimensional space, within either a two- or three-dimensional aural landscape, but within the wrong diegesis creating temporal discontinuity. The text of *All That Fall* has an excessive, absurd realism, and an asymmetry of sound that deconstructs and de-familiarizes the sound, allowing Beckett to construct the listener's imagined aural reality, that reflexively comments on its own construction, creating a two-dimensional pictorial experience:

MRS. ROONEY. ... The wind – [*Brief wind.*] – scarcely stirs the leaves and the birds – [*Brief chirp.*] – are tired singing. The cows – [*Brief moo.*] – and sheep [*Brief baa.*] – ruminates in silence. The dogs – [*Brief bark.*] are hushed and the hens [*Brief cackle.*] sprawl torpid in the dusk. We are alone.

(Beckett 2009a: ATF 24)

The Beckett text creates a constant consciousness of the processes involved in constructing and de-constructing a realm. Pan Pan's technical excesses of proximity and hyper-sensory stimulation in sound and vision, play on our normative embodied convictions to convince the body that this is the real experience. And due to the lack of relief in the excessive stimulation there is no time or space to allow a hyperreflexivity to occur, which may place the body in a metaphysical multiplicity or no subjective realities. Any opportunity for interactivity and co-creation of that reality by the audience is taken away by the solipsistic isolation the hyper-excesses create. Watching each other watching ourselves, a mediated epistemology isolates, internalizes and distances, creating a two-dimensional visual experience, perhaps without the redeeming factor of a hyperreflexivity on the process.

The critical reviews of Pan Pan speak of excessiveness, not discontinuity: 'it feels like it [the Mail train's arrival] is literally hitting you in the chest' (Wilkinson 2014: 133). The technically mediated immersive experience is equated with a hyper-sensory stimulation and extreme proximity producing a virtual other-worldly-world (Adam Alston 2016, Phillip Auslander 2008, Walter Benjamin 1986, Gabriella Giannachi et.al. 2012, Nick Kaye 2007, Josephine Machon 2009). Eadie used an excess of proximity and volume of the surround sound to have the sound pressure waves invading the body in a physically intense 'objectionable, hard and visceral' experience (Ibid. 134). But as immersive virtual reality research also indicates it is the sense of the somatic body, and not necessarily its excesses that increases the 'reality' of the physical experience (Slater & Sanchez-Vives 2014: 25).

Wilkinson states that Pan Pan's *All that Fall* created an excessive physically, invasive 'considerable force' of sensory sight and sound, surrounding or pushing *into* the body. There is an 'overwhelmingly intense moment ... [and] spectacular incandescent explosions ... to an almost blinding degree' that the audience have to shield away from (Wilkinson 2014: 133). Aedín Cosgrove's 'extraordinary lighting design' (Tubridy 2012: 14) matches Eadie's sonic intensity with a visual intensity that again overwhelms the sensory capacity of the body. There is a gap between what the bodily experience tells the rational mind, and what the

rational mind tells the body. Rationally the body knows that the norms of everyday sensory perception are not set in a mode of constant intensity. But equally rationally the more intense a sensory experience the more ‘real’ it must be, because it is a ‘real’ felt sensory experience, how can it not be ‘real’ even if intense. This results in creating a greater distance between the hyper-sensitized body created by immersive virtual reality (IVR), and the sensitized body of the norm. There is a gap between the expectations of the real (from IVR) and the actual experience of the real. The experience of the real will never live up to the sensory intensity or diversity of the ‘immersive’ experience.



2.4. Samuel Beckett, *Embers*, ca. 1959. Pan Pan theatre company production. Image: www.panpantheatre.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/PAN0813EM13.jpg

Pan Pan’s *Embers*.

Analysing the reviews and photos of Pan Pan’s *Embers* (2013), reveals a production that uses the same technique of pre-figuring the audience experience, and confusing the dividing line in-between the actual and the imagined virtual worlds. *Embers* is the story of Henry, a man whose world is a creation of memories that are slowly dissolving in his need for the external world. Pan Pan use the ‘traditional theatre space’ (Wilkinson 2014: 12) of a proscenium arch and a stage, with a four-meter-high skull constructed out of two-hundred and twenty-two layers of individually cut crenelated plywood, sat on over ten tonnes of grey pebbles, where: ‘the play’s first minute, which begins before the house lights even go down and features a group of seemingly random men and women wandering on the stage before one of them removes a sheet covering a large object, revealing a giant skull’ (*blouinartinfo.com* 23 September 2014). This ‘framing device of actors crunching over ten tonnes worth of stones’ (*No More Workhorse*, 14 August 2013) equally pre-figures and habituates the audience’s senses and imagination (fig. 2.5).



2.5. Pan Pan, *Embers*.

www.panpantheatre.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/PAN0813EM

The sheer size and density of weight of the scenography would create an intensely felt somatic phenomenon. The literal metaphor of a beach and skull imposes a pre-constructed image and reality onto the imagination – in visualizing the imagination both of Pan Pan’s theatrical presentations of Beckett’s radio productions, no longer come out of the dark of the imagination. When resisting a staging of *All That Fall* Beckett wrote to his American publisher Barney Rossett that:

[e]ven the reduced visual dimension it will receive from the simplest and most static of readings ... will be destructive of whatever quality it may have and which depends on the whole thing *coming out of the dark*.

(Beckett 2014: 63-4)

This friction between the ability and inability to assert any freewill in the construction of the world that I inhabit, could be applied to Beckett himself as well as Henry in *Embers*. In Beckett’s case this may link back to the conflict in-between parental control from Beckett’s Mother, and the opposing influence of ‘Ruddy’, Professor Thomas Brown Rudmose-Brown. As Beckett’s early mentor as a seventeen-year-old undergraduate at Trinity College, Dublin (1923-1926) Ruddy played a foundational role in constructing Beckett’s attitude to life:

He would have tried to set Beckett against all systems and all orthodoxies, whether religious, philosophical or ethical: “Every one of us must strive, unflinchingly, to be himself,” he said. Beckett’s entire career could be regarded as an illustration of that particular precept.

(Knowlson 1996: 51)

This non-conformist attitude to life also mirrors Henry’s and Maddy’s torture and isolation as they try to construct their own reality, in Maddy’s case her own reality amidst the norms of everyday life in a village such as Beckett’s own in Foxrock, Dublin, norms that are not dependable, as shown in *All That Fall* [’s] themes of ‘collapse, decline, dissolution and death’ (Knowlson 1996: 429).

At the time of writing *Embers*, between December 1957 and dispatching it to the BBC in February 1959, Beckett struggled to converge with the considered norms of various 1950s social situations. James Knowlson (1996) notes his persistent struggle with his abandoned faith, the ‘hell’ of ‘enforced appointments’ (Ibid. 440-1), the difficulty of accepting an honorary degree from his old university, Trinity College, that he called a “commencement farce” (Ibid. 465), or attending the Prix Italia ceremony in 1959 where he won the RAI (Radiotelevisione Italiana) prize, and having to participate in ‘detested organised group outings’ (Ibid. 471). Just as it can be too reductive to ascribe too much influence on Beckett of his life circumstances, Beckett does manage to universalize his personal by personalizing the universal for his characters. The main embodiment of this motif for Beckett is presenting a provisional body to situate the character in a time and space, simultaneously visualizing the disembodied mind of the same character, such as Maddy.



2.6. Pan Pan, *Embers*.

www.panpantheatre.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/PAN0813EM

The auditor of *Embers* is also placed in the head of a frustrated writer of his own world (Beckett, Henry, the audience member?), and going back to the reviews Pan Pan’s production literalizes this for the audience by placing two actors inside the wooden skull (fig. 2.6). Both Maddy and Henry struggle to converge with the world’s they are creating, resulting in them becoming more or less present depending on the physical occupation of a two- or three-dimensional sonic landscape, whether real or imagined; perceptual instabilities are visualized into dimensional instabilities, as with virtual reality and Pan Pan. Both Maddy and Henry are stuck in the Merleau-Ponty ‘continual birth of existence’ in a perpetual state of becoming, in the gap in-between the actual and imagined virtual realm; the gap ‘between what the play’s words describe and what the listener hears’ (*theguardian.com* 15 August 2013). Henry remains a solid material three-dimensional character in a fluid and ephemeral world, as the continuous unnatural sea sound in the two-hundred and twenty-eight pauses of Beckett’s text, forces the presence of the sea into the imaginary foregrounded, two-dimensional sonic field.

Critics note that Beckett wanted (West 2010: 68) an intentional electronic distortion in the sound of the sea, because as Everett Frost reports Beckett wanted a ‘fresh approach’ (Ibid.). This unnatural sound Katherine Worth notes is a ‘sardonic reference to the artificiality of all the “natural” sound effects in the play’ (quoted in Drakakis 1981: 203). Beckett wanted to emphasise the constructed nature of the real world, as in *All That Fall*. The ‘relentless pressure’ of the unnatural sea sound and the shifts in non- and synchronous sounds, for example; Ada has no ‘shingle sound’ as she appears, represents the theme of ‘this seemingly solid realism is all an illusion’ (Ibid. 206). Pan Pan unambiguously pre-figures the audience’s imagination, visualizing Beckett’s unnatural ‘sea blares from 592 mini speakers – part set design, part art installation – hung up on stage in mesmerising lines of polycarbonate strips that glisten like shingle’ (*No More Workhorse*, 14 August 2013), or of a father’s skull decomposing underneath the waves. Every action in this pre-constructed world seems to prove the veracity of the reality of the world seen. But externalizing and pre-figuring the internal projecting practices of sensory creation, neutralizes the imagination, preventing the audience from creating the world that they inhabit.

Beckett and Pan Pan.

Both Beckett and the digital and virtual world tessellate our sense of being in-between being and nothingness, actual and virtual, object and subject, and into the process of bringing a world into being. Beckett produces this locus of process, or continuous creation through a text that metadramatically oscillates in-between both a fixed and fluid, actual and virtual meaning and interpretative possibility. *All That Fall* and *Embers* embody this principle exposing human presence in the shape of *process*, suggesting that Maddy’s sense of becoming situated and immersed in a world is a constantly becoming-other, more a process or an event, potentiality rather than a fixed thing. Pan Pan replicate the digital and virtual principles and methodologies of immersing the spectator deeper into the virtual other-worldly-world of the play. An ideology immersed in the principle of excess; presence of high-technology, hyper-sensory stimulation, physical proximity, hyper-anticipation, pre-figuring and externalizing the imagination. The principle of excess prevents the projecting practices of sensory perception from creating the worlds that we inhabit.

The human projecting practices of sensory perception oscillate in-between being and nothingness, actual and virtual, self, other and world, and body and tool/technology. An oscillating process that is used to habituate and assimilate the self to world, as we bring a world into being. If the speed of technological development and hybridization processes have sped-up to the point we are in the continuous process of habituating and assimilating that technology, we exist in a locus of process. And the principle of 'excess' becomes habituated and the norm. The liberal Western world is unlikely to be a world of hyper-sensory intensity and would be dull in comparison. Beckett uses the tool of metadramatic referencing to keep the process of tessellating our sense of being in-between the actual and virtual and into the process of creation a conscious process. The principle of 'excess' takes away any consciousness reflection on the fact that we create the world that we inhabit. If we no longer reflect, we no longer create the world's we inhabit through the projecting practices of sensory perception. We no longer oscillate in-between being and nothingness, self, other and world, subject and object, self and technology. We have swapped the actual world for the pre-constructed virtual other-worldly-world, mediatizing the 'live' and live performance. Phillip Auslander (2008) analyses how the human has swapped the actual for the virtual world, the live for the mediatized:

Live [Life] performance thus has become the means by which mediatized representations are naturalized ... if the mediatized image can be recreated in a live setting, it must have been "real" to begin with. ... whereas mediatized performance derives its authority from its reference to the live or the real, the live now derives its authority from its reference to the mediatized, which derives its authority from its reference to the live, etc. ... the Baudrillardian paradigm of *simulation*: ... a collapsing of the two traditional poles into one another: ... (Baudrillard 1983: 57; original emphasis) ... The result of this implosion is that a seemingly secure opposition is now a context of anxiety, the anxiety that underlies many performance theorists' desire to reassert the integrity of the live and the corrupt, co-opted nature of the mediatized.

(Auslander 2008: 43-44)

This is a transitional moment for the concept of immersion, existing at a crossroads not only in the human ability to replace the actual with virtual other-worldly-worlds, but also in the degree of human knowledge, desire and decision to keep this ability a conscious one. Do we advertise the fact that we create the world's we inhabit, through the projecting practices in-between self, other and world? Do we reflect on the fact that the excess stimulation in the digital and virtual world neutralizes this ability to bring our own worlds into being? Do we allow the digital and virtual realms to replace the actual world?

Ontological stability within this transitional reality is caught between the secure contemporary antinomies of presence and absence, object and subject, teleology and process, opposition and transition, and the disruption of these antinomies. In the locus of process, the real and the imaginary merge and the opposite poles of presence and absence collapse into one – and the secure ontological locus of a subjective ‘I’ in ‘this place’ becomes an unknown liminal context of anxiety. The subjective condition of a priori construction becomes a multi-dimensional localized phase space: local, personalized and multi-dimensional spaces, isolated and solipsistic. If it is a known locus of process, it can also become a locus of continuous creation. This becomes the locus of process, the Merleau-Ponty ‘conception cannot precede execution’. In the placelessness of process, a non-locus of infinite possibilities, a possible Merleau-Ponty post-postmodern locus for consciousness and being arises. One that demonstrates that bringing a world into being is just a continuum whereby the discontinuities (gaps) between self and world that technology reveals, are more or less revealed, depending on the degree of assimilation of the technology at that time. All things pass in the locus of process.

The next chapter will explore the possibilities further along the reality continuum, to determine if the concepts of immersion, in terms of site-specific productions of Beckett, are more successful in replacing our experience of bringing a reality into being without technology.

Chapter Three

Site Specific Beckett:
Augmented Reality.

Habit is a compromise effected between the individual and his environment, or between the individual and his own organic eccentricities, the guarantee of a dull inviolability, the lightning-conductor of his existence. Habit is the ballast that chains the dog to his vomit. Breathing is a 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 (an objectification of the individual's will, Schopenhauer would say), the pact must be continually renewed, the letter of safe-conduct brought up to date. The fundamental duty of habit ... consists in a perpetual adjustment and re-adjustment of our organic sensibility to the conditions of its worlds. Suffering represents the omission of that duty, whether through negligence or inefficiency, and boredom its adequate performance.

The pendulum oscillates between these two terms: Suffering – that opens a window on the real and is the main condition of the artistic experience, and Boredom – with its hosts of top-hatted and hygienic ministers – Boredom that must be considered as the most tolerable because the most durable of human evils.

Beckett *Proust* 1931

The ‘Continuous Incompletion’ of the Beckett Text: Part 3.

Chapter one proposed an interpretation of Beckett’s oeuvre that embodies and manipulates Merleau-Ponty’s principles demonstrating how the human constructs a stable world to exist in. A process of bringing a world into being that I suggest pre-figures the contemporary experience in the digital and virtual realm. Chapter two explored how the world of Beckett, the digital and virtual realm, and the concept of an immersive reality embodies this process. A process that exists in a space in-between being and nothingness, exposing human presence in the shape of *process*. A principle that suggests that the human sense of becoming situated and immersed in a world is a constantly becoming-other, more a process or an event, potentiality rather than a fixed thing. Chapter three will continue to explore this locus of process within an immersive continuum, in relation to measuring the degree of separation in-between an actual and virtual reality through Company SJ’s site-specific productions of Beckett’s plays. This moves the study of performances of Beckett’s work from productions mediated by the recorded media of television or cinema in chapter one, to chapter two’s highly technologically mediated ‘live’ productions, to this chapter’s study of the ‘live’ performance of Beckett’s work that has no obvious technical mediation, but still retains a commonly understood aesthetic of immersion and immersive theatre.

Beckett progressively used more cutting-edge technology to refine the audience experience of bringing a world into being. The most renowned contemporary ‘live’ productions of Beckett’s theatre, such as *Pan Pan*, *Company SJ*, and *Gare St. Lazare* move in the opposite direction, using less technology in the attempt to replace the actual with the virtual other-worldly-world of the performance. This consequently returns Beckett’s theatre to the traditional theatrical space and ‘live’ experience. These ‘live’ theatrical productions of Beckett’s work I suggest attempt to reproduce the principles, methods and effects that the technological digital and virtual realm uses to immerse an audience into another world, but without using technology. This is not only an attempt to keep ‘live’ theatre alive in the face of competition from the immersive experience of the digital and virtual world, but also to reproduce a ‘more’ intense, authentic, convincingly real and ‘live’ experience of replacing the actual world with a virtual other-worldly-world of choice. Beckett used technology to reveal the actual experience of bringing a world into being. Contemporary ‘live’ theatre, and in particular site-specific theatre, uses the principles, methods and effects of the digital and

virtual world to bring a world into being. Is this attempt to elide or superimpose the actual world over a virtual world, in this case the virtual other-worldly-world of the performance, due to misconceptions surrounding the experience of how we bring a ‘real’ world into being by the digital and virtual industry? Is this possible mixing or ‘implosion’ of the actual and virtual, live and mediatized realms, the ‘collapsing of the two traditional poles’ that Auslander spoke of at the conclusion of chapter two? Would this blending of the actual and virtual, being and nothingness, subject and object produce Beckett’s ‘Third Way’ of being human, in which our sense of being oscillates in-between and through the opposing poles, in a locus of process? This chapter explores the technological regression happening in contemporary theatrical productions of Beckett’s work and in particular site-specific performances, to explore the current experience and degree of assimilation of the digital and virtual world.

Company SJ (director Sarah Jane Scaife) produced *Act Without Words II* (1956) with *Rough for Theatre I* (late 1950s) as the first part of their *Beckett in the City* series and as part of what could be called the ‘festivalization’ of Beckett: in 2009 at Dublin’s Absolut Fringe Festival, the 2010 Ulster Bank Dublin Theatre Festival, the 2011 London’s Greenwich & Docklands Festival (St. Alfege’s Park), and the Imagine Watford Festival (stage-door laneway of Watford Palace Theatre), in 2012 at New York’s River Festival (Theatre Alley, close to ‘ground zero’), and finally all over the globe. Part two of Company SJ’s *Beckett in the City* series performed *Fizzles*, and part three of *Beckett in the City: The Women Speak* (2015, 2017) performed *Not I* (1972), *Footfalls* (1975), *Rockaby* (1979-1980), and *Come and Go* (1965) in that order. Through an analysis of the critical material I will explore the first and last productions of the *Beckett in the City* series, namely *Act Without Words II*, and from *The Women Speak*, *Footfalls* and *Rockaby*, to reveal the development of their conceptualization of site-specific theatre. This will reflect beyond the performance space to investigate if contemporary humanity uses a digital or virtual methodology to bring a world into being. Conversely this will also explore in detail how the principles, methods and effects of digital and virtual technology are used by site-specific performances of Beckett’s work to immerse the audience into the other-worldly-world of the performance. This consequently explores how the technological concept of immersion and immersive reality, reaches beyond any technical boundaries or limitations, and ultimately brings together the realms of the actual and virtual. These concepts will continue to trace-out and reveal how humanity is evolving through the use of its new tools of the digital and virtual world.

Site-specific Art.

Site-specific art is traditionally an artwork that is created to exist in a certain place. The artist will take the location into account in the conception and execution of the artwork. The art is created in the site and can only exist in that site, therefore, if the artwork is moved it is no longer the same piece of art. Site-specific art draws attention to the site and context surrounding the site, allowing artists to interrogate the contemporary and historic reality of the surrounding location. For the audience/participator this seemingly provokes an engagement and interaction with the public spaces in new and stimulating ways.

Site-specific theatre oscillates in-between the actual realm, and the *pre*-constructed other-worldly-world of the play, which is based on ideological hopes and dreams. Beckett's plays oscillate in-between the actual, and *imagined* other-worldly-world of the play that the audience bring into being. Therefore, the only social, political or cultural ideology that exists in Beckett's plays are what the audience bring with them. Beckett's plays only come into being in the moment and process of their contextualization. It is only in the fluid process of *this* performance in *this* place that a Beckett text emerges. This performance epigenetic re-contextualizes and re-historizes the Beckett text simultaneously, which acts as a compound or variation on the theme of the 1968 site-specific designation 'found' art. Whereby Wolf Vorstell would tour bombed out sites, backyards and scrapyards with an audience as participator, and 'declared as art found objects, or the particular condition of a site or building, or an event, or an entire environment' ((12) quoted in Kaye 2000: 116). If the creative process is the art, then the art is in a permanent state of emergence and has no ontological stability anywhere, and sits in Beckett's no-man's-land tessellating in-between being and nothingness, object and subject, actual and virtual. Beckett keeps this a reflexive and conscious process for the audience member. Essentially, the audience know that they exist in an existential void, and that the only reality that exists is the one that they create. Through using the actual real world 'particular condition of a site or building, or an event, or an entire environment' as the context or set for the performance, declares and frames the actual world as a work of art, a representation or picture. And if the experience of the actual world is as a framed representation and artwork, it becomes an abstract, conceptualized idea, and an objectified and distant experience of the actual world. Superimposing the actual and

virtual realms over one another, blurs any boundaries in-between the actual and virtual, live and mediatized world of representation.

The 'found' site declares actual a framed *representation* of the actual world. A declaration that paradoxically moves the audience further away from the possibility of immersing oneself into a 'real' other-worldly-world, because it is a representation. How much more so, when that framed representation of an actual world is set-dressed to create a heightened version of itself, as in Company SJ's 'live' site-specific theatrical productions of Beckett. In analysing the reviews this becomes a hyper-real world, which produces a *heightened* sense of presence and proximity, foregrounding the immersive experience of that particular reality. The everyday experience of the actual world in the liberal Western world is unlikely to be in a state of constant heightened sensory stimulation, and in comparison, would be a habituated, dull, muted, and stable experience in its sensory impact. This heightened methodology replicates the digital and virtual aesthetic, which again creates a heightened sense of presence and proximity through foregrounding a figure or world, set against a black or blurred background, in the attempt to immerse the viewer further into experiencing the framed representation of the 'actual' other-worldly-world, as actual. And as the actual world already exists, the audience do not need to use the projecting practices of the sensory body to bring a self, other and world into being, it already exists. As with site-specific theatre it reifies the actual world, creating an actual world that becomes an abstract and conceptualized idea, not an experience of creating a world. The audience no longer bring an actual world into being, it already exists, as framed art. Is the human experience of the actual world moving further along the reality continuum towards experiencing the actual world as a framed virtual realm?

The reviews of Company SJ's productions suggest that Company SJ use the Beckett text as a tool and medium through which to interrogate various contemporary societal issues, choosing a site that re-creates, adapts, translates and re-mediate the Beckett text. Is the site the performance? This process creates a new relation between the world and the text emerging through the specificities of its sitedness; is the site itself Company SJ's artwork? Company SJ's site-specific productions of Beckett appear to stick rigorously to the Beckett text, because it is the context that makes meaning. This duality and conflict of a precise text existing within an imprecise 'interpretation' due to the texts need to be contextualized to a specific site, embodies the fundamental locus of any Beckett text. Beckett's texts are not

fixed objects they exist in a constant state of movement, oscillating in-between being and nothingness, actual and virtual, precision and imprecision, and it is only through their contextualization that they come into being as a fixed play, paradoxically just as they vanish into the ether. Beckett's actual texts are ghosted by all the possible, potential and probable interpretations of the texts, waiting only for the engagement of this person, in this particular space and time, to emerge into being.

This concept of an imprecise adaptation simultaneously existing in a precise replication of the text is important, due to the degree any reproduction of Beckett's work is judged to be a 'true' and 'faithful' copy of a seemingly exacting Beckett text. Going back to the source demonstrates that this concept of a Beckett text existing in a state both actual and virtual, fixed and fluid, allows the text to be fixed in the fluid *process* of performance anywhere, anytime and in a locus of the virtual. In the *process* of continuous incompleteness any reproduction of the Beckett text anywhere, and at any time, is a true and exacting replica of the text. This thus produces a performance epigenetic re-contextualising and re-historicizing Beckett simultaneously, foregrounding the notion that there are no fixed a priori conditions in Beckett's probabilistic universe.

On film, as on the stage. Enda Hughes the director of *Act Without Words II* for the *Beckett on Film* project (2001), created a cinematic correlative of Beckett's stage directions, consequently reproducing Beckett's metadramatic referencing and conscious creation of the worlds that we inhabit. We see a world come into being. Examining the video, and in conversation with Marcello Magni (18 September 2017), in his role of 'B' for the film, exposes the filming techniques used to create experience of emergence for the viewer. Photographing Magni in 'every attitude [posture, move] that I strike is being photographed, so I had to move *from* point-fixed to point-fixed, *to* point-fixed to point-fixed', 'every time I did a move, he would say: "hold", "hold", "hold", "hold", "hold"'. Photographing each move separately 'If in a second [of film] there are so many frames, twenty-four I think, he would have taken [and used] maybe twelve. So, the staccato image comes because it is not a flowing drama', 'if you miss one frame, you miss half of my smile'. The staccato movement, stop-start motion, and deletion of some of the frames of film creates the Cézanne effect, forcing the projecting practices of sensory perception of the viewer into action, to fill-in what is not there. The camera action also recreates this: 'he had a camera very far away and then another close-up. One was zooming on me and one very far away [...] and he shot everything at the

same time'. The viewer's perspective flickers in-between near and far without travelling the intervening gap in-between. Hughes, as Neil Jordan with *Not I*, and Anthony Minghella with *Play*, use the leader tape of the film to recreate the same flickering in-between something and nothing and into the reflexive process of creation.

The Certainty of Uncertainty in Beckett's Text *Act Without Words II*.

Beckett's texts are not fixed objects they exist in a locus of process, where our sense of being oscillates in-between being and nothingness, actual and virtual, precision and imprecision, and it is only through the texts contextualization that they come into being as a fixed play. Beckett keeps the process of fitting the text to the context, performance to the self, self to the world a conscious process for the participator, though the device of metadramatic referencing. The site-specific immersive experience attempts to make actual the virtual other-worldly-world of the play. Thus, the act of metadramatic referencing or consciousness construction of the self, other and other-worldly-world of the play, is eliminated. As a consequence, the projecting practices of the sensory body oscillating in-between being and nothingness becomes an unconscious and therefore normal, and habitual process. Through an exploration of Beckett's texts, staging and original critical reviews of the premiere, and comparing them to the critical reviews of the contemporary reproduction, can indicate the degree that our sense of bringing a world into being has been given-over to technology. A comparative process that not only explores the degrees of separation in-between an actual and virtual experience within an immersive continuum, but also examines the principles, techniques, and effects used to create the other-worldly-world by Beckett, the virtual and digital realm, and consequently site-specific 'immersive' theatre.

There are two mimes called *Act Without Words* that are written as natural companion pieces. *Act Without Words I & II* are categorized as 'short' Beckett plays, along with fifteen other 'short' Beckett plays (Beckett 2009c: v). A designation Gontarski states is applied to 'a discrete narrative and theatrical work at once more and less than the traditional one-act play' (Ibid. vii). *Act Without Words II* was written in French as *Acte sans paroles II* around the same time as *Act Without Words I* in 1956. *Act Without Words II* was first published in *New Departures*, vol. I (Summer 1959), and first performed 'probably at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, on 25 January 1960' (Ibid. AWWII 46).

The text states *Act Without Words II* is a ‘A mime for two players’ (Ibid. 45), and as there is no dialogue or voice, the text is all stage directions, which are as precise as they are vague. *Act Without Words II* places two figures with contrasting corporeal rhythms in restricted environments. Consequently, these environments impose a physical distortion, disability and a possible meaning onto the bodies, as each body is forced to fit that particular space. The goad (a pre-cursor of the bell in *Happy Days*), stage lighting, and sacks, all force a physical order, discipline, habit, and unnaturally slow or fast rhythm onto the bodies. This particular body space relationship is a common occurrence in Beckett’s plays (*Happy Days*, *Endgame*, *Play*, *Footfalls*, *Quad* ...). If there is no free will in the construction of the world we inhabit, has Beckett fixed the meaning of the play? The text continuously oscillates in-between the fixed and fluid interpretive possibilities, creating a space and moment in-between the actual and virtual text, which allows an exact reproduction of the text to be produced, dependent on the uncertainties of the context, conditions of staging, and performance moment. It was around this time in the early 1960s that Gontarski notes Beckett started ‘to work with his plays directly on stage’ (Beckett 2009c: xi-xii) which led to many performance-based revisions, due to Beckett himself experiencing how his bodies move through, and create the world that they inhabit. This experience of the ambiguity and fluidity of the performance moment, in conjunction with the need for a director and actor to have some sort of fixed script to work from, would have highlighted the need for a fixed, exacting script that can bend and flex to any context. Beckett constantly augments the actual play with an infinite number of contextual possibilities, probabilities and potentialities.

The stage directions in the text of *Act Without Words II* perform this seeming paradox of being an exact ‘low and narrow platform at the back of stage’ (Beckett 2009c: AWWII 47; emphasis added) that has no specific size, unlike the television play *Ghost Trio* with its precise rectangles ‘floor ... 0.70 m. x 1.50 m.’, ‘wall ... 0.70 m. x 1.50 m.’, ‘door ... 0.70 m. x 2 m.’, ‘glass 0.70 m. x 1.50 m.’ and ‘pallet, 0.70 m. x 2 m.’ (Beckett 2009a: GT 125-126), or ... but the clouds ... circle of light ‘about 5 m. diameter’ (Beckett 2009a: btc136), and *Quad*’s precise ‘Square. Length of side: 6 paces’ (Beckett 2009a: Q 143), or in the stage plays *Footfalls* exact strip of light ‘length nine steps, width one meter’ (Beckett 2009c: FF 109), *Not I*’s concise height ‘about 8 feet’ (Beckett 2009c: NI 85), *That Time*’s ‘LISTENER’S FACE about 10 feet above’ stage height (Beckett 2009c: TT 99), or *Ohio Impromptu*’s ‘table say 8’ x 4” (Beckett 2009c: OI 137). Notwithstanding the fact that the ‘about’, ‘say’ and

‘paces’ across all of these examples has the same built-in contrasting and conflicting certain uncertainty, ambiguity and manoeuvrability in the size of the actor’s ‘steps’ or ‘paces’ and spaces to be used. The ‘*about*’ and ‘*say*’ is simultaneously based on the certain uncertainty of interpretation, and yet needs and demands definition and thus a certain precision, as the bodied actor occupies and physically moves through space on an actual stage.

The text of *Act Without Words II* contains this same ambiguity in content and form. There is a wide spectrum and fluidity in the possible interpretation contained in the generality of the speed of physical movement of the mime: ‘A is *slow*, awkward (gags dressing and undressing), absent. B *brisk, rapid, precise*’ (Beckett 2009c: *AWWII* 47; emphasis added). Yet there is simultaneously a physical actor moving, occupying, and thus fixing that particular speed, in that particular body, in that specific space. It is both the possible and the actual that brings the play into being. It is the oscillation in-between the actual textual ‘slow’ and ‘brisk’, and the interpretative performance that creates the reality of the play. Beckett augments the actual play with infinite contextual possibilities that ghost and haunt the play, that are just as real as the actual directions of the play:

The possible is already fully constituted, but exists in a state of limbo. It can be realized without any change occurring either in its determination or nature. It is a phantom reality, something latent. The possible is exactly like the real, the only thing missing being existence ... the difference between the possible and the real is thus purely logical.

(Lévy 1998: 24)

This same oscillation in-between the text and the impossibility of it being realized in an ideal way, also exists in A and B’s precise action, but imprecise length of each of their scenes being ‘*approximately* the same duration’ (Beckett 2009c: *AWWII* 47; emphasis added), again a word with the same flexible meaning as Damien Hirst’s interpretation of ‘about’ in his version of *Breath* for the *Beckett on Film* project (Beckett 2009c: *B* 79). The sacks are sited precisely ‘two yards from right wing’ (Ibid. *AWWII* 47), the distances the goad moves are ‘strictly’, ‘a foot short’, but there is also an imprecision in the action of ‘draws back again, a *little* further’ (Ibid. emphasis added). The speed of the goad’s movement is equally a vague ‘Pause’ and ‘pauses’ (Ibid.). How long does A ‘halts, broods, prays’ (Ibid.), as the ‘broods’ acts as a physical embodiment of a vocal ‘Pause’ with attitude? It is the incessant, repeating oscillation in-between a precise, actual text, and an imprecise, contextually dependent, possible text, that creates the world of the performance.

Repetition is the oscillation in-between the actual and virtual world that brings the spectator/participator into the experience of bringing a specific world into being, and is a technique, device or stage technology that Beckett exploits. Beckett's particular use of repetition, simultaneously exists in a possible world as well as in the actual physical and verbal world. This possible world has a presence on stage even if that presence is invisible and individual. Beckett augments the actual play with a possible play that hovers on the threshold of existence. If the action of the play ends as it begins, this in-itself implies a repetition and thus a precision within the play, although there are no specific written directions for repeating *Act Without Words II*. This particular act of repetition relies on the implication of repetition. The act of implication works through the action of memory and imagination, one projecting backwards to the past and the other simultaneously forwards into the future to create a present. Oscillating in-between the past and future, the act of implying a repetition creates Vertical time, and multiple layers of past, present, and future phantom realities. Through which a mean phantom reality comes into being as a *possible* repetition before it is enacted, and is a pre-subjective ghost reality that augments the textual play. Beckett constantly creates phantom realities that augment and ghost the textual reality. There are no specific directions for a repetition of the play as the curtain falls, but because the curtain falls as it rises, this action in-itself implies repeating the play:

The point [of the goad] draws back again, a little further than before, pauses, darts forward again into sack, withdraws, recoils to a foot short of sack. Pause. The sack moves. Exit goad.
A crawls out of sack, halts, broods, prays.

CURTAIN

(*Ibid.* AWWII 47-49)

As a performance text, it is only through the interaction of this particular audience sited in those particular a priori conditions, that brings a possible reality into existence. Beckett seemingly immerses the audience further into the play through stimulating the imagination, thus participation, which appears to give a greater sense of agency and control over that phantom realm, but he also constantly calls attention to this action. This constant use of metadramatic referencing of human experience, ruptures the action of immersion. This rupture creates a self-reflexive separation, distance and divorce from the self and reality

created. Consequently, and paradoxically, the audience obtains a heightened awareness of the body's physical situatedness.

As a phantom outside observer of the reality I create, the audience/participator also has a heightened awareness of the *acting* of repetition, and the consequent habituation of those actions used in the creation of the realities experienced, whether actual or virtual. Beckett stimulates a heightened awareness of the constructed nature of reality. This metadramatic referencing is an act which forces the audience/participator into a heightened reflexive consciousness, that the reality that they are creating is a controlled, habituated construction by some unknown, outside force, as the epigraph to chapter three reveals, and as *Waiting for Godot* exemplifies, we construct as we are constructed. Magni (18 September 2017) spoke about how we construct a self and world through habitual, 'performed', 'movements that are codified by culture', as opposed to a personal sense of being in the world. 'Human beings copy each other', and in repeatedly performing and habituating behaviour, 'it becomes codified', 'it's an imitation of a gesture, they have learnt it by doing it like that, and that means: "I am strong"'. Maybe your own gesture, your personal gesture to be strong is different, but they don't question themselves, they've learnt it', 'when you are in that stage of movement you are controlled by culture, instead of the performer, [who is] totally free and they are very individual'. Magni's philosophy to free the self from habituating and embodying the constructions of society is based on the teachings of Jacques Lecoq: 'he makes you search for your own [...] you have to find the child in you [...] innocent, free [...] that is not performed [...] the impulse is freer'. Magni tries to 'See like someone who has just been born!' (Cezanne quoted in Smith 2013: 102), 'In movement for me, it is a state of being, in a state of not thinking about it'; a knowledge beyond knowledge.

In a locus of process there is only the instant of performance; context is everything and context moves. It is the continuously incomplete *process* of tessellating in-between the self, other, body and world that is the creation of a stable world and I, that is 'explicitly *acted* out in language' in all of Beckett's texts, as the prose piece *Worstward Ho* (Beckett 2009b: xiii; emphasis added). Exploring the ontological gap and processes in-between the subject and object, Beckett mixes these states and produces his 'third way', a way that migrates the audience/reader through multiple layers of worlds, or of no fixed realms – all possible realms or the traditional existential void. *Worstward Ho*, which Beckett began 9 August 1981, acts

out and brings into being the continuously incomplete *process* of oscillating in-between the body and world, in the process of creating of a world:

Say a body. Where none. No mind. Where none. That at least. A place. Where none. For the body. To be in. Move in. Out of. Back into. No. No out. No back. Only in. Stay in. On in. Still.

First the body. No. First the place. No. First both. Now either. Now the other. Sick of the either try the other.

(Beckett 2009b: WH 81)

It is in the infinite oscillation in-between a trichotomy of the actual, imagined virtual, and possible body/world that migrates the participator through multiple realms in various stages of cohesion. Consequently, there is an infinite repetition and reduction or ‘worst’, that can also be applied to the goad in *Act Without Words II*. The actual textual repetition of the action of the goad states ‘Enter goad right on wheeled support (one wheel)’, then ‘Enter goad right on wheeled support (two wheels)’ (Ibid. 48). The implied possible repetition is contained in the increasing number of wheels that the future goad will need in its ‘wheeled support’ (Ibid: 48-49). If there is repetition it is repetition with difference. The difference in the repetition still does not give the audience/participator control of the future narration. Beckett still directs the imagination through the sequential repetition, because what is imagined next by the audience/participator, is determined by the goad’s growth in length and consequent number of wheels. There is no choice in what is imagined next, because the previous action of the goad determines its future; as the goad lengthens it will need more wheels. If there is no choice, Beckett’s own possible world starts to come into being, emerging, cohering and becoming present on stage, the virtual becomes actual. Beckett constantly augments the actual representation with the possible representation, that he directs through habituating repetition, making actual the virtual and bringing his precise world into being in the audience’s experience. And as the repetitions have the ability to be ‘infinitely’ repeated, the habituation of Beckett’s world is infinitely reinforceable. And although the act of repetition also requires a certain precision, there is simultaneously an indeterminacy and variable in the pattern of the possible repetition of the goad. This is repetition with difference.

Beckett's *Footfalls* and *Rockaby*.

Beckett's aesthetic progress in refining the audience experience of bringing a world into being runs parallel with increasing his practice of directing theatre. This can be seen in the progress from *Act Without Words II* to *Footfalls* and then through to *Rockaby*. In one small example, Beckett's innovative and increasing use of the technology of the stage, inspired the invention of new technology: "The chair [in *Rockaby*] is rocked by memory," according to Labeille. But Alan Schneider told ... that a \$3,000 specially built infernal machine helps prod memory into action' (*The New York Times* 17 December 1980: JEK A/8/1/45).

In analysing the text of *Act Without Words II* the characters A and B bring themselves into a fixed and defined 'slow' or 'brisk' being, through repeating the physical conventional habits of daily life. The goad appears as another character or artificial life form that oscillates audience perception in-between the actual stage world, and an off-stage virtual other-worldly-world. Progressing onto *Footfalls* and then to *Rockaby*, Beckett refines the audience experience of bringing a world into being simply through both protagonists May and W existing in the continuous process of emergence. Never entirely 'here' or 'not here' May and W constantly come into and out of being, through the stage light and darkness. The audience, as May and W, oscillate in-between coming out of the dark of the auditorium, stage darkness and non-existence, and into being through the stage light. May and W, actually and literally, are temporary characters existing in temporary moments on that stage, sited in that theatre. The reflexivity on this process creates an audience of outside observers distanced from the world that they create. A reflexivity intensified through making the act of acting clear. This is achieved in *Footfalls* initially because the audience are left uncertain if the voice of the Mother is an internal voice that is externalized and acted by May, and subsequently, when May acts the part of Amy. Beckett keeps the temporary nature of creation a conscious process, which ruptures immersion and produces the outside observer. The characters, as the audience, become aware that being situated and immersed in a world is a constantly becoming-other, more a process or event, potentiality rather than a fixed absence or presence as in *Act Without Words II*, or defined object or subject such as Mouth in *Not I*.

The Text of *Footfalls* (1975).

Beckett referred to *Footfalls* as his ‘pacing play’ which was written in English between the 2 March–November 1975 at his Akademie der Künste studio in Berlin, and first published by Grove Press, New York, in 1976. *Footfalls* was premiered and directed by Beckett on the 20 May 1976 at the Royal Court Theatre, London, with Billie Whitelaw in the role of May, and Rose Hill as the voice of Mother, and on the same bill as *That Time*, which was directed by Donald McWhinnie. *Footfalls* exists in a faint light revealing a female figure pacing side-to-side in a lateral, narrow strip of light. A dialogue ensues between the figure of May and the unseen voice of the Mother. In the second half of the play May creates a fictional double called Amy (an anagram of May) with her own narrative. In the end May finally disappears. Exploring the source text again reveals an aesthetic that oscillates in-between being and nothingness, becoming as fluid as it is fixed and exacting in its content and form.

The directions of where to place the lighted strip in *Footfalls* are imprecise, but the lateral strip of light itself, and the movement of the body in that lighted space is exact:

Strip: downstage, parallel with front, length nine steps, width one metre, a little off centre audience right.

(Beckett 2009c: FF 109)

The strip of light is exactly ‘width one metre’ and ‘nine steps’ long, but the actual ‘nine steps’ defining the stage world will be as variable in size as the potential actor playing May, as the ‘downstage, parallel with front’ and ‘little off centre audience right’ (Ibid.) will fit any potential context. Neither precisely fixed here, or vaguely there, the metadramatic referencing or reflexivity on the temporary nature of the staged reality perceived by the audience, is literally and actually embodied and visualized through the use of the ‘dim’ light (Beckett 2009c: FF 109). May, as W in *Rockaby*, comes into and out of being in varying degrees of cohesion through the varying shades of grey light, ‘grey hair’, ‘grey wrap hiding feet’ (Ibid.). May is not totally or precisely there ‘Lighting: dim, strongest at floor level, less on body, least on head’ (Ibid.). Oscillating in-between the actual and virtual, fixed and vague body, emerging in and out of being through the medium of stage lighting, it is May’s moving, experiencing body, pacing and shaping that space, that determines and encompasses the totality of May’s world, her: ‘human *experience* as the phenomenalizing of the world itself ...

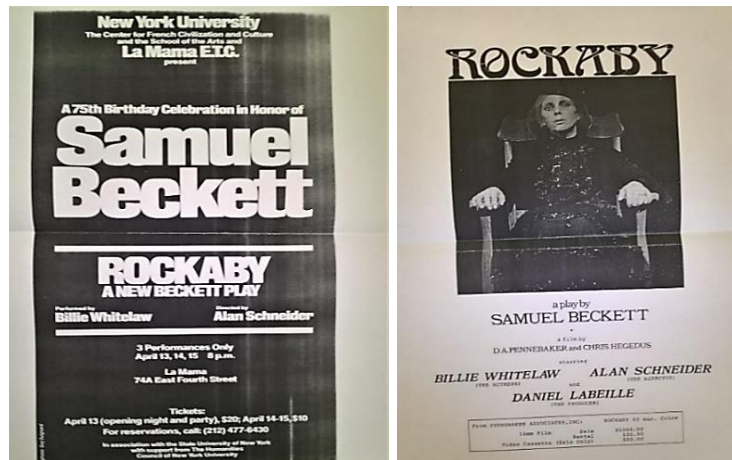
living body qua living' (Hansen 2005: 234; emphasis added). Magni discussed the same phenomena as dancers' movement 'creates the ecology', 'they have to engage a part of their imagination in which the movement is beyond the movement ... that's why you say [space is] as a character ... because it's lived in another way' (18 September 2017). Oscillating in-between something and nothing, it is the Merleau-Ponty body moving and occupying that space that determines the reality inhabited. It is this particular actor in this particular space that traces out and redefines the ambiguity in the Beckett text.

As these descriptions are not absolute it also acknowledges the relativity of the audience experience situated in that context. It is literally an art that is sited in a 'found' space, anywhere and at any time. Essentially the audience are immersed, 'sited' and bounded 'in' a world of *no* space, time and causality, forever. Beckett's 'found' sites declare *all possible* objects, conditions, buildings, events and environments to be his texts, his art. Immersed in, and bounded by all possible worlds, the audience exist simultaneously in the past, present and future, and in Vertical time the virtual is the actual.

Reviews of *Footfalls* Premiere (1976).

The original reviews of the premiere of *Footfalls* (all refs. JEK A/8/1/20) speak of an audience reflexivity and awareness of existing in-between being and nothingness, in 'the infinite void beyond' with no a priori conditions, in which the only world that exists is their own, in a 'theatre of total introversion', where the projective practices and reverse gaze of self-creation, in which the self and non-self 'Speak to themselves of themselves', 'pretending to himself [*That Time*] he's an object, an "it"', and 'the audience is left with a strong objective sense', through mirroring the characters moment of self-creation (*The New Statesman* 28 May 1976). In a world of 'living spectre[s]' (Ibid.) not entirely born, into a world of no fixed, defined or objective reality, for the audience 'a little time was needed to readjust to the world of discernible features' of a conventional, orthodox, and recognisable reality (*Times Literary Supplement* 4 June 1976). In asking Beckett whether her character in *Footfalls* was supposed to be dead Beckett replied to Billie Whitelaw "'Well, let's say, you're not ... quite ... there,'" (*The New York Times* 14 February 1984). On the point of emergence nothing is quite clear, and as Billie quotes Beckett when he directed her 'In *Footfalls* he said, "I want you to say these two words very quietly", I said, "O.K., let's see how quietly I can say them," and, in fact, when I did it, I didn't make any sound at all. I just mouthed the

words, and it was quite effective' (Ibid.), as in ... *but the clouds* ... there is someone barely there, in a 'found' world where all possible events exist.



3.1. Posters of the original *Rockaby* production and of the film of the production. JEK A/8/1/45

The Text of *Rockaby* (1979-1980).

Beckett's aesthetic 'vagening' of the experience of his world continues into *Rockaby*, which was written in English, in-between autumn 1979 and June 1980. Beckett wrote *Rockaby* at the invitation of professor Dan Labeille of the State University of New York at Buffalo, for the celebration of Beckett's 75th birthday (13th April). It was written for Irene Worth, but performed and premiered with Billie Whitelaw in the only role of an old lady in a rocking chair who occasionally speaks to her own voice on tape. Directed by Alan Schneider, it was premiered at the Centre Theatre in the State University of New York at Buffalo, New York, 8 April 1981. In another mother-daughter relationship from the later plays, *Rockaby* again disassociates the body from the voice of a prematurely aged old woman W, who seems to be gently rocked into death by the rhythmic counterpointing of her rocking chair, as an unseen voice (Mother) narrates a story of her life.

Footfalls is generally seen as a prelude to *Rockaby*, although Beckett himself would have debated making any direct links between these two works, as reported during the premiere of *Rockaby* in America 1981: 'Beckett was cool to the suggestion that *Footfalls* shall be used as a curtain-raiser' to *Rockaby* (Henry Popkin: JEK A/8/1/45). The opposite aesthetic to the companion pieces *Act Without Words I & II*, and ... *but the clouds* ... and *Ghost Trio*, which has the same actor/protagonist. For my purposes *Footfalls* is a prelude to *Rockaby*, but only in the sense of embodying the development of Beckett's aesthetic

practices. Moving from the text of *Footfalls* to *Rockaby* there is a greater sense of the shifting, and temporary coalescence of the ontology of the character, through the action of moving in and out of the medium of light, revealing and resolving equally concealing and dissolving. In *Footfalls* a pacing body creates the space it inhabits, in *Rockaby* a mechanically rocked chair defines W and her world. In-between something and nothing exists an existential void with no a priori conditions, in which W has isolated and objectified the self to the extent that she becomes her own object, her own projected phantom self – a shadow self – and a visible exchange of flesh and flesh of self as other, perpetually projecting ‘another like herself’ (Beckett 2009c: R 129) forward to merge with ‘her own other’ (Ibid. R 134). Reifying the self, the audience witness W deconstruct the self and blur any objective outlines that define and determine the borders of the body, as she oscillates in-between merging with, or becoming the phantom other/mother:

Audience members are engaged as witnesses to semblances and echoes which are simultaneously there and ‘not there’, where the boundaries between self and other, interior and exterior, are unclear’

(McMullan 2010: 120)

If the self is the object/other – the thing-in-itself, then subject and object mix. And there is no need for the projecting practices of the body to reach out beyond the self to create a stable world and I, it already exists, within the self. The body becomes both site and subject of meaning making.

In the text W’s body movement ‘swaying in and out of light’ (Beckett 2009c: R 125) places the body in-between the senses, oscillating in-between ‘there’ and ‘not there’, perpetually in the process of ‘becoming’ – another time and space from what is there before them. Beckett’s texts are augmented by their own shadow texts and shadow characters, in a liminal space in-between the fixed and fluid. Oscillating in-between being and nothingness Beckett’s plays are persistently in the process, projecting unknown selves and times that we are constantly running to catch-up with. These worlds are a replaying of the protagonists, or imagined protagonists’ memories, or imagined memories, as much as they are simultaneously projections or rehearsals of future narrations/memories; the world is a projected shadow always on the very edge of existence.

Reviews of *Rockaby's* Premiere (1981).

Our sense of being oscillates in-between being and nothingness, actual and virtual, precision and imprecision, continuously in the incomplete process of fitting the self to the world. And it is only the repetitive process of habituating the body/self to a world, that the world that I inhabit comes into being. The world comes into and out of being in varying degrees of cohesion along a continuum, and repetition is the process of oscillating in-between certainty and malleability, being and nothingness, continuously replaying the past incrementally changing over time, as we simultaneously project toward a future. Beckett uses repetition as an exploratory and creative process, a constantly 'becoming' other from what is there before them, not as a method to find and fix 'a' truth. The digital and virtual realm, and site-specific theatre, use repetition to reveal more detail and thus more truth of the reality revealed. Fundamentally repetition is the method used to habituate and fit the world to self. A process Beckett explores in the epigraph to this chapter, keeping it a reflexive response. A response lost in the principals used in the digital and virtual world, which are imitated across media and 'live' performance. This oscillating process of perpetually habituating and fitting the self to the world can be seen in the critical reception to *Rockaby's* premiere in 1981 (all refs. JEK A/8/1/45).

Again, the reflexivity on the temporary nature of creation, located in a space in-between the actual and virtual world, is embodied in the critical commentary of the premiere. Two responses dominate: a greater sense of being in Vertical time, where space and time collapse and all possible worlds exist, and intimately connected to this is the intensely felt sense of the theatrical nature of *Rockaby*. Both responses highlighting a reflexive awareness of the constructed nature of a world. It is only in the Vertical time of performance that each audience resolves all the latent possible worlds into one, to declare that this 'found' site is this experience and this art. Vertical time contains everything; birth, life, death, or nothing; the classic existential void. Henry Popkin states *Rockaby* is 'trapped forever in a timewarp', 'a treadmill in time' with 'life repeating itself', as past, present and future compound into one 'it's potential for contrasting past aspirations with present despair'. This is 'life never seen in quite this way before ... lived in a perpetual present' as 'theatre ripe with imagistic possibility', with 'uniquely theatrical utterances' (*The Village Voice* 29 April 1981). W's 'Old eyes simultaneously looking through a window, back at life and ahead toward the

inescapable end' in a 'poetic passage from life to death' (*Theatre* 9 April 1981). *Rockaby* is 'distilling all human experience into one last crystalline drop of life', in 'a genuine piece of theatre' where 'the stage comes vividly alive' (*Daily News* 15 April 1981). Beckett looks 'for that single word ... that would sum up the whole of human existence', 'In *Breath* ... the expiration offered at the moment of birth and death', 'collapses space and time' and offers 'a double sense of time' as we oscillate in-between 'the distinction between being and non-being', 'to look into the abyss that Beckett perceives' (*The New Republic* 9 May 1981). *Rockaby* is 'a forlorn icon of absolute human isolation' in 'an age of existential alienation', 'the existential quest remains' where 'his plays always stare fixedly into the empty center of human existence', in-between the actual and virtual realm 'rocking has now become the central metaphor for human life' where 'Beckett juxtaposes images of the womb and tomb', in Vertical time "It's like the whole of human life compressed into 15 minutes" said Martin Esslin' (*Herald Tribune* 18-19 April 1981).



3.2. Samuel Beckett. *Act Without Words II*. ca. 1956. Company SJ. New York 2012, London 2011.

<https://www.company-sj.com/samuel-beckett-rough-for-theatre-one-and-act-without-words-two/>

3.3. Samuel Beckett. *Act Without Words II*. ca. 1956. Company SJ. New York 2012, London 2011.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59007a6dbf629aa22fdd4ed2/t/590382181b10e352e5d01b8b/1493402159781/aww-raymond-keane-ground.jpg?format=300w>

Company SJ's Site-specific *Act Without Words II*.

At the turn of the millennium Nick Kaye (2000) explores the construction of site through performance, art, and architectural space, using the human definitions of space and place by anthropologist Marc Augé. In this analysis these definitions resonate with an analysis of the reviews of Company SJ's production of *Act Without Words II* in the Manhattan, alleyway site of Theatre Alley (2012), in respect of the Beckettian duality and conflict of our sense of being existing simultaneously in the actual and virtual, fixed and fluid, precise and imprecise interpretation and location. Resonating with its proximity to 'ground zero', the location of the destruction of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre,

Company SJ's production echoes Michel de Certeau's 'Non-place', which for Augé is the moving on from place, 'an absence of the place from itself caused by the name it has been given' (1995: 85). Literalizing the case of 'ground zero'; there are no 'Twin Towers' for 'ground zero'. In physically moving through 'ground zero' the body is simultaneously absent from itself through its projecting practices, as the 'Twin Towers' are equally a virtual projection. This simultaneity produces a transparency in the experience of the fleshy boundaries of the body, which is therefore able to 'pass beyond the dimensions that you are physically occupying' making possible the ability to capture and contain an experience and realm of ... infinity. A practice Magni discussed (*Beckett on Film* project, 2001), in relation to the infinite possibilities of the projective practices of the sensory body, and how this relationship with space constructs the world we inhabit:

because he [Beckett] leaves the space empty, it is our movement that projects our dramatic situation ... When acting ... when you move somewhere, you can make yourself exist beyond the theatre, and your movement can have a space that is larger ... our actions pass beyond the dimensions that you are physically occupying ... the movement is beyond the movement.

(18 September 2017)

Any walls or boundaries containing space, and thus the experience and interpretation of the work for the audience/participator, are transparent or permeable, but also reversible as a Möbius strip; externalizing the internal world of the imagination and internalizing the external play. This produces a bi-directional travel in the experience and interpretation of realities – nothing is perfectly repeatable if it is entirely contextual. Apart from being a mime and almost entirely interpretable, this flexibility in the audience/participator's ability to occupy space whether actual, imagined virtual, possible, or a combination of all three, is both entirely contextual and unrepeatable. The influence and experience of the play exists in the moving moment; this is a recapitulation, a constant variable in the permutations, as with *Play's 'Repeat'* (Beckett 2009c: P 64) ten lines *before* the end of the play being a variant, notwithstanding Beckett's 'REPEAT' notes concerning its variation (Ibid: P 66-67). This is repetition with difference. Within the space in-between the fixed and the fluid, exists the continuously incomplete *process* of creation, a moving moment where nothing stays the same, and everything is contextual. Beckett's plays only exist as 'this play in this space'. In movement, the body creates the world it inhabits. In their absence, the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre remain as a physical presence, an imagined virtual world present in the

actual physical performance. They remain as a latent presence occupying Vertical time where past, present and future collide.

De Certeau's 'Anthropological place' for Augé is the use of place 'formed by individual identities, through complicities of language, local references, the unformulated rules of living know-how' (1995: 101). Non-place (transport, transit, commerce and leisure) passes through anthropological place and is a process of displacement (Kaye 2000: 2, 10). Again, Company SJ literalize and emphasize the *process* of displacement, movement and alienation in their urban city sites, locating transient people – the homeless, immigrants and the audience together – in transient places, such as car parks and alleyways in-between buildings. The body displaces space, and in movement the body is in excess of one's actuality – a phantom and virtual augmentation. To site oneself in the moving here and now, one projects 'outward' from the 'non-place' of the body's absence from itself, into a world other reflecting back the 'anthropological place'. This bi-directional interchange between the body and world is the process of bringing a world into being. The influence and interpretation of these definitions would appear to produce a production sited in Beckett's locus of process in-between being and nothingness and in a state of continuous emergence, but every element of Company SJ's productions of Beckett are an attempt to fix the virtual other-worldly-world of the performance, as the actual world.

The Beckett text, site-specific 'found' art, and Company SJ's productions of Beckett all oscillate in-between being and nothingness. Beckett keeps this process of making the other-worldly-world actual, a conscious process; the audience/participator are aware that they bring an imagined virtual world into existence. Site-specific 'found' theatre declares, names and frames the actual world as a *representation* of the actual world. This consequently pre-constructs the other virtual worldly-world of the performance, making actual the virtual. Framing and naming the actual world, neutralizes the ability of the audience to bring a world into being for themselves, as it already exists. Company SJ's 'live' site-specific theatrical productions of Beckett set-dress the framed representation of an actual world, creating a heightened version of a framed *representation* of the actual world. This removes the immersive experience of bringing an actual other-worldly-world into being further from the audience. Fundamentally we exist in a locus of process, oscillating in-between the actual and virtual, subject and object, body other and world, immersed in an existential void or realm of infinite possibilities. Every effort of digital and virtual reality and site-specific theatre

attempts to stabilize and fix the oscillation in-between a priori conditions. Company SJ's site-specific productions of Beckett's *Act Without Words II* in Theatre Alley, New York, June 2012 and in St. Alfege's Park, London, June 2011, attempt to make actual the virtual, to concretize the virtual, and to answer and fix the ambiguous Beckett text in the site. These explorations of Company SJ's productions of Beckett are not in chronological order but thematic.



3.4. Samuel Beckett. *Act Without Words II*. ca. 1956. Company SJ. New York 2012, London 2011. www.beckettcircle.org/2012/10/act-without-words-theatre-review-2012.html

Company SJ in Theatre Alley, Manhattan (2012).

In the process of performance, passing through a merged actual and virtual realm what remains behind in the passing and 'falling away'? In their absence the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre remain as virtual monuments for the city. In speaking of the function of a city's monuments Henri Lefebvre states:

Monumentality ... always embodies and imposes a clearly intelligible message. It says what it wishes to say – yet it hides a good deal more: being political, military, and ultimately fascist in character, monumental buildings mask the will to power and the arbitrariness of power beneath signs and surfaces which claim to express collective will and collective thought.

(Lefebvre 1991: 143)

In an analysis of the critical reviews, Company SJ project and inscribe onto a virtual monument of the Twin Towers that which they understand it has come to hide and silence. In the Twin Towers absence there is a general and global superimposition of a Western military and political stance on terrorism and immigration, not only onto an overt symbol of corporate power but also onto one of the pillars of capitalism. Performing in the virtual shadow of this monument Company SJ mobilise it, revealing one myth, the prescriptive nature of the Beckett text, through another, the limits of freedom, and the law and order of the ideological theatre that the built environment implies.

This is particularly true of the Manhattan production where the universality of a parable for the resignation of man to a habitual life controlled and constructed by outside forces of the Beckett text, metamorphoses into a local political statement that makes visible the hidden '43,000 homeless' in a 'spic and span[ed]', 'clean[ed]-up' New York (Brater 2013: 123). Analysing the production reviews, Brater notices, and I would suggest is the result of the self-policing of the digital surveillance culture and in-screen locus of subjectivity: the 'post-Giuliani, post-9/11, [New York] if you see something, say something' (Ibid.). By eliding the revealing of the terrorist threat with the hiding of the 43,000 homeless people, even though this maybe an ironic comment aimed at the post 9/11 New York society, Brater (2013) still visualizes the politicization of social construction in this review. Within this article it meant the threat from immigration, as it would only be immigrants that inhabit this particular context. Because of the proximity of the performance in Theatre Alley to 'ground zero', the location of the destruction of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre, the hyper-context speaks its political message louder: 'leading greater charge to the sense of vulnerability and despair already evident in the productions' (Tubridy 2012: 14). This co-mingling of presence with the history of the context, as with any site-specific production, breaks the fourth wall of performance and lends a greater sense of actuality to the performance, and therefore a greater immersive reality to the realness of the representation seen. The actual realm becomes co-mingled with the representation of a hyper-real. What has to be true and therefore real is the event itself, thus fixing and answering the ambiguity of Beckett and performance. This authentication of the experience of the performance has many facets, not least in its 'found' location being made to resemble an alleyway where the real homeless would sleep.

To stabilize the multiplicity of post-modern a priori conditions that exists within digital and virtual reality and Beckett's ambiguous text, the Theatre Alley production in Manhattan (2012) is constructed as an extreme example of where the homeless would sleep. Again, the reviews state that the alleyway is perfumed with the 'stench of urine', is 'dark', 'narrow' and 'lined with flattened cardboard boxes' for the audience seating, with a 'dumpster filled with more cardboard' nearby (Brater 2013: 124). This recreation of a possible locus of the experience of the poor immerses the audience/participator into an imitation and frozen representation of the actual world, not into the actual lived experience of the poor. The audience/participator is immersed into an imitation of a 'found' location. Set dressing the actual 'found' site, stages reality and doubly frames the actual realm. This

double framing further removes the audience/participator's ability to bring a world into being through the actual lived experience. And because the 'found' site declares actual a framed *representation* of the actual world, and the audience/participator is in that site, both site and subject become objects of art. This reifies both the audience/participator and the actual world, creating an actual world and self that becomes an abstract and conceptualized idea – an object of art, not experience. The objectification of experience as Art, goes beyond Adam Alston's 2016 'aestheticised experience'. If this process of objectifying, conceptualizing, or reifying the experiencing of living, becomes habituated, so a more intense sensory 'experience' is needed to re-experience the 'experience' of my body/life. Life becomes a habit, an addiction. And as the only body I can experience is mine, the only reality that exists is mine. Life is a solo act, narcissistic and solipsistic. Reality is unlikely to be a *heightened* sense of sensory stimulation, intense sense of presence, and extreme proximity in the liberal Western world, and in comparison, the real world would be a habituated, dull, muted and stable experience in its sensory impact. The objectification of experience as Art becomes a secondary effect of the aestheticized location: 'squatting on the cardboard-covered curb or standing' against a wall 'trying not to think too closely about their proximity to the wall's residue' (Ibid.). The 'hyper' aestheticized location convinces the sensory body (it feels real) and mind (rationalist logic of the context tells the audience it must be real) therefore it must be true. Again the 'hyper' aestheticized experience has been validated as being real; consequently, if it is not a 'hyper' experiencing it is not the actual world.

Swapping an actual for the virtual 'life' has roots in the commodification of human experience. The 'experience economy' is a designation that was first applied by B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore (1998), and states that goods and services are sold by emphasizing them as memorable events, thus the memory itself is the product. The more the experience 'transforms' a life the more the business can charge for the value of the 'transformation' that the experience offers. To the experiencing body *everything* is potentially important. Thus, in the experience economy context is everything, *that* experience in *that* place, maximizing the potential of the sensory body to produce more detailed information for the memory, and thus a greater transformative experience. This 'hyper' aestheticized experience Lévy spoke of in 1998 in relation to the body's reaction to its virtualization through new forms of sport:

[that] attempt to exceed physical limits, the conquest of new environments, the intensification of sensation, the exploration of other velocities [... sports of] tension and becoming, ... maximize the sense of alienation, ... maximally intensify our physical presence in the here and now ... Actualization reigns ... this maximal embodiment in the here and now can only be obtained by causing boundaries to tremble. Between air and water, between earth and sky, between soil and summit, the surfer or parachutist is never entirely *there* [... his body] escapes itself ... overflows itself and changes technological exteriority or biological alterity into concrete subjectivity. By virtualizing itself, the body is multiplied.

(1998: 42-44).

And in the continuously incomplete process of oscillating in-between the actual and virtual realms, the body's virtualization is not disappearance or dematerialization it is a change of identity:

My body is the temporary actualization of an enormous hybrid, social, and technobiological hyper-body [which] returns, transformed, to its quasi-private sphere [... it is] a re-creation, a reincarnation, a multiplication, vectorization, and heterogenesis of the human.

(Ibid. 44)

Lévy suggests that 'One day, it will detach itself completely from the hyperbody and vanish' because the boundary between 'heterogenesis and alienation, actualization and commodity reification, virtualization and amputation, is never clearly defined' (Ibid.).

The foundational concept of the deadening, habitual nature of life in Beckett's *Act Without Words II* has been subsumed in Company SJ's production into the dull, repetitive nature of the poor immigrants' lives, weaving together the themes of self-censorship, terrorism, immigration and freedom. This produces a specific answer to the ambiguous nature of Beckett's plays, which is a contemporary drive in a multiple ontological era with no specific answers. But a consequence of emphasising the immersive experience, produces the aestheticized experience, which objectifies and distances the self from the experience, abstracting, conceptualizing and producing a foregrounded, pictorial experience and view. In objectifying 'experience' as Art, renders 'life' into living artistic 'experiences'; a representable, producible, reproducible and commodifiable exchange.

Company SJ in St. Alfege's Park, London (2011).

The commodification of life is a possible condition of the participator of Company SJ's production of *Act Without Words II* as it metamorphoses with a different context: to quote Richard Serra from 1994 'To move the work is to destroy the work' (194). Moving site-specific work is to change it, replace it, and to make it something else (Kaye 2000: 12). The same production of *Act Without Words II* in Theatre Alley, Manhattan (2012) was moved from a clearing in the trees at St. Alfege's Park in London (2011). The only element that changes is the site. Exploring the critical reviews in London (2011) 'at dusk on a summer's evening ... The audience gathered at a small gate on the perimeter of the park, from where it was guided through headstones [of a cemetery] and trees to a dim clearing in the gathering dark' (Tubridy 2012: 13). When reaching the doorway of an outbuilding, the door of the building preceded to open and 'a shaft of light seared the night' (Ibid.). The promenade appears to allow the audience/participator to bring their own world and meaning into being. But passing through an actual graveyard and into the 'found' location as a dazzling shaft of light appears, the religious connotations and thoughts of 'let there be light', and 'light at the end of the tunnel' or 'we have seen the light' rise unbidden in the liberal Western consciousness. The liminality of the experience of 'dusk', of being guided on a 'mystery tour', and through a graveyard, is resolved, defined and refined as an actual religious place and experience. There is no choice, the imagined virtual world is made actual for the audience/participator, therefore they take no part in creating the world that they inhabit. This reading of the play in this site and situation suggests the play as a visual metaphor debating the politics of religion, not as the Manhattan (2012) production which was read as a political statement concerning the eliding of immigration with terrorism, due to the production's proximity to the destruction of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre (Brater 2013). Again, the play is distilled from a universal condition demonstrating how routine conventions limit life, to a specific human condition that focuses on religion creating, controlling and limiting life, weaving together the themes of self-censorship, life, death and religion.

St. Alfege's Park (2011) is a 'found' site containing many thresholds and liminal spaces neither one thing nor the other, and as darkness falls the contingency of the body's materiality, and the processes of sensory perception and definition, are accented through deprivation. Deprivation intensifies the aestheticized 'life' experience, focusing the

experiencing self on the self: in ‘deprived space ... the materiality of the body coincides with the materiality of space [and] the subjects only “experience their own experience”’ ((Tschumin 1994a: 42-2) quoted in Kaye 2000: 41). In deprived space the only certain materiality, and thus reality I can experience is mine (Alston, 2016: 75-107). The body becomes both the site and subject of meaning making, internalizing the external projecting practices of sensory perception. The process of oscillating in-between self, other and external world to create the world I inhabit, has become an abstract and conceptualized idea – an object of art, not experience. A process that produces an internalized, objectified, distanced and aestheticized experience. In objectifying the process of bringing a world into being as Art, renders ‘life’ into living artistic ‘experiences’; a representable, producible, reproducible and commodifiable exchange.

Beckett revealed that ‘I am, the thing that divides the world in two’, I am the flesh, the body, the borderland, or ‘no-man’s-land’ forever in a process that oscillates in-between the rational, reasoning and logical mind, and an external chaotic world and universe. I am my world of precisely projected repetitions, an automated habit that imposes order on and defines an objective world. I am, as Beckett, an automaton perpetually performing the creation of my world through its infinite deconstruction, reality only emerges as a repeated, mechanical, and habitual action; the world is a habit, I am a habit, life is a habit, life is an addiction: ‘life is a succession of habits, since the individual is a succession of individuals; the world being a projection of the individual’s consciousness’ (Beckett, *Proust* 1931).

The digital and virtual world internalize the external projecting practices of sensory perception, oscillating our sense of being in-between a self and self as other, producing a solipsistic, narcissistic experience of being in a world. The external world and other, never becomes assimilated, never becomes stabilized, never becomes a habit and the norm. Our sense of being oscillates in-between a self and self as other, normalizing existence in a locus of process, where a priori conditions of space, time and causality are unclear. It becomes normal to feel a permanent sense of existential angst in a locus of process that has no beginning, end or answer. And if it is normal it is unnoticed.

Company SJ in City Quay Car Park, Dublin (2013).



3.5. Production shots on site for *Rough for Theatre I* and *Act Without Words II* by Samuel Beckett. Dublin Fringe Festival 2013 12-17 September

https://www.facebook.com/pg/CompanySJ/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1401312690097229

In 2013 Company SJ joined with Barabbas theatre company to produce *Act Without Words II* at the Dublin Fringe Festival. Examining the reviews, I found it is the politics of a Capitalist society embodied by the site, and how that is created, rather than religion, or the eliding of immigration with terrorism, that is of greater concern to Company SJ and the critical commentators. Again, as in St. Alfege's Park the audience rendezvous, here at the Screen Cinema before walking to the site of an empty parking lot on the Quays, beside the Talbot Memorial Bridge. The 'possible rendezvous' is a pre-cursor or pre-performance performance to the event, or is it the *event* itself? A 'possible rendezvous' was an element of the 'situationist' methods (Guy Debord, 1956) used to heighten the reality of both the actual and virtual other-worldly-world of the performance. The heightened sense of anticipation, fear and excitement of meeting strangers or no-one, in unexpected places and events, heightens attention toward the actual world in passing, and the 'found' event and site. The walker has a greater sense of their own 'process of acting out, of performing the contingencies of a particular spatial practice' (Kaye 2000: 5). Consequently, the greater the attention paid, the greater the amount of information is produced, and thus is proof of the truth of the representation seen – whether of the actual or virtual other-worldly-world of the performance. Although the rendezvous and promenade performance also act as a magnifying lens to the aestheticized experience, creating a hyper-conceptualized, abstract, distanced and objectified experience, not as a tool for bringing a world into being through the process of oscillating our sense of being in-between being and nothingness. Thus, it is the experiencing of heightened awareness when moving through the surrounding buildings, rather than the characters and the performance of the play itself, that is the performance. The performance of heightened sensory perception as it moves through space is the creation, and defines the 'site'

and meaning of the play. The derelict warehouse, the Ulster Bank headquarters overlooking one side, and the backdrop of the lit IFSC building (International Financial Services Centre, a major European financial centre) become monumental buildings, shadowing, constructing and also pre-figuring the participators imagination. An imagination which responds to, and equally obeys the programme note, which ask the participator to: ‘note the contrasting architectures of social decay and financial power’ (O’Brien & O’Toole: *The Irish Times*: 2013). A note that again acts as a pre-performance performance that reinforces the construction and pre-figuring of the audience’s imagination. Who or what creates the reality that we inhabit?

The shadowing of the buildings onto the participator’s pre-performance promenade, acts as a ‘spatio-temporal augmentation, to visualize the implications of its operation on the environment’ (Giannachi et. al., 2012: 57). Kaye (2000), speaks of shadows as presences in the environment. Moving through space, shadows show the effects of human presence; a shadow shows the processes used to create another time and place from what is in front or before them (58). Shadows expand the boundaries of meaning making. This sense of reflexivity on the action of shadows, works in conjunction with the action of the rendezvous and promenade, and the naming and defining of meaning in the programme note, to heighten sensory perception. Consequently, heightening the aestheticized experience, abstracting and objectifying experience (living life) further. Objectifying life, distances the experience of living from the human; a distance and detachment from life that also acts as a microscope. The human can look on from the outside of living life, to answer and define the certain uncertainty and ambiguity of life. But answering and thus fixing the meaning of life, also freezes experience; living life. Defining meaning creates virtual walls and borders around the performance, defining, refining and fixing this performance in this site. This makes the virtual other worldly-world of the play, actual. And if the actual world already exists, the audience do not need to create the reality that they inhabit. Who or what creates the reality that we inhabit?

Oscillating in-between being and nothingness Beckett realized that it is fundamentally impossible to fix a priori conditions in the actual or virtual realms. It is the body’s movement that places the body in-between the senses, perception (cognition: Penrose 2016) is a projection and happens in-between the neurons (Ibid.) in and as the experience of the self-moving body, perpetually in the process. And as the dynamic of the body is almost constant

movement as it distributes weight unequally, the balance-imbalance dynamic produces the constant oscillation in-between the actual and virtual, perception, cognition and growth.



3.6. Samuel Beckett. *Act Without Words II*. ca. 1956. Company SJ and Barabbas Dublin City Quay car park. 14-17 Sept 2013. Dublin Fringe Festival. Photo Kasia Kaminska

<https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=http://itmarchive.ie/web/Reviews/Current/Dublin-Fringe-Festival--Samuel-Beckett-s-Act-Witho.html>

3.7. Samuel Beckett. *Act Without Words II*. ca. 1956. Company SJ and Barabbas Dublin City Quay car park. 14-17 Sept 2013. Dublin Fringe Festival.

<https://www.company-sj.com/samuel-beckett-rough-for-theatre-one-and-act-without-words-two/>

Company SJ in Christchurch Lane, Dublin (2009).

The performance acts out the site, as the site is the performance, and in this post-modernist merging of the actual world with the virtual other-worldly-world of the performance, there is no ‘outward’ gaze, as the world we inhabit already exists. The projective practices of the sensory body are in the service of reception; the sensory body only receives information. If the human does not create the world they exist in, because it already exists, the human experiences the world as a hyper-objectified ‘hyper-aestheticized experience’. An experience that distances and objectifies the everyday accidental and random fictions happening in the street, which may match the fiction of the text within the site. This again heightens sensory perception through anticipation, within the site. Anticipation is a human reaction that is manipulated and used as a tool in the same way as the ‘possible rendezvous’ is used as a tool to heighten sensory perception. Both states of being interestingly anticipate a possible future, but only within that site. Therefore, anticipation is used as a tool to augment the reality of the production.

In exploring the critical reviews, this seems to have been a regular occurrence within Company SJ’s site-specific productions. As part of the 2009 Dublin Absolut Fringe Festival, *Act Without Words II* was sited in an ancient alley with Christchurch Cathedral as a backdrop: ‘which seems to mock the play’s set-up, drawing attention to the ironic contrast between the wealth of history in the city and its contemporary poverty’ (Keating 2009: 14).

The actual world acts as an augmentation to the virtual other-worldly-world of the play, abstracting and conceptualising the actual world. Which seems to answer and fix the ambiguity of the Beckett text. Equally the serendipity of the everyday irrupts the routine and passivity of the audience gaze, by actual homeless people interjecting, calling out: “Us real junkies do it much better” (Weaver, 2009). While another group stop and give advice to Scaife at the first outdoor rehearsal, in the process of which Raymond Keane’s character A incorporates that advice into his rehearsal performance (Keating 2009: 14). Later ‘A group of local men even stop and ask Burroughs (B) ... if he is okay’ (Ibid.). This irruption of the real emphasises the aestheticized experience, reinforcing the actuality of the virtual other-worldly-world of the play, seeming to fix and give meaning to an ambiguous Beckett.

This is an augmentation relationship with reality, oscillating in-between layers of representations of the actual and virtual, in a closed circuit, reifying the real. Lévy hints at a metaphysical multiplicity, a heterogenesis, a perpetually becoming other, an embrace of alterity that re-opens the circuit between the self, other, world, in a place of potentiality where everything exists in potential. Reality becomes moving moments of coalesced possibilities with varying degrees of stability along a continuum; the process or travelling now, which suggests a place that does not exist until you arrive there, and will cease to exist the moment you leave. It is the transience, the movement, the *process* of moving on, the absence of place from itself; the *process* of performance that defines site-specificity. And even in the moment of defining site (these are still real, solid buildings) the performance erases site. It is the lived engagement with the world in the *process* of living that defines consciousness. Non-place defines supermodernity; a multiplicity of a priori conditions formed in movement, producing potentiality.



3.8. ‘Beckett in the City: The Women Speak’ Irish Arts Centre, New York. *Rockaby* c 1980.

http://irishartscenter.org/images/events/beckett-in-the-city/Beckett_event_Rockaby-Joan-Davis-photo-Hazel-Coonagh.jpg

3.9. Joan Davis during Beckett’s “*Rockaby*”, ‘Beckett in the City: The Women Speak’, Irish Arts Centre, New York. Credit: Emon Hassan for *The New York Times*

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/25/theater/beckett-in-the-city-the-women-speak-review.html?_r=0

‘The Women Speak’: Company SJ’s Site-specific *Footfalls* and *Rockaby*.

Company SJ produced Beckett’s four short plays for women; in order of presentation *Not I*, *Footfalls*, *Rockaby* and *Come and Go*, as part three of the *Beckett in the City* series called *The Women Speak*, in Dublin, as part of the ‘Tiger Dublin Fringe Festival’ 10-20 September 2015, and in Manhattan, New York 20 September-1 October 2017. As previously, this analysis is based on critical reviews. Again, both of these productions were in ‘found’ sites. Dublin’s ‘found’ site-specific performance was located simultaneously within two sites, one actual, the deserted and derelict Halla Banba Hall; the former National Ballrooms, and the other site, the former Coláiste Mhuire; previously the base of the Gaelic League, Parnell Square, Dublin, was virtually present. The Manhattan 2017 ‘found’ site was equally a deserted and derelict large warehouse and former piano factory on West 52nd Street.

The term ‘found’ is used relatively, implying as it does an unmediated site. But both sites are again prepared and mediated by various theatrical *deus ex machina* of sight and sound. Apart from also being mediated by the theatre of the surrounding built environment, body, performance and Beckett text. Both of these productions, and the four plays themselves, are thematically linked through female marginality. And again, the production may stay the same as it moves from one site to another, but the meaning of *that* body in *that* space changes with site. The play in the Dublin site, embodied Irish women trapped in domestic servitude by a patriarchal law, a law that was projected onto the wall of the site as an image. The Manhattan production invites the audience in a programme note and pre-curtain announcement, to ‘draw parallels between [the play and] poor immigrant women who might have worked in such factories long ago’ (jonathankalb.com 1 October 2017). Site-specific immersion attempts to pre-figure the audiences meaning making processes, through the device of telling the audience what to imagine, as some of Beckett’s work tells the reader/actor to ‘imagine’, which creates a pre-constructed world for the audience. Who or what creates the world we exist in?

Beckett makes this a conscious process through metadramatic referencing; the digital and virtual world, and site-specific performance prevent the projecting practices of the participator from bringing a world into being, through pre-constructing, fixing and determining a world. This makes the creative process an unconscious habitual process and the

accounts for the unconscious bias within these productions and production reviews towards fixing, answering, solving and resolving the unstable a priori conditions in-between being and nothingness.



3.10. 'Beckett in the City: The Women Speak', Irish Arts Centre, New York. *Footfalls*, c 1975.

http://irishartscenter.org/images/events/beckett-in-the-city/Beckett_event_Footfalls-Michele-Forbes-photo-Hazel-Coonagh-copy.jpg

3.11. 'Beckett in the City: The Women Speak', Irish Arts Centre, New York. *Footfalls*, c 1975.

http://irishartscenter.org/images/events/beckett-in-the-city/Beckett_event_Footfalls-Michele-Forbes-photo-Futoshi-Sakauchi-1.jpg

The friction created in-between a fixed and fluid interpretation of a world, is reflected in the theatrical conflict created through mixing a promenade performance and site-specific genera. A friction that exists in-between the fluid, liminal, ephemeral, passing and moving through of space, in the *process* of performance, as against the fixed, visceral, concretized actual body and built environment. And it is this friction in-between the fixed and fluid experience of the body, that sets in motion the asymmetrical oscillation of creation, and into the process of meaning making. But an unintended consequence of mixing promenade and site-specific performance is that the participators moving body also becomes the site and subject of the performance, and the site and subject of meaning making. This creates an isolated, solipsistic and narcissistic experience of the site-specific performance, and not the communal immersive experience of creation perhaps hoped for. This conflict and friction in-between the self, other and world is embodied in site-specific performance itself, the performance of the body, and of Beckett's plays, as against a key aspect of Company SJ's *The Women Speak* productions use of projected film footage.

The reviews speak of being 'Thrust' into a waiting room, where the participators can choose(?) to sit, stand or kneel, are then 'given a brief introduction and procedure to follow moving through the building' (*Thepublicreviewshub.com* 14 September 2015). The room is the first of a series of large rooms that the participators 'blind and dependent' (*Thestateofthearts.co.uk* 16 September 2015) are reverently and ritually 'ushered silently', 'by torchlight [that] illuminates our way in the darkened corridors'

(*Thepublicreviewshub.com* 14 September 2015). Sensory perception of sight and sound is heightened through the process of partial deprivation. Pre-figuring a possible narrative of the building and its tenants, the audience are initially guided deeper into the building, past visible and unhidden scaffolding holding up a timeworn and ruined ceiling, ‘plaster crumbling, floors broken, gaping holes sheeted off’ (*Irish Independent* 21 September 2015), exposing the ‘truth’ of the building usually hidden. Answering any ambiguity or uncertainty in the meaning of the text Company SJ give an actual and metaphorical truth to the site, as the participator literally walks deeper into the building and the consciousness of the women past and present as they ‘walk up the main staircase to the sound of an unseen soprano singing somewhere in the building’ (*Meg.ie* 17 September 2015). On entering the Hall ‘a projection of Article 41:2 from the 1937 [Irish nationalist] constitution illuminates a paint-peeled wall’ pre-figuring the imagination and meaning of the performances (*SundayBusinessPost.com* 20 September 2015), as the projection enshrines in law that the woman’s “place” and “duties” are in the home. Another wall size projection shows the same three women about to appear in the plays, pacing through rooms, corridors and stairwells in a different but equally dilapidated building which looks much the same. These video sequences of the Coláiste Mhuire are shown in passing and passing through them, as the participator walks up and down the stairs, in corridors and rooms throughout the show, within and between the plays (fig. 3.13). The audience follow a projected figure from another time and space: ‘as the audience ascends a creaking staircase we walk in the wake of an old woman who seems to turn to observe her ghost’ (*Exeuntmagazine.com* 18 September 2015). Who is actual and who is virtual? As both realities are actual – realities start to multiply, layer upon layer all in different degrees of cohesion as the participator passes through and among them.



- 3.12. ‘Beckett in the City: The Women Speak’, Irish Arts Centre, New York. *Come and Go*. c 1965. http://irishartscenter.org/images/events/beckett-in-the-city/Beckett_thumbnail.jpg
- 3.13. ‘Beckett in the City: The Women Speak’, Irish Arts Centre, New York, *Footfalls*. c 1975. https://www.facebook.com/pg/CompanySJ/photos/?ref=page_internal

Thus, the possible narratives start to multiply exponentially as the projections mobilize ‘ghost architectures’. The multiple narratives formed by the architecture; its

character, history or lost parts of the crumbling building that ““We put this thing that we’ve made ... And between these two there are transparent architectures”” (McLucas et.al. 1995: 47 quoted in Kaye 2000: 54-55). Walls and boundaries dissolve, disperse and become transparent, and through which the stories multiply, become local, personalized, isolated, and solipsistic realities in increasingly multidimensional localized phase space: this ‘complex overlaying of *narratives*, historical and contemporary, [creates] a kind of *saturated space* ... “everything is potentially important”” (Kaye 1996: 214 quoted in Ibid. 53).

Everything is potentially important in the ‘experience economy’, *that* hyper-aestheticized experience in *that* place, maximizing the potential of producing more detailed information. And in a supermodernity of a multiplicity of a priori conditions, the more information obtained, the better space, time and causality can apparently be fixed. In the new post-modernist space this mode of maximizing producing information as performance labour produces the ‘*saturated space*’ – a hyperspace, (whether ideological, metaphorical or actual space), in which the actual and virtual emptiness is absolutely packed – a space ‘without any of that distance that formerly enabled the perception of perspective or volume. You are in this hyperspace up to your eyes and your body’ (Jameson 1991: 43). Technology is no longer needed to create the immersive experience; the immersive experience is as real in experience, as being in the actual realm.

The projective practices of the machine, rather than of human sensory perception, creates another hyperspace, in which the projected filming of the Coláiste Mhuire is monumentalised: ‘inscribing on to the monument that which it hides or silences’ (Kaye 2000: 34). Thus, in the process of performance the projecting practices reveal one myth through another, and the event demonstrates the possibility of challenging them both (Ibid. 36). One official body, the constitutional law, is projected on to another official body, the Coláiste Mhuire; and in moving through the projections the participator becomes part of the official body, transformed and morphed into a living embodiment of the Law. Literally staging *Not I* through what was ‘previously [the] base of the Gaelic League, is to do more than desecrate grounds that once belonged to the revival’ the patriarchal State and Church, but to do so against Article 41:2 ‘articulates the ramshackled body of the female in nationalist Ireland’ (*Broadwayworld.com* 15 September 2015) through the ‘actresses use [of] their lined faces and roughened voices’ (*New York Times* 25 September 2017) ‘this place is [literally] both their soul and their body’ (*Irish Independent* 21 September 2015). This makes actual, the

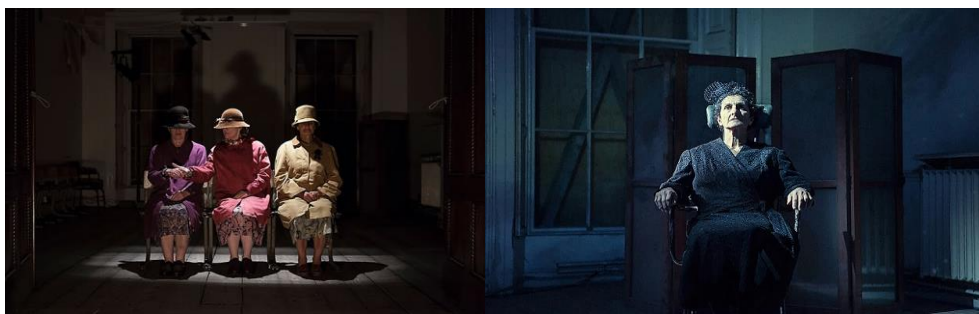
virtual mind of the protagonist through the body of the building, as the participator moves further and further into the singing protagonists' mind, and thus closer to the truth and core of meaning. Quoting Michel Foucault 'our position in society is structured through bodily experience with architecture', with the world and with one another (Kaye 2000: 38).

Company SJ's projective practices multiply and layer the spatial planes, moving the participator simultaneously and alternatively through multiple projected, represented, and actual realities, making visceral the contingency of the body space relations. Mediating one site through another, and another, multiplies exponentially the body 'I', thus the: 'spectators gaze is subject to a deflection or reversal ... As if the position of spectator were the essence of the spectacle, as if the spectator in the position of a spectator were his own spectacle' ((Ibid. 86) quoted in Ibid. 10). The real place becomes itself an object of art, and the audience is both in the building and an object of art. Ultimately the multiplication of a priori conditions via the projections produces a hyperspace where 'Audiences in immersive theatre are often asked to do something more than watch, think and feel so that they can feel more of the work and feel more intensely' (Alston 2016: 9). In a hyperspace the body becomes the information producing technology needed to prove the reality of the actual world seen. Therefore, technology is no longer needed to create the immersive experience, and the immersive experience is as real in experience as being in the actual realm. The digital and virtual experience is transposed and transferred onto the actual world experience. In transforming the cognitive processes of sensory perception with which we use to cognitively map our spatial, social and institutional relations, into digital and virtual imitations, appears to bridge the gap in-between the actual and virtual world, with ever more physical proximity, thus clarity and detail – 'because everything is potentially important' – creating a truth and totality.

The conceptualization of 'immersion' and thus the tools and *deus ex machina* used to immerse human experience into the virtual other-worldly-world now reaches beyond any technical boundaries or limitations, as seen in the simple device of pre-figuring the imagination. Also, the obvious conflation of man and machine used in Pan Pan's high-tech 'live' theatrical productions, becomes Company SJ's discrete and integrated use of mediating technology in their 'live' theatrical productions of Beckett's work. This discretization of advanced technology in the performance of creating a world to inhabit, has again made it possible to extend the conceptualization of immersion, and what is considered to be a 'tool' for replacing the actual world with a virtual other-worldly-world. If the human body has

become the site and subject of meaning making, its borders have become permeable, transparent, translucent and everything that 'I' experience is potentially important, and the body becomes the information producing machine to prove the reality of the actual world seen. And depending on the degree of sensory intensity that the experience produces, depends on the amount of information the body produces, and thus the truth of the totality. And on the continuum of measuring the degree of cohesion of the reality experienced, the human body acting as the tool that replaces the actual world with the virtual world is conclusive in-itself to prove the reality of the world experienced. Digital and virtual technology are no longer needed to immerse the self into the other virtual worldly-world. The body is the tool that makes the digital and virtual realm possible.

The Women Speak makes a determined effort to concretize the virtual – to make actual the virtual, to externalize the internal. But conversely the liminality of site, which is matched by ontologically liminal females, is deeply inscribed into the projecting practices of the character's and audience's relationship with the other and self, interior and exterior, technology and body. In pre-figuring our experience in the digital and virtual realm the texts of these late plays oscillate in-between pre-figuring the present, and the past it has become. The texts go beyond any sense of presence as performance of the past, as the ephemerality has no sense of temporal stability. There is only a sense of temporary coalescence in varying degrees of cohesion along a continuum of reality, of the fictional ontology of the character.



3.14. 'Beckett in the City: The Women Speak', Irish Arts Centre, New York, *Come and Go* c. 1965.
http://irishartscenter.org/images/events/beckett-in-the-city/Beckett_event_Come-and-Go-left-to-right-Brid-Ni-Neachtain-Michele-Forbes-and-Joan-Davis-photo-Hazel-Coonagh-1.jpg

3.15. 'Beckett in the City: The Women Speak', Irish Arts Centre, New York, *Rockaby*. c 1980.
<https://www.company-sj.com/samuel-beckett-the-women-speak/>

Breathing is a Habit.

Life is a Habit.

The World is a Habit.

If the human processes of creating the world that it inhabits have been taken over by digital and virtual technology, then the reciprocal and reverse process must apply, and the cognitive processes of sensory perception must replicate the technological methodologies of reproducing a world to inhabit. And in an age and moment of transition, where our sense of being oscillates in-between an actual and virtual realm, the human metaphysical fixed binary's such as object and subject, actual and virtual, being and nothingness, presence and absence, or fixed and fluid definitions, can no longer work, situated as they now are in the fluid multiple ontological conditions of the digital and virtual world, where the only certainty is uncertainty. Every element and effort of Company SJ's site-specific productions of Beckett's work seems to be an attempt to concretize the virtual – to make actual a virtual interpretation of the play. Making actual the virtual seems to stabilize the oscillating processes in-between the actual and virtual world, which the technology reveals. This seems to fix and answer the current crisis in embodied subjectivity – a crisis that can be summed-up in the impossibility of fitting an ontological binary into a multiplicity. And if this existential crisis in a priori conditions continues for long enough, it too becomes a habit and the norm.

The architecture of the stage is re-configured in this chapter, expanding its own borders, but also making those borders permeable, confusing the reality of the real. This permeability keeps an unstable and metamorphic ontological identity, locus and relational contexts for the spectator. There is no ontological stability anywhere and technology is no longer needed to confuse the locus of the real, and the immersive experience is as real in experience as reality is immersion. The next chapter will explore a created environment rather than a 'found' site. This investigates the relationship between an enclosed space and body ecology, investigating the possibilities of the body as site of performance, as the centre of creation and emanation of reality, and as a quantum reality of potentiality.

Chapter Four

Body Specific Beckett:
Simulated Reality.

Perhaps that's what I feel, an outside and an inside and me in the middle, perhaps that's what I am, the thing that divides the world in two, on the one side the outside, on the other the inside, that can be as thin as foil, I'm neither one side nor the other, I'm in the middle, I'm the partition, I've two surfaces and no thickness, perhaps that's what I feel, myself vibrating, I'm the tympanum, on the one hand the mind, on the other the world, I don't belong to either.

(The Unnamable 2010c: 100)

The ‘Continuous Incompletion’ of the Beckett Text: Part 4.

This chapter explores the relationship between an enclosed space and body ecology, investigating the possibilities that the body is the site of performance; the body as centre of creation and emanation of a reality. Has the body rather than its surrounding ecology become the locus of performance, whether the actor or spectator body? Travelling across the whole landscape of Gare St. Lazare’s productions from 1998 to 2018 serendipitously coincides with the relatively early stages of the digital revolution, which as discussed started around 1989 at the time of Beckett’s death, to the present moment. In tracing the development of their performance methodologies and the critical reception of the same, will inevitably shadow the evolution of the digital and virtual landscape. And as this chapter will focus on the body and performance, the development of the body’s relationship with, and experience of the digital and virtual ecology will consequently follow.

Meta-Contextual Immersion.

Situated behind the concepts and reception of the discipline of site-specific art are the ‘meta’ circumstances and elements that produce the context and thus meaning of the performance. This ‘meta-contextualization’ includes: space, place, audience participation, actor identity, body, and other theatrical signifiers such as costume. Here the emphasis is on the performing body’s narrative in that particular context. Gare St. Lazare Ireland Theatre Company is the Irish touring branch of the Paris based Gare St. Lazare Players, and consists of Judy Hegarty-Lovett and Conor Lovett touring the world mainly with Beckett’s prose. At the turn of the millennium in 2005, the company presented a programme of performances entitled *Access All Beckett*, which was included in a cultural festival celebrating Cork winning the title ‘European Capital of Culture’. This production included the *Trilogy* and a second programme of prose in site-specific spaces. These productions were ‘jumping genres’ (Cohn 1980: 208) in that they were staging Beckett’s prose works: *Texts for Nothing* in a chamber of a Masonic lodge, *Enough* in a public bar, and *Worstward Ho* in an art gallery of a museum. In these productions there was an emphasis on who the solo performer was. The meta-contextualisation in these cases focus on the British or Irish actors that ‘know’ Beckett’s work, and have studied and performed Beckett’s work to critical and academic acclaim. Resulting in a nation and its cultural heritage becoming hallowed and brought into

present being, through this particular body in this particular space. This comparative process oscillates back and forth through time, quantifying and qualifying a performing body in the moment and process of performance. Thus, creating a performance epigenetic which bridges the moment of creative genesis of Beckett's work with its recreation. Therefore, the body becomes the site and subject of meaning making. At the same moment as *Access All Beckett* in 2005 (33) Rebecca Schneider discusses the emergence of the solo performer in relation to Walter Benjamin, and the concomitant loss of 'aura' of the art object due to its indiscriminate reproduction. Schneider suggests that the art object becomes the performing body in the transient moment and process of performance:

With the object in crisis, artists abandoned the object as site and collected under the awning of performance. Under this awning the site of the work shifted to the space between the object and the maker, the object and the viewer, the object and any given context [...] This space between viewer and viewed was closely aligned with dance and theatre, where any product is more profoundly in the process, in the action, in the exchange, than any formally discrete object. The Solo Artist *making* art became, then, the auratic object itself. The artist stepped (or danced) into the place of the object and rescued origin, originality, and authenticity in the very unrepeatable and unapproachable nature of his precise and human gesture – his solo act.

(quoted in Schechner 2006: 159)

Does this concept of art as the physical experience and process itself, represent a deeper and more reflexive experiment into what the bodily experience of being 'immersed' into a world means beyond technological immersion?

It is the sensory landscape of the body that now becomes the stage, and the triggering of sensory intensity becomes the *deus ex machina* of this aesthetised experience. This chapter will explore the impact this has on how the performance is received. Any textual analysis that follows does not necessarily trace the chronological order in which Beckett wrote his prose, as this is a performance analysis it follows the order that Gare St Lazare presented them. This explores Gare St Lazare's changing performance methodologies and corresponding reception, investigating how this reflects and responds to the rapidly changing digital and virtual ecology. Starting with a brief exploration of the text's creative genesis, the text itself, and material on its first publication; critical reviews, contractual conditions with publishers and broadcasting institutions (BBC), I will investigate how Beckett pre-figures our experience in the digital and virtual world. This broad literary review creates a performance epigenetic

which bridges the moment of creative genesis of Beckett's work, with its recreation through Gare St Lazare.

Molloy (1947).

Molloy was the first text of the *Trilogy* begun 'in Ireland 2 May 1947 and completed in France only six months later, on 1 November 1947' (Weller in *Beckett* 2009d: viii) and is the first in a long-line of Beckett's 'slippery narrator-narrated characters' (*Guardian* 1998 BCMS 4612). *Molloy* is written as an interior monologue, in which the 'narrator-narrated' character turns himself inside-out as a Möbius strip ultimately externalizing the internal, making actual the virtual. The novel is split into two parts and the reviews speak of a 'psychological odyssey of a man sent to look for another and undergoing in the process a painful transformation into the social reject whom he seeks but fails to unearth anywhere except in the depths of his own soul' (*The Times* 27 December 1989; MM/RER/PE/WR/11). This late 1980s psychoanalytical reading appears again in the late 1990s: '*Molloy* is one of Beckett's most compellingly self-revealing works, shedding rare light on the intensity of his enduring attachment to his over protective mother' (*Irish Echo* 1998), and again in the second decade of the 2000s as a: 'surreal narrative and mordant humour ... with *Molloy's* system of communication with his deaf, blind mother by knocking on her head' (*Irishtheatremagazine.com* 17 March 2011). Although as Shane Weller notes in 'the late 1980s and 1990s attention was redirected towards the novel's narrative of self-undoing and its rhetoric of paradox and aporia' (quoted in *Beckett* 2009d: x), the psychoanalytical reading remains an underlying constant. Replacing the early philosophical context, this constant reappearance (performance epigenetic) of the engagement with psychoanalysis reflects the 1950-1960s reading of *Molloy*: 'As early as March 1954, Thomas Hogan (in *Irish Writer*, no.26) identified *Molloy* as a representation of the id, and the narrator of *Part II*, Jacques Moran, as a representation of the ego' (Weller in *Beckett* 2009d: x), an analysis which reappears in J. D. O'Hara's 1993 essay 'Jung and the "Molloy" narrative' concerning the id and ego (Gontarski 1993: 131). Around a decade on from 1954, in 1961 Hume Kenner suggests: 'that "the real quest happens ultimately inside Beckett's own mind"' and 'that "Molloy" is not so much a novel as "two utterly disparate voices coming together to form one desolate utterance"' (*The Book Collector* 1988: 54; MM/RER/PE/WR/11). A quote repeated again a decade later in 1973 when A. Alvarez compares *Molloy* and Moran: 'the real quest

happens ultimately inside the author's own skull. ... It is not so much a novel as two arias, two utterly disparate voices gradually coming together in one dissonant, dotty chime' (56). The engagement with the psychoanalytical reading is a constant. This suggests no matter the changing fashions of interpretation there is a foundational meaning emerging from the process and moment of creation, through to its re-creation, becoming a performance epigenetic. This embodies Beckett's process of writing which is a process of reworking through the performance of writing, from performance to performance. It is the action that performs the utterance and the action is in very specific a priori conditions, which solves the temporal paradox by simultaneously re-contextualizing and re-historicizing Beckett within performance. Which not only suggests a holistic practice that demonstrates the interaction between the part and whole, but simultaneously that the performance epigenetic concept is embodied, and expands the parameters of meaning making, suggesting that Beckett can mean anything to anyone at any time.



4.1. Conor Lovett as Molloy.

Malone Dies (1947-1948).

Malone meurt is the French-language novel Beckett started writing on 27 November 1947 and completed on 30 May 1948 almost as soon as he finished *Molloy*. Subsequently translated by Beckett as *Malone Dies* and published in 1956 by Grove Press in America. The English version was published by John Calder in 1958, before becoming the second novel of a trilogy in the late 1950s (by Grove, Calder and Olympia). Beckett himself – as Peter Boxhall discusses (2010a) – had an uncertain and ambiguous attitude to the novel being published as a singularity or as part of a series. Beckett wrote to George Reavey (8 July 1948) suggesting that it ought to be thought of as part of the 'series': "I am now retyping," Beckett writes, "for rejection by the publisher, *Malone Meurt*, the last I hope of the series Murphy, Watt, Mercier and Camier, Molloy, not to mention the 4 Nouvelles & Eleuthéria" (Beckett 2010a: x; & note 3: xvi). Although after *L'Innommable* was written Beckett stated to John

Calder a decade later, 6 January 1958: ‘Not “Trilogy”, I beseech you, just the three titles and nothing else’, and a decade after that to Barney Rosset in May 1969 ‘that he “couldn’t bear the thought of “trilogy”’ (Ibid. & note 4: xvi).

The critical understanding of *Malone Dies* could echo *Molloy*, in the sense that it has one underlying reoccurring reading that can transcend time and space (performance epigenetic); which could also reflect Beckett’s changing attitude to its form of publication in the context of the relationship of the part to the whole. The initial reviews in the 1950s speak of the content as philosophical existentialism, that reflects an isolationism and self-containment for the reader, and simultaneously and paradoxically the form appears to draw the reader into an experience of participation in a wider world: Seán Faoláin reviews *Malone* as ‘the swan song of an elderly man dying in a fetid room; as utterly isolated as a rabbit expiring in a warren’ but there is ‘the feeling, however, that Maurice Nadeau did get from *Malone* when he said of it: ‘*Le son de sa voix dans nos oreilles, c’est notre propre voix, enfin retrouvée*’ (‘The sound of his voice in our ears, it is our own voice, finally found’ (my translation)) (MM/RER/PE/WR/11). Echoing this Alvarez states Beckett uses ‘Brecht’s notorious “alienation effect”, [as] a way of keeping the created characters at a distance and the audience dispassionate, analytical, uninvolved’ (1973: 62). There is a certain performativity and equivalence in the alienation effect and the reflexive, self-referential movement in literature, both of which *demand* an imaginative participation from the reader/performer. Which questions the amount of free will available when engaging with any art form, but particularly with Beckett’s work which spins on these elements, and which emanate from Beckett’s own ‘compositional processes of these short prose works are intricately connected and intriguingly self-referential; this is no longer a writer who starts and completes a work, but one who across a wide range of texts realises that there is no possibility of completion’ (Nixon in *Beckett* 2010b: vii). In Beckett’s locus of continuous incompleteness, the experience of the work is the experience of the process of creating the work; an infinite process of continuous creation

The ability of the participants to receive, project and experience what Beckett saw in his ‘mind’s eye’ on the point of creation, emerges to a certain degree from his precise description of a figure moving in and around a three-dimensional rotunda, which is one of the tropes of Beckett’s work and stems partly from his re-reading of Dante from the 1930s onwards: ‘Beckett’s world owes more to the circles of Dante’s damned ... the emphasis has

shifted from giving an account of the suffering ... to focus on the *imaginative effort required* to capture their appearance or to envisage their possible position within an enclosed space' (JEK A/7/4; emphasis added). The knowing 'imaginative effort required' to place them in 'their possible position' is Beckett in the act of projecting himself outside of himself and into his imagined world to 'see' how his worlds come into being, and then describing that experience. Gary Lewis discusses this act of projecting the imagination in the creation of his world, when creating his role of BAM, BEM, BIM, BOM in *What Where* for the *Beckett on Film* project (2001): 'we first voiced the idea that I need some kind of reality, some concrete external reality to put into, to relate this to [...] the Stalinist Putsches. And then I withdrew from that' (7 March 2017). We create, project, see and experience virtual worlds on a constant basis, as a norm. This experience of projection is transferred to the participant, and is a technique that can be applied to all media no matter how reduced the content. Although the language of the prose can only be physically reduced so far before there is a blank page, and it is at this point that Beckett resorts to the visual media of the stage, television, film, intense listening of the radio and the projected 'mind's eye' inherent in all forms: 'Beckett's true role is that of dramatist needing the aid of more representation than he cares to supply in words' (Faoláin MM/RER/PE/WR/11).

Beckett's self-referential style remains essentially the same regardless of media, in respect of the methods he uses to immerse the reader/participant in a knowing participation. In an *INTERVIEW WITH AVIGDOR ARIKHA, 11.9.90.*, James Knowlson discusses a letter Beckett wrote to Thomas MacGreevy discussing Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* in 1928-29, which compares interestingly with this consistency within Beckett's style: 'Sam was twenty-three when he wrote this ... he says "but he is so often so much master of his form that he becomes its slave." Now that is surely one of the things that Sam was trying to avoid more than anything all his life' (JEK A/7/4). This similarity in Proust's and Beckett's constancy of style in content and form may reflect the recurring interpretations (performance epigenetic). Writing of the *Trilogy* in 1973 Alvarez calls Beckett 'a genuine existentialist' in that there are no 'final answers to be had from theology or metaphysics' (56). A decade later at the time of Beckett's death in 1989 the *Trilogy* and *Waiting for Godot* continue to 'reflect the existentialist philosophy' where characters are 'stripped of all social and historical certainties', (Patrick Parrinder, *The Guardian* 1989: MM/RER/PE/WR/11).

These readings suggest both a new existentialism and post-modernist understanding. The existentialist problem concerning the lack of any a priori conditions finds a new situation in posthuman technology that concerns a multiplicity or no a priori conditions. This reflects the sense of existentialist angst regarding the posthuman paradox, one that concerns the material body resolved or dissolved according to the context of whether the body is in the actual or virtual world, material or apparently immaterial world. This new materialism oscillates in-between the existential, uncertain a priori conditions of digital and virtual reality and an essentially embodied material consciousness. Tessellating in-between the actual and virtual, this body creates the space it inhabits, which is reflected in my reading of the reviews of Gare St. Lazare's recent theatrical performances of the prose. In 2006: '*Malone* weaves a fairytale version of his life ... but cannot sustain the illusion' of tenuously mixing and blurring the boundaries between realities (*Variety*). The 2010 world and body of '*Malone* differs little from *Molloy*, apart from ... a more structured story featuring bizarre characters that change sex, shape and purpose, making sure all our expectations of meaning and resolution are well and truly thwarted' through a polymorphous almost transparent, permeable and unbounded flesh (*Australianstage.com* 15 October 2010).

This self-referentiality is a performative reflexivity, and is the structure of Beckett's work, epitomised in the tension in-between the independence and interdependence, in this case of *Malone Dies* place within the *Trilogy*. Peter Boxhall (*Beckett* 2010a) explores how this apart-a part tension can be found and maintained within *Malone Dies* itself (x). As a part of the whole Boxhall states: 'Malone thinks of himself in part as one of the "Murphys, Merciers, Molloyes, Morans and Malones" ... he acknowledges his peculiar status as a kind of avatar, a form among other forms adopted temporarily by a narrating agency, rather than an autonomous subject' (*Beckett* 2010a: x-xi). Taking the term 'Avatar' from its dictionary definition concerns the visible manifestation of a deity in human or animal form. In the context of this 2010 review quote it is not only interesting in the implications of how natural it is to think about, and to use this virtual reality term about the self, and specifically in terms of a multiplicity of identities donned and discarded as a suit of clothes. It is also notable that *Malone* is aware of, and accepts not only that he is a character ghosted by other flesh that is 'you and not you', and his own conscious control over this process, but also that the whole is in-turn controlled by an overlord or higher power.

Malone's struggle for a singular identity apart from the whole is marked by his relationship with his exercise book as Boxhall explores: "But the exercise-book is mine, I can't explain" [Ibid: 75]. His notebook, and the words of which he is made, are more surely a mark of his singularity' (Ibid: xi). This struggle for an enclosed, singular identity is visualised in the physically embodied movement and manual behaviour and performance of the body in the process of creating – in this case – the novel's *mise-en-scene*: 'My little finger glides before my pencil across the page' (Ibid: 33), 'I hear the noise of my little finger as it glides over the paper' (Ibid: 34). This tension in the relationship of the whole to the part, and the part to the whole, is expressed in the paradox of totality, which states that the 'organism is not reducible to the sum of its parts, but is nothing over and above these parts' (N 268/207); Merleau-Ponty's solution states: 'emergent totality lies in behaviour' (N 268/207). The emergence of 'Malone' is the creation of his world in the process of a man recording the process of its de-construction and his own death, in relationship with the other. Contained within the end is a beginning, 'a new set of possibilities to the point of expression. In this sense, the moment, coming "soon", at which Malone will be "quite dead at last", has still to arrive' (Ibid: xvi). Within a locus of process, a possible expression of all possibilities exists, and it is only after the moment of choice and consequent creation of a world that a world is born. The world is not a pre-constructed entity it is a moment-by-moment act of creation in collaboration with the other. The foretaste of death inspires life, renews and animates life stimulating vitality and a vividness to life, as Malone dies, *L'Innommable* is born.

The Unnamable (1949-1950).

It is only in the moment of choice that resolves the paradox between the whole and part, and *Malone Dies* suspends that moment of choice. *L'Innommable* was written between 29 March 1949 and January 1950, and does nothing to resolve the impasse. In abandoning narrative altogether, the author, narrator, and reader witness and try to map the process of how 'such a figure can be said to exist, to manage as best he can without character, plot, situation or any other of the trappings of the novel form' (Boxhall in *Beckett* 2010a: ix). A consciousness of the existentialist vertigo still exists post-millennium, where performance reviews speak of Lovett as: 'The unnamed, undefined speaker standing at the very edge of the abyss, describes the impossibility of talking about or defining self – "I, of whom I know nothing" – and moves into the fractured speech we associate with the later "Godot" and

“Endgame.” (*Variety* 2006). This continued de-construction of the self and world is mirrored in ‘Mahood, disintegrating in a jar of sawdust, contemplating his ineffably glum condition and seeking – as well he might – a reason for existence’ (MM//RER/PE/WR/11). “‘Where now? Who now? When now?’” [*Beckett* 2010a: 1] plunges us into a kind of spiralling, existential vertigo ... at times the audience struggled to stay in touch with the churning questions and multiplying uncertainties that plagued the protagonist’ (*Irishtheatremagazine.ie* 17 March 2011). Drawing together the psychoanalytical and existential reading of Lovett’s performance: ‘Is this schizophrenia, a writer’s despair of words, or mere existential angst? Each of us is free to interpret it according to our experience’ (*Australianstage.com* 15 October 2010). Creating the possibility of fixing the multiplying a priori conditions of the unnameable narrator *as* multiple, within a body instead of place. Lovett’s character is fixed, identified and placed in an ontological multiplicity, simultaneously: ‘a philosophical vagrant, an elderly man lost to memory and fantasy, and a paralyzed protagonist’ meaning all things to all men or nothing to no-one (*Lincolncenter.org* 2017). Yet ‘All these Murphys, Molloyes and Malones do not fool me’ (*Beckett* 2010c: 14), because the unnameable narrator always returns to the only certainty that is the fleshly materiality of the singular ‘I’: ‘where am I, I don’t know, I’ll never know, in the silence you don’t know, you must go on, I can’t go on, I’ll go on’ (*Beckett* 2010c: 134).

Recent critical readings of *The Trilogy* at the Lincoln Centre’s White Light Festival 3-5 November 2017, speak of the possible narcissism involved in a metaphysical multiplicity, and the certainty of uncertainty being a seeming resolution to an irresolvable position. Director Judy Hegarty-Lovett states that in ‘avoiding character ... any specific time or place ... specific characteristics’, keeping ‘the delivery very close to the actors’ ‘natural delivery’, and the ‘direct address to the audience’, tellingly ‘make[s] it look like those are the actor’s words and he is speaking to you directly’, ‘the character never fully settles’, thus ‘the audience ask “Who is this guy, and is he real? And is this happening?” ... “is this the actor speaking, or is it the character speaking?” And it oscillates between both at all times’. Moving between both, the critic felt the audience ‘were in Molloy[’s head], or any of the other characters, included in their journey and in their thought processes and in their thinking ... in some way, complicit ... connected with the journey and the discoveries that the character was making and as he was going along’ (*theintervalny.com* 2 November 2017). The audience mirror the actor/character/Lovett. Thus, the only reality I can know emanates from and is created by the body, and the locus of certain uncertainty becomes the body I. The only the

certainty in a locus of process is the I body, producing a possible narcissism Gary Lewis (*Beckett on Film* project (2001)) commented on when discussing the politics of digital and virtual reality: ‘you dumb everything down to the “I”’ (7 March 2017).

The aporia is again reflected in the discussion of whether the novel was intended to be the third instalment of a trilogy. One answer is the letter above that Beckett wrote to George Reavy in July 1948: ‘*Malone Meurt*, the last I hope of the series’, a sentiment repeated in a letter to Thomas MacGreevy in January 1948 (Pilling 2006: 102). Steven Connor points out that in this letter ‘Beckett had no thought of a third novel in the sequence at this point’ (*Beckett* 2010c: viii). However, Beckett did ‘sign a contract with Minuit in November 1950 ... for publication as a whole of what would in time become known simply as the Trilogy’ (Ibid: ix). Beckett’s ambivalence confuses the designation of *Trilogy*, following its English translation in 1958 Connor notes that Beckett ‘wrote to Aidan Higgins in August 1958 that he had always wanted the three novels to appear in one volume, he also informed John Calder on two occasions, in January and December 1958, that he did not wish the word “trilogy” to be used of the books (Pilling 2006, pp.141, 143). He would write in similarly emphatic terms to Barney Rosset of Grove Press in May 1959’ (*Beckett* 2010c: xvi), and as noted above in May 1969, and then into 1973 where Alvarez uses the designation of *Trilogy* as a norm. The ambiguity in the relationship of the whole to the part in the designation of ‘Trilogy’ reflects Beckett’s holistic approach to the creative process. He wrote about the creative relationship *in-between* the whole and part; the process of moving in-between the body/I mind and world in the process of experiencing it, literally embodying the self-referential style he created for his work. Is Beckett a slave to his own form or is the form a slave to Beckett?

As with Beckett’s working practices in the previous chapters, the relationship with the BBC in particular, whether on the radio ‘Third Programme’ or on BBC television went beyond collaboration to co-creation, which effectively creates a work in a state of continuous incompleteness and creation, as with Beckett’s ambivalent attitude to the designation of ‘Trilogy’. Re-visiting the archives reveals many reasons for this, and certainly in the early days of his relationship with the BBC Beckett had an open, trusting attitude to any suggestions for change. But again his vagueness and inconsistency in decision making – probably through feeling uncertain of the medium itself – led to the BBC taking responsibility for how and what was presented to the world as Beckett’s work, effectively

presenting Beckett with a *fait accompli*, after the work had been broadcast (can we strictly call this Beckett's work or is it Beckett in creation with the BBC?).

As early as June 30 1957 (all refs.: BBCWAC RCONT 1 Samuel Beckett Scriptwriter file 1 1953-1962) when referring to a BBC radio production of *The Trilogy*, Beckett states 'I had in mind' extracts of *Molloy* to use 'But I am not at all sure that we would not find something more suitable in *Malone Dies*', 'Another possibility would be an extract from my uncompleted translation of *L'Innommable*'. Donald McWhinnie on the other hand will 'get down to it in really practical terms' (6 September 1957) concerning choosing the music John Beckett was providing for *Molloy*. As a consequence, Beckett is effectively presented with a *fait accompli* on how McWhinnie presents *Molloy*, as Beckett states 'I hope we may meet before that broadcast and have a look at the text together' (8 September 1957). There is no guarantee that Beckett will control what or how his work is presented. On 31 December 1957 McWhinnie writes after the radio 'Third Programme' broadcasts of 10 December, 9:45-10:35pm, repeat, 13 December, 8:15pm and 14 December 1957, 8:45-9:10pm: 'Alas, "vero, vero" did get lost. It was my fault for under-estimating the timing and we had to make a slight cut in order to fit into the programme allocation. I really should have known better ... I had to make a snap decision'. Even if pre-broadcast control of extracts were given over completely to Beckett, the conditions of performing and recording involve other individual people and disciplines.

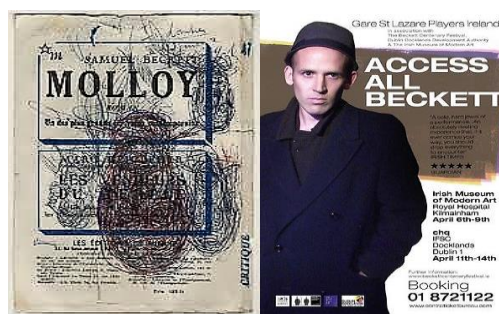
Again, the process of negotiation in-between the broadcaster and artist will inevitably result in the co-creation of a performance of *Malone Dies*, as McWhinnie writes: 'it seems a great pity not to include ... Might I suggest ... which you can tear to pieces and put together again perhaps ... Alternatively ... I am sure we could stand 75 minutes' (20 February 1958). Beckett disagrees, and in this instance firmly outlines the problem and suggests a solution to McWhinnie's choice of extracts, but still offering too many other options in a vague, non-committal and inconsistent tone: 'I had two reasons for excluding ... be overcome by a few lines of introduction which I could write for you. I propose ... perhaps ... If they agree ... I'll propose another sequence' (26 February 1958). McWhinnie replies 'we both very much regret ... I do believe ... I am completely confident ... An additional factor ... from the listeners point of view ... I do hope ... I am sure you won't regret it ... talk about practical details' (4 March 1958). Which results in a *Malone Dies* broadcast on 18 June 1958, 8:00pm and 19 June, 9:30pm where McWhinnie 'had to abandon ... and end where originally planned

... had to make three cuts ... I trust that you will not find these too disruptive' (16 June 1958). Even if Beckett had complete control over the extracts, the broadcaster again presents the artist with a *fait accompli*. Perhaps it was at this point at the beginning of his experience of the 'performance' involved in transmediation that Beckett also realized more completely the unpredictable, transitory, co-creative and thus participatory nature of creation.

The results of the 'Survey of Listening and Viewing' (14 January 1958) of the BBC radio broadcast of *Molloy* (BBCWAC RCONT 1 Samuel Beckett Scriptwriter file 1 1953-1962) compare quite interestingly with reviews of Gare St. Lazare's presentation of the *Trilogy* in respect of this borderland and the listeners' sense of immersion in, or exclusion from the work. The 1958 audience requires a representation of reality that conforms to their contemporary conventions of representation, which may just be the complete opposite to current audience expectations of theatre. The current audience, if the popularity of immersive, participatory, site, event, and spectacular theatre is used as the barometer, requires: participation in the creative act (performance(ity)), as it emerges, and through physical action, whether facilitated by a direct interaction with the technology or not. The physical conditions of: extremes of light and sound, creating hypersensory stimulation which forces a physical participation (and thus 'truth'?) in the performance, physical proximity supplying sensory details and thus proof of the reality seen (high-definition visuals). And a more recent device which involves the suspension of the suspension of disbelief, acts as a device to superimpose the actual world over the virtual other-worldly-world of the play, recreating Castell's 'real virtuality'. All these devices create the conditions that seem to create an apparently spontaneous and serendipitous 'real', 'live', 'experience'. It is the sensory landscape of the body that now becomes the stage, and the triggering of sensory intensity becomes the *deus ex machina* of the aesthetised experience and life. Pan Pan's 2011-2013 high-tech production of *All That Fall* (1956) prefigures these theatrical devices. The ambiguity that exists in deciding whether Dan pushed a child off the moving train is represented by the arrival of the train in both in the text and staging, but is a question that is also left unanswered. What is not there has a greater impact than what is there. Analysing a review by Judith Wilkinson (2014) of Pan Pan's production the ambiguity is corporeally answered in the positive through the excessive sound and vision of the arrival of the train. The corporeal impact of the train hits the audience as well as the possibly imagined child: 'it [the Mail train] feels like it is literally hitting you in the chest' (Ibid. 133) which solves the mystery of whether Dan pushed the child off the moving train. Ontological instability is

increased (through an actual overwhelming hypersensory intensity) in the same moment as it is apparently decreased (through alleviating the imaginary suspense), thereby creating *an answer* to the problem created; which is the final condition created at the end of Pan Pan's production.

Molloy's 1958 audience feedback speaks of a discomfort with the knowledge of the ontological instability caused by unconventional representations of the body, and consequently an uncomfortable awareness of existing in an existentialist no-man's-land. *Molloy* bore 'no relation to reality', 'an author should communicate with his audience, and that requires a common language and interest', 'If you strip your writing of period, place, sequence, reference, contingency, credibility and significance, even the presence of tense lucid sentences you cannot save it from futility'. This lack of any a priori conditions seems to be expected in the current theatrical climate. But in 1958 without the contemporary conventions of representation, the world presented is 'incomprehensible and meaningless', 'nothingness and futility', 'leg-pulling', 'outlandish' and 'incoherent'. There is also an awareness that 'a work of this complexity must be read by myself', because the restraint created by our conventional expectations and orthodoxy when constructing a world, can vanish when alone, as Beckett discovered at his writing retreat in Ussy. When alone the world and I as it is before, or during the process of emergence as we outline and define conventional constructions of an objective world, are seen. Beckett's verbal and dramaturgical strategies are the equivalent of Cézanne's oscillating blue lines visualizing a world in the process of emerging, in the: 'sense of vast looming shapes dimly perceived', that are 'hard to describe', where 'the guttural intonation made it almost unintelligible', and 'One has to have time to get used to' habituating seeing the process of creation and de-creation: 'Beckett has the courage to express what most people dare not acknowledge is there', the messy, bodily chaos and vague islands of order where humanity conjures-up some 'fantasy of superhumanly logical logic'.



4.2. Alberto Giacometti's *Molloy* 1951.

4.3. Conor Lovett.

Gare St. Lazare has presented Beckett's *Trilogy* as a solo piece by Conor Lovett throughout the company's history. A brief examination of the critical reception of the same production and performance of Lovett's *Molloy* throughout the period 1996-2018 can indicate the changing perceptions and priorities of contemporary expectations. The sense and acknowledgement of an existentialist borderland with no a priori conditions, no defining lines outlining an objective world, is progressively lost throughout this period. This fluid, undefined no-man's-land where the self, other and world relationship is perpetually oscillating through a merged actual and virtual world, is habituated, and thus becomes the norm and unnoticed. The qualifying statement that: 'The texts were written intended to be read and are recited with the kind permission of The Samuel Beckett Estate' becomes less and less prominent in the period examined, from the premiere of *Molloy* at Battersea Arts Centre 1996 through to The White Light Festival, New York 2017, although Gare St. Lazare continue to present the *Trilogy* to date, with extracts included in the *Here All Night* multi-discipline and multimedia production at the Abbey Theatre 2018. This relaxation embodies an unfixed and fluid interpretative stance as a norm, which not only reflects a loosening of the Estate's control over how Beckett's work is performed, but it also questions – as with the insistent myth that Beckett consistently exerted strict control over his work – whether this stipulation is true. It is important to question this as it directly affects the performance, adaptation, presentation and relevance of Beckett's work through time.

Another prominent theme of the critical reviews throughout this first decade of the millennium, is the public expectations of an acting performance and how close this representation is to a 'real' person, which comments on how, and what the audience experience as the 'real' world. Lovett's minimalist acting style in 1998 is 'monotonous', a 'memorized presentation', not acting 'in any conventional form' a 'recitation', where his 'featureless face sheds little if any information on Lovett's feeling' and is 'an exercise' not suited 'to stage adaptation' (*The Irish Echo* October 1998). In *The Guardian* (3 December 1998 BC MS4612) 'Molloy is very old. Lovett is young', and 'an actor pretending to be a stand-up comic pretending', with 'a hint of affectation', but 'you want and need more' than 'a bar-room anecdote'. *The Times* (1 December 1998 BC MS4612) states the 'voice varying only once ... [in] an hour of mad muttering ... proved an ordeal beyond my powers to enjoy.' Through to 2006 where this minimalist, repressed and internalized, non-matrixed style of acting: a 'matter-of-fact delivery' produces 'astonishingly expressive dramatic pauses'. This

may indicate that what is not there in the ‘less is more’ style of acting is being read as a greater representation of a ‘real’ person, and becoming read as the norm. And paradoxically externalized through, and read in tandem with, the externally gesturing body. Consequently, proof of the ‘real’ meaning is *seen* through a moving, material body, in a ‘minimum of gesture, movement and histrionic display’ where ‘gesture stunningly transforms’ and produces a ‘real’: ‘unified yet multifaceted portrait of the writer’s anguished modern-man, trapped in a universe he never made’ (*Variety* November 2006).

This crystallises the principle that a material body moving space is the creation of a perpetually changing world and ‘I’; that ‘I’ am the centre of creation and emanation of my world. An opinion crystallized in the 2010 reviews where ‘Now we can see ... Molloy and Malone’, thus ‘Each of us is free to interpret’ (*Australianstage.com* 15 October 2010). This solipsistic interpretation of performance demonstrates that what is *not* there is more real than what is there. The lack of sensory stimulation and spectacular paradoxically acts as hypersensory stimulation by anticipation, producing a projected participation and co-creation by the audience in a ‘highly theatrical production’ (*The Scotsman.com* 17 January 2011). The minimalist actual vocalization and the precise and detailed account of gestural physicality literally embody microscopic proof of a totalizing reality: there is ‘nothing flashy here. No giant sets. No fancy lighting. Just a man’ (*Edinburghguide.com* 24 January 2011). The parts are summed-up and represented here by extreme bodily endurance through a ‘staggering Conor Lovett [performing] for a marathon three hours’ (*Ibid.*). Deprivation creates hypersensory intensity, which is extreme physical intensity and equivalent to receiving minute details and thus proof of the reality seen. Merging Molloy and the ‘real’ man through the ‘less is more’ principle results in a ‘disarming directness, allied to a splendid physical precision’, a ‘precision and physical presence’, where ‘Lovett’s precision, directness’, ‘completely engaged the audience’ and ‘Every twitch of his hand or shift of his booted feet articulates some baffling internal struggle and carries his audience along on whatever journey he wishes to take’ (*Irish Theatre Magazine* 17 March 2011). Lovett is the ‘real’ Molloy and the centre of creation and emanation of a ‘real’ world, through a bi-directional transfer between the body and its projected imagination, producing the world it inhabits: ‘A truly remarkable actor, he brings Beckett’s texts to life not only as if they were actually written for the stage, but as if they are his own jumbled streams of consciousness, both unwritten and unrehearsed’ (*TVBomb.com* 22 January 2011). What is not there has more of a presence than what is there. The dominance of an imagined virtual other-worldly-world over the actual

realm demonstrates the progression in our expectations of what produces a ‘real’ world, and is an element I discussed with Gary Lewis in March 2017 in relation to the *Beckett on Film* project from 2001. It is what is not there in the text of *What Where* that has more of a presence than what is there: ‘the way it ends at the beginning “We’re the last five” [...] they know somebody has gone before them, the missing character of the last five has already gone’. And the same within the non-matrixed style of acting in which ‘the smallest thing is huge, so although [...] you have this repetition [...] the smallest changes are so significant, and the smallest gestures are of course so significant’. Because there is so little sensory information, detail or input, anything that is there has a greater impact: ‘A tear’, ‘Whispering in your ear’, ‘it was just a slight differentiation in the pecking order and in the level of how much enjoyment they got out of it’ that differentiated in-between all the characters he played. What is not there focuses attention on what is there, stimulating the projecting practices of the ‘flesh’ as imagination and corporeal memory, containing the imminent, the latent, past, present and future, in which an act of performance epigenetics appears: ‘Arthur Koestler[s] *Darkness at Noon*, the echo of that was in my head’. Even the actual camera close-up in-itself is a device that increases the presence of the virtual realm. We see minute details in the close-up, and thus proof of the reality presented, is seen. Inevitably and indeterminately the virtual other-worldly-world is superimposing over the actual realm.



4.4. Bill Irwin in *Texts for Nothing*, the Classic Stage Company.
UoR JEK A/8/1/50.

Texts for Nothing (1950-1951).

Texts for Nothing (*Textes pour rien*) are thirteen texts Beckett called ‘the grisly afterbirth of *L’Innommable*’ written during a period of general creative stasis after ‘the frenzy of writing’ represented by the Trilogy. They were written in French between 24 December 1950 and late December 1951 and were published together by Les Éditions de Minuit as *Nouvelles et Textes pour rien* in November 1955. The isolation and impasse that was created

by the completion of *L'Innommable* at Ussy January 1950, and the death of his mother 25 August 1950, resulted in three years of inertia as he wrote to George Reavey in May 1953: "Since 1950 [I] have only succeeded in writing a dozen very short abortive texts in French and there is nothing whatever in sight" (Texas). The translation into English began in December 1951 but was only completed fifteen years later in December 1966 at Ussy, after '5 weeks of fierce assault' (BC HER 021). They were published under Beckett's title of *No's Knife: Collected Shorter Prose, 1945-1966* by Calder & Boyars 1967 and by Grove press as *Stories and Texts for Nothing* in the same year. Mark Nixon speaks of their repeating the 'quest narrative' and the *verfremdungseffekt* (alienation effect) of the Trilogy, in which '*Texts for Nothing* foreground a disintegration that the monologue of a troubled consciousness is unable to remedy' (Beckett 2010b: xi). In a self-referential movement the writer, narrator, reader and critic all separate themselves from themselves, and from a distance watch themselves in the process of creating or deconstructing their world, down to the microscopic detail.

From *L'Innommable* 'There are no days here, but I use the expression. I see here from the waist up, he stops at the waist' (Beckett 2010c: 2), comes *Happy Days* and *Not I's* lips still looking for a coherent self and time, and thus '*Still* explores how a mind, situating itself outside the body, investigates the most minute aspects of its consciousness, the minuscule movements and sense impressions that deny complete stillness' (Knowlson 1996: 593). Beckett's obsession with vision is stated explicitly when exploring the possibilities of non-existence in his only film *Film* (1963). Beckett uses 'the epistemology of the Irish philosopher George Berkeley (1685-1753), whose premise was that "*esse est percipi*" – that to be (i.e. to exist) is to be perceived' (Frost in Beckett 2009: xiii) as the banner headline to the 'General' instructions of *Film* (Beckett 2009a: 97). An obsession embodied by Beckett himself, as he projects himself outside of himself, and looks back, while watching, performing and describing the process of bringing that three-dimensional self and world into being: Beckett 'is in fact, a solipsist who pictures his mind as a "hollow sphere" containing everything' (Alvarez 1973: 31). Beckett stated something similar to Jonathan Kalb: 'he told me that it was essential "to visualize a play on your mental stage while you're writing"' (Kalb 1989: 72-3). Between the world of the mind's eye and projected gaze is a visualized body moving precisely on a precise 'mental stage' creating its own exact world. This is a borderland between the watched and watcher, and is the space of Beckett's 'no-man's-land'

in 'Recent Irish Poetry', inhabited by refugees from any fixed a priori conditions, in which object and subject mix producing Beckett's 'third way' of being human:

The new thing that has happened, or the old thing that has happened again, namely the breakdown of the object ... [and] the breakdown of the subject ... The artist who is aware of this may state the space that intervenes between him and the world of objects; he may state it as no-man's-land, Hellespont or vacuum'
(Beckett 1983: 70)

A place of perpetual emergence, a place where Paul Cézanne's de-anthropomorphized landscapes created out of a mass of chaotic oscillating blue lines, and multiple dimensional planes of perspective describe this pre-constructed world for Beckett:

[Cézanne] seems to have been the first to see landscape and state it as material of a strictly peculiar order, incommensurable with all human expressions whatsoever. Atomistic landscape with no velleities of vitalism, landscape with personality á la rigueur, but personality in its own terms, not in Pelman's, *landscapality*.

(SB to Thomas MacGreevy, 8 September 1934 (TCD))

Beckett felt Cézanne portrayed a vision similar to his own, demonstrating the extent that man alienates himself from himself as he separates and defines himself in the process of bringing a self and world into being:

How far Cézanne had moved from the snapshot puerilities of Manet and Cie when he could understand the dynamic intrusion to be himself and so landscape to be something by definition unapproachably alien, intelligible arrangement of atoms ...

(SB to Thomas MacGreevy 8 September 1934 (TCD))

[W]hat I feel in Cézanne ... he had the sense of his incommensurability not only with life of such a different order as landscape, but even with life of his own order, even with the life ... operative in himself.

(SB to Thomas MacGreevy undated 16 September 1934. TCD (Knowlson 1996: 196-197))

A place where the refugee rationalizes, objectifies and imposes order on this chaotic reality through focusing and defining the outlines of the objective world, according to conventional habits; a self-imposed automation, an operationalism which is demonstrated through compounding Merleau-Ponty's principles, where 'I'm in the middle ... I feel, myself vibrating ... on the one hand the mind, on the other the world, I don't belong to either' (*The Unnamable*; Beckett 2010c: 100). There are no pre-constructed realities; reality emerges from the solipsistic self and ultimately, we are alone in our own worlds, and it is only by setting in

motion (by being born) the asymmetrical projection of flesh that moves us beyond ourselves, that a consensus reality is born, resulting in a temporary coalition of probabilities. The aporia, disintegration, isolation and fractured incompleteness that is the process of producing the text, is the text. Beckett ‘acts’ out on the page (then stage) the birth, life and death of creative experience: there is ‘no need of a story’ (*Beckett* 2010b: 18), or character, as Beckett’s act of watching himself bring a world into being, is the text, play, actor, reader, audience or participant, experiencing the emergence of a world in all its degrees in-between the absolutes.

Conor Lovett is a well-known, respected interpreter and solo performer of Beckett, therefore creating his own exclusivity, veracity and reality of the performance. The site of the art becomes the solo artist *making* art (Schneider, 2005). There is no teleology here; it is the experience of creating the art that is the art, not the totalizing object or reality. But more than that, because the process of making is the experience, and experience is live and living moments, a-side from the performance seeming to become a co-creational one, it becomes a reified life and experience. ‘Experience’ becomes the objectified art work, and as the ‘experience’ can only be known through the experiencing sensory body, as this process becomes habituated so a more sensory intense ‘experience’ is needed to re-experience the ‘experience’ of my body/life. Life is a habit, an addiction. And as the only body I can experience is mine, the only reality that exists is mine. Life is a solo act, narcissistic and solipsistic.

Lovett chose a selection from these narratives or self-interrogations in *Texts for Nothing* to recite in the context of a ritual laden chamber of the Cork Masonic Lodge, 8-10 April 2005. In analysing the reviews, it was the ritualistic nature of the symbol-laden room and the ritualistic performance of the two wardens leaving and sealing the room before the performance began, that again heightened sensory perception by anticipation. The seriousness and therefore reality of this immersive performance event was heightened and fixed by these ritualistic ‘pre’ performances. Also, the secret and serious nature concerning the myths surrounding the subject of the Masonic institution carried its own symbolic meaning, which was used to add to the immersive reality of the performance.

No matter where Lovett performed within the space, whether promenading around the spectators or on ‘The steps, ornate Master’s chair and stool’ (McMullan 2010: 140), all are enclosed within the same space. It is the performer’s moving body that describes and creates

the world. Moving around the space the immersive proximity to Lovett again, creates a hyper-reflexivity and awareness of the exclusivity, immediacy, an 'in-an-instant' sensibility in a physically aware co-created reality. The spectator is 'in' the performance, 'on' the stage and 'in' the screen, and the need to project, swap and empathise with the Merleau-Ponty other is negated, the audience inhabit the gap in-between the real and unreal. There is no ontological stability anywhere: 'Lovett embodied the narrative voice in search of a body or other bodies' (Ibid.). Anna McMullan states that there is an ontological tension between the imagined narrative with no stable body, and the live material body 'which becomes invested with a certain phantasmatic ambivalence' (Ibid.). Therefore, the body is in a hyper-reflexive 'no-man's-land' out of a priori conditions with no fixed locus, identity or relational contexts.

Enough (1965).

Enough was written in French as *Assez* between September and December 1965, and published by Les Éditions de Minuit in February 1966, and the English translation in the April 1967 issue of *Books and Bookmen*. Mark Nixon explains that *Enough* returns to the journey theme of the 1950s, and is more accessible than the work surrounding its publication date in the 1960s; *Imagination dead imagine* and *Bing* (2010b). Beckett wrote to Ruby Cohn in 1968 to say he had written the text *Enough* 'aberrantly', between these two works (Letter to Ruby Cohn 19 November 1968: BC). Nixon notes that the opening line 'All that goes before forget' (Beckett 2010b: 93) performs this stark break 'in terms of both its unexpected language and its first-person narrative' (Beckett 2010b: xv). *Enough* is a short story that externalizes the internal monologue, showing in the mind's eye the conclusion of an affair between an old man and old woman, concluding: 'Enough my old breasts feel his old hands' (Beckett 2010b: 98). Although the original reviews of the staging of *Enough* highlight the ambiguity of the place and relationship between 'indeterminate partners – perhaps a young woman and an elderly man. He is so strange and deformed that he may be an extraterrestrial creature' (*The New York Times* 14 December 1984: JEK A/8/1/4), or 'about a boy adopted by a tired old ape' (*Daily Telegraph* 10 December 1982: JEK A/8/1/4), or a woman with a 'tyrannical master' (*New York Post* 16 April 1981: JEK A/8/1/4). 'The tender, lasting image here is of the couple walking miles, often silent and hand-in-hand, with he stooped so with age to be bent over parallel with ground, the better to see the flowers' (*Buffalo Courier* 9 April 1981: JEK A/8/1/4) and 'cruder imperatives of an anatomical order' (Beckett 2010b:

96). ‘We are in a ghost land, which Beckett tries to make very present. All is spectral and far away; at the same time, striking us as it were between the eyes’ (*The Stage and Television Today* 13 January 1983: JEK A/8/1/4). An image experience that the director Enda Hughes re-creates for *Act Without Words II* for the *Beckett on Film* project (2001). Hughes achieves this experience by flickering the viewer’s vision in-between a near and far perspective, through using two cameras filming simultaneously and cutting in-between the two perspectives. This filming technique enacts Beckett’s and the digital and virtual oscillation in-between the actual foreground, defined and outlined objective world, set against a virtual blurred/black background or void. Beckett keeps this a reflexive process. Beckett’s image: ‘is so personal in his efforts to be universal that some of his work takes on elements of a secret society ... stuck on the threshold of the journey’ (*The Stage and Television Today* 13 January 1983: JEK A/8/1/4; emphasis added). Within the digital and virtual realms any reflexivity on the process is lost, thus habituated and an unknowing existential human condition. In a locus of process somewhere in-between one reality and the next, the oscillation is frozen in a state of tension on a knife-edge in-between one state and another.

Enough’s retrospective narrative also joins the onward journey theme within the ‘closed worlds’ of the works Beckett translated and completed during this period: the film version of *Eh Joe* for Süddeutscher Rundfunk and the BBC, translating *Imagination dead imagine* and reapplying himself to *Le Dépeupleur* (*The Lost Ones*). Within these works it is the oscillation in-between an embodied and detached consciousness, the knowing seeing of the experience, and in visual detail the creation of a three-dimensional world, whether an internalised or externalised world or rotunda, that defines this moment; in *Le Dépeupleur* ‘A determined effort is made to “see” the entire structure and organisation of the cylinder and to describe the workings of the “abode” as precisely as the “eye of the mind” (or the lens of a camera) will allow’ (Knowlson 1996: 536). It is the dynamic movement between the creator-created eye, between the eye of the mind and ‘lens of a camera’ in the closed worlds of *Ping*, *Closed Space*, *Play*, *Film* and *Ill Seen Ill Said*, and is the trope of Beckett’s work.

The original staged ‘reading’ of *Enough* was ‘recited’ by Billie Whitelaw in production with *Rockaby*’s premiere as part of Beckett’s 75th birthday celebrations. An occasion that brought together Alan Schneider, Daniel Labeille, and Dr Saul Elkin of the Department of Theatre at the University of Buffalo, April 1981. The production also travelled to New York, and went through two steps of transmediation (adaptation); from the prose it

was actualized onto the stage, which was filmed by Donn Alan Pennybaker. In 1982 and 1983 the production played at the Cottesloe Theatre in England, and in 1984 adding a production of *Footfalls* it returned to New York. Beckett's foregrounded and defined image against a black or blurred background and the ontological conditions produced in this no-man's-land, are still elements that are recognised and commented on in the critical reviews of these productions (all refs. JEK A/8/1/4), especially in relation to how 'real' the performing body and voice is received. Beckett's minimalist, repressed and non-matrixed acting style of 'no colour', 'Don't act', 'No emotion', 'Just say it' (Kalb 1989: 234), is not the norm in the 1980s, by 2005 – as previously noted of 2006 – this style has become habitualized and the norm. There is a consensus in the 1980s that Whitelaw produces a 'reading', or 'dramatic reading', where the protagonists are identifiable, and the space hints at a concept of an immersive theatre: 'Schneider has staged it with the total immersion' (*The Detroit News* 19 April 1981). Although 'Gesticulating a bit overmuch' Whitelaw's body and gesture do not describe a world emerging as previously (*The Times* 10 December 1982). The 'vocalising is therefore too concerned with sound and effect' (*The Guardian* 19 December 1982) Whitelaw 'plays it all deadpan' (*The Detroit News* 19 April 1981) which 'seems just a shade too deliberate and self-satisfied' (*The New Republic* 9 May 1981). This could highlight the self-reflexive metatheatrical aspect of Beckett's dramaturgy – in which the actor enjoys the creative process of their own performance. Having no faith in a central self Beckett's actors tap into the pleasure of 'playing' themselves, in pushing the boundaries of pretending, because they realize there is always an alternative self.

In 2005 Whitelaw's 'deadpan' acting would be read by critics as real, partly due to the digital and virtual image retraining sensory cognition. The detailed, defined and foregrounded image is read as more real, in the 'less is more' real experience. As a consequence, this also expands the limits of meaning making by expanding how the stage image is read. As a holistic whole it is the totality of the body moving and making multiple narrative spaces and identities that produces a potential 'to fictionalize its huddled audience in ambiguous ways ... [that] kept the relation between tale, teller and hearers shifting and unstable' (McMullan 2010: 139). Which interestingly comments on the current acceptance and understanding of this minimalist style of acting in the context of the relationship of the part to the whole world created and experienced.

Exploring the 11-16 April 2005 reviews of Gare St Lazare's *Enough*, it is a story narrated by the companion of an older man, until asked to leave him. The narrator is as McMullan notes, embodied as the 'slight, young' female Ally Ní Chiaráin, standing on a 'white box in a corner of the bar' (2010: 139). Beckett himself refused to give a gender to the character of *Enough*. Therefore, this production apart from answering or "'solving" the gender riddle of the play' and narrative (Ibid.), embodying the narrator as female, elevated on a white box with face-forward to the audience, creates a slightly unsettling voyeuristic two-dimensionality: is this a talking picture or a statue? Voyeuristic in the sense of the elevation, close physical proximity to the spectators and the emphasis of the innocence of 'white' and 'young' female. The unstable identity of the speaker, is she real or a de-humanised object, is matched by the audience's own unstable locus and identity, are they listening to someone in a pub, or viewing a piece of art, or as McMullan notes are they witnessing or judging? This ontological instability will impact onto the objectification and commoditisation of the performer(ance), which may link back to the Schneider quote, in that the solo performer takes the place of the art object. The height and vulnerability of the performer, the two-dimensional pictorial frontality of the spectator's POV, and the performer being in a corner ultimately objectifies the performer and performance into a foregrounded, two-dimensional pictorial plane experience. The wider context of being part of a cultural festival in the 2005 European Capital of Culture celebration encourages the audience towards viewing this performance as a piece of artwork, and a high-value piece of art due to the competitive nature of winning the title 'European Capital of Culture'.

Worstward Ho (1981-1982).

Beckett began *Worstward Ho* on 9 August 1981 and finished in February 1982. The novella was published in England by Calder in April 1983. In attempting to translate the piece into French, Beckett wrote to Antoni Libera: 'I find I cannot translate *Worstward Ho*. Or with such loss that I cannot bear the thought' (1 August 1983: Knowlson 1996; note 4: 827). Beckett's friend Edith Fournier published the French translation in 1991 under Beckett's title *Cap au pire*. This is Beckett's penultimate novella with: 'no named character, no indication as to the time or place of the action, just 22 pages of cryptic and often verbless text' (Hiley 1983: MM/RER/PE/WR/11). All action has perished – there are no verbs thus no causality, as in *Ping* which Beckett wrote in the mid-1960s as a catalyst to an impasse in the

writing of *The Lost Ones*, in which ‘all [is] known’ in a limbo of ‘traces blurs signs no meaning’ (Beckett 1967: 165). Examining *Worstward Ho* there are no social constructions, conventions, identifications, habits or borders to define the world and ‘I’, and within this metaphysical multiplicity there is no cause and effect, no fixed time or space. If there is no cause there is no answer, no end, no teleology, and ‘all is known’, thus there is no creation, there is only infinite potentiality, and only potentiality. The world and I is only ever a projected future, we are our future, now. In *Worstward Ho* in just ninety-six paragraphs, one of which consists of the one word: ‘Next – ’ (Beckett 2009b: 89), and starts and ends with ‘On’, ‘can be read as a set of staccato variations on the Shakespearian theme that “The worst is not/So long as one can say, This is the worst.” (as copied out in the “Sottisier” notebook)’ (Van Hulle in Beckett 2009b: xiii). This aside of Edgar’s from Shakespeare’s *King Lear* indicates the notion that *Better Worse*, the provisional title of *Worstward Ho*, performs the failure of language and creation itself: the ‘greatest paradox for the writer ... that the word “worst” is inadequate, for as long as it can be uttered, the situation can worsen ... a spoken or written “worst” cannot be the absolute worst’ (Ibid. xiii).

Beckett uses techniques in the text of *Worstward Ho* that de-constructs the habitual worlds of narrative language, making it untranslatable, through a mass of alliteration, straining syntax, coining neologisms and swapping the function of verbs and nouns in order to fail. As an artist Beckett felt he had to neglect his ‘duty’ to aesthetic ‘habit’, to refuse the artistic ‘norms’ in the construction of his art and worlds. Beckett stated that ‘van Veldt is the first to desist from this estheticized automatism [habit] the first to admit that to be an artist is to fail, [habit and convention] as no other dare fail, that failure is his world and the shrink from it desertion’ (‘Three Dialogues’ in *Disjecta* 1983: 145). To try and reach beyond the strict parameters of the conventional norms, to achieve this failure of convention and the consequent failure of conventional success, is to choose suffering, Beckett wrote: ‘Suffering – that opens a window on the real and is the main condition of the artistic experience’ (Proust 1931). Beckett painted with words with the intention of challenging and failing aesthetic convention as Cézanne had done, as *Worstward Ho* fails: ‘All of old. Nothing else ever. Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better’ (Beckett 2009b: 81). Beckett painted with words Cézanne’s ‘window on the real’, the pre-constructed objective world of oscillating blue lines and multiple dimensional picture planes in the form of fractured, undefined objects and realities, unsubstantial and unrecognizable figures and worlds, and occasionally out of this sea of chaos enough of a recognizable image emerges in the mind’s

eye to inspire 'On'. This is the artist's 'no-man's-land', a borderland of potentiality where the object and subject has broken-down, a void and infinity where there are no pre-formed a priori conditions to outline the objective world, and any world created is a co-creation between the breathless speaker, writer, reader and participant all acting out a world in the process of failing to perceive the world and 'I'. In the process a performance epigenetic is formed that directly links Beckett's creative process with any re-creation of the work. There is no definition of, or end to the production only staging posts, 'instances' on the way, no fixed meaning, sense or success '*Nothing is more real than nothing*' (*Disjecta* 1983: 8-9), there is only the body before us no matter how gender and culturally neutral DeLong's costume 'of elaborate headband and purple fleece over a loose black martial arts-style costume' (McMullan 2010: 140). There is only a body fading in and out of focus, starting with 'On. Say on. Be said on. Somehow on. Till nohow on. Said nohow on' (*Beckett* 2009b 81) ending with going on, 'Nohow on/Said nohow on' (*Ibid.* 103). In the failure of creation comes deconstruction and an infinity of possibilities through re-creation, the void is never empty. Beckett takes away the illusion that a world and reality is a fully formed thing. Beckett shows that there is no pre-formed order or pattern constructing a world, and that a reality only emerges as a repeated, mechanical, and habitual action: 'as if he were credited with a sightline to reality' (*Radio Times* review of original *Lessness*, February 1971). Reality can only emerge mechanically.



4.5. *Lessness*

Beckett sets in motion the oscillation between opposites that is the process and thus tension and energy of creation. The oscillation creates energy through repetition that habituates the world in the process of creating that world. The experience of creation is the creation – the experience of making art is the art. From conception to inception Beckett imposes an automation on himself as he creates, the creational process itself is automation; a matter of trying to structure and impose an order and pattern out of what is essentiality

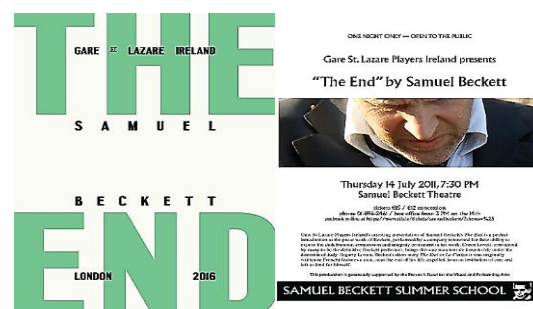
nothing, a void; but as Cézanne shows the void is never empty even if infinite, there is a random and chaotic potentiality filling the void.

Beckett treats his imagination operationally, he automates the creative process of the construction of his rotunda worlds, and as a consequence the 'I' is automated through – foregrounding, receding, repeating, and habituating the construction of his world in his mind's eye, applying the distanced, alienated, objectified 'cold eye' (Knowlson 1996: 384) of personal experience to his art. Beckett looks back on himself in the hollow sphere of his head, watching a mental stage, or TV screen in the mind, in which he can move in and out of his rotunda in his endless quest to fail better. There is no end to the microscopic details, precision, and persistent repetition oscillating back and forth across the no-man's-land between the real and the unreal, no end to the struggle that lay in breaking the conventional habits that form the world 'I' exist in, no end in the struggle to stretch past habit, to reach the unconstructed world – a world beyond knowledge, where the spontaneity of the instant of creation touches Cézanne's innocence of a new born child, an innocence lost in the 'sin of being born'. An innocence that would require a re-birth – a knowledge beyond the knowledge of the habitual conventions that construct the world and I, a knowledge that re-learns ignorance and descends into flow of the process, into the instant that a world emerges, into Cézanne's blue oscillating lines, into the chaos that is the real, as Molloy says: 'For to know nothing is nothing, not to want to know anything likewise, but to be beyond knowing anything, to know you are beyond knowing anything, that is when peace enters in, to the soul of the incurious seeker' (*Beckett*: 2009d: 64). Is the 'incurious seeker' as much a paradox and impossibility as 're-learning ignorance'? Or is the recurring image of Beckett's career – that of holding hands – and specifically here as the old man and child holding hands: 'Hand in hand with equal plod they go' (*Ibid*: 84) symbolic of a union between a life necessarily weighed down with systems and orthodoxies but yet striving to find and hold on to an unfettered and unencumbered innocence?



4.6. Lee Delong in *Worstward Ho*.

This ritualization and automation of the process of creation is used by Gare St. Lazare in another solo performance of the prose piece *Worstward Ho*, 6-15 April 2005, to define the performance space within the Cork Public Museum. Looking at the critical reviews, the ritual Lee DeLong created in a ‘pre’ performance performance, again enclosed and immersed the spectator in the space, creating connotations of exclusivity, the first time, and therefore an original and more-than-real event. DeLong ‘drew the curtains across the museum’s large windows overlooking the park and river outside’ (McMullan 2010: 140). The spectator is ‘on’ the stage and this time behind the curtains, waiting, once more to return to the performance of their lives, once this more-than-real on-stage rehearsal is over and the curtains are opened. Ontological instability is increased by the asexual costume and the very physical use of the space. The narrator of *Worstward Ho* cannot fix place, body or identity; instead the body oscillates between and through the real and unreal space: ‘a body. Where none ... A place. Where none. For the body. To be in. Move in. Out of. Back into. No. No out. No back. Only in. Stay in. On in. Still.’ (Beckett 2009b: 81). Yet it is still the moving, gesturing body displacing space that makes meaning: DeLong ‘brings extraordinary depth and sympathy to a mind that is involuting and a body that no longer serves that mind. Her inflections, gestures – even her smiles – leads us through the thicket of negative abstractions, humanising it’ (*The Guardian* 14 April 2005; BC MS5142 & BC MS5147). It is only through a body moving space and projecting a vacuum that the process of creation happens. DeLong’s ritualistic movements, posture, voice and unusual gestural communication with her arms and hands, created, projected and ‘conveyed the corporeal effort of imagination’ (McMullan 2010: 140). For McMullan: ‘the body is both given and imagined, external image and interior context, corporeally located and continually traversed by other images, memories, desires and textual incarnations’ (Ibid. 141). Imagination and memory mix and merge and the unstable, metamorphic and multiple ontological reality of a very context-specific realm, refuses to fix a body in a place.



4.7. Posters for *The End* by Samuel Beckett performed by Gare St. Lazare, 2016.

<http://garestlazareireland.com/gift-shop/>

4.8. Posters for *The End* by Samuel Beckett performed by Gare St. Lazare, 2011.

<https://beckettsummerschool.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/gare-st-lazare-poster-2011.jpg>

The End (1946).

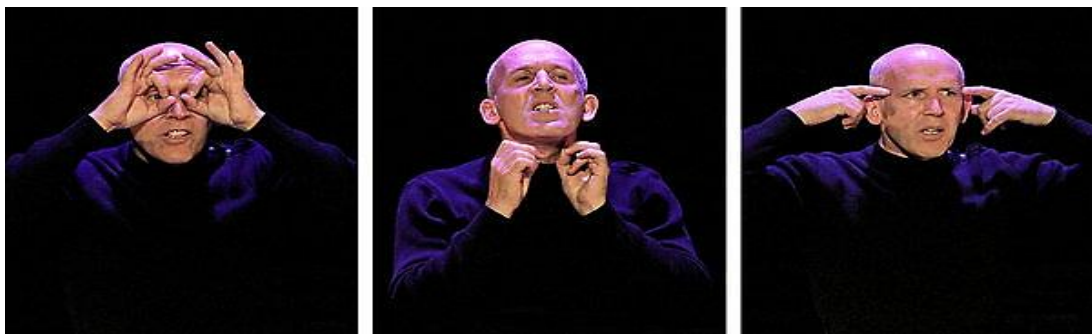
The End ('La Fin') is a short story initially called 'Suite' which Beckett began writing in English on 17 February 1946, changing to French in mid-March and by the end of May 1946 wrote to George Reavey: 'The first half is appearing in the July *Temps modernes* (Sartre's canard) ... I hope to have the complete story published as a separate work' (27 May 1946 (Texas)). This is the first piece of extended prose that Beckett wrote in French and 'It marked the beginning of an extraordinary fertile period during which he produced four stories, four novels and two plays, all written in French, not to mention a number of critical articles and poems: a "frenzy of writing", as Beckett himself described it' (Knowlson 1996: 358 & note 9: 773). In exploring this immediate post-war transformation in Beckett's writing, Knowlson mentions some of the reasons: changing to the French language to write, writing 'the things I feel', the 'taking away, in subtracting' knowledge, writing of the experience of the imaginative construction of alternative worlds, about 'a whole zone of being that includes folly and failure, impotence and ignorance' (Ibid. 351-55). Part of Beckett's 'revelation', the 'vision at last' from *Krapp's Last Tape* (Beckett 2009c: 8) is his mother's death: 'Krapp's vision was on the pier at Dún Laoghaire; mine was in my mother's room. Make that clear once and for all' (Knowlson 1996: 352). On a broader scale there is also Beckett's need to escape Joyce's influence, having psychotherapy, being stabbed, freedom from Ireland, his mother and the Nazis. These pre-war influences can be seen in *Dante ... Bruno . Vico .. Joyce* in his enthusiasm for 'language as form *and* content' (note the split and shortened ellipsis of *Not I* in the title) and in *Proust*:

whom he shares fundamental tenets – "primacy of instinctive perception", style as vision more than technique, "an art that is perfectly intelligible and perfectly inexplicable". It is, however, a minor note in *Proust* that will become Beckett's major critical chord – the mobile subject before an evanescent object.

(Ruby Cohn quoted in *Disjecta* 1983: 8-9)

This literally describes Cézanne's world in a continuous process of coming into being, an infinite process of emerging, continuous creation, or continuous incompleteness. The themes in Beckett's late work are a crystallization of many threads from a life including his love of painting and sculpture, literary influences, and the 1930s philosophy notes that speak of Merleau-Ponty's principals: of the pre-constructed world of the senses: "'the Scholastics" ... (Nothing is in the intellect that will not first have been in the senses)', where the emergence of a world and I is the perpetual process and flow of 'Heraclitus of Ephesus: "Primacy of flux

in his cosmos. *All things flow*”, in a locus of process all things exist in a state of continuous incompleteness (or continuous creation), where we find Cézanne’s undefined, fluid realities, with no a priori conditions, in Democritus’ reality where ‘*Nothing is more real than nothing*’ (Ibid. 374); a void filled with chaotic oscillating lines, and the de-habituated reality the narrator finds himself in. The protagonist in *The End* finds himself lost in a once familiar but now curiously generic, flat colourless world, drained of life, full of foregrounded, displaced or vanished buildings, streets, palings and signs. The protagonist has lost his ‘habit’, familiarity or orthodoxy for his world, a world beyond the knowledge of habitual conventions that construct a world and I, ‘beyond knowing anything’. This deconstruction of reality neutralizes any a priori conditions, creating a new locus of infinite metaphysical multiplicities and infinite potentiality (but only potentiality). This is a world that speaks only of its instant experience in the moment of creation through its deconstruction, *ad infinitum*. How long is an instant, or do we experience reality in varying degrees of cohesion along a continuum coming into and out of definition and clarity?



4.9. Conor Lovett from the company Gare St. Lazare in *The End*, New York, 2015.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/04/theater/review-in-becketts-the-end-a-nameless-man-stares-down-death-onstage.html>

The End is an episode recounted by a man expelled from an institution of care late in his life, finding his own way in the world, and the characters he meets and the situations he encounters ‘before finally lying down to let life ebb away’ (*Unity Theatre Press Release* October 2011). The critical interpretation of the performance of Beckett’s prose in 2011 expresses the concept that: ‘in the end never being able to admit we’re completely alone, or that we really will die, in the end’ (*Thebigidea* 17 March 2011). A concept that traces Beckett’s understanding that a world and I emerges from a solipsistic self and that essentially, we are alone in our own worlds. Writing of Jack Yeats paintings and his experiences of Art in 1930s Germany; Beckett wrote to MacGreevy that Yeats paintings describe ‘the impassable immensity between the solitude that cannot quicken to loneliness and the loneliness that cannot lapse into solitude’ (14 August 1937 (TCD)). Together alone, we are alone in our own

worlds as Vladimir and Estragon in *Waiting for Godot*, Molloy, or a Krapp divided from himself in *Krapp's Last Tape*. Beckett acknowledges the 'real' world is a borderland or no-man's-land of chaos represented by Cézanne's de-anthropomorphized 'landscape[s] incommensurable with all human expression' and indifferent to man. Beckett 'sees' beyond conventional habits to: (Ibid: 30 August 1937):

The real consciousness is the chaos, a grey commotion of mind, with no premises or conclusions or problems or solutions or cases or judgements ... in a coenaesthetic of mind ... self-aesthesia that is entirely useless. The monad without the conflict, lightless and darkless.

(SB to MM 30 August 1937 (Texas))

With no habits, orthodoxy, or oppositions there is only the chaos of potentiality in a metaphysical multiplicity; a borderland between potentially everything and nothing. These 1937 images speak of Beckett's love of Schopenhauer's pessimistic World Will, and the suffering of willing desire which for Schopenhauer is an everyday human norm. But which also has a reverse side through its release from desire, its freedom from suffering the will that conventional habits inflict.

The abstract conceptualization concerning the isolation at the heart of the human condition; that I am the centre of my world, embodied in the reviews of the Auckland Arts Festival, Herald Theatre, New Zealand, 16-19 March 2011 production (*Thebigidea.com*), moves to an embodied actualization of this notion of a no-man's-land in the reviews of the Lincoln Centre, White Light Festival, November 2015, in that Beckett does 'not care for the afterlife of character' only in-the-moment of performance, he 'was writing for his fellow humans and his work is by a person about people' (*Stagebuddy.com* 10 November 2015). This seeming paradox that 'nothing is everything' (*Nothing is more real than nothing*) is embodied in the 'less is more' concept, and is inevitability echoed in the contemporary non-matrixed acting style: 'Beckett's minimalism allows a particular kind of freedom with scrupulous boundaries' (*Stagebuddy.com* 10 November 2015). A freedom within restriction that Niall Buggy discovered when acting Beckett's work: 'Oh, very different, it's very disciplined. In that the freedom of Beckett is in its lack of freedom. Obeying him is very important; I think that is where the freedom lies' (In conversation; 13 June 2017). There is an endless amount of freedom in following the precision of the text as far as possible knowing that the language in the text, as the body on stage will fail to be precise over time, and in that failure a space is created for the possibility of recreation. In failure, time and space disappear

allowing the artist to touch the moment of Beckett's creative genesis. In failure we enter the space of vertical time. In the failure of creation comes recreation.



4.10. Conor Lovett from the company Gare St. Lazare in *Here All Night*, 2018.
<https://www.google.com/search?q=gare+st+Lazare+images,+beckett>

Gare St. Lazare's *Here All Night*.

The critical reception of *Here All Night* states it 'defies easy description ... *Here All Night*'s absence of linear narrative frees us to go where the words and music brings us and offers another way to access both Beckett's world and our own'; this quote is a constant throughout the production and describes multiple or no a priori conditions, the classical existential void or metaphysical multiplicity of infinite potentiality (*Samuelbeckettssociety.com* 30 November 2017, *Lime Tree Theatre* 1 January 2018, *Dublin.ie* 11-14 April 2018, *Thejournalofmusic.com* 19 April 2018, *Nationaloperahouse.ie* 25 April 2018). *Here All Night* is a multi-discipline, multi-media production, advertised variously and simultaneously as a concert, drama, chamber opera, contemporary music/opera, and installation art. This creates the possibility of fixing the multiplying a priori conditions as multiple, within a body instead of place. Premiered in 2013 at the Brighton Festival and taken on tour with the support of Culture Ireland, through to 2016 (and to date 2018) where the production acquired a singular meaning and teleology: representing 'the commemoration of the 1916 Rising [against English Rule] ... acknowledging the amount of cultural activity over the past 100 years since the Rising and leading to Independence' (*Edgemedianetwork.com* 4 October 2016). A singularity of meaning that could demonstrate the desire to fix any fluidity of meaning in interpretation. A reading supported by its construction, which Lovett claims that going forward this is a 'Work in Progress' with roots stretching back to the 2010 Beckett Project Paris, and its first glimmer in 2006 when RTE Radio commissioned Gare St. Lazare to perform all seven Beckett radio plays. The multiple meanings implied by its legacy are fixed as multiple, and thus comprehensible and tangible.

The reviews state *Here All Night* blends a selection of Beckett's prose from *Watt*, *Malone Dies*, *The Unnameable*, *First Love* and the radio play *Words and Music*, an original musical score that incorporates melodies written by Beckett for the songs in the early novels *Watt* and *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, live improvised music, 'a choir, concealed in the middle of the stalls, bursts unexpectedly into life', and an installation of a 'hypnotic ... lifeless man levitating several feet off the ground' (*Telegraph.co.uk* 23 May 2016). The audience are immersed simultaneously in a 'live' and virtual experience, Castell's 'real virtuality', and thus there is a sense that somehow death is not final, which is enacted through an almost pagan, ritualistic engagement with this life-size human effigy, which was a re-imagined installation by Brian O'Doherty that joined the show as *Hello, Sam Redux* after the Lincoln Centre 2015 production. This is a complex mixed-media production that engages with the themes of death, resurrection, mourning and celebration, through:

[the] main visual focus a suspended effigy, framed by a skeletal rectangular space made of rope. Three listening stations – with voices speaking to Beckett as if he is still alive and on the other end of the phone – face the effigy including texts created and spoken by Eoin O'Brian, Beckett's doctor, Michael Colgan of Dublin's famous Gate Theatre and long-time Beckett friend, and for the first time the voice of Jack MacGowran, the consummate Beckett actor, reciting Beckett's *Texts for Nothing #8*, contributed by Beckett to O'Doherty's seminal artwork *Aspen 5+6* in 1967 ...

(Ibid.)

and a solo piece called *Shade* that consists of a 'Single figure concealed in a habit circumnavigating the space of the installation bearing witness to the effigy suspended in the space. *Shade* will occur once during each installed period' (*Artsemerson.org* 2016-2017). Additionally, 'Oil filters smoke an atmosphere that only slowly clears. A body's suspended in mid-air literally hovering over proceedings', 'Lighting glows around that sanctified body', 'flickering evoked' and 'Lovett's tread like Pappenheim's along a rhomboid tightrope of light around the body enacts its own rituals, watching over a wake corpse' (*Fringereview.co.uk* 2 June 2016).

The start of the performance is not indicated by the house lights going down, which is again a ritualistic performance in-itself for the audience 'waiting for the usual cues from crew and artists. We don't get them. Most of the performance is like this. We are alienated because we expect to be told what to do and when to do it' (*Artsemerson.org* 6 October 2016). Removing the liminal zone in-between the real and unreal worlds, partly enacted through the

ritual of the lights going down, removes the space in which the audience initiate the process of suspending disbelief. Equally the continued visibility of the auditorium, including other audience members, superimposes the 'real' outside world onto any representation that follows – because there is no space to de-familiarize the real world. An auditorium is a place of heightened reality therefore dragging the 'real' world into an auditorium heightens the reality of any representation seen. And as with any sensory intensity there is its concomitant assumption of a heightened sense of detail and clarity, and thus, greater proof and truth of the representation seen. Through betraying the contemporary conventional audience expectations and habits, the experience becomes the objectified art work, the 'aestheticised experience'; and I produce my own simulacra to experience for me as the art work. Thus the audience are 'on' the stage and 'in' the performance, performing real life – the actual and virtual world swap – and literally bring Beckett and his world into being, both through Beckett's avatar Lovett, and through their own automated body, achieved through the willing(?) suspension of the Will as: 'hypnotised' in an 'hypnotic', 'arresting', 'willing suspension', this 'meditation' is 'mesmerising' and 'monastic'. The Abbey Theatre, Dublin, 11-14 April 2018 production: has 'this tarred man, floating strangely on air ... Suspended in a mystical prism and immersed in hellish red light, he's like some Stygian figure plunged from the depths. It's Samuel Beckett himself, according to a programme note ... With Beckett literally at its centre' (*exeuntmagazine.com* 14 April 2018). Beckett 'himself' is the centre of creation and emanation of a real world. This is the real Beckett and his world, ritualistically emerging and being brought into being by the participator in a solipsistic relationship with the effigy.



4.11. 'Hello, Sam Redux' by Brian O'Doherty CREDIT: GARE ST LAZARE

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/here-all-night-beckett-in-london-print-room-review-samuel-beckett/>

First Love (1946).

First Love (*Premiere amour*) was written from October to November 1946, with *L'Expulsé* (*The Expelled*) also written in October, and *Le Calmant* (*The Calmative*) in December, with the first full length play *Eleutheria* (Greek word for 'freedom') or as Beckett

called it *L'Eleutheromane*, written in French between January and end February 1947. It was the winning of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969 that pushed Beckett into pulling out of 'his trunk' in the cellar two unpublished prose works written in French after the Second World War, *Mercier et Camier* and *Premiere amour*. After sending the French *Premiere amour* to his French publisher Jérôme Lindon and receiving a copy in May 1970, Beckett wrote to Josette Hayden 1 June 1970 speaking of his regret that he had agreed to their publication. Beckett's first draft of *First Love* into English was 24 April 1972-18 May 1972 (BC MS 1227/7/14/1). This is another retrospective narrative that recounts the short tale of a young man expelled from the family home after his father dies. He meets a young woman, a prostitute called Lulu on a bench, becoming infatuated with her he moves into one of her rooms has a relationship with her. A few months later, hearing her labour pains and the first cry of a new baby he leaves with the sound of the cries pursuing him down the street. Throughout the following years the cries echo in the 'hollow sphere' of his mind: 'a little fainter each time, admittedly, but what does it matter, faint or loud, cry is cry, all that matters is that it should cease. For years I thought they would cease. Now I don't think so any more.' (Beckett 1973: 62).



4.12. Conor Lovett from Gare St. Lazare in *First Love*, London, 2014.
<https://www.google.com/search?q=gare+st+Lazare+images,+beckett&tbm>

The prose opens with a graveyard and closes with the birth of a child – which resonates with Beckett's much quoted 'Birth was the death of him' (death in life, perhaps the consequence of habit?) – and in the process creates a parallel *and* circular movement of infinite creation through its deconstruction. A brief comparison between the critical reviews of a 2006 production of *First Love*, and the Gare St. Lazare 2013 production (as part of *Here All Night*), can again indicate the changing priorities and concerns of a viewing public. The 2006 production was directed by Beckett's former assistant director Walter Asmus with permission from the Beckett Estate. In another example of the co-created nature of Beckett's

work, it was Asmus that suggested staging this prose piece and created a narrative for Beckett, who responded: ‘He looked at me and said, “Yes, there could be a tramp on a bench who fishes a manuscript out of a dustbin”’ (*The Sydney Herald* 5 May 2006, JEK A/8/1/18). The energy of the creative (or co-creative) process stems from the fundamental tension and oscillation in-between the states of opposition, the: self and other, whole and the part, actual and virtual, stasis and movement, body and mind, and is an opposition commented on by Asmus: ‘There’s a rational being and a body which responded to it’ (Ibid.). A conflict in-between the precise and imprecise, fixed and fluid, actual and virtual embodied in the performance of Lawrence Held in this production: the reviews speak of a precise ‘controlled and careful performance’, ‘coldly compelling, with the text’s manifest technical mastery combining with restrained performance’, ‘we approach it from a position of almost total ignorance’, a ‘non-encounter’, with a ‘deliberately sketchy narrative’ and a ‘nondescript’, ‘unnamed’, ‘non-expressive’, ‘flat monotone’ actor/ing reminiscent of Lovett’s reviews for Gare St. Lazare (Ibid.). The critical reception of the 2013 Gare St. Lazare production speaks of the totalizing sensory effect of ‘seeing’ the process of creation rather than the movement between the composite parts: ‘it’s about the telling of that tale’, a process ‘which starts with a note of suspense as the quietly hypnotic background music which dies away and cuts out just as the melody is about to resolve ... Lovett [goes onto] a stage that is already in a state of quiet tension’ (*Alledinburghtheatre.com* 24 May 2013). Suspended between one intensified state and another, it is the body moving that undefined space that makes meaning, and reality emerges from a locus of the I: ‘Lovett does not so much command the centre of the black-box stage as suck the space into himself’ (Ibid.). Which speaks of Merleau-Ponty’s ‘Flesh’ from sections 2 & 4 of ‘Eye and Mind’ as previously mentioned, which explores the reversibility of the subject and object as a fundamental manifestation of being, but here Lovett ‘sucks’ in the space around him becoming his own other, and the centre of creation and emanation of his own world; the only thing I can know is the self.

The ‘less is more’ opposition again applies to the minimalist style of acting that is a constant theme in the reviews of both periods. Although in the later productions (2016), Lovett’s acting style is again spoken of as an embodied whole, rather than as here (2014), as a separate vocal part of the whole. Lovett mimes sitting on the bench, ignoring two actual benches that are floated onto the stage, his ‘lengthy pauses gives the heart a flutter’, but his ‘softly spoken’ voice creates an intensity in ‘the uncomfortable silences’, creating an intimate ‘one-on-one conversation with you’ (*Theirishworld.com* 1 December 2014). This minimal,

internalized style of acting Auslander describes as ‘screen ready’, because the live performance is already mediated by preconceptions concerning the degree of truth of the reality seen. And part of the construction of this image experience is to foreground and proximate the image, whether ‘live’ or ‘on-screen’, which produces highly-defined images of extreme clarity and detail. And in the logic of scientific enlightenment, the greater the clarity and microscopic detail revealed, the greater the ‘truth’ of the world seen. Therefore, we do not need to create the world we inhabit through the projecting practices of sensory perception, it already exists. Thus, to the screen ready eye, the truth of the performance lies in the details. And in the Beckettian paradox it is what is *not* there, in the failure to bring a complete world into being that recreates a world. What is *not* there has more of a presence than what is there. The truth of the performance lies in the repressed, muted and minimalized style of acting, concerning any facial expression or vocal intonations of the actor, if it is not to be received as exaggeration. The eye has been reconfigured, trained, and habituated to experience reality as though it is the divided and multi-dimensional picture planes of a digital and virtual screen. The foregrounded proximity of the image works in tandem with the fine detail to prove the degrees of the reality seen. Stimulating hypersensory awareness through anticipating what is *not* there, works through moments of muting and suspending any sensory input, consequently any moment of proximity from the other, is intensified by its concomitant lack: ‘he steps right up to the audience to confide an intimacy’ (*Alledinburghtheatre.com* 24 May 2013). It is what is *not* said and seen, that is read as more ‘real’ than what is actually perceived. This total sensory stimulation creates a hyperspace where everything in that space – that the actor and audience physically experience – is read as having a meaning to the solipsistic self. This includes externalizing the internal, swapping actual and virtual realities: ‘The hillside ... canal path ... the byre ... are all there on this stage ... dancing between this imagined scenery, is a scenery of the mind’ (Ibid.).



4.13. *Here all night*

The Print Room, London May 2016. Photo Hugo Glendinning.
<http://garestlazareireland.com/here-all-night-music-in-beckett/>

The experiential body of the re-configured eye of digital and virtual reality has been transferred onto the real world. The eye expects the detail and proximity and thus the hypersensory stimulation of the digital and virtual realm as a norm. The embodied cognition travels in both directions projected out and received in via the self as other. Even the very minimalist Gare St Lazare production did not leave enough to the individualized creation of the world: as a 2015 review (*Newyorktimes.com* 3 November) required less actual and more unreal detail; a ‘less vivid’ production than ‘even this unadorned “visually nondescript” production feels too adorned’ and ‘wishing we’d gathered in the dark’ to hear *The End*.

The End was presented as part of *Here all Night* at a three-week festival at the Print Room, London 2016. Lovett’s precisely detailed, controlled and automated body projects and reflects a real ‘I’, because of his detail and proximity: reviewer’s state Lovett’s ‘immediacy and brilliance’, his ‘commanding presence’, was ‘physically assured’, ‘Lovett holds a gesture [a physical pause] ... for far longer than you might think necessary’, ‘perfectly summoning the inherent absurdity of the situations’, the time ‘is impossible to tell, so dreamlike is his telling’ (*Watsonstage.com* 18 May 2016). This is the ‘real’ Lovett whose ‘performance makes the text feel like real lines of thought, stripping out the sense of artificiality’ (*Totaltheatre.org* 2016). In the mind’s eye this is the aestheticized experience; the act of creation itself. I am the ‘three-dimensional installation. Any playwright writes a three-dimensional event that takes place in a time and space ... Beckett very much wrote a blueprint for an *event* that occurs’ (*Thesundaytimes.com* 23 August 2015; emphasis added). The participators produce whole body prosthesis in which the actual and virtual realms merge, dissolving a priori conditions and placing the experience in a ‘true’ moment of creative genesis: ‘Lovett and Hegarty have created ... a human situation ... one in front of an audience so we may experience it. Specifically, the experience of living – or being trapped – in time’, ‘makes us acutely aware that everything he does is to pass the time, or as he puts it, “play the part” of someone living. Are we the same? Perhaps his situation only differs to ours in degree rather than kind’, Lovett tellingly ‘holds a mirror to the audience and shows us what it means to be human’ (*helenablackstone.com* May 2016). *Hello Sam* ‘attempts to engage with the myth of Beckett’s persona, as well as the mystery of his work, by staging a situation which calls on the viewer’s imaginative participation and “willing suspension of disbelief”’ (*Artsemerson.org* 2017). The moment of (re)creating the art is the art, and in freezing the moment of (re)creation, a priori conditions do not exist, therefore neither does history, and Beckett is brought back to life, or did he ever leave? In an interview concerning this

production Lovett says: ‘*Here All Night* which is a piece that we created and Beckett’s involvement is more as a collaborator’, (*Watsonstage.com* 19 May 2016). Lovett states: ‘This is not messing with Beckett ... It’s working with him’ (*The Boston Globe* 30 September 2016). A sentiment shared by the actor Stephen Brennan as he discussed his role in *A Piece of Monologue* for the *Beckett on Film* project (2001). He spoke of playing Lucky in a production of *Waiting for Godot* directed by Walter Asmus: who ‘was Beckett’s assistant on his last Schiller production, and so through him I felt I was getting Beckett’s final cut and being directed indirectly by him. We freely took many of his production ideas and notes, and wouldn’t we have been mad not to. From beyond the grave Beckett’s hand still conducts the music’ (16 March 2017). As Niall Buggy says ‘it’s between you and Beckett’ (13 June 2017).



4.14. *How it is* with Conor Lovett and Stephen Dillane, Gare St. Lazare.
<https://www.google.com/search?q=gare+st+Lazare+images,+beckett&tbm>

How It Is (1958-1960).

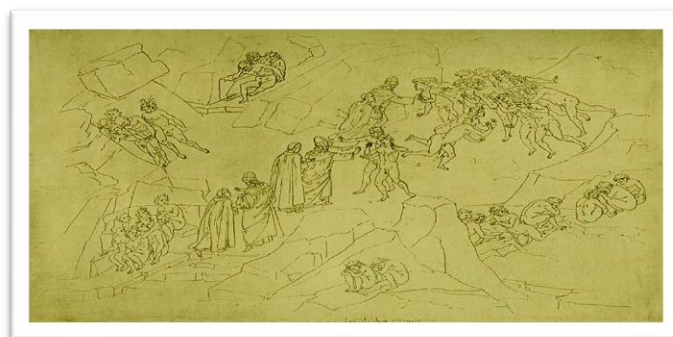
How It Is was written in French as *Comment c’est* between December 1958 and Summer 1960, published in France January 1961, and translated into English by the end of January 1962, and then published in English April 1964, and it was the only longer prose work to appear in the decade following *From an Abandoned Work* (written spring/summer 1954: John Pilling). Nixon notes that the ‘textual distillation and contraction ... shot through with an atmosphere of narrative incoherence and arbitrariness’ in *From an Abandoned Work*, is a ‘watershed in Beckett’s writing’ which flows into and ‘anticipates the poetic starkness of Beckett’s later short prose’ and drama (*Beckett* 2010b: xi-xii), which Beckett focused on following *From an Abandoned Work*. Interestingly a ‘free’ admission performance of *How It Is* by Gare St Lazare was hosted by the flagship arts centre for Ireland in Europe, Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris (Culture Ireland) 23 February 2018 with the synopsis: ‘*How It Is* ... is written entirely in short paragraphs punctuated only by the spaces between them and relates the solitary narrator’s existence before, during and after his encounter with a certain Pim. It remains a most enigmatic and experimental work that challenges our ideas of form, content

and the possibility of achieving meaning through language' (*centreculturelirlandais.com*). A small indication of the serendipity of Beckett's existential materialism; a conscious embodiment of the existential void, meeting the contemporary version of the classic existential void in the digital and virtual realm; in which our sense of being unknowingly and unconsciously embodies the void.

In the months leading-up to writing *How It Is* Beckett struggled with, and stood against orthodox beliefs and wrote of the experience. Beckett was involved in both religious and legal forms of censorship at this time. In Ireland Beckett cancelled permission given to Brendan Smith to stage three mimes at the Dublin International Theatre Festival, to Alan Simpson to stage a reading of *All That Fall*, and a performance of *Endgame* at the Pike Theatre Dublin, because the Archbishop of Dublin was opposed to works by Joyce (*Ulysses*) and Sean O'Casey (*The Drums of Father Ned*), being performed at the festival. At the same time Beckett was drawn into a conflict with the Lord Chamberlain's office in England concerning the censorship of *Endgame* and *Krapp's Last Tape*. Beckett was also drawn into his passion for Art; through Bram van Velde's art exhibition, Cézanne, Dante's *Divina Commedia* and Botticelli's engraving of Belacqua, the anti-hero in *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* and *More Pricks than Kicks*, who sat with his head between his knees and arms clasped around them, and who reappears in *How It Is*:

the sack under my head or clasped to my belly clasped to my belly the knees drawn up the back bent in a hoop the tiny head near the knees curled round the sack Belacqua fallen over on his side tired of waiting forgotten of the hearts where grace abides asleep.

(Beckett 1964: 26)



4.15. Sandro Botticelli. 'Negligent/They Died a Violent Death'
<http://danteworlds.laits.utexas.edu/purgatory/gallery/0134violent.jpg>

The first ideas and draft of *Rough for Theatre II* were written at this time, in which two bureaucrats A and B dispassionately credit and debit the account of the life of a potential

suicide C. In the process of objectifying the other, A and B objectify the self, habituating and mechanising the self to fit into the larger bureaucratic machine. Beckett's awareness of the human cost of submitting to the orthodox is perhaps put into perspective for him when considering the fragility, brevity and random nature of life, as his first love Ethna MacCarthy lay prematurely dying of cancer: 'but Ethna is Alba, and Alba is Celia and Celia ... all this is the same woman in all his work, it's always Ethna', who was assisted in her death when husband Con took the unorthodox move and 'gave her a drink that was poison to help her die' (Avigdor Arikha JEK A/7/4/ Tape 25, Side B). Isolating himself from the orthodox Sam went to Ussy to write what was first entitled 'Pim', the three-part *Comment c'est (How It Is)* as he explains it to Donald McWhinnie (6 April 1960):

a 'man' is lying panting in the mud and dark murmuring his 'life' as he hears it obscurely uttered by a voice inside him ... [he] murmur[s] forth a fragment of what is being stated within.

In the mud and the dark a man 'repeats his life as he hears it, uttered by *another* voice, telling how it was. Meanwhile, memories surface, perhaps, of life above in the light' (*Theprintroom.org* May 2018; emphasis added). This 2018 synopsis by Gare St Lazare disembodies 'another' voice, and in the process externalizes, objectifies, and distances the self from the self. The self becomes an abstract conceptualized idea and artform, the self as other is the self. Again, it is too easy to attribute Beckett's life experiences to the themes of his writing, and there is a tapestry that interweaves familiar threads from work to work, but again they are used less autobiographically than as a universal exploration into the nature of being. Writing in Ussy created an isolation that allowed Beckett to free himself from all formal systems and orthodoxies, in a condition where he potentially had access to a different state of being past the knowledge of conventional habits – into a potential re-birth and state of innocence. In solitude without the mirrored constructions of other's eyes, without the rules of social conventions, which Beckett's permeable flesh 'as thin as foil' all too readily absorbed, he could reflect on the oscillation between self and world:

Perhaps that's what I feel, an outside and an inside and me in the middle, perhaps that's what I am, the thing that divides the world in two, on the one side the outside, on the other the inside, that can be as thin as foil, I'm neither one side nor the other, I'm in the middle, I'm the partition, I've two surfaces and no thickness, perhaps that's what I feel, myself vibrating, I'm the tympanum, on the one hand the mind, on the other the world, I don't belong to either.

(*The Unnamable* 2010c: 100)

‘I am, the thing that divides the world in two’, I am the flesh, the body, the borderland or ‘no-man’s-land’ that oscillates in-between the rational, reasoning and logical mind of mathematical permutations of different elements as in *Lessness*, and an external chaotic universe embodied in the random, fluid freedom of *That Time*, and *Rockaby*’s lack of punctuation. I am my world of precisely projected repetitions, an automatized habit that imposes order on, and defines an objective world. I am, as Beckett, an automaton perpetually performing the creation of my world through its infinite deconstruction. I am the watched and watcher, the ‘narrator-narrated’ character creating and created, turning the ‘foil’ of flesh inside-out as a Möbius strip externalizing the internal and internalizing the external, Schopenhauer would claim that we and the world are one.



4.16. 16 June 2018, *The Irish Times*, *How It Is* ‘A Flawless conjunction of acting and staging.’

<https://www.google.com/search?q=gare+st+Lazare+images,+beckett&tbm>
<https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/stage/theatre/how-it-is-review-a-flawless-conjunction-of-acting-and-staging-1.3377880>

The critical reviews of *How It Is (Part one)* call it ‘A flawless conjunction of acting and staging’ (*Theirishtimes.com* 2 February 2018). An oft repeated phrase in which there is no division between the stage and auditorium, actor and audience. Lovett was joined on-stage by Stephen Dillane, in the world premiere staged at the Everyman Palace Theatre, Cork, 1-4 February 2018, and in London at the Print Room, Off-West End, 3-19 May 2018. In the reviews the director and designer Judy Hegarty-Lovett attempts to reproduce the texts narrative ambiguity by re-configuring the seating in the theatres. In unreserved seating the audience sit on the stage, and the actors ‘perform’ and move around the auditorium. Hegarty-Lovett in a pre-performance performance, introduces ‘both cast and crew before the opening ... [she] suggests a symmetry of ambition ... to make parallel lines meet and fuse ... of performance and stagecraft results in a flawless conjunction of lighting, music, acting and, probably pre-eminently, setting’, ‘We have been warned that what we are watching is part one of a three-part novel. This is not a play’ (Ibid.). It is a new art form replacing the real world with a virtual other-worldly-world representation that is as real in experience as the

real world; the 'real virtuality'. The real and unreal worlds collide. Again, through breaking the fourth wall as well as revealing, showing, and telling the behind-the-scenes truth of the representation in the 'pre' performance performance, prevents and suspends the suspension of disbelief. The real slides in and over the unreal, and is an action that is compounded by placing the participator/performer on the stage and the performers in the auditorium. The performers are the real audience, and the audience are the performers, who, what, or where is the real? The experience *is* the objectified art work, and as the 'aestheticized experience' is my experiencing, I produce my own simulacra to experience for me as the art work. The actors are part of this totalizing *deus ex machina*, and are automated and produced as part of, and in the service of producing the information needed for the experience machine. It is the experience that produces the information, that is the information of the experience (life), *ad infinitum*. We have become information producing machines for the sake of producing information; and as the world becomes ever more automated what will the human do to occupy an ever-increasing lifetime?

This reverse gaze exists as 'the only reality I can know is my own body' in a locus of multiple (or no) a priori conditions in the January 2018, Cork Press Preview evening, at the Everyman Theatre, Cork 1-4 February 2018 performances, and the Print Room, London May 2018 productions 'as part of Culture Ireland's GB18 Programme' (*rte.ie* 18 April 2018) of *How It Is*. The Cork Press Preview evening exists in the metaphysical multiplicity: as it 'can work on multiple levels', 'it's kind of about everything', 'see what it starts telling you', detaching from the larger world or hyperbody 'It allows you to bring your own stuff to it', to 'project their own concerns into the piece' (*Eveningecho.ie* 26 January 2018). After the world premiere at the Everyman, *The Irish Examiner* states: it is 'inviting [the] audience to project their own meaning on', to 'let it wash over you', 'we are not sure', as it 'invokes the opaque prose', in a 'space that is spectral, almost spiritual' (2 February 2018). At the same performance it is the experiential moment for the critic to: 'take what is offered without struggling for interpretation. Engagement is all' in 'the unaligned experience' (*Irishtimes.com* 2 February 2018). The Print Room reviews speak of the production producing a hypersensory intensity within a locus of process, containing no, or multiple ontological conditions: 'Beckett's most enigmatic works', 'at his most obscure', 'wilfully obscure', transcending a priori conditions with 'moments of pure wonder, when all sense of time and space disappears and you enter a strange other world' (*Sketchesontheatre.com* 7 May 2018). A 'nowhere man in a nowhere land, doomed by who-knows-who', where the 'actors ... misdirect the audience

by materialising and vanishing all over the stalls' (*Whatsonstage.com* 8 May 2018). In her own article Hegarty-Lovett finds the certainty of uncertainty 'is reassuring', the 'staging for his prose as a convergence of form and content', 'where the very means of communication is in doubt' as 'The process itself and the content are full of doubt', as the artists are 'filled with questions and are constantly kept in check by our choices', and as the world changes with the next choice, it is the on-going process that 'this [is] part of the journey and the making' as 'staging the prose is a conversation. A conversation occurs between performers and the audience' (*thestage.co.uk* 3 May 2018). Equally it is 'about everything ... gives the full spectrum of existence and identity', 'about emigration, war and identity', and nothing, in a hyperspace where 'you trust there's enough going on' (*Eveningecho.ie* 26 January 2018).

As hypersensory intensity is evoked to break the habitual norms used in creating a world, a locus of process appears, a space that forces the participator into recreating new habits to be able to place an I anywhere at all. This produces excessive sensory awareness that produces more information and thus 'truth' of the reality seen. The reviews speak of an actual hyper-stimulation of the real: 'the dystopian roar of Mel Mercier's sound design' (*Irishtimes.com* 2 February 2018), 'we are in deep Beckett territory as a visual and aural assault begins, with deafening static, blinding lights and shattering glass combining to discombobulating effect', 'I feel enervated and alive rather than consumed by existential angst' (*Irishexaminer.com* 2 February 2018). In London 'the sheer volume of words becomes too much to bear, an almost physical pain', and in a soundscape of three-dimensional binaural foregrounding 'Beckett [is] whispering cool truths in your ear' individually and personally, which is 'an acutely intense, nigh-on spiritual night'.

The act of re-habitation or re-creation of a stable reality, is the act of repetition and the unconscious everyday act of living 'Life is habit', 'duty', 'Boredom' becoming the hypnotic 'dull inviolability' (Beckett *Proust* 1931), 'utterly mesmerising' experience, evoking a pagan ritualistic effect, almost a reverse anthropomorphization of the *deus ex machine* of the stage in *How it is*: 'the empty seats ... glow a pale yellow. Smoke swirls ... eerie soundscape envelopes us all. Wind howls, silence sings and ghosts begin to lurk around the edges', 'as if the theatre seats might suddenly judder towards us' (*Sketchesontheatre.com* 7 May 2018). A 'file like cowled monks fades into mist' (*Irishtimes.com* 2 February 2018), 'like some kind of twisted prayer; chanting, stuttering and recanting', in 'a space that is spectral, almost spiritual' a 'strange alchemy is wrought' (*Irishexaminer.com* 2 February

2018). Tellingly ‘It’s going to be a verbatim performance’ (*Eveningecho.ie* 26 January 2018); this is the real, in-the-moment life experience, an aestheticized experience – where the only thing I can know is the self.



4.17. Conor Lovett from Gare St. Lazare in *Here All Night*, 2018.
<https://www.google.com/search?q=gare+st+Lazare+images,+beckett>

Here All Night.

Through a brief exploration of the critical reception and thus interpretation of Gare St Lazare’s April 2018, *Here All Night* Irish tour, a comparison can be made with the previous 2016 critical reviews of the same production, and with the above 2018 *How It Is* reception. This micro examination may determine the speed of technological change through its indicative themes. Literally detaching from the hyperbody the 2018: ‘Conor Lovett, as ever, is a perfect instrument’ (*Irishexaminer.com* 21 April 2018), a thing, automaton, objectified, controlled and used by the centralized effigy of the floating Beckett himself. In the above publicity photograph (fig. 4.17), the levitating Lovett becomes Beckett, as an actor puppet floating in front of a ritualistic altar, implying that death has no dominion. Beckett has never left us; and as this is a work in progress that Lovett states is ‘develop[ed] as we’ve gone along’ (*Irishexaminer.com* 10 April 2018) it ‘continues to evolve and may not ever be “finished”’, and in the process of continuous incompleteness it traces back, bringing forth in a direct line with Beckett himself ‘more importantly it feels like it’s a collaboration with Samuel Beckett himself’. More than this the ‘crowd-funding through the generosity of individuals’ makes the production ‘feel like it belongs to our audiences’ (*rte.ie* 18 April 2018). The individual investment in the production again blurs the boundaries between ‘actualization and commodity reification’ and the aestheticized experience becomes the art; I produce my own simulacra to experience for me as the art work, this is ‘life’ as art, one step removed from its self – mirroring the real. The stage image of Lovett and Beckett becomes the ‘real’, mirroring onto the audience a real experience, where the participants see

themselves seeing themselves seeing, in an infinite regression. And as with *any* collaboration no one is responsible as all are responsible, and if all are responsible no-one is responsible – thus the centre is dispersed, and there is no centre of creation. If there is no fixed point, centre or teleology can creation or art happen? For Gare St. Lazare the words are not ‘fixed; finding in their collaboration the permission to jam ... to stray and improvise, free from strictures (Beckett would not approve)’ (*IrishTimes.com* 17 April 2018). Can creative collaboration be anything else but fluid – meaning everything to everyone or nothing to no-one?

What the progression from *Here All Night* to *How It Is* vividly demonstrates is the need for technology to assist in the swapping of the actual for the virtual world – real for the unreal – is obsolete. Moving from the 2016 to the 2018 *Here All Night* production embodies a process that habituates and normalizes our existence in a locus of process or metaphysical multiplicity. The ontological condition of the digital and virtual human that oscillates in-between the multiple a priori conditions of digital and virtual space, and a physical singular I body, has become habit, therefore frozen in-between without our knowing it. We do not create the world that we inhabit.

If digital, virtual or Smart technology, or Artificial Intelligence (AI) ‘learns’ through the process of using previously acquired knowledge (data or memory), applying it to assess and react to a present question, and simultaneously extrapolating and projecting that information forward to assess future probabilities, is this not the same oscillation in-between self, other and world that the human uses to stabilize a world and I in this place, out of the chaos that is the universe? Artificial Intelligence uses the same habituating action that the human uses, visualized and actualized. AI, as a new born child uses: ‘a general process whereby the individual embodies knowledge and techniques through establishing behaviours that are reinforced by exchanging information with the environment in ever more predictable circuits of feedback’ (Jones 2018). Beckett revealed that ‘I am, the thing that divides the world in two’, I am the flesh, the body, the borderland, gap or ‘no-man’s-land’ that oscillates in-between the rational, reasoning and logical mind and an external chaotic universe. I am my world of precisely projected repetitions, an automatized habit that imposes order on and defines an objective world. I am, as Beckett, an automaton perpetually performing the creation of my world through its infinite deconstruction, reality only emerges as a repeated, mechanical, and habitual action; the world is a habit, I am a habit, life is a habit, life is an addiction:

life is a succession of habits, since the individual is a succession of individuals; the world being a projection of the individual's consciousness (an objectification of the individual's will, Schopenhauer would say), the pact must be continually renewed, the letter of safe-conduct brought up to date.

(Beckett *Proust* 1931)

Digital and virtual reality pre-constructs our world through habituating the projecting practices of perception, making the process of oscillating in-between being and nothingness an unconsciousness act. If we do not know that we bring the world that we inhabit into being, why would we? The projecting practices of sensory perception in-between self, other and world have become obsolete. The oscillation in-between self, other and world becomes internalized, moving exclusively to an oscillation in-between the self as other and world; the void in-between the actual and virtual *is* the material I, I am my existential void, creating a new existentialist materialism or material existentialism. I am the centre of, and creation of my world, I am my world – I am the flesh *and* prosthetic I/other/world, never and forever in the process of assimilation in an infinite multiplicity of a priori conditions, and the body I is the only certainty, crossing other materiality's only randomly and serendipitously.

Would a clear acknowledgement of our metaphysical multiplicity reverse this reified reverse gaze? Would the knowledge that the world/I is a three-dimensional projection, effectively a hologram created through the oscillating processes in-between the I/other/world help to ameliorate the sense of existential angst that the digital and virtual human swims in as it moves incessantly from an ontological singularity to multiplicity? Is it that simple?

Chapter five will explore this possible landscape in the hope of determining whether knowledge is power, to regain control of the human evolutionary process that is beginning to indicate a new stage of human interaction with digital and virtual technology in the Quantum human. This will examine productions of Beckett in digital and virtual reality and in particular the late plays of Beckett: *A Piece of Monologue*, *Ohio Impromptu*, *Catastrophe* and *What Where*.

Chapter Five

Beckett in Mixed Reality:
Hyper-reality.

I can, therefore I am: life as a transspatial emergence ... “neither here, nor here, nor here”.
(Merleau-Ponty 1959: VI 313/260)

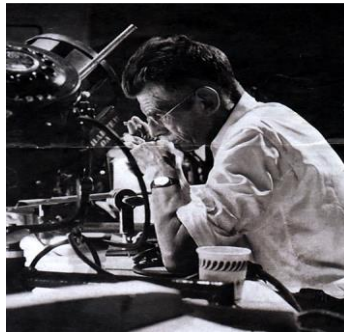
The ‘Continuous Incompletion’ of the Beckett Text: Part 5.

This chapter will focus directly on the productions of Beckett’s work made for digital media and Virtual Reality technology. Beckett’s death occurred at the inauguration of the digital age in 1989 which activated certain latent tendencies in Beckett’s work and deactivated others. This confluence of events has facilitated a certain degree of recognition within the performance of Beckett, that Beckett’s world and the digital and virtual world exist in a similar ontological locus somewhere in-between being and nothingness, actual and virtual. A locus that creates a human condition and consequent aesthetic, that as we have seen in previous chapters, inspired the subsequent digital re-imaging of performance Beckett. A re-imagined representation that does not, as equally as does use digital technology to explore and replicate the human experience in this locus. It is this digital re-imagining of performance Beckett specifically that provokes this chapters continuing investigation into how Beckett pre-figured the human experience in the digital and virtual world.

This chapter focuses specifically on the digital art of Jeffrey Shaw and Sarah Kenderdine, through their revisioning of Beckett’s prose *The Lost Ones* (1970) for a mixed reality of Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), Telepresence, and reality, in their production UNMAKEABLELOVE (2008), that was first launched at the eArts Festival, Shanghai 2008. I will also explore Mabou Mines’ staging of *The Lost Ones*, originally produced in 1974, and then premiered in New York at the Theatre for the New City in October 1975, as an early example of what is now termed Immersive, Participatory, Event or Site-Specific Theatre. Comparing the critical commentary on these two productions will develop the proceeding two chapters’ contentions that it is *either* the body or space that creates an immersive performance, through exploring in more detail the notion that it is the intrinsically holistic nature of the body to body and world relationship that produces the creative act. In this respect the holistic nature of UNMAKEABLELOVE (2008), and VR, will be compared to that of Beckett’s theatrical world. And in this regard Beckett’s late theatrical plays and the critical reviews of their premieres will also be touched on: *A Piece of Monologue* (1979), *Ohio Impromptu* (1980), *Catastrophe* (1982), and *What Where* (1983).

This will explore more explicitly eliding immersion in the ‘live’ experience of the other-worldly-world of the play, with that of the VR event. What are the techniques that the

'live' experience uses to imitate and recreate the bodily effect and experience of being in the other-worldly-world of digital or virtual reality? Conversely this will equally reveal the digital and virtual techniques used to recreate the experience of being in a 'real' world. This examines in detail the methodologies used to replace the actual with the virtual world. I suggest that Mabou Mines' production produces an analogue experience that foreshadows the contemporary digital and virtual experience of *The Lost Ones*. Thus, reproducing Beckett's pre-figuring of the digital and virtual experience through producing Beckett as Beckett originally created, and thus producing a performance epigenetic, directly linking any reproduction of the text – irrelevant of what is staged – with the creative genesis of the text.



5.1 Image used for the programme of the *Samuel Beckett and Technology* Conference, Prague. 2018. Image of Beckett working on 'Film' in New York City, July 1964.

Mabou Mines' 1984 holographic staging of *Imagination Dead Imagine* (1965), that premiered at the Performing Garage in New York City's Soho, home to the avant-garde company The Wooster Group, repeats the same phenomenon of pre-figuring the contemporary digital and virtual experience. An investigation of the critical reviews of this production reveal that it uses the same technology that also foreshadows Shaw and Kenderdine's panoptic display system called *Re-Actor*, used in the performance of *UNMAKEABLELOVE* (2008). Both phenomena equally pre-figure the most recent understanding within Quantum theory of how the human constructs a universe to exist in. A process that replicates the same holistic practice of the human-to-human projection and reception of projected realities. A process of creation which Quantum theory also likens to the functioning of holographic technology.

The Lost Ones (1972).

Previously, in the absence of my other, the world empties of humanity and shrinks to a human waiting in a small room, enclosed and unable to 'live' beyond my own projections mirrored back to me, exactly, reified, frozen and suspended. I am my own panopticon, other

and world, my own watcher watched. Alternatively, the human body expands and loses any objective defining boundaries of the flesh, and becomes a part of the whole, as an ontological multiplicity and future Quantum human. Is there a locus in-between these two extremes of either total isolation apart from, or complete submission to the whole?

Again, as with *The Trilogy* in the previous chapter, *The Lost Ones* and *Imagination Dead Imagine* share the same aesthetic that forms all of Beckett's work. There is the sense that the work is in a continuous process of emergence, perpetually developing due to its movement in-between the whole cannon and its parts, automatically and perpetually creating a moment of autogenesis – the work develops itself.

Going back to the text this brief literary review demonstrates that Beckett's autogenic aesthetic is created from a trichotomy of writing processes: the 'false start's' create 'Residua', which in-turn are re-shaped and re-used, leading to a text in the process of continuous incompleteness, and thus residing in an ambiguous and indeterminate locus. This aesthetic can be encountered in the ease within which Beckett's apparently medium specific work can be translated into another: '*The Lost Ones* opens like a play with stage directions' (Schwab 2000: 59). This has the effect of visualising the prose, and effectively producing a transmediation in and of itself:

Inside a flattened cylinder fifty meters round and sixteen high for the sake of harmony. The light. Its dimness. Its yellowness. Its omnipresence [...] The temperature. It oscillates with more measured beat between hot and cold. [...] Consequences of this climate for the skin. It shrivels. The bodies brush together with a rustle of dry leaves.

(Beckett 2010b: 101)

Catanzaro's (2013) literary review states that the text exists 'at the borders of fiction and political commentary' (183), in which 'the narrative brings us closer to the *visual* canvas' (185), where the voice acts 'as a *recording* device' (186), as 'an Ur-text' (189), communicating in a primitive form where the sensors swap and reform into new compositions, in which Schwab's earlier literary review (2000) suggests: 'the act of reading [*The Lost Ones*] ... displac[es] the reader into an utterly foreign space that radically decomposes, transforms and then reconfigures familiar modes of perception' (63; emphasis added). It is notable that Schwab discusses and defines the space and its physical effects, whereas Catanzaro struggles to define and explain it, resorting to the language of experience.

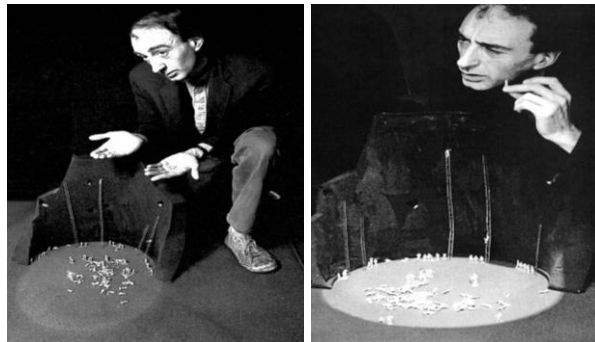
Is Catanzaro's 2013 difficulty of definition the result of habituating and normalizing living in a permanently emerging universe, situated somewhere in-between the actual and virtual? In a comparative moment the 1975 critical review of Mabou Mines' theatrical production of *The Lost Ones* states: "The Lost Ones" is "a story" or, more properly, a fragment of an incomplete work. It could be considered a monologue, but it is not a play' (Mel Gussow, *New York Times* 23 October 1975: 46). Debra Cohen in *The Drama Review* (20: 2; June 1976), calls the performance a 'monolog' (84). This earlier determination to define *The Lost Ones* genre contrasts well with the post-millennium mixed and multiple media the prose could belong to. The contemporary reading of the ambiguous status of Beckett's work is not only a reflection of the indeterminate nature of Beckett's work, but also of our ambiguous relationship with media and technology. In a locus in-between being and nothingness the Digital human, just as Beckett's textual *Lost Ones*, Mabou Mines' 'live' human performance, and the virtual performance of UNMAKEABLELOVE, oscillates in-between the actual and virtual realm, fixed and fluid interpretation of: genre, media, world, or context they could exist in.

The Lost Ones by Mabou Mines, 1975.

This is a world of indeterminacy and probability, hovering on the very edge of existence. A world embodied in Mabou Mines' performance adaptation of *The Lost Ones*, and thus a realm that foreshadows the digital and virtual experience of the prose. Equally reproducing Beckett's pre-figuring of the digital and virtual world. Using a broad swath of critical reviews, one of which Sarah Kenderdine (2012) discusses Mabou Mines' 1975, New York premiere of *The Lost Ones*, I explore her comparison with her own mixed reality version called UNMAKEABLELOVE (2008), with respect to certain similarities in concepts and methods of producing an immersive engagement, without the new technology. I will initially investigate these similarities in relation to the environmental structure and operations of Mabou Mines' production of *The Lost Ones* directed by Lee Breuer in 1975: 'that has become a kind of avant-garde legend' (Kalb 1989: 132; & Kenderdine & Shaw 2012: 108). A legend that was the final piece performed by Mabou Mines in a three-part 'Beckett evening', following *Play* and *Come and Go*. This production of *The Lost Ones* contains the same indeterminacy that exists in all of Beckett's work, staged as it was originally in 1974 (Warrilow), or begun in 1972 (Ruby Cohn 1980). Through the same reviews, I will then compare the phenomenological experiences of Mabou Mines' production of *The Lost Ones*

with Shaw and Kenderdine's UNMAKEABLELOVE. This comparison continues to identify the lineage of the ontological genealogy of the digital and virtual human, which points forward to a Quantum human through a final exploration of Mabou Mines' holographic staging of *Imagination Dead Imagine*.

Examining the critical commentary on Mabou Mines' production reveals that as with Company SJ's *The Women Speak*, and UNMAKEABLELOVE, their three performances of the evening were isolated and in different parts of an auditorium and building. All three companies had a promenading audience, and in Mabou Mines' 1975 production of *The Lost Ones* they 'were led to a small rectangular room off the main theatre area' (Cohen 1976: 83). One unreal space bleeds into another, as the audience directly enter the cylinder from 'the main theatre area' (Ibid.). Moving from auditorium to auditorium, any liminal space within which the audience alternatively suspend disbelief, and suspend the suspension of disbelief, is, as with Gare St. Lazare's production of *How It Is*, dissolved. Whether that liminal space is actual, virtual, or an action creating a liminal space: the foyer, or placing the audience on the stage rather than in the auditorium seating, the action of lowering the auditorium lighting, having a stage curtain to open, or introducing the back stage crew in a pre-performance performance, are all actions that produce a space and a certain distance from reality whether in the imagination or in actuality.



5.2. David Warrilow, *The Lost Ones*, Mabou Mines <https://www.maboumines.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/lostones.jpg><https://encrypted->

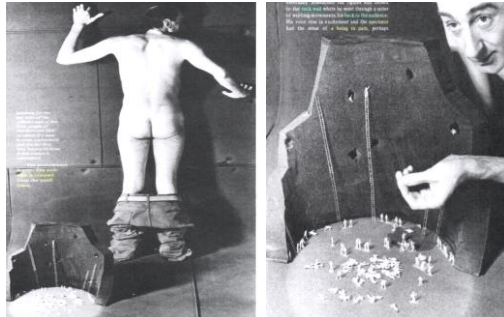
The stage designer for Mabou Mines Thom Cathcart, replicated the structure of the rubber cylinder in the text by creating a vertical dark-rubber, cylindrical amphitheatre, with a thick, foam rubber flooring that encompassed both the stage and auditorium. Effectively layering, swapping or blending actual and virtual spaces and identities (fig. 5.2). Again, as in previous chapters, the audience are physically 'on' the stage and immersed 'in' a parallel performance of *The Lost Ones*. An effect created by Gare St. Lazare through placing a choir in the audience, thus the audience are 'on' the stage and 'in' the performance of their *Here*

All Night production. Mabou Mines' immersive technique had the actors and Narrator walk around the space, 'sitting among the spectators, lying on the floor' (Kalb 1989: 138):

Two other performers sat among the spectators and were listed as cast members. They were undistinguished from the other spectators except for one occasion when they broke out in hysterical laughter about something that was not particularly funny. Their role was ambiguous, and while they contributed to the piece, it was probable that they were not distinguished from audience members. (Cohen 1976: 86)

Immersing the audience in a panopticon space that encompasses both the other-worldly-world of the play and the actual realm, blends actual and virtual spaces and identities making 'actual' the virtual and potentially producing a mixed reality of 'real virtuality'. This blending stimulates the projective 'act' of comparison between the subject and object, producing the locus of process or 'transspatial' space of probability, possibility and latency. This space suspends the audience in their own expectations, producing a state of hypersensory perception, making hyper-perception *available* to this space. Suspended in our expectations, what is *not* there has as much presence as what *is* there. Hyper-perception is not just a product of actual(?) space. With almost no dialogue in the Beckett script, actor Gary Lewis discussed the 'extreme listening [needed], because every word is essential you are really listening' when creating *What Where* for the *Beckett on Film* project (2001) (7 March 2017). Again, logic dictates that the more intense the sensory perception, the more 'real' the experience must be. And within the 'transspatial' space of hyper-reality, as there is more sensory information available, the audience member is able to acquire multiple identities in multiple locations as actor, spectator, director and critic. A metaphysical multiplicity Stephen Brennan discussed when creating his role in *A Piece of Monologue* for the *Beckett on Film* project (2001): 'He is, in short, in fine, a compilation of people I have met, or not met, or seen, or heard about, in circumstances I have known, or considered or imagined, caressed, or wrought, with gentleness or sadness or anger' (16 March 2017). By the time Warrilow reaches a possible ending in the 1975 *The Lost Ones*: 'So on infinitely until towards the unthinkable end' (Beckett 2010b: 117-119), the experience becomes equally as intense and 'real' for the audience as: 'The only other performer in the piece, a woman (Linda Woolf), who had been sitting *in the audience*, took off her dress and sat naked against the rear wall' (Cohen 1976: 86; emphasis added). The narrator by this point had also taken his clothes off and was nude (fig. 5.3). The nudity of the actors 'really intensifies the action', 'actually breaks down the emotional defences in the audience' (Kalb 1989: 138). The 'brutal honesty

... causes spectators to agree unconsciously to accept their experiences of it in a more *actual* sense than is usual with a play' (Ibid. emphasis added). Swapping the actual for the virtual realm, or layering the real over the unreal, produces a hyper-intensity, and if it is intense it must be 'more' real; this is 'real' life experience, the live process of living.



5.3. *The Lost Ones*, directed by Lee Breuer, 1975. Photographs Richard Landry.

Kenderdine also describes the small architectural cutaway model cylinder complete with niches, that David Warrilow as the narrator places on the floor and manipulates many centimetre-high plastic figures, dramatizing the narrative in an articulation of the theatre of automatons (fig. 5.3). Warrilow's narrator has omnipotent control of the reality that he and the audience experience. This is the same function of the augmented torch in UNMAKEABLELOVE. The torch user triggers random iterations of *The Lost Ones*, manipulating and controlling what is revealed or concealed of the reality of the world experienced. A pair of 'opera glasses' (Kalb 1989: 136) or 'toy binoculars' (Cohen 1976: 84) that Mabou Mines placed beside each spectator/participants' seat to view the scenes in *detail* is another primitive (or analogue) augmentation, that is also comparable to the mediation of UNMAKEABLELOVE'S polarizing 3D glasses. And as with the high-definition of the digital image, the more detail is given, the more proof is obtained and thus 'truth' of the reality seen.



5.4. UNMAKEABLELOVE 2008.

The final comparison Kenderdine mentions in her article is the exploitation of lighting. As the images of UNMAKEABLELOVE indicate (fig. 5.4), within *Re-Actor*, *The Lost Ones* world is a totally darkened space that 'only becomes perceptible via the torch

beams that are directed by the viewers [the 6 torch users]' (Kenderdine & Shaw 2012: 109). This augmented interaction resonates with the final image of Warrilow's narrator sitting in darkness with a plastic figure 'balanced on his knee, illuminating it with a penlight' (Kalb 1989: 138). But Kenderdine's torch users and non-torch users that make-up the audience of promenading spectators outside of *Re-Actor*, simultaneously exist in a real world of ambient, low lighting. In-between being and nothingness both the torch and non-torch user exist in a world that is never entirely there or not there. This is a world that exists permanently on the edge of visibility – suspended on the edge of the visible as both fact and concept.

Looking at Mabou Mines' world the spectator/creator is entirely immersed in another-worldly-world. Aside from the dark-rubber walls, this was achieved by creating a 360° three-dimensional rotunda world of light, the equivalent of Binaural sound that surrounds, encompasses and creates the environment the audience/participator exists in, creating an invisible rotunda of imaginary light walls, a landscape the reviewer Cohen calls 'the total environment' (1976: 86). A sensory environment expanding outwards from the central hub of I. But contrary to the solid rubber walls of the rotunda, these light walls are permeable, transparent and optional boundaries. This light world was created by using a single hanging lamp that fell to within 'two-and-a-half feet off the floor' (Cohen 1976: 84), and flickering strobes *under* the spectators' seats that replicate the fluctuations in the text 'although not precisely', as there are occasional blackouts (Kalb 1989: 136). The actual and virtual rotunda walls appear to reinforce each other, but the imprecision of the imaginary walls creates the same act and world of indeterminacy as UNMAKEABLELOVE. In a locus of process somewhere in-between the actual and virtual rotunda walls, an act of probability appears, in which a husband and wife in *The Lost Ones* depend on the 'law of probabilities' to meet (Beckett 2010b: 177). The same law of probability that the mathematical algorithms running UNMAKEABLELOVE, and the digital and virtual world depend upon.

'making unmakeable love' (Beckett 2010b: 111).

Beckett's world is an inconclusive realm of probability, that hovers on the edge of existence and is a space that resonates with both Dante's *Purgatorio* where about 'two hundred bodies in all round numbers' (Ibid: 103), are reduced to thirty characters in the digital art of Jeffrey Shaw and Sarah Kenderdine, as they revision Beckett's *The Lost Ones*

for a mixed reality of VR, AR, Telepresence and reality, in their production of UNMAKEABLELOVE (2008). Interestingly in a 2015 review Jeffery Shaw ‘is considered a sort of godfather for immersive art experiences – a pioneer and master in the field’ (*The Globe and Mail* 18 September 2015). In the pre-digital years of the 1960s and 1970s Shaw was motivated by a desire to create art that would ‘physically engage the viewer; works that would come to life as a consequence of the interaction’ (Ibid.). Shaw created an analogue immersive experience, based on techniques that are now embedded in his and Kenderdine’s use of digital and virtual technology (2008). And as we have seen in previous chapters those same techniques that are now used to immerse the viewer into a virtual or digital other-worldly-world experience, are also transferred back into the human, analogue world of performance without technology. Our ontological lineage is one that constantly oscillates in-between attempting to recreate a separate world via technology, or to remake the actual world.

Through exploring the reviews, UNMAKEABLELOVE scaled down Beckett’s ‘flattened cylinder fifty meters round and sixteen meters high for the sake of harmony’ (*Beckett* 2010b: 101), to a hexagonally shaped room of 5.5 meters wide and 3.5 meters high, reducing the ‘roughly 200 “little people”’ (Ibid: xv), or ‘two hundred bodies in all round numbers’ in the text (Ibid: 103), to containing 30 characters that are reduced to half life-size to reflect Beckett’s body to space ratio. UNMAKEABLELOVE’s panoptic display system called *Re-Actor*, combines a six-sided, rear projected screens, using twelve projectors, passive Polaroid filters, and glasses for stereoscopic three-dimensional viewing. This is an augmented reality interface (*Re-Actor*) with game-engine technology, polarizing 3D glasses, and over 300 motion-capture sequences performed by three actors, creating an algorithmically driven world of virtual characters (fig. 5.5).



5.5. UNMAKEABLELOVE 2008.

The world these virtual characters inhabit, the human experience of the mixed reality of UNMAKEABLELOVE, and any human interaction with a digital interface or virtual

reality, is driven by the fact that from the birth of the computer to date, all computer algorithms, in every digital and virtual device ever made, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and machine learning, is based on a popular misconception, when also thinking about fabricating a superintelligence that can mimic and supersede human intelligence, purely in terms of questioning its use in the development of fully autonomous: weapons, planes, cars, surgical procedures, or financial and informational systems. Computer algorithms are not based on the on/off, zero/one binary that is used to transport them. The algorithms are based on finding the highest possible odds out of the billions of options they have to choose from to answer a question. And the number of odds it has to choose from is based on the amount of information on that particular question the computer has been fed. Therefore, the answer we receive will not be a straightforward yes or no, right or wrong answer, but will be based on the highest probability that the answer is correct. No matter how much information on a particular subject a computer is given, it can never give a yes-no, right-wrong, correct or incorrect answer, because the algorithm is based on predicting odds; effectively gambling. In-between being and nothingness, yes and no, actual and virtual, whole and part, is a world based on probability. As the first algorithmically generated AI created paintings (fig. 5.6) vividly demonstrates, the reality of the image created is based on the highest possible odds of being correct, and probability by definition cannot be 100 percent correct.

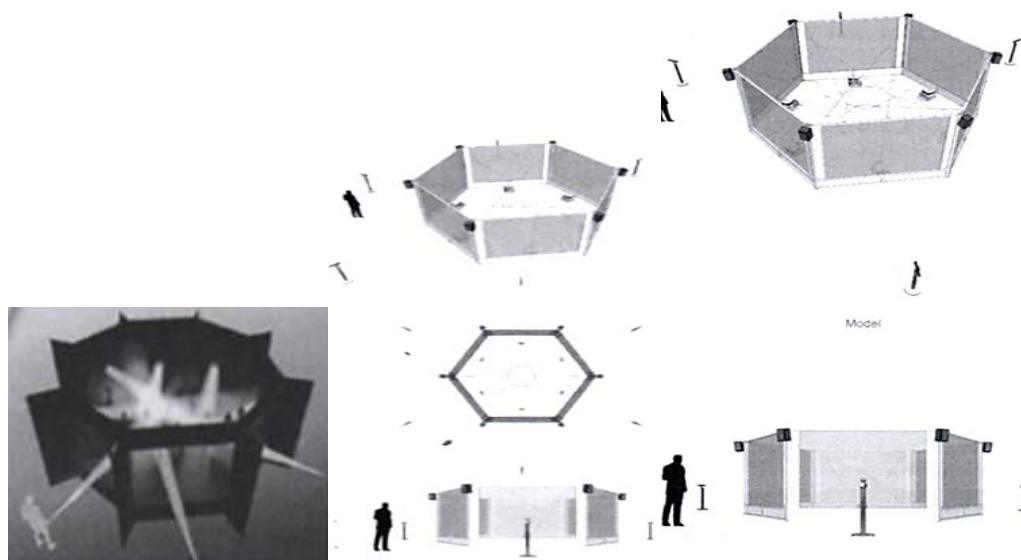


5.6. A *Portrait of Edmond de Belamy, Famille de Belamy*, 2018, Paris, GAN-generated, print on canvas. First sale of a painting generated through Artificial Intelligence (AI). Created by computer code written by the French artist collective called 'Obvious'. Sold at Christie's auction house 25 October 2018, \$432,500.

The real-time application of the algorithms for UNMAKEABLELOVE, uses 6 interactive torches 2 meters in front of each screen, which casts real-time light beams into the virtual world. The virtual light beams intersect and illuminate the computer-generated figures to reveal a world of thirty 'humans'. Six infrared cameras are positioned above each screen to capture the torch users and display their respective real-time video inside the virtual world, in effect allowing the users to see through the walls of the display machine to illuminate their projected 'other', and the 'other viewers who are standing opposite them on other sides of the

installation' (Kenderdine & Shaw 2012: 106). The audience and torch user are an augmentation of the algorithms and its reality. These algorithms are not based on an oppositional ontology that assumes, outlines and defines an objective world of yes or no, correct or incorrect binary, that results in a straight-forward answer and thus control and power over the reality created. These algorithms – as Beckett – project an answer somewhere in-between yes and no, actual and virtual.

The projection technology of *Re-Actor* is very high-resolution, and real-time rendering of the characters allows for dynamic lighting, seemingly controlled by the viewers. Six volumetric light beams, casting shadows onto each other and the environment, light the characters helping to create a visual 3D reality. Sound is projected into the virtual space from 6 audio outputs (one for each screen) to simulate 3D positioned sound (Binaural sound). The system has its roots in early cinematic viewing and projecting machines such as The Kaiserpanorama – a stereoscopic cylindrical panoptic peepshow. *Re-Actor's* system is said to be able to offer a physically immersive three-dimensional space, to 'conjure a persuasive and coherent 3D virtual reality within an architectonic enclosure that the audience could freely circulate around and gaze into' (Kenderdine & Shaw 2009: 193) (fig. 5.7).



5.7. *Re-Actor* 2008

In analysing the reported environmental conditions of this panopticon, I found there exists an art of anti-climax, whereby the audience are promised an experience – an immersive event with a beginning, middle and end narrative, as we imagine real life to be, but within a new world – that does not arrive. This anticlimactic art within the digital and virtual world is able to suspend the participator on the moment of anticipation, in Beckett's no-man's-land in-

between the real and unreal. Suspended on the *about* of every situation, each individual human component of this machine simultaneously exists in singular and multiple locations and timescapes, and has singular and multiple identities, roles and relationships. This produces a hyper-sensory intensity, hyperspace and hyper-reality, creating a situation where everything has a possible meaning, and there is no discernible end. There is no ending in UNMAKEABLELOVE, or in *Waiting for Godot*, or *Play*, or in *The Lost Ones* 'last state of the cylinder and of this little people of searchers' (Beckett 2010b: 120), is ambiguous in the sense it could be a perpetual reduction to the 'last state' as in *Quad*, or in endlessness that opens *Endgame*, 'CLOV: [*Fixed gaze, tonelessly.*] Finished, it's finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished' (Beckett 1986: 93).

Beckett's prose *The Lost Ones*, as every Beckett work exists in a realm that is as unfixed and fluid, as it is fixed and determined. This prose piece is a world in perpetual motion, oscillating in-between the poles of opposition: 'So on infinitely until towards the unthinkable end *if* this notion is maintained', 'this last of all *if* a man', 'He himself after a pause *impossible* to time', 'the temperature comes to rest *not far* from freezing point'; an inconclusive, imprecise '*if*', '*not far*', and negating '*impossible*', bring into being a world in the process of continuous incompleteness of the text and narrative. The inconclusive silence is louder than the 'stridulence' when it stops, thus all the future unsaid and unknown has more of a presence than the known: 'So much *roughly* speaking for the last state of the cylinder ... *if* a man in some *unthinkable* past ... *if* this notion is maintained' (Beckett 2010b: 119-120; emphasis added). Everything is contingent, imprecise, and ambiguous with no certainty, and the 'Endless' (Beckett 2010b: xvii) lessening and infinite winding down of the 'Residua' *Sans* (1969), becoming *Lessness* (1970), written in the same period as *The Lost Ones*, is a winding down to infinity because the end is unthinkable, and therefore does, or does not exist. This is a world of probability not certainty. With no ending, the anticipation or the *about* of every situation that is created is not fulfilled, and if the anticipation is unfulfilled it recreates another moment of anticipation and creation, *ad infinitum*. The projected act of comparison produces anticipation that not only heightens perception and thus the experiencing of the experience of living; life, it also intensifies the reader/participants consciousness of being watched and watching. The act of comparison is the act of creation, and a possible externalization of the internal panopticon, whereby I oscillate in-between being both the watched and watcher, object and subject.

The environmental extent of that surveillance system is so omnipresent that the act of surveillance penetrates and is internalized by *The Lost Ones* in the text (Catanzaro 2013: 187), the reader, and UNMAKEABLELOVE'S participator. The reversibility of the action of internalizing the external and externalizing the internal as surveillance system is literally brought into being as a closed world, through Beckett's use of Irish philosopher George Berkeley's dictum *esse est percipi* which 'asserts that individuals internalize the sense of being in such a way that it defines human consciousness as a kind of structure' (Ibid. 183). A structure literalized and actualized by Beckett, through a consciousness bringing into being the imagined structure of his rotunda worlds. A literal process UNMAKEABLELOVE achieves through *Re-Actor*. Both extract out of the mind's eye the creative *processes* involved in the creation of the three-dimensional architectural structure of the rotunda and 'closed places' and worlds that we bring into being. These creative actions are then transcribed onto the participators and personas experience and sense of being within that room, and onto the stage or page, and in the case of the prose *The Lost Ones* into a sealed cylindrical structure made of rubber. Is the participators experience of UNMAKEABLELOVE the experience of the *processes* of creation or its end results? Do the participators create the world that they inhabit?

Analysing the reviews of UNMAKEABLELOVE, the mixed reality realm of *Re-Actor* follows Beckett by actualizing and literalizing human consciousness as structure, although *Re-Actor* produces a pre-constructed realm. UNMAKEABLELOVE, again follows Beckett through a literal externalization of the internalized other, revealing the reversibility of the action of watcher and watched. But the potential participatory and reciprocal process of watching and watched between torch user and other in UNMAKEABLELOVE could be negated by the simple on/off, present/absent nature of the digital binary of the projected other appearing and disappearing, (although as noted this binary is based on a random, probability on/off appearance/disappearance); the results are seen but not produced by the participator. There is an effect but no cause. This same process of negating the projective practices of the totality of the body's sensory array (the Flesh), again happens through the simple process of the torch actualizing and literalizing the other as a projection. This is a pre-constructed world and I, where we do not create the self or reality that we inhabit; there is no cause, there is only effect. The torch user can see the other and the Lost Ones, but the Lost Ones cannot see you. The torch user and audience become their own other, as with Cézanne's self-portrait or the *Selfie* (fig. 5.8), whereby 'The viewer ... is in fact an intruder' (Silverman quoted in Galen

1993: 271). The self as other becomes the self, thus distancing, objectifying and reifying the self as other.



5.8. *Self-portrait with beret* 1900, 63x50cm oil/canvas, Private Collection.
http://art-cezanne.com/cezanne_1900_14.html

A Universal Panopticon.

In recent reviews Beckett's cylinder – which could apply to *Re-actor* – has been simultaneously depicted as a 'disembodied artificial intelligence' (AI) (Schwarb 2000: 64), a thought experiment, and 'cybernetic machine' (Porush 1985: 73), or it could be the technologically manipulated environment of social surveillance systems of: CCTV, Drones, Satellite, and digital mobile technology. Equally if 'a' human consciousness is relocated into one of these disembodied 'larger mind[s]' (Jones 2011: 165), it could also be a projection and personification of the human mind as Antoni Libera (1983) suggests (our online selves; social media?) (Ibid.). Ultimately as a technologically manipulated environment, these systems are as much an architectural structure in the mind, as a physical structure that determines human behaviour in society. Focusing the lens of the mind's eye from the macroscopic social panopticon of a prison, asylum or CCTV etc., down to the microscopic internalization of a personal surveillance system built into digital mobile technology and social media, the panopticon as a technology of public control is built into the system. This is a system whereby we are both watcher and watched, internalizing and personalizing a panopticon constructed out of the fear of what is *not* there. This system produces an actual and metaphorical panopticon that Gary Lewis discussed in relation to *What Where* for the *Beckett on Film* project (2001). Through producing 'this cycle of interrogating and then failing', we 'actually failed the central authority', 'the Dictator', and what is *not* there that has a greater presence, creating an internalized panopticon: 'and it's language that closes the trap, he just switches it [...] he starts from the beginning again and instead of saying "Did he say what?" he says "Did he say where?", and Bim wasn't asked to get him to say "Where"'. Repeatedly failing, we create habits, conventions, orthodoxy and a panopticon constructed out of the fear

of what is *not* there: ‘People who are so ingrained, so conditioned into subservience that nobody needs to crack the whip anymore [...] it’s in their head and so they worship [...] the Dictators, like a Deity’ (7 March 2017).

The Panopticon was designed in the eighteenth-century by the British philosopher Jeremy Bentham as a model prison. A guardian watches the inmates from a central tower, but the inmates in the circular building surrounding the tower, due to the lighting conditions ‘could not locate the source of the watchful gaze but were nevertheless certain of its existence’ (Catanzaro 2013: 188). From the central tower the other can see you, but you cannot see them. Unable to locate the source of being perceived we internalize and personalize the panopticon in our relationship with digital media, resulting in a reality where ‘I am the centre of creation and emanation of my reality, I am my world’, creating a solipsistic narcissist who conforms, coerces and controls themselves and the other(s). Bentham stated that the ‘Panopticon provided “a new mode of obtaining power over the mind in a quantity hitherto without example”’ (Ibid.). Unable to locate the source of being perceived the site of power becomes indeterminable, and a system of checks and balances on power is impossible. If the site of power is indeterminable it is equally available to all.

Panopticism is a social theory named after the panopticon and was originally developed by French philosopher Michel Foucault in his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975). For Foucault the panopticon served as a metaphor for the operations of power in the social sphere to monitor and normalize the behaviour of the populace. Lewis also discusses another system that creates a rotunda in the mind’s eye, an architectural structure and panopticon in the mind, as much a physical system determining human behaviour in society. For Lewis *What Where* represented: ‘the notion of a kind of bureaucracy which is manmade and almost becomes an abstract, dominant entity’ whereby the human is a component of the machine and inevitably, ‘people slavishly conform [...] but the machine has taken over, the bureaucracy of the authorities has taken over’, in which case ‘there’s a lot of validity in the notion of bureaucracy being an entity, the machine being an entity in itself, like the nexus of society’ (7 March 2017). But again, if the site of power cannot be *seen* anywhere, then that power is displaced into a locus of process somewhere in-between the real and unreal, dependent on and spread across the continuous movement within the metaphysical multiplicity, and power becomes infinitely dispersed, integrated and emergent in and across the system, effectively invisible or potentially available to all. This

plays with the concept that this is an empty power in relation to issues such as surveillance, tracking and identity in civil and personal space.



5.9 *Re-Actor*, UNMAKEABLELOVE, 2008.

Structurally *Re-Actor* is a reverse panopticon as display system, with the central tower restraining and containing *The Lost Ones*, and the surrounding hexagonal projection screens containing the power that literally reveals, constructs and constrains the world *The Lost Ones* inhabit (fig. 5.9). In examining the reviews this reverse panopticon system does reveal and make clear – but exclusively to the audience members – that the source of power and authority resides within the torch user, controlling the experience of the world that *The Lost Ones* and the audience members promenading around *Re-Actor* inhabit (fig. 5.9). As in the relationship the reader has with the Beckett text, the only difference between *The Lost Ones* and the participator/audience is the opportunity that the potential awareness of existing in a permanently emerging universe offers. And it is the potential power contained in the knowledge of existing in an interim reality for the participator/audience, that appears to confer agency in the construction process of their world. If the participator is aware that their ontological state is as unstable as the space they inhabit: ‘I can, therefore I am: life as a transspatial emergence ... “neither here, nor here, nor here”’ (Merleau-Ponty; VI 313/260), then access to the power that is threaded through and part of the system is freely available and potentially unlimited; there are no borders or boundaries. The Lost Ones’ ignorance of their locus leaves them suspended and in a state of existential angst, in a potential state of solipsistic narcissism; I am the centre of creation and emanation of my world. Inside their reverse panopticon the Lost Ones’ may look directly out of *Re-Actor* appearing to return the gaze of the audience/participator, but this is a reified reverse gaze in which they are searching for their own unknown watcher. The only certainty the Lost Ones’ can know in this no-man’s-land in a perpetual process of construction, is the self; the ‘real’ mirror image of Cézanne’s self-portrait, appearing and disappearing as an on-off digital binary. What is the participator/audience experience? Is Beckett again handing over responsibility for creating

his art and *The Lost Ones* to a re-creator simply due to the text's existence in a no-man's-land, or does any re-creator exist inside Beckett's own panopticon?

Analysing the reviews there are various stages and levels within this hierarchy of power that the torch user submits to in exchange for an illusion of power and control of the reality revealed. Initially the physical augmentation and real-time interaction with the torch suggests control over the beginning of the performance: a light coming up-on, the *Re-Actor* stage revealed, and the suspension of disbelief. If in revealing their own world the torch user does not like what they see, they move the torch that controls what is revealed of *The Lost Ones* world, recreating what they and the promenading audience see. The torch user controls what is experienced of the world. They only reveal what they want to see, and as a consequence reveal reflections of their own desires (fig. 5.10).



5.10. UNMAKEABLELOVE 2008.

The torch user is simultaneously in the real and unreal world, simultaneously the self and other projection inside the panopticon with the Lost Ones. Placing the other simultaneously inside *Re-Actor's* panopticon places the torch user, and by proxy the audience, into another of the torch user's identities as an audience member 'in' the performance and 'on' the stage. This automatically breaks and reverses the fourth wall, simultaneously suspending the suspension of disbelief. If the audience becomes the performer, the audience experience the proscenium arch as Cézanne's real mirror, thus re-configuring one of their identities into a performer in a 'real' world; a technique used by Gare St. Lazare in *How It Is* (2018).

This simple projection of the other into the panopticon functions in the same way as introducing the cast and backstage crew in the pre-performance performance, again a technique used by Gare St. Lazare in *How It Is*. The other inside *Re-Actor* reveals the behind the scenes 'truth' of the construction of the representation; the other appears to see how the reality emerges. The audience see how the torch user appears to bring a reality into being. *Re-*

Actor in and of itself is a ‘pre-performance performance’ that exposes and reveals the truth of the representation seen, compounding the suspension of the suspension of disbelief. An auditorium is a place of heightened reality therefore dragging the ‘real’ world into an auditorium heightens the reality of any representation seen. And as with any sensory intensity there is its concomitant assumption of a heightened sense of detail and clarity and thus greater proof and truth of the representation seen. Through betraying the contemporary conventional audience expectations and habits, the experience becomes the objectified art work, the ‘aestheticized experience’ reified, and I literally produce my own simulacra to experience for me as the art work in UNMAKEABLELOVE. Thus, the audience are ‘on’ the stage and ‘in’ the performance, performing real life – the actual and virtual swap – literally bringing Beckett and his world into being, both through placing our own avatar as the other onto the stage, and through automating/habituating the projective processes of the body through the willing(?) suspension of the Will/disbelief. Placing the audience ‘on’ the stage and ‘in’ the performance, and the continued visibility of the auditorium and audience members due to the ambient light outside *Re-Actor*, removes the liminal zone used to de-(re)familiarize reality, the real slides in and superimposes over the unreal. All these elements blur the boundaries between the real and unreal, and create a multiplication and confusion of identities and locations for the torch user and audience; who is prisoner and contained and who is guard and observer?

Critical Reviews of Mabou Mines’ *The Lost One*’s and UNMAKEABLELOVE.

All the reviews of Mabou Mines and Shaw and Kenderdine’s *The Lost One*’s from 2012, 1989, 1976, and 1975 use the ‘last state of the cylinder’ as a conclusion on the performances. This ‘last state’ is represented in Mabou Mines with Warrilow as the narrator, the ‘last of all *if a man*’ (Beckett 2010b: 120; emphasis added), in darkness, nude, with a plastic figure ‘balanced on his knee, illuminating it with a penlight, apparently dispensing with distinction among contexts’ (Kalb 1989: 138). In mixing, merging and colliding the actual and virtual realms Kalb’s earlier 1989 review ultimately identifies and places the performance in-between states, questioning as Beckett does the ability of the performance ‘*if a man*’ to end or start. UNMAKEABLELOVE equally has no end, there is no ‘last state of the cylinder’ (Beckett 2010b: 120), just the endlessness of variable repetition based on algorithms of probability. Kenderdine’s own conclusion on UNMAKEABLELOVE in 2012

was ambiguous and representative of the human condition in digital or virtual space, in that it created both an engaging, and uncomfortable and challenging experience for the viewer/participator. For Kenderdine UNMAKEABLELOVE created an immersive ‘engagement’ and an uncomfortable ‘confrontation’ due to the endless shifting ‘symmetry of real and virtual ontologies’ (2012: 109). An experience and engagement in HCI (Human Computer Interface) that Mark Crossley (2013: 246) suggests UNMAKEABLELOVE achieves by: ‘proposing that the performance *is* the act of engagement between user *and* system as the user of the technology becomes hyper-aware of the spectatorial gaze upon them’ (Kenderdine & Shaw in Vanderbeeken et. al., 2012: 114). As previously, the post-2010 reviews tend to focus on the language of ‘life’ experience, not the technicality of how the human becomes post-human and part of the machine. In an earlier analysis of virtual reality Gabriella Gianacchi (2004) describes ‘how’ once in the HCI, humans are both embodied and virtual, describing a virtual theatre as ‘one which through its virtuality is able not only to include the viewers within the art but also to distribute their presence globally in both the real and simulated virtual world’ (10). Recognizing that our sense of being in the digital and virtual locus of process, oscillates in-between and communicates with a multitude of people, places and times simultaneously, but equally with the only certain materiality of the singular ‘I’ body.

Most recently UNMAKEABLELOVE is reviewed as a fully embodied experience of this oscillation in-between the actual and virtual, and as an actualization and literalization of Beckett’s ‘alone together’ world as ‘an icon for we human’s in a WEB 2.0 world of the experience of “connected isolation”’ (Grau 2017: 27). At the inauguration of the digital age and time of Beckett’s death in 1989 Kalb states this oscillation in-between the actual and virtual amounted to the ‘vacillations of identities and contexts have been nothing more than this man’s games?’ (138). Gussow’s 1975 review speaks of an emerging New World order as ‘Warrilow begins, like an explorer on a new continent’ creating the world he inhabits and bringing the virtual into the actual as ‘the imagined becomes tangible’ and ‘a child’s model that suddenly becomes a projection of the reality itself. The speaker ... becomes [the cylinder’s] *deus ex machina*. We have been inside the cylinder and now we are outside, witnesses from an outer space’, ‘the cylinder is a cosmos, perhaps a microcosmos of our civilization’ (Gussow 1975). In 1976 Cohen speaks of a space of incarceration and a lack of power and agency where in the end ‘The audience is released from the small room’ (1976: 87). Finney’s 1981 literary review suggests that the space is where stasis and the process of

search coexist producing a multiplicity of illusions to conceal the reality of a chaotic universe, a space and action that is intrinsic to the human condition, creating the world of *The Lost Ones*: ‘Beckett constructs a Lilliputian model of man’s obsessive need to construct artificial codes and systems [and habits] with which he can conceal from himself the real lack of any code or system in life’ (*The Residual Beckett TLS* 1981: BC MS3023). In the same publication Porter Abbot supposes it is the container itself, rather than the impotent action that is the active force determining that world: ‘that le dépeupleur is the cylinder itself, a kind of slow exterminator’ (Ibid). In-between the actual and virtual our sense of being oscillates in-between and communicates with a multitude of people, places and times simultaneously and equally with the only certain materiality of the singular ‘I’ body.

What is becoming apparent is that there are striking similarities in Shaw and Kenderdine’s (2008) production of *The Lost Ones*, and Kalb’s 1989 interpretation and detailed review of Mabou Mines’ 1975 production. Interestingly Kalb was analysing Mabou Mines’ *The Lost Ones* at the time of Beckett’s death and the inauguration of the Digital Age in 1989. This may reflect the subconscious influence on performance interpretation, of social conditions. We reflect on experience from the position of present conditions – the event gets mediated through our current conditions. This methodology can give an insight into the current social conditions, and in this case, then and now.

Mabou Mines’ 1984 *Imagination Dead Imagine* (1965).

Analysing the critical reviews of Mabou Mines’ holographic staging of *Imagination Dead Imagine* (1965), in New York in 1984, repeats the same phenomenon of pre-figuring the contemporary experience within the digital and virtual world that Beckett’s text, and UNMAKEABLELOVE perform. The holographic technology also foreshadows Shaw and Kenderdine’s panoptic display system called *Re-Actor* used for the performance of UNMAKEABLELOVE (2008). Both phenomena equally suggest the most recent understanding within Quantum theory of how the human constructs a universe to exist in, which Quantum theory likens to the functioning of holographic technology. Tracing backwards forward to the present, and projecting into the future traces and predicts our ontological relationship with technology.

The founding and co-artistic director of Mabou Mines, Ruth Maleczech did seek and receive permission from Beckett to ‘stage’ her third directorial project with the company, the short prose piece *Imagination Dead Imagine*. The narrative of which repeats the enclosed small white rotunda of *The Lost Ones*, but here containing two bodies, male and female. It also repeats the act of the prose performing as stage directions:

Diameter three feet, three feet from ground to summit of the vault. Two diameters at right angles AB CD divide the white ground into two semicircles ACB BDA. Lying on the ground two white bodies, each in its semicircle. White to the vault and the round wall eighteen inches high from which it springs.

(Beckett 2010b :87)

The prose as stage directions bear a striking resemblance to the experience of the architectural structure of Mabou Mines’ holographic reconstruction. The set featured an off-white catafalque or bier, and a life-size hologram suspended above, which brings to mind Gare St. Lazare’s analogue production and publicity image for *Here All Night* (2018), in which Conor Lovett levitates in front of an alter/bier, and of the floating effigy called *Hello, Sam Redux* which was part of the performance (compare images 5.11 with 5.12).



5.11. Mabou Mines <https://listart.mit.edu/sites/default/files/styles/slideshow/public/-IA311YF7RfxifL2sS8IVCDnhAFhF14GxNXOo41f8k8.jpg?itok=f0CEmBPs>



5.12. The Print Room, London May 2016. Photo Hugo Glendinning.
<http://garestlazareireland.com/here-all-night-music-in-beckett/>
Hello, Sam Redux and Conor Lovett in *Here All Night*.
<https://www.google.com/search?q=gare+st+Lazare+images,+beckett>

The visual effects reported by Mel Gussow in his 1984 review of Mabou Mines' *Imagination Dead Imagine* for the *New York Times*, gives a sense of the enclosed holographic environment: 'a beam of light falls on a catafalque and the intricate designs on the exterior changes colour and texture as we watch it – from gold to bright white, from sandstone to marble. Faces and objects seem to appear on the surface'. A quality of light interpreted by McMullan in 2007 from a video recording, which: 'created the sense of the theatre space itself as an analogue of the rotunda ... It created the sense of an ontologically ambiguous space, suspended between the live and the ossified' (62). In the space in-between being and nothingness – whether contained within or between the Beckett text or holographic reconstruction – the walls creating space are imagined in the mind's eye as a panopticon, with walls that are as plastic and permeable as UNMAKEABLELOVE'S, and Mabou Mines' sound-light walls creating the rotunda of *The Lost Ones*.

L. B. Dallas designed the bier – which Maleczech thought of as the 'other' part of the 'body' – from a poured plexiglass mold inlaid with the shapes of objects, objects that Maleczech stated should be 'things from her life: a clock, a glass, a shoe; things from the life of the voice' and from the real life of the performer of the hologram 'a high heeled shoe and a [red] princess phone' (Brater 2014: 274-5 (2011-2012)). 'Things' that make the blended body of Beckett and Merleau-Ponty, through merging the object and subject through the projective practices of the Flesh, where the body encompasses the world: 'Things ... become an annex or prolongation of self ... incrustated in its flesh ... "made from the same stuff as the body"' (Johnson 1993: 47 (*PrP*, 163, *OE*, 19; *EM*, 125)). This experimental and innovative hologram for theatre was the largest of its kind at the time, at four feet, three inches long; the exact life size replica of the young girl performing the hologram Clove Galilee (Maleczech's daughter). The real 'things' and the 'life size' body reveal the desire to make the virtual actual.

The hologram image was created in three sections dividing Galilee's body into three sections as Beckett's female figure is 'bent in three' (*Beckett* 2010b: 88). Thus, the three sections of the body in the hologram 'rotate independently of each other, sometimes turning in contrasting directions and occasionally rotating the segments one at a time' fracturing and alienating the body from itself (Brater 2014: 279). The narrative is read in a quiet, strained voice by Ruth Nelson, an 'elderly', 'eighty-two year old' woman (*Ibid*: 274, 278). At Maleczech's request Nelson recorded the text leaning 'backwards over the back of a chair as she delivered the lines "so she was always under strain," while the recording was being

made' (Ibid: 279). A technique of enforced physical disability reminiscent of Beckett's own physical demands made on his actors in his working practices, as in the example of physically restraining Billie Whitelaw by strapping her head, arms and legs in a chair for her performance of Mouth in *Not I*. The actual and physical distortion for Maleczech was to make actual the metaphorical, to 'unmoor Nelson from her high-class intonations', to again distance and alienate the voice from itself and from the holographic body, so that it 'sounds fractured and overwrought, as if it does not quite belong to the speaker' (Ibid; 278-9). The lights as the sound track of John Lennon's 'Imagine' also fades in and out in fractured phrases. The narrative is 'On a tapeloop embodied in the structure underneath the hologram and emanating from two tiny speakers will be the whole of Beckett's novel, also continually turning [as the hologram] and forever repeating itself', as UNMAKEABLELOVE (NYU, *MM Imagination Dead Imagine*: Folder 24).

Before comparing the critical commentary on the holographic reconstruction 'pre' the digital revolution, with the reviews of the virtual reproduction in the midst of the digital age, I will briefly explore the technical landscape of holography. The structural environment of Mabou Mines' holographic reconstruction bears a striking resemblance to *Re-Actor's*, both aiming to substitute the actual world with the other-worldly-world of virtual reality in the audiences' experience.

The MIT Museum Maleczech worked with, describes holography as:

a method of recording and reconstructing light waves. When light hits an object, it reflects back in waves that exactly correlate to the object struck, creating a characteristic "wave front" that is recorded on photosensitive film. Projecting light back through the hologram reconstructs the wave front, delivering to the eye the tonal range, color, and 3D [sic] form of an object without its material presence.

(Brater 2014: 273)

Beckett requested further information on her 'holographic visualization' (fig. 5.13), and she replies:

SAMUEL BECKETT

Paris
24.12.81

Dear Mr Maleczek

Thank you for yrs. of Dec. 16.
Imagine Dead Imagine. No
comma & beseech you.

Help me to visualize
"holographic visualization"
- 1st consent.

Yours sincerely

Samuel Beckett

5.13. Beckett Postcard. <https://www.maboumines.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/ID11.jpg>

Process #1 – A high contrast black and white film is taken of a figure brightly lit and slowly turning against a black background. The film is developed and projected onto a rear projection screen which then refracts the image through a holographic optical element. As the image passes through this optical element, it takes on the characteristics of a three-dimensional body.

Process #2 – A film is taken in the same manner as above. The film is then cut and transferred to five 360° celluloid cylinders. These cylinders rest on top of a turning mechanism and are lit by a special high-intensity light.

(Maleczek to Beckett 12 March 1984, NYU; MM 1966-2000)

It is striking that one similarity in both systems, is that another medium of film recording human performers interpolates in-between the actual and virtual technology to facilitate the production of the virtual world; in the case of UNMAKEABLELOVE in the form of 300 motion-capture sequences of the actors. This database the behaviours are ‘con-scripted by the computerised codes for their virtual re-presentation’ (Kenderdine & Shaw 2012: 107). UNMAKEABLELOVE’s script is written by computer codes that are based on algorithms of probability and a Beckettian aesthetic of continuous incompleteness. The Lost Ones ‘behaviour is driven by [real-time] computer algorithms, allowing their actions to change based on the surrounding bodies’, ‘so it is different everytime’ (Zukerman 2011). A real-time action repeated in the audience’s experience, as the reality experienced depends on which torch user you are in proximity with. Mabou Mines’ holographic audience promenade around each other and experience a real-time reality according to changes in the surrounding bodies and to the POV of the centralized body/bier.

Both systems create a reverse panopticon experience, one actual and one virtual. When looking ‘into’ the panopticon, all both audiences see is the other mirrored back; in UNMAKEABLELOVE the self is the other, and in *Imagination Dead Imagine* the other is

the other audience member as self. Both systems replace the projecting practices of the sensory perception (the Flesh) with which we use to create a sense of being in a world, preventing the audience from creating the reality they experience. Added to this, there is no liminal zone for either experience; the light functions as the auditorium for the hologram and UNMAKEABLELOVE, thus the audience are 'on' the stage and 'in' the performance. This is a reified life, life as art, and the virtual other is all there is. In reversing the fourth wall the truth behind the reconstruction of the representation of a world and I is revealed. In virtual reality the control of the reality seen seems to be in the hands of the torch user, and in the hologram, it is the narrator's voice from the machine that triggers the appearance of the hologram. Both systems use rear projection screens to project a 3D image. Both systems use the same human system of projection and reception of light waves to reveal the virtual world. The holographic construction concealed the source of light whereas UNMAKEABLELOVE forced the torch user to reveal how this process seems to work. The light and thus hologram 'fade' in and out of appearance in an analogue process of emergence, in UNMAKEABLELOVE the Lost Ones appear and disappear instantly in an on-off digital binary. Both systems project bodies, one life size, and the other half life size which move seemingly independently, the hologram fracturing itself into three parts, in UNMAKEABLELOVE the self as other is literalized as a projection inside *Re-Actor*, and then fractured into the Lost Ones. The experience of both worlds is ultimately created through a holistic relationship between human and machine seemingly creating each other.

Reviews of Mabou Mines' 1984 *Imagination Dead Imagine*.

In-between the extremes of being and nothingness, actual and virtual, real and unreal, our sense of being exists in a no-man's-land in a perpetual process of emergence, where nothing is stable and everything is in flux. This is a locus of multiple a priori conditions of space, time and causality, and is reflected in the original premiere and consequent critical commentary of Mabou Mines' holographic production of *Imagination Dead Imagine*. The same locus of Shaw and Kenderdine's virtual reality production UNMAKEABLELOVE. Going back to Brater's 2014 critical reading of Gussow's 1984 review of the premiere of the holographic *Imagination Dead Imagine*, Brater chooses to highlight that 'Gussow identifies a sensory binary in his review, writing that "Beckett himself could have been describing the eerie effect of Miss Maleczek's stage piece when he wrote in this text about the striking

contrast between the ‘absolute stillness and the convulsive light’” (271). In-between the extreme ‘sensory binary’ of being and nothingness, nothing is stable and everything is in flux producing the “‘mystery of the vision’” (Ibid.). A ‘mystery’ located in a locus of process, where senses swap functioning producing a multiplicity of forms: “‘the current adaptation is the equivalent of hearing poetry read to sculpture’” (Ibid. 275). The undefined, vague ‘eerie’ reality that Gussow experiences as a ‘mystery’, is becoming less so in Brater’s 2014 review, reflected in Brater’s choice to illuminate a sense of being in-between ontological extremes. But again, Brater may describe the effect and experience, but the cause itself is not dissected in detail – the process of perpetually assimilating technology is being habituated.

McMullan’s 2007 review of a video recording of the holographic production mentions Robert Scanlon’s 1987 review. Scanlon as Gussow discusses the unfixed and fluid nature of the image experienced and ‘praised the haunting quality of the piece’ (62). The oscillation in-between the fixed and fluid nature of the contemporary ontological condition, sitting in a locus McMullan describes as an ‘ontologically ambiguous space’ (Ibid.), is still novel, noticed and dissected by McMullan in 2007, where she states it is ‘a kind of literal “post-human” space’ (Ibid.). A space that again ‘was haunting, diaphanous, compelling’ (61), but the cause of Beckett’s ‘ontologically fragile bodies’ (60), rather than just the effect, is explored in detail by McMullan in 2007. Revealing that there is an awareness of the projecting practices of the Flesh or sensory body, as they oscillate in-between the self-other, or self-technology. The projecting practices with which we use to construct a world to inhabit, have not become an unknown and habituated process: ‘In much of Beckett’s theatre, the intense effort to see the image of the body or body fragment’ (61). Haunted by our desire to see our phantom other, McMullan notes the tension in-between the self-other projection; the actor-character in which Beckett ‘casts the body on stage as an already mediated phantasm: the embodied imagination imagining its own embodiment’ (61). Nothing is real and all is virtual, and reality is generated by ‘deducing models of reality by virtual paradigms’ (Ibid.). As Brater states of the technology in 2014:

Holography, which tricks the mind into undergoing the same process it used to perceive what is actually in front of us, is a sly three-dimensional interpretation of Beckett’s figures, who seem to be simultaneously absent and present. As the MIT exhibition notes “a holographic image engages the eyes and brain in a way that feels like the real world – yet the hologram is simply light; the material is gone.

(274 (*Jeweled Net*))

The human and its world are a projection before an actualization. As with the use of the pre-performance performance the human rehearses the projective act of constructing a stable world and I before determining which one has the highest probability of coming into being. This phantom pathfinder embodies Merleau-Ponty's principle of Hyperreflection. 'Hyperreflection' (*surréflexion*) is a pre-subjective act, an act of comparison and compromise found in *The Visible and the Invisible* (VI). This principle demonstrates that it is the reversibility of subject and object within the body that is the fundamental manifestation of being: 'Hyperreflection is the effort to take seriously these spaces of genesis ... that remains sensitive to the silence of what cannot be said ...' (Johnson 1993: 46), the words *not* spoken, the choices *not* made, the multitude of worlds *not* created, but always present as possibilities and probabilities. In a universe of probabilities and process what is *not* said has as much presence as what *is* said, neither dominates. Beckett's text of *The Lost Ones* and UNMAKEABLELOVE actualize the residual; they are the words we dispose of, what we cannot say, the unspoken remains, present but suspended, refugees from any stable ontology and perhaps humanity's future. We are the remains from an infinite choice of worlds and I.

What is *not* tangibly created through the process of probability algorithms choosing and defining a (moving) probability universe, *is* conversely defined, refined and haunts that tangible probability world as the *next* probability and possibility, the unspoken remains that are simultaneously present and anticipating what is *about* to happen, propelling and projecting us forward into another probability future; we are our future now. These algorithms produce an anticipatory moment that oscillates in-between all the possibilities of probability, actual-virtual, past-future, memory-imagination. An anticipatory moment that forces attention on the *imaginative effort* required to recreate a world and I, and it is that *effort* that is the creation, the artwork. The act of Beckett writing is the text; the experience of describing the act itself is the artwork, the act of creation made flesh, we are what we do, as Merleau-Ponty states: 'I can, therefore I am' (VI 313/260). The '*imaginative effort required*' for this creative process is the medium through which the artwork is conveyed and is the artwork itself, the imagination made flesh – 'content is form and form is content'; has Beckett become a slave to his own form? The reversibility of both creates a moment of manifestation, an actualization of the art, making actual the virtual, and is commented on by Beckett as he speaks of potential readers of *Finnegans Wake* by James Joyce:

Here is a direct expression – pages and pages of it ... You are not satisfied unless form is so strictly divorced from content that you can comprehend the one almost without bothering to read the other.

Our Exagmination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress (1929)

The medium is the art, and in this case the medium is the *effort* of the human to *imagine*, specifically through the human Flesh-body. In the pre-constructed world of UNMAKEABLELOVE what the torch user sees and projects for the audience is not the imagination, is not what they *want* to see, it is not a construction of their own choice, as choice implies an oppositional ontology, and within a universe of probability algorithms there is no yes-no choice, it is a process of comparison and compromise made in a relationship with the algorithms. What is seen is the *effort* required to make the art, the *effort* is the art and the medium through which the art is produced ‘form is content and content is form’. The algorithms reveal *The Lost Ones* universe is constructed from a particular mathematical equation based on the highest possible odds. The torch user repeats this algorithmic decision-making process based on the highest possible odds, in collaboration with the machine, by deciding *up-to* what point, percentage or degree that that reality revealed is right, wanted or correct *enough*, reaching the limit-case of the system-being, and then moving on, as the torch moves on to the next probability compromise. Within this world there is no defined choice, control or power, it is always a compromise affected between moving moments of the real-unreal, actual-virtual, past-future.

‘alone together’.

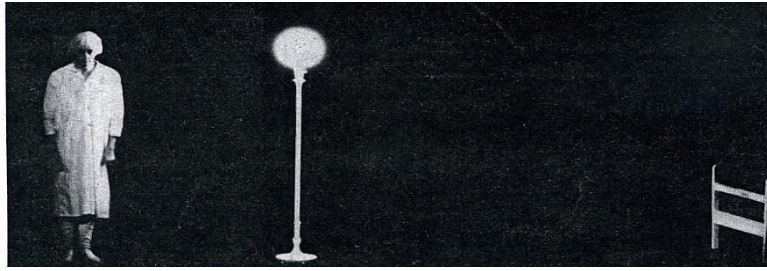
The effort is the artwork, the imagination made flesh. A Flesh made in collaboration with the other and world, and is the fundamental process of creation manifested throughout Beckett’s creative life. I will be examining archival material on the creative genesis of the text, the contractual process with publishers and production companies, the text itself, and the premiere and subsequent productions. I will be focusing specifically on the later theatrical plays that were written in-between the late 1970s and 1980s: *A Piece of Monologue* (1979), *Ohio Impromptu* (1980), *Catastrophe* (1982), and *What Where* (1983), (see chapter one for an exploration of the television plays of this period *Quad* (1980-81), and *Nacht und Träume* (1982). Through a comparative examination of this material we can again see the co-creative and collaborative processes fundamental to Beckett’s aesthetic; an embodiment and

manifestation of an ‘alone together’ philosophy, that promoted unity, harmony, humanity, and an understanding that the human is a part of, as much as apart from the whole.

No-where is this collaborative aesthetic more prominent than in the act of Beckett writing ‘for’ a request. So much of his work, and certainly all the later plays were written in response to an appeal. To what degree is that work of art influenced, informed and shaped by the person and the context of the request, and is this important? For example, we know Beckett simplified his television plays for the technical skills of the BBC film studios, but re-introduced those same complications when directing the filming of those same teleplays in the SDR television studios in Germany. Do these other influences beyond Beckett’s immediate artistic intuitions need to be included in examining how Beckett’s art is created and thus interpreted? This again directly reflects on the extent to which we consider art to be a co-creative act, and the impact this will have on the present and future representation of Beckett’s work. How much does writing ‘for’ shape or form what is written, and is this important?

A Piece of Monologue (1979).

Of the shorter later plays *A Piece of Monologue* was the first to be written by Beckett in response to a request, and in this instance from David Warrilow (fig. 5.14). The success of Warrilow’s recent staging and performance of Beckett’s prose text *The Lost Ones* would have undoubtedly influenced the request and positive response from Beckett. As with Beckett’s relationship with the BBC there is a sense of a co-creative process, as Beckett is again presented with a menu of ideas for the play, admittedly after Beckett had requested what ideas Warrilow had in mind; Warrilow writes: he ‘had an image of a man standing on stage lit from above. He’s standing there in a sort of cone of light. You couldn’t see his face and he’s talking about death’ (*Jobs* 1:1&2 (1992): 120). Beckett felt that he was too close to death himself to write on the subject and replied to Warrilow: ‘I think the best wd. be for you to make your own selection from existing texts’ (*UoR*: SB to DW 1 October 1977). This again would effectively create a new piece of work from the previous ‘false starts’, in-effect creating a ‘Residua’ piece by Beckett but at one remove.



5.14. David Warrilow in *A Piece of Monologue*.
<https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detail>

The archives reveal that Beckett had worked on a script at first entitled ‘Gone’ from 15 May 1977 (BC HER/091, BC MSS DRAMA/PIE), but gave up on the piece unfinished November 1977. Until again at the request, this time from Martin Esslin January 1979, for any unpublished material to go into the *Kenyon Review*, (a literary rather than performance context, therefore can we not equally say that the genesis is a transmediation and adaptation?). This second request acted as a catalyst for Beckett to heavily revise and add the briefest of stage directions to the text. Beckett sent the text, now entitled *A Piece of Monologue* to Esslin and Warrilow on his own 73rd birthday. Warrilow performed it on the opening night of 14 December 1979 at La Mama ECT (Experimental Theatre Company) New York (BC STAGEFILE/SHO – 1979/2). Even Beckett’s own translation into French of *A Piece of Monologue* which was finished in February 1982 and delivered to Les Éditions de Minuit by 2 March 1982, becomes the *process* of continuous incompleteness in relation to a world and other through ‘adaptation’, due to “‘insoluble problems”, [which] again was eventually “reduced to a free version, shorter, entitled *Solo*” (UoR SB to DW 12 March 1982). Beckett’s creative genesis produces art that is autogenic; it develops itself every time it is engaged with. It is the creative effort that is the art and medium through which the art is created. And if Epigenesis is the rise and fall of inherent latency, then Beckett contains all possibilities, probabilities and latencies in perpetuity. Therefore, any reproduction of Beckett is pure ‘Beckett’, no matter how much it deviates from the published text.



5.15. David Warrilow and Rand Mitchell. *Ohio Impromptu*, The Harold Clurman Theatre production at the Edinburgh Festival, 1984. (UoB MM/REF/PE/WR/11).

Ohio Impromptu (1980).

Again, the creative genesis for Beckett writing *Ohio Impromptu* was through a request, and for a specific purpose. Associate Professor of English S. E. Gontarski, at Ohio State University, Ohio, USA, asked Beckett if he would write something for an International Symposium to be held at the university in May 1981 honouring Beckett's 75th birthday (BC STAGEFILE/SHO – 1981/1). Agreeing to do his best Beckett had many 'false starts' between March-April 1980, completing the piece in late 1980. Beckett, Gontarski and Alan Schneider, Beckett's American director, all chose David Warrilow to play the Reader. The text of *Ohio Impromptu* actualizes the phantom other, by presenting a mirror image Reader and Listener (Cézanne's self-portrait?) seated at the corner of a table, where the Reader reads from a book a 'sad tale' (fig. 5.15). The Listener controls the telling of the tale by knocking on the table. At the end of the spoken text they have grown to be as one: '*raise their heads and look at each other. Unblinking. Expressionless*' (Beckett 2009c: 139-40). In 1996 Knowlson notes that at this point the stage image converges with the narrative (665), effectively merging the real with the unreal on a stage of representation. This demonstrates that the layers and picture planes of reality are multiplying, shifting, merging, and superimposing on top of each other. But more than this, there is the sense that the whole of the 'shorts' mentioned in this chapter are written as extended stage directions rather than scripts, which would undoubtedly result in the 'exact', 'precise' and 'perfectionist' production Beckett apparently wanted, but due to the human element would inevitably fail and falter, reproducing Beckett's locus of creation.



5.16. Donald Davis, Daniel Wirth & David Warrilow. *What Where*. The Harold Clurman Theatre production at the Edinburgh Festival, 1984. (UoB MM/REF/PE/WR/11).

What Where (1983).

The creative genesis of *What Where* also stems from a request, for the 1983 Autumn Festival in Graz in Austria. The request came in the summer of 1982 but Beckett took until

20 March 1983 to finish it to his own ‘dissatisfaction’ (Knowlson 1996: 828; note 20). This stage play was initially written in French as *Quoi où* then translated into English as *What Where* and staged with *Catastrophe*, both plays in their English world premiere, and with a reprise of *Ohio Impromptu* in its New York premiere at the Harold Clurman Theatre, New York on 15 June 1983 (fig. 5.16), with Alan Schneider directing (BC STAGEFILE/SHO – 1983/1). The French version was translated into German by Elmar and Jonas Tophoven for a SDR television version *Was Wo*, that was directed by Beckett with the assistance of Walter Asmus in 1985, giving Beckett the potential of rectifying the ‘dissatisfactions’ of the original stage play through another media of television, it was broadcast by SDR (Stuttgart) in 1986. The filming of *Was Wo* in Stuttgart took place 18-28 June 1985 (BC MS3097/2), allowing a greater length of time for filming than the BBC. This SDR production effectively created Beckett’s last teleplay, and at the time is as close to what he wanted to achieve as possible, which was then re-adapted for a new stage version *What Where II* (Acherley & Gontarski 2006: 640). This effectively creates a transmediated work able to be adapted from one media to another due to the fact that Beckett’s work is in a continuous state of incompleteness. Interestingly in 2009 Everett Frost acknowledges that ‘Beckett’s final performative gesture would be to so fuse theatre and media in the evolution of a single work that they can no longer be extricated from each other’ (Beckett 2009a: xxii).

Again, as with the previous late plays the text is written as stage directions, and thus it is only in the process and effort of performance that the text comes into being. Asmus states that when filming in Stuttgart: ‘it was [a] “work in progress” I had most of all the impression that it was shaped and developed as we went along because it was really a process of finding the right image for Bam’ (JEK A/7/12). This questions the idea that in Beckett’s world any fixed reality or presence; “‘life material” can simply be accessible (what?) or simply *there* (where?)’ (Caselli in Ben-Zvi 2003: 335). Martin Esslin suggests that ‘in Beckett’s theatre “what [characters] do is who they are”’ (Ibid.), embodying the Merleau-Ponty principal of ‘I can, therefore I am’. It is the body moving through space, in that moment, making and filling a vacuum that de- and re-creates a world as Merleau-Ponty’s states ‘emergent totality lies in behaviour’ (N 268/207). As the emergence of ‘Malone’ is the creation of his world in the process of a man recording the *process* of its de-construction and his own death in relationship with the other, so with Bam coming into and out of being: ‘They are all totally exhausted. They come from death and go to death’ (Beckett to Asmus JEK A/7/12).



5.17. *What Where*. *Art Over the Borders*. 25 July 2018. Facebook.

Again, existing purely in the process of the act, produces an ambiguous text neither entirely present nor completely material, embodied in the textual contradictions of the; vague ‘possible’ and the precise ‘Same’ of the characters: ‘*Players as alike as possible. Same long grey gown. Same long grey hair*’. A paradox matched by the extremes of staging; a precise ‘3m x 2m’ ‘Playing area (P)’, with imprecise lighting ‘dimly’, ‘shadow’ in a ‘General dark’ and vague ‘Downstage left’ of V (Beckett 2009c: 153), effectively accommodating any actor, any stage size, any world. In-between presence and absence, actual and virtual able only to ‘investigate the conditions that allow presence and materiality to “reappear” as such ... It is the figure of Bam as a “deviser devised”’ that brings the world into being (Caselli in Ben-Zvi 2003: 335). As scribe and witness, object and subject, we create as we are created; the self is self as other, and everything is a reflection. Bam is both the source and product oscillating in-between the actual and virtual. It is only the autogenic moment, the creative moment, experience, process, false start, and effort of creation that can be felt, there is no end. In a locus of perpetual emergence would we see as Bam sees?

Premiere Reviews of *Ohio Impromptu*, *Catastrophe* and *What Where*.

Analysing the original critical reviews of the Harold Clurman production of *Ohio Impromptu*, *Catastrophe*, and *What Where*, in New York 1983-1984, and at the Edinburgh Festival 13-25 August 1984, all reinforce the principle that Beckett pre-figures our experience in the digital and virtual world (all refs. BC STAGEFILE/SHO – 1983/1, 1984/1, 1984/2, JEK A/8/1/52 & JEK A/8/1/54). In-between ‘something and nothing, between consciousness of the void and the void itself’, all three show the artist ‘struggling with the action of making art’, where the art ‘queried the purpose of human existence [and] the purpose of its own existence’, and the effort is the art in an ‘uncanny distillation’ (*Saturday Review* Jan-Feb 1984). These ‘playlets’, ‘miniplays’ (*Newhouse Newspaper* 15 June 1983),

‘mesmerizing trifles’ (*Daily News* 16 June 1983), Residua and ‘murky fragments’, have an ‘incantatory power’ (*The New Yorker* 1983), where ‘the intensity of the artistic vision’ forces a locus of process to appear and all is ‘open to interpretation’ (*The New York Times* 16 June 1983). A sensory intensity that overwhelms and hypnotizes sensory cognition, turning-off thought: ‘We are transfixed by the intensity’ (*The New York Times* 10 July 1983), overwhelmed by its ‘Mesmerizing!’ (*Daily News* 16 June 1983), ‘powerful’ (*Village Voice* 1983), ‘haunting’ (*Women’s Wear Daily* 1983), ‘Haunting! My imagination was spellbound!’ (*The New Yorker* 1983). Overwhelming the projecting practices of the Flesh, the world that we inhabit is knowingly pre-constructed in a ‘definitive for our time’ (*New York Post* 1983). *The Theatre Column* speaks of what is not there in *Ohio Impromptu*, ‘Weighing Absence’ in a tale ‘enclosing his nothingness’ surrounded by phantom ‘after images’ as the new senses or Flesh appears and ‘his hand sighs’, and past, present and future merge in a ‘paradoxical conflation of narrative past tense and dramatic presence’.

In order of presentation the critics reveal our sense of being in a locus somewhere in-between being and nothingness. *Ohio Impromptu* (all refs. JEK A/8/1/38), ‘is the act of reading, of telling a story ... the act of thought, the art of writing’, the ‘artist as creator’, producing a moment of autogenesis: because ‘Beckett’s writing ... exists by virtue of what it creates in us, the plays we write in our minds about the plays, rather than what they boldly state’, creating an infinity of options ‘why not all these possibilities and others’. We create as we are created; we ‘see and hear ourselves “performing” our lives ... one figure divided – the Self and the Other’ projection, and reified reception, the other as self (*Saturday Review* 1984). In-between the actual and virtual *Catastrophe* (all refs. BC STAGEFILE/SHO – 1983/1, 1984/1, 1984/2, JEK A/8/1/52 & JEK A/8/1/54), equally produces a moment of autogenesis for the participator of Beckett as ‘I also heard hoofbeats and the turning wheels of a tumbrel [it] was only an aural hallucination from my own spellbound imagination’ (*The New Yorker* 1983), ‘cooking up reverberations’. The Assistant equally trapped in a quantum world with ‘the sense of possibility and impossibility in the bloody job’ (*Other Stages* 16 June 1983). In between being and nothingness is the ‘artist being harassed by the state’ (*Saturday Review* Jan-Feb 1984), ‘the vision of an artistic work, being altered ... or desecrated’, and ‘the big man is a metaphor for the manipulation of the artist’ (*Newhouse Newspaper* 15 June 1983) – but the Protagonist is ‘the Protagonist’ and art – it is the creative effort that is the art and medium through which the art is created, by all present. We see the effort and tortuousness involved in moulding, habituating and normalizing the creation of an

orthodox self, other and world, as in *What Where* (all refs. BC STAGEFILE/SHO – 1983/1, 1984/1, 1984/2, JEK A/8/1/52 & JEK A/8/1/54); ‘the portrait of the Protagonist in *Catastrophe* – an emblematic figure of the death in life’ but also of the possibilities beyond the orthodox enculturation (*The New York Times* 16 June 1983). Becoming our multiple selves ‘These figures we have seen seem to be components of one man’, ‘the invisible Bam is an inner self, governing visible behaviour – the Self and the Other again – except that this time the Other is fragmented’, ‘all parts of one person’ (*Saturday Review* Jan-Feb 1984), ‘that move through the routine tasks of inflicting and suffering pain’, “We’re in Limbo [in] an eternal search that will not yield an answer” [Alan Schneider], ‘an eternity of time’ ultimately asking “Are you free” (*Other Stages* 16 June 1983) to outline and define a world and I that exists beyond the orthodox, beyond the conventional dualism of subject and object?

As both object and subject Beckett’s ‘Third way’ revealed that:

I am, the thing that divides the world in two ... I’ve two surfaces and no thickness, perhaps that's what I feel, myself vibrating, I'm the tympanum, on the one hand the mind, on the other the world, I don't belong to either.
(*The Unnamable* 2010c: 100)

Beckett revealed that ‘I am, the thing that divides the world in two’, I am the flesh, the body, the borderland, gap, and ‘no-man’s-land’, that oscillates in-between the rational, reasoning and logical mind and an external chaotic universe. I am my world of precisely projected repetitions *failing*, I am the failure of the *about* to happen, the failure of all possible probabilities, I am the failure that decentres and recreates a space of genesis, a space of generation in-between being and nothingness. This failure develops the conclusion from the previous chapter and is contrary to it, because it is the failure of memory and imagination, orthodoxy, habits and conventions to be precisely repeated that creates a space of genesis for the appearance of a ‘here’ and ‘now’, enabling a stable ‘I’ to be placed ‘here’. Failure is an evolutionary success.

This chapter revealed that Beckett pre-figured our ontological condition in the digital and virtual realm, that points forward to a Quantum world. Any technology whether a stone flint or AI is an extension of human capability. Thus, as our understanding of the human condition evolves, the technology we invent mirrors that evolution. The current human understanding of the processes of creation are made manifest through our technology – the act of creation made flesh. One of the most immediate examples of this symbiotic

relationship in-between the human and technology, is that due to the increasing speed of technological innovation the human is currently unable to habituate and assimilate the technology into, and as a part of the body fast enough – thus the human is in a constant process of habituating but never assimilating technology. If we have habituated the *process* of habituation, we do not know that our sense of being exists in a locus of process, and in a state of metaphysical multiplicity. And if we do not know that we have to create the world that we inhabit, why would we?

It is the *failure* of the projecting practices of the body to repeat, habituate, assimilate, and normalize the relationship in-between the object and subject, self, other and world, body and technology that reproduces our current locus of process. It is the same failure of the projecting practices to assimilate a world that produces the same locus of process as Beckett's 'Third way', Merleau-Ponty's and my 'Flesh', Cézanne's seeing with the innocence of a new born child, the probability algorithms producing the digital and virtual realm, and a future Quantum universe, that creates the infinite possibilities of re-creation.

This chapter also exposed that performance is always contextualized, always mediated through our current conditions. From this position projecting backwards forwards, the intimate relationship between the evolution of performance and the evolution of technology can be exposed. Consequently, both the current and future human condition within this relationship and evolutionary process is uncovered. In understanding how technology and the human interact the next stage of the human evolutionary process may also be predicted. Identifying the lineage of the ontological genealogy of the digital and virtual human points forward to a Quantum human and world, and is the realm of the conclusion

Conclusion.

Samuel Beckett in Quantum Reality.

‘Virtual’ is derived from the Medieval Latin *virtualis*, itself derived from *virtus*, meaning strength or power. In scholastic philosophy the virtual is that which has potential rather than actual existence.

(Lévy 1998: 23)

‘exist’ is derived from the Latin *sistere*, to cause to stand or place, and *ex*, outside of. Does existence therefore mean being in a place or leaving it?

(Ibid: 28-29)

I can, therefore I am: life as a transspatial emergence ... “neither here, nor here, nor here”.

(Merleau-Ponty 1959: VI 313/260)

Samuel Beckett's death occurred at the inauguration of the digital age in 1989 activating certain latent tendencies within Beckett's work and de-activating others, provoking this project's investigation into how Beckett pre-figured our experience in the digital and virtual world. Through a process of compounding and extending Merleau-Ponty's early and late principles I experimented with the nature of what constitutes subject and world construction in the process of bringing a world into being, before offering a system that demonstrates how we bring a world and I into being. In applying these principles to Beckett's realm, I explored how they function in relation to the construction of his world, and how this may pre-figure our experience in the digital and virtual world. Throughout this thesis I return to the source text and the Beckett archives on their creative genesis, premiere and contemporary reproduction and critical reception, to expose the unique ontological locus of any Beckett text, identified as a locus for being human in the digital and virtual realm.

I discovered that Beckett's locus for being human exists in the *movement* in-between the actual and virtual realm, layering or producing a simultaneity (singularity?) of ontological states and bringing into being Beckett's 'Third way' of being in the world. A way in which Beckett's body and world are not *either* subject or object, actual or virtual they are simultaneously both. A way that always describes a being and realm of probability, possibility and latency based on the highest possible odds that a world and I will come into being out of the chaos of the universe. But it is only since the beginning of the computer age in the 1950s that we have found the ability to bring this world into being through our tools and technology, to externalize and explore this world. I discovered that Beckett understood that the tools we invent embodies the processes we use to bring a world into being. Therefore, Beckett's use of increasingly complex technology embodies a continuum that exposes human evolution.

I discovered that by having an overview and touching on the whole landscape of Beckett's use of technology in chapter one, starting with the prose before moving onto the more obvious use of the technology of the stage, then into the media technology of the radio, film, and ending in television, allowed a temporal continuum to form that traces Beckett's exploration and expression of this evolutionary relationship with technology, a relationship that exposes the processes we use to bring a world into being. In the latter part of chapter one I trace this evolutionary continuum through a comparative analysis of *The Lively Arts: Shades* project (1977) with Neil Jordan's version of *Not I* for the *Beckett on Film* project (2001).

And as a consequence of this temporal continuum I also discovered that it could trace the degrees of human integration and assimilation of the technology of the digital and virtual world, and the potential consequences on the human experience of the actual world, exposing the wider social, cultural and political impact. Which addresses one of the main questions of this thesis; who or what creates the world that we inhabit? Another unforeseen consequence of this continuum was that in tracing backwards also pointed me forward to a positive, non-catastrophic solution to the perceived problem of the co-existence of man and machine.

A solution based on my investigation in chapter one of the symbiotic relationship in-between Beckett's co-creative processes in the creation of his texts, and metadramatically placing the participator into the same process of oscillating in-between being and nothingness and into the act of (re)creation. Beckett's metadramatic referencing is a knowledge that forces the projecting practices of sensory perception into the conscious act of oscillating in-between self, other and world in order to bring a stable world and I into being. In the actual world and the digital and virtual realm we are oblivious to the fact that our sense of being oscillates in-between being and nothingness and into a possible act of creation. If we do not know we exist in a locus of process, we do not know that we have to bring our own worlds into being – then why would we? Who or what creates the world that we inhabit?

It is knowledge of being in a locus of process that determines whether we exist in the classic existential void, or in a possible new locus for being human, in a metaphysical multiplicity, that accepts that the only 'real' worlds that exist are the ones that we create out of an infinite universe of possibilities, in a locus of process we exist in Beckett's 'Third way' of being in a world, that looks forward to a Quantum human and world. It is our *performance* in-between the actual and virtual self, other and world that brings a world into being. The world and I are a co-creation brought into being through our intrinsically symbiotic relationships in-between the self, other and world.

The next three chapters focused on the details of that landscape tracing backwards to Beckett's first use of the more obvious media technology of radio, before moving onto film and then ending in television. In the comparative process these three chapters focused on the 'live' theatrical performance of Beckett's work since his death, to retrospectively investigate any emerging latencies within these interpretations that pre-figure and measure the human

assimilation of the digital and virtual realm. Chapter two started the assimilation investigation with the most obvious high-tech 'live' version of Beckett's world with Pan Pan's *All That Fall* and *Embers*, before moving onto the most 'live' and least technological productions in chapters three and four. This continuum exists in order to explore the contemporary designation of 'live' and 'live' performance. This in-turn investigated the degree of human assimilation of technology and the wider consequences on our sense of being human and being in a world.

In chapter two Pan Pan place the participator into a 360° black box immersive environment with the intention that they *experience* another world, but there is an inherent and fundamental contradiction in our understanding of how the concept of immersion functions. Being 'immersed' in another world is not an engagement with that world, which is how we understand experiencing being in a world, it is being overwhelmed by that world. The excess sensory stimulation used in immersive environments and Pan Pan's production is intended to immerse the participator further into that virtual other-worldly-world, but the excess overwhelms any possibility of cognitive comprehension and thus engagement with that world, submerging any possibility of *experiencing* bringing a world into being.

Any sensory and cognitive comprehension or understanding in our relationships with the self, other and world in the process of bringing a world into being is made obsolete. The excesses effectively 'switch-off' the possibility of bringing a self and world into being, resulting in passive acceptance and absorption of the world with which we are presented. And the world that we are presented with in Pan Pan's production is the experience of the world of technology. The world that we inhabit and experience is the experience of the technology. The real world is replaced with immersion into the experience of the other-worldly-world of the performance of the technology, at the cost of human engagement in that world.

The conclusion to chapter two demonstrated that in going back to the archive and then coming forwards to the text's recreation allowed me to quantify and qualify the degree of reality of the worlds with which we are presented. This comparative process measured and showed that we have completely assimilated technology into the process of bringing a world into being, and that we no longer need Pan Pan's high-tech 'live' performances of *All That Fall* and *Embers* to replace the actual world with the virtual other-worldly-world.

Beckett uses increasingly more complex media technology to bring the participator into the process of bringing their own world into being. An act that results in Beckett bringing an actual world process *to* the virtual other-worldly-world of the performance, in an act of referencing or comparing the actual to the virtual realm. Post-Beckett's death, contemporary 'live' performance Beckett uses increasingly less technology to immerse the spectator into the 'real' virtual other-worldly-world of the performance. The more discrete use of technology results in Beckett's metadramatic referencing of the processes we use to bring an actual world into being by technology and the self, becoming obsolete. The virtual other-worldly-world of the performance subsumes the actual real world and brings into being Castell's 'real virtuality' – the performance is the 'real' world as the actual world becomes a performance. My thesis concludes that the realm we must reach, returns to Beckett's metadramatic referencing of this performance, which produces a consciousness that it is our sense of being *performing* in-between being and nothingness that brings a world into being. This is a world reaching beyond Auslander's virtual realms replacing the actual world, and further than Deuze and Maturana's media life-based ontology, to demand a re-realization that we are responsible for bringing our own worlds into being. As Beckett demands any participant, whether: the BBC, publisher, actor, director, reader, archivist or researcher to take over responsibility for the worlds that they (re)create.

What the move from the most obvious high-tech 'live' production of Beckett's work in chapter two, to the more discrete, hidden use of technology in Company SJ's site-specific productions of Beckett's work in chapter three demonstrates, is that not only have we increasingly assimilated technology into the process of bringing a world into being, but that technology is taking over that process. In a reciprocal and reverse process, I found that the cognitive processes of sensory perception are replicating the technological methodologies of reproducing a world to inhabit. The principles of the virtual have replaced those of the actual world in the human process of bringing a world into being, producing new and different cultural codes, spatial organization, temporal frames, and a priori conditions of space, time and causality. Working in series, chapter's three and four are both studies on the most obvious 'live' theatrical performance of Beckett since his death, both of which trace a possible path to Beckett's 'Third way' of being in the world. A way in which Beckett's body and world are not *either* subject or object, actual or virtual they are simultaneously both. In chapter three the traditional ontological binary of subject or object, actual or virtual conflicts with the principles of the digital and virtual world, and we look to the actual world to fix the

multiplying a priori conditions in this locus of process. I found that due to technology taking over the processes we use to bring a world into being, we have transferred the technological methodologies of the digital and virtual realm to the actual world, site, context, or object in order to bring a stable world and I into being. But it is in the process of experiencing the relationship in-between the body, other and world that is the site and subject of meaning making. It is the performance, interaction and simultaneity of the projecting practices of the flesh, and flesh of the other that brings a world into being – virtual or actual.

This layering of ontological states and realms is not just a metaphor, it becomes actualized by the digital and virtual industry experimenting with the digital screen image. Experiments that have transferred to the ‘live’ immersive experience and Company SJ’s site-specific performances. Adding to the use of excessive sensory stimulation, virtual and digital technology now adds the concept of proximating the image to the viewer, through layering the picture planes of the image. Company SJ play among the dimensional picture planes of the image, by set-dressing a framed representation of an actual world to create a heightened version of itself – a hyper-real world. As with Beckett’s image whether on stage, radio or screen our sense of being oscillates in-between being and nothingness, but unlike Beckett within this hyper-reality, and in the virtual and digital image, we again do not move into the process of bringing a world into being. Who or what creates the world we inhabit?

Site-specific performance is an attempt to fix *one place* for a body to exist in. An attempt to bring one world into being out of infinite universe of possibilities in a locus of process. An attempt to stimulate a re-engagement with the process of bringing an actual world into being, when simultaneously immersed in the virtual other-worldly-world of the performance. Company SJ’s site-specific performance Beckett compounds that attempt to re-engage the participator into the act of bringing a world into being, by performing in the actual world. But by overlaying the methodologies of the digital and virtual world over the actual world site, Company SJ make that performance obsolete. We no longer bring our own worlds into being. In a locus of process in-between being and nothingness we exist in vertical time, where the buildings, contexts, objects, environments, past, present and future give meaning to the performance. And in this multiverse in-between being and nothingness meaning is individual, isolated, solipsistic and narcissistic. Site-specific theatre oscillates in-between the actual realm, and the *pre*-constructed other-worldly-world of the play, which is based on ideological hopes and dreams. Beckett’s plays oscillate in-between the actual, and the

imagined other-worldly-world of the play that the audience bring into being. Therefore, the only social, political or cultural ideology that exists in Beckett's plays are what the audience bring with them.

In chapter four Gare St. Lazare look to the site of the human body rather than the world in their attempt to immerse the audience deeper into re-engaging with the process of bringing a world into being. It is the body that now carries the methodologies of the digital and virtual realm into the body world process of creation. This chapter investigated the relationship between an enclosed space and body ecology, investigating the possibilities of the body as site of performance, as the centre of creation and emanation of reality, and as a quantum reality of potentiality. I travelled across the whole landscape of Gare St. Lazare's productions from 1998 to 2018 which serendipitously coincides with the relatively early stages of the digital revolution, which as discussed started around 1989 at the time of Beckett's death, to the present moment. In tracing the development of their performance methodologies, I inevitably shadowed the evolution of the digital and virtual landscape. And as this chapter focused on the body and performance, the development of the body's relationship with, and experience of the digital and virtual ecology consequently followed. It is the sensory landscape of the body that now becomes the stage, and the triggering of sensory intensity becomes the *deus ex machina* of this aesthetised experience and life.

The processes Gare St. Lazare use to immerse the participator(?) further into experiencing the 'live' virtual other-worldly-world of the performance as an actual 'real' world, demonstrates that the cognitive processes of sensory perception that we use to bring a world into being have assimilated the technological methodologies of reproducing a world to inhabit. Transferring these technological methodologies onto the body's experience of the physical conditions Gare St. Lazare use previous technological methods as well as embodying and revealing some new digital and virtual methodologies, in the attempt to immerse the participator further into to process of bringing a world into being. Gare St. Lazare use the same extremes of light and sound to create hypersensory stimulation, which appears to force a physical participation (and thus 'truth'?) without cognition, physical proximity, a non-matrixed style of acting, thus emphasizing what is *not* there more than what is there, breaking the fourth wall by placing the participator/performer on the stage and the performers in the auditorium, as well as revealing, showing, and telling the behind-the-scenes truth of the representation in the 'pre' performance performance, which prevents and

suspends the suspension of disbelief, are some of the devices used to superimpose the actual world over the virtual other-worldly-world of the play, recreating Castell's 'real virtuality'. All these devices create the conditions that seem to create an apparently spontaneous and serendipitous 'real', 'live', 'experience'.

Tracing the performance of Conor Lovett throughout the period 1996-2018 indicated the changing perceptions and priorities of contemporary expectations. Throughout this period Conor Lovett's body increasingly becomes the site and subject of meaning making, it 'sucks' in the space around him becoming his own other, and the centre of creation and emanation of his own world; the only thing I can know is the self.

My analysis concludes that by assimilating the digital and virtual methodologies of bringing a world into being, the human projecting practices of sensory perception in-between self, other and world have become obsolete. The oscillation in-between self, other and world becomes internalized, moving exclusively to an oscillation in-between the self as other and world; the void in-between the actual and virtual *is* the material I, I am my existential void, creating a new existentialist materialism or material existentialism. I am the centre of, and creation of my world, I am my world – I am the flesh *and* prosthetic I/other/world, never and forever in the process of assimilation in an infinite multiplicity of a priori conditions, and the body I is the only certainty, crossing other materiality's only randomly and serendipitously.

Chapter five explored this landscape in the hope of determining whether knowledge is power, to regain control of the human evolutionary process that is beginning to indicate a new stage of human interaction with digital and virtual technology in the Quantum world and human. In this chapter I focused directly on the productions of Beckett's work made for digital media and Virtual Reality technology in the revisioning of Beckett's prose *The Lost Ones* (1970) for a mixed reality, in a production called UNMAKEABLELOVE (2008). I also explored Mabou Mines' staging of *The Lost Ones*, originally produced in 1974 as an early example of what is now termed Immersive theatre, coming to the conclusion that Mabou Mines' production produces an analogue experience that foreshadows the contemporary digital and virtual experience of *The Lost Ones*.

In developing the proceeding two chapters' contentions that it is *either* the body or space that creates an immersive performance or world, I found that it is the intrinsically

holistic nature of the body to body and world relationship that produces the creative act. In this respect the holistic nature of UNMAKEABLELOVE (2008), and VR, was compared to that of Beckett's theatrical world, in particular the late plays: *A Piece of Monologue*, *Ohio Impromptu*, *Catastrophe* and *What Where*.

Mabou Mines' 1984 holographic staging of *Imagination Dead Imagine* (1965), repeats the same phenomenon of pre-figuring the contemporary digital and virtual experience, by foreshadowing UNMAKEABLELOVE'S use of technology. Both phenomena equally pre-figure the most recent understanding within Quantum theory of how the human constructs a universe to exist in. A process that replicates the same holistic practice of the human-to-human projection and reception of projected realities (fig. 1). A process of creation which Quantum theory also likens to the functioning of holographic technology. And as Particle physicists are now 'symmetry breaking' in their understanding of the process of creation, so Beckett understood that it is this asymmetrical oscillation and metamorphosis of subject into object and back that is the fundamental manifestation of being.



C.1. Hologram Universe. <https://www.qwaym.com/our-hologram-universe-is-very-real-new-study-suggests/>

This project studies how we *perform* bringing a world and I into being, and as with Beckett and the discipline of Beckett studies, it is a multidisciplinary understanding, of the evolution of how the human creates a world to exist in. It is in the *performance* of a multidisciplinary approach that can push forward into a deeper understanding of the future Quantum human and world.

Tracing backwards, forward to the present and projecting into the future traces and predicts our ontological relationship with technology. My conclusion suggests that in identifying the lineage of the ontological genealogy of the digital and virtual human we can point forward to a Quantum human and world.

Time passes.
That is all.
Make sense who may.
I switch off.

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Appendices.

Beckett on Film (2001) Interviews.

Beckett on Film (2001).

Extended transcripts of all the interviews quoted in the Thesis.

Interview with Gary Lewis.	Page 279-291
Interview with Charles Sturridge.	Page 292-297
Interview with Charles Garrad.	Page 298-313
Interview with Stephen Brennan.	Page 314-316
Interview with Niall Buggy.	Page 317-326
Interview with Neil Jordan.	Page 327-330
Interview with Marcello Magni.	Page 331-346

What Where

Transcript for *What Where*, a production by the *Beckett on Film* project.

Interviewee: Actor Gary Lewis.

Interviewer: Annette Balaam.

Telephone Interview.

Date: 7 March 2017.

Time: Start approx: 2.08pm.

Length: 47 minutes, 37 seconds approx. 47: 37.

MP3 recording no.10.

Voice recording Microsoft Windows Smart Phone, and downloaded onto laptop.

GL: Yes, yes, I think it works really well.

AB: It's a bit creepy though isn't it, when you see what's going on – I see what you mean about the complicity between, because you're both, it's like you're both complicit in your own downfall, in your own death.

GL: Yes.

AB: Yes, it was really ... when you here talking about the torture and the tortured and how complicit the abused is in their own abuse, as victim, that relationship really was quite stark because you were picturing both ends of the scale.

GL: Yes, yes, I think it's because the writings so ... condensed, reduced, you know just the bare bones, so I think we felt in there, and you see it with Sean, that there was almost a sadistic enjoyment of the process and there the inevitability, the various minions who through this cycle of interrogating and then failing. It's the way he trips them: "Did he say where, where?", and then he registers that he's got them, he's put in this new word, this new question, "and where?" and it's "Oh God!" You can, not only can you add something new, but you can actually stop and replay it, start again and then get them, as if it's ... I suppose that's what made me think about the Show Trials. Because they didn't really have to do it, it gave it some kind of perverse legitimacy, I don't know. Because if globally people knew, that in that situation it was, it was just horror, the trials were absolute nonsense you know, people were being forced to confess to things they knew nothing about. It was true of the whole thing, what I remembered was, it was, what I had read, a long, long time ago. Arthur Koestler

Darkness at Noon, the echo of that was in my head. It was set during the Stalinist Trials and executions, so that was the notion I had. I'm sure there would be other things ... but that ...

AB: I think what came through was the intensity, it was the tiny little movements, as you said about the nano-second pauses, and the nano-second ... the you're going to die any second if you even blink wrong. I think that's what came across, your face was just so intense and there was just these tiny movements, and then just this one tear, there was nothing else and I think it's the imagination then projects onto your face. Because it's like all these tiny little things and you're trying to work out, and again it's all those nano things, the tiny things which make it so intense.

GL: Aye, absolutely, it's so small and I think that that too echoes, you know Beckett's writing, because it's, everything is ... the smallest thing is huge, so although it's ... you have this repetition, this ... the smallest changes are so significant, and the smallest gestures are of course so significant. A tear would seem retrospectively, can be inappropriate, like "Oh, God, that isn't in the bloody text", you know, but for me it's beyond, it's bizarre disappointment, that whole thing like abuse. People, like the minions actually are ... they're crushed by the fact that they've let the Dictator, the Dictator down, more than the fact of their impending doom.

AB: That's quite ...

GL: They've actually failed the central authority.

AB: Yes.

GL: And of course, because it's ... the way it ends at the beginning "We're the last five", you know, you've done this every few minutes that, you know ... the other, other, it's just so (?), so the small gestures are ...

AB: I think that element of the failure, the failure and that thought is ... it just never occurred to me, they would be, they would be ...

GL: Maybe they fear, like in all sorts of places, even like the people who were, remain loyal to, like say Gaddafi.

AB: Yes.

GL: Right up to the end, you know still spouting this line and stuff, and then they'll go away and it's (unclear) talk about it yesterday. People who are so ingrained, so conditioned into subservience that they, nobody needs to crack a whip anymore, they've got it, it's in their head and so they worship the ... it's almost like a Deity, the Dictator's like a Deity and everybody used to make up these fucking ridiculous words suggesting 'the Great Conjugator' and it was just bizarre.

AB: But it's still going on. I think this is what is so shocking, is that you'd think, well nothing's changed in fifty years.

GL: No. Not at all. Not at all, because on the one hand you can see it in North Korea, but you also still see elements of it in the West.

AB: Yes, yes.

GL: People who you know, who are like sane, highly educated people just being apologists for ... for completely authoritarian nutters.

AB: It's true, it's almost like the obvious way of controlling a population, like with a Dictator or any kind of ruler, is shifting now with the technology. Instead of the TV controlling the people it almost like, immersive reality is controlling the people. A different way of controlling the masses.

GL: ... to make them feel they don't really need books.

AB: Give them an iPhone.

GL: ... sense of the line, you dumb everything down to the 'I'. I think that whole area is, will need a lot of explanation because it's changed. So here we are where people have actually sort of ... (?) sources, analysis, commentary and all that, but a lot of this space is just occupied by pure old trivia and rubbish, the space itself ...

AB: I think this is the trouble, we don't stop, we don't stop and say ok what is going on because we get bogged down.

GL: Yes.

AB: And just tumbles forward without actually saying well can we stop a minute, you know and this is why I wanted to go back to the performance aspect of it, because there is very little of it in academia. I searched everywhere looking for stuff about the *Beckett on Film* and there's very little of it. You know, apart from the reviews from media, but very little academic stuff. I couldn't work out why and then I thought it may be because they were adaptations of the stage plays. Did you feel it was a stage play, or while you were performing it, did it feel it worked just as well, or was it like a screen play? Did you notice a difference in the way you were performing it or was it, would it have been better as a stage play do you think?

GL: Well, there is a difference here, most definitely because there are some close-ups in it, there's no getting away from the fact that there's a big camera in your face. Although you focus on playing the character and what's going on, it's not, it's not a stage. That never ... I don't think we felt we have to do a stage play here, and then just film it, like filming

something on the stage. I think that would be ludicrous because if you've got, if you're using a different medium then use it.

AB: Yes.

GL: The close-ups have a different, a different kind of ... you obviously work within parameters but in them maybe ... in that case it's not that different, that could have been a stage set.

AB: Yes.

GL: You know I could picture that as a workable set, just the exits and entrances, where Bam comes through, the megaphone, yes, I think that would be quite useful. But I think the close-ups work. I don't think ... you know that it would have been a bit of a waste to throw them away. If you are going to use a camera, if you are going to use film then you see what you can add to it, what you can bring to it. We never felt when we were making it ... I don't think we felt, we knew that we were part of this project, putting Beckett on film, that there were other plays being done, but I didn't, I don't think we felt, that we had to ... that we had to ...

AB: All the baggage that goes with it...?

GL: ... that we had to film a theatre piece, you know it was, it was going somewhere else with it.

AB: Yes, so you felt you did have the freedom from all the, the freedom from all the constrictions that the Beckett Estate were putting on you, did you feel, you didn't actually feel that those were part of you?

GL: No, we didn't, and also it was very much that we sat down and spoke about it first. You know it wasn't like Damien and Michael Colgan said this is the way we're going to do it, and we're going to be completely reverential to the ... we spoke about it. That's where we first voiced the idea that I need some kind of reality, some concrete external reality to put into, to relate this to. And then that's where I came up with, you know, started talking about the Stalinist Putsches. And then I withdrew from that, because once you start working it's different. Sean and I didn't talk a great deal and didn't eat during the breaks together, I don't remember, I just don't remember having any conversations with him.

AB: So, was it just that you felt that it was a silent communication, you trusted each other to just do your parts and then it would be put together?

GL: Yes. It was a faith in the work itself and the trust in the work itself.

AB: What in?

GL: We never ... I can't recall us sitting and saying "let's try this, let's try that", I don't remember actually much of that; we talked more about the politics of it beforehand. But once

we got into filming, we'd separate dressing rooms and there was stuff obviously that Sean was filming on his own. But they wouldn't interrupt filming with talking about, with ... or anything. It was quite a focused shoot.

AB: Yes, that comes across, there's a real intensity, a real tension between the two of you, and when he starts whispering in your ear, it was, it was chilling.

GL: Oh, aye, it is chilling, he carries that authority, and each of those characters would of course know that this is the process, that this is how the machine operates, maybe not ... but this is, they know that somebody has gone before them, the missing character of the last five has already gone, you know, he's already been given the works.

AB: Because it did feel like you were all, that no-one was not part of the machine and the machine was actually what controlled the human, which actually, again make me think of Communism and Stalinism, because they made this huge bureaucratic machine that ended-up consuming the people that created the machine.

GL: Yes, yes.

AB: And that's where I think it still feels so contemporary, because watching it, it was like you were human robots, just part of that big machine, a cogwheel and it was the speaker. You were in this library, this metallic, very futuristic library, it's that contrast.

GL: Yes, that rings true for me, the notion of a kind of bureaucracy which is manmade and almost becomes an abstract, dominant entity, and people slavishly conform, they just conform, years of surrender, as much as a complete surrender, they're following orders.

AB: It does remind me ... make me think as Beckett, one of those kind of things that made him, pushed him forward through all this – he had a terrible life really, on his father's death bed, his father said "fight, fight, fight" that was it (not "what a day") and it was this whole idea of fighting against the machine, the conventions, fighting against what is considered normal and this is part of, I think that *What Where* is. It's him saying, look be warned this is what can happen, which is what the World War II was about and which lead on to Stalin and Lenin. But it reminds you that doing everyday stuff and habits actually blind you to what horrors are really there, because you never have any obvious reasons, you don't hear the screams, you don't have blood, you don't have gore, you have this very clinical image and very efficient people and it's all left to the audiences imagination to know what's going on, to make-up the story and it's that intensity I think, that you have by projecting your imagination, so it's almost projecting your thoughts on Stalin, and how easy it is to get wrapped-up in day-to-day living. That really came across. It was definitely that sense of, "let's make it all

normal” and so torture and abuse and the abuser becomes normalized, and so the last one left you know that he’s going to go through the same process.

GL: Yes. The other thing that’s strange, the names of the seasons really stand out for me because it’s ... the season’s bring images of nature and the world outside, what does Spring mean, what does Winter mean? But when society, when a Bureaucracy or a Dictatorship takes over all those things in nature, they don’t really matter anymore, because times passing ...

AB: Yes.

GL: You said there something about, you just do things – people just doing the day, time passes, seasons come and seasons go and you just do this, you do that, you do stuff to pay the bills and you do this, do this social media, and so the abnormal becomes normal and as in Nazi Germany, and as it is in many places South American Dictatorships, Eastern Europe Dictatorships, all sorts of place and people become complicit in it and in the lies.

AB: Yes, it’s the complicity and I think that’s what came across with your acting – all these different Bim, Bam, Bom. You were all these different people and we knew you were different and you’re looking and thinking ok, it’s another version of him, so it was still you, but it was another version of you and ... but it was almost like you’ve got these multiple identities but your all complicit in your own torture, that’s where it got ... it really made me think about ... when you were talking about the relationship between the victim and the victimiser, the victim and the abuser, it really came across, because you are thinking, this guy’s doing it to himself ... was that where Beckett was going? Is it that time passes, that is all, that is all life is, is time passing and you’re complicit in your own good life or bad life?

GL: Yes.

AB: I watched it again this morning and it was quite intense.

GL: I remember when it was done and I was sent a video and I showed it to my dad and he just ... Oh, Jesus ... I don’t like that.

AB: He would have been of the generation that would have seen that sort of thing.

GL: Aye, aye.

GL: I suppose that kind of thing has existed through the years somewhere. It’s whether you look at it as a ... love, absolute subservience or suppression, absolute subservience to a state or suppression by a state, or by the other level of existence, you know, “what did he do/get, what are we here for, what difference does it make if you just follow your orders and wait your turn to be given the works and tortured” and you do, you do, you know the interrogation and the boot is on the other foot ... Another thing about the play is in the setting of the

characters in the film, there looks like there is no ... I'm trying to remember the last one ... he almost questioned what's going to happen in his interrogation.

AB: Yes.

GL: And he says ... he says you'll be given the works and he says "where" ... is that all, it's almost like he's saying, "I'll be given the works up to which point, up to which point?" and "what where and, and where" ... is that all, and it's like confirmation and about the nature of it. And it just made me think under what circumstances could somebody possibly just blow the whistle and get off, you know?

AB: Yes ... it is ... I think the last one was, you just knew that, that the controller was next ... I think?

GL: ... "I switch off", yes, in a sense he will.

AB: Yes, because he becomes just another ... it reminded me of Pink Floyd, 'just another brick in the wall'. It made me think that we are all just feeding this big machine ...

GL: There's a Glasgow writer – I don't know if you are familiar with the work of Jim [James] Kelman? He's worth reading. He, in fact he was compared to Beckett in some ways, he won the Booker Prize a few years ago for a novel called *How Late It Was, How Late* and similarly he writes everything ... there's not a word there which shouldn't be there. He's an incredibly funny writer at times, but a lot of the stuff is tough and it's a world like Beckett's. He's done a lot of short stories and incredible novels, but I remember a discussion when he's talking about Kafka and fame, and people keep talking about Kafka's being surreal. You know you could look and see Kafka as a realist, you could see that, you could see that Beckett was something like this, and that this is not completely abstract. The reason for me that is telling, and it hits a nerve is because, you know it, you can find, you can find this stuff in history and in society and human existence. So, it hits a cord, it's like you open a book and you don't want to read ... you'll go under ... you don't want to read this, am I up to it?

AB: Yes, I know what you mean. Did you find it hard though to create the characters or the separate characters, did you think of them as separate people, or did you think of it as one person?

GL: Well, I thought there had to be some, because he's beaming(?) onto the director, on to the differentiations with the contact lenses and I imagine an (?). Obviously in any theatre production they would need to be different actors because it isn't physically possible. I thought of the ... you never meet the three people looking identical. The costumes were pretty much the same, for me it was just a slight differentiation in the pecking order and in the level of how much enjoyment they got out of it.

AB: That came across.

GL: The sadism ...

AB: ... yes, the posture and physicality ...

GL: Do they enjoy giving them the works? Did they enjoy their position to be the one who interrogates, even if they do both know, that it's somewhere in the back of the mind, that their time will come?

AB: The difference seems to come across in your body posture, you held your head differently and your face ...

GL: Yes, I did try to ... I mean I didn't do a great deal different, like the voice. I tried to do different things with the voice, I tried to do different things with the tone. I imagine that a lot of people would approach this to be an almost, like a robotic and a monotone ...

AB: As Beckett said and we assume of all Beckett characters.

GL: I would have lost a lot and because there is something to be explored in the pecking order, what is your status, what is your position for the cleansing? Your next basically.

AB: That came across.

GL: The Nazi's were like a sort of untouchable, but they could be just wiped out, they could randomly pick somebody from his inner circle and make their life hell, just to let everybody know that that's what's required of them, absolute obedience, because even though they give it, they can still ...

AB: ... die of it.

GL: ... punished at any time.

AB: That was conveyed in the last one, that the Dictator is going to become a victim like everyone else. That could be quite an optimistic ending. Is he saying that the machine takes over or is he saying the machine is going to ...?

GL: I think our victim is in a bigger picture, just as in the same way a torturer is a victim, you know they have to live with that, they go through the rest of their life just squaring the circle, and that their being that, and that it's ok to torture people, that what they have done is ok. I suppose what they are saying, that what you do to others ...

AB: ... you get back?

GL: That kind of happens in *What Where* and I think, I don't think the price that they pay is necessarily just death, I think it's the whole twistedness of their own existence.

AB: And yes, because the religious, ritualistic almost habitual nature of it did come through, the round room, the books on the floor, almost looked ritual, Masonic.

GL: Yes.

AB: You had, almost a black cassock on and the collars ...

GL: Yes.

AB: There was a real ...

GL: There was like a ... nobody reads these books.

AB: Yes.

GL: Again, there was no real need to censor anything [we censor ourselves].

AB: Yes.

GL: Yes, where different voices may have come from in the past, but the machine has taken over, the bureaucracy of the authorities has taken over, so they really need to burn them like *Fahrenheit 451*.

AB: Yes, they don't need, the machine doesn't need to control anymore, they do it to themselves. That's where the surveillance, it reminded me of the present surveillance idea, simply because we don't need to look at each other and control each other, we do our own controlling, because we've looked at each other and controlled each other for so long, we censor ourselves instead of other people censoring us.

GL: Aye, aye, in many cases they struggle to do it, struggle to conform ... they kill to conform.

AB: Yes, we fight like hell to conform, whereas here is Beckett saying, is that such a good idea, look at what it is doing, it's making us all part, part of this big machine that swallows us up. I feel a bit like that with screen reality and digital reality, we're censoring ourselves.

GL: Aye, people ask if they can be my Facebook friend and all that, I don't have a presence on social media at all.

AB: Yes.

GL: I don't go down that route, in fact that's why I phoned you, I'm stalling with emails.

AB: It's all so demanding, and because there is no human body involved and no human connection it's alienating us and making human relationships worse.

GL: Yes, you re-write your life, you package it in a way that it looks acceptable to you and how you think it looks acceptable to other people, who'll promote you ... Facebook, you put a picture of yourself up every night, and its Friday night and you are never depressed or even remotely fed-up, it's all ... you struggle to conform, you are fighting just to be.

AB: We used to fight not to conform, now we're fighting to conform, [We have a panopticon in our head? Social media is an internal/external panopticon?]

GL: And that's the thing that's different in the digital age, it's the interesting things that Foucault the French philosopher worked on, looking at schools in some housing estates

which were pretty much modelled on the Panopticon, within the prisons there was a central observation point that was all about surveillance, this predated mass CCTV in the digital age. He's got some interesting things to say to do with the notions of surveillance, knowledge and discipline.

AB: Yes, very frightening. I think that reminded me of Beckett and the digital, was the whole idea of almost no language within Beckett's work. You have almost no script, how do you cope? As actor's you are used to getting a massive script, but here you have a handful of lines, how do you deal with that? As an actor when you look at that what do you think?

GL: That's almost the most interesting thing about it, because it's extreme listening, because every word is essential you are really listening.

AB: Focusing other senses?

GL: Yes.

AB: So again ...

GL: It's not banter, or a chat, everything is so, and when he switches it to: "Did he say where?" from "what" to "where", you realize, 'Oh, Christ ... I'm caught, you know, the traps just closed about my leg' it's "but where?"

AB: Did you feel like that, that you were being tortured?

GL: Yes, because up until that point where the trap closes, and it's language that closes the trap, he just switches it, it's not good, he starts from the beginning again and instead of saying "Did he say what?" he says "Did he say where?" and Bim wasn't asked to get him to say "Where", this is the whole colour change here, everything's changed, so it's, he's in an impossible situation, he can't say "You never asked me", that's never going to happen. So you know then that the traps been sprung.

AB: Before you went on set did you feel like you had a hyper-sensory awareness, you are almost like an athlete, where every sense was really finely tuned, because you knew you had to very tightly focus, because it was on the little tiny bits, the nano bits that you had to focus on, rather than the big language or big pictures.

GL: Yes, that's right, aye, that's right.

AB: So, before you went on set, was there a ... I don't know ... as an actor you have to cut out and blinker everything, just to bring yourself into that very tight moment?

GL: It was a very supportive shoot though [is it something that is built into the text that creates collaboration and space for adaptation?]. People were, the crew, there are obviously different departments, yes, the set and the crew helped. It was quite an oppressive setting, it helped that you were supported by that kind of thing. And you could also try something and

do it again because it's a film, you couldn't do that in theatre. So that maybe allowed us ... the fact that you could go back and do it again.

AB: So, film allowed you to experiment more?

GL: Oh, yes, yes, you could try something. You do want to ... you don't ... it wasn't in any way sentimental, but at the same time you want to register, I felt it was important to register the, the fall, the collapse, the getting thrown out of the machine, getting thrown out of life, getting thrown out of the, the end of the relationship with the Dictator, you're not in the team, you're not in the gang, I'm going to take you away and give you the works. I felt it was necessary to register that and not be completely monotonal.

AB: The fact you are saying about the disappointment of being thrown out of a gang and disappointing your Dictator never occurred to me. What really occurred to me was the fear of – we're going to die now – but actually the fear of being thrown out ...

GL: Yes.

AB: That's really important.

GL: There are echoes of that going back in the register – so it's not like people would be terrified that they're going to die, it's that they have fallen foul of their maker, and that's going to have implications for the afterlife. When it's absolute belief and the end of this something, then I think that's how it would be felt, that you'd let down, you'd failed.

Amazing to think that they must of been like that in the Roman Empire as well. In lots of societies, Dictatorial societies, I think the soldiers were completely dispensable and had complete allegiance to the central rule.

AB: Did you feel that the set was oppressive, as it looked a big set, circle, was it a pressing down, because they were quite tall walls, a circular drum, did it feel like that?

GL: You are summoned to this central place, this is the place, this is the arena. The bit that struck me as quite funny, was when he says "Are you free?" you wonder what he's done (to make the two?), it's just ironic, "Are you free?" What the hell are you doing? It could be your Uncle, "Are you free?" That too could be irony "Are you free?", "Are you free?" Am I fuck, yes, I'm free, free to ...?

AB: So, there was space in the Beckett text to explore and expand even though the Beckett estate said you have to do it as the text. Within the text, because there are so little words there seems to be an enormous space to interpret?

GL: I think that paradox is bang on, that's absolutely the key, yes.

AB: It is a paradox because Beckett was so strict, this is what the myth is about, in that Beckett was strict which is why the Beckett estate keeps a tight rein on interpretations, this is

why I get so excited about this production and your performance because there did seem so much space.

GL: Yes, I totally agree with you, there was a lot to explore. I can imagine us doing it again, for example, starting from the beginning and going somewhere else, maybe not too far but I can imagine us going somewhere else with it. I think that could happen.

AB: And that would still be true to the Beckett text.

GL: Yes, yes absolutely I would say that. It's so spare there's a lot of space to explore there, that's how it felt to me, because you look and you look, and you are in that strange terrain, it may be very shadowy and dark grey but there's lots of subtle ... there's just so much to look at even though there's not a lot there in terms of the volume of the words, but there's so much to consider.

AB: Did you spend a lot of time going over the script and thinking how the hell am I going to do this?

GL: It's only one of the things, when you start looking at a page and there's hardly anything written on it, what the hell, you know ... that's the key, you certainly look at a page for a long time, and there's not a lot on paper but it certainly got you going.

AB: So you started with the Show Trials and then it developed into the relationship between the victim and the victimizer, how did you concrete it into a human character, how did you think 'now I am going to put it into a body, was it posture, the body breathing and the looks, was it everything you were doing in tiny detail?

GL: So, for me that questions not so applicable to how I approach stuff, because I don't come from a technical background in acting. So, for me it was more about the actual predicament of the character. I didn't think too much about, for me it's about where he is in the regime, where he is in the pecking order, how much does he, does the language suggest that he relishes this, how crushed is he by being thrown out by the Dictator? It's more about that, how these things register, rather than a conscious, it's more about a consideration of how he understands rather than a technical approach.

AB: Are you forming a narrative, a story about each character?

GL: To some extent.

AB: And then placing them in a pecking order and a status order so they all have their own little story?

GL: And relationships, certain relationships.

AB: So, they actually know each other?

GL: Well, relationship more with him, the key one.

AB: It was always their focus on him, so it was always going back to the Dictator, going back to making him happy?

GL: Yes. Happy's not quite the right word, but yes. A doing and being.

AB: Doing and being the right thing for him?

GL: Doing the right thing for him, exactly.

AB: And then he was having to please the machine?

GL: Yes, there's a lot of validity in the notion of bureaucracy being an entity, the machine being an entity in itself, like the nexus of society.

AB: Many thanks for his time and permission and consent if I do anything with the interview.

Word count: 5,636

Ohio Impromptu

Transcript for Ohio Impromptu, a production by the Beckett on Film project.

Interviewee: Director: Charles Sturridge

Interviewer: Annette Balaam

Telephone Interview

Date: 8 March 2017

Time: Start: 3.30pm. Finish: 4.22:48pm.

Length: 52 minutes, 48 seconds. 52: 48.

MP3 recording No. 13

Voice recording Microsoft Windows Smart Phone, and downloaded onto laptop.

Material for the shooting of the film.

Emailed to Annette Balaam

Date: 8 March 2017

Time: 17:14pm.

Subject: Prep Texts

Dear Annette

So, this is all I have.

Three Shotlists from June

Two brief Planning documents

The HeathRobinson Plan (Rig Thoughts) was not adopted!

The Motion Control Camera was the theoretical solution but the actual solution was improvised on the day.

Charles

Page 1.

SHOTLIST DAY TWO OHIO IMPROMPTU (Motion Control)

MOTION CONTROL MASTERS (Did I say three shots?)

1.

Wide 2S Listener/Reader Camera starts to track over opening words: “Little is left to tell...”. Camera tracks forwards and clockwise round table into tighter 2Shot through into MS Reader O/S Listener through into CU Listener O/S reader.
Covers opening dialogue up until “My shade will comfort you” or repetition of that phrase (NB Should run until “...living alone together”)

NB Possibility to consider. Delaying start of move until: “In a last attempt to obtain relief...” to accommodate earlier CU.

2.

Mid tracking 2 Shot Listener/Reader (ie. Favouring reader and holding Actors, table hands and book)) running from: “Could he not now turn back...” Tracking clockwise through to 2S Listener/Reader favouring Listener. Front on to Listener on: “Page forty paragraph four”. But run through; “Little is left to tell. One night...” (NB This is a new Motion Control shot)

3.

MCU Hand of Listener to cover knock after 2nd “Little is left to tell.”(before “One night as he sat trembling...”). Camera pans up to CU Listener and then tracks clockwise to favour reader and keeps going round reader (as opening shot but tighter) until it favours Listener again. Move should end on “Grew to be as one”. Dialogue runs to “sat on without a word”.

[Just to show I am human I have considered reversing the direction (not the action) of this shot so that it panned up from the knock onto Listener tracking anti-clockwise through Reader until it comes round behind Listener onto MCU reader. This would NOT be an alternative but depends on whether it feels better to have one contradiction to the direction of the moves and on how the close tracking round the back of the reader works in shot one. It is “Either/or”. Ends on

4.

Wider 2S Listener/Reader (Favouring Listener and showing both + hands + book on table) Covers from Finally he said I have had word from....” Clockwise track starts on: “So the sad tale a last time told...” (Jeremy times ie waits till he hears Camera track noise) Track end BEFORE final “Nothing is left to tell.” At which point we are holding the Wide 2S centre of the long end of the table (ie Where we were on location except tighter). Starts to track back on the final lowering of the arms. Tracks back to final location position through the opening location position at same speed as location track.

5.

Variation (possibly for safety) more exactly morning location shot. ie. Starting on Wider 2Shot (as in location line up) and ending on Location final position.

NB. SYNC Light change on both these shots which should start as the Camera reaches the “Location first position”.

GENERAL NOTES: Each shot should have one take with table and no ACTORS.

QUERY: Do we need a tracking mark on the background?

Page 2.

Shot List Tuesday 27th June: OHIO IMPROMPTU

1. Static WS room, window b/g. (Listener sitting LOF) NB Note lens height, angle distance from table.
2. Track back from WS Table (Listener sitting LOF) NB Note lens height, angle distance from table. Various speeds.
3. Title sequence track and panning shot various speeds and hold lengths.) NB Note lens heights, angle distance from table

Page 3.

SHOTLIST DAY THREE OHIO IMPROMPTU

The plan today is to start with some static CU and 2 Shots to cover the central section of the play and then do some of the moves will use John (or other) as body double and will therefore not need a matte (both figures will be real), Some will be "grip control" moves, The static cover could run in longer or shorter sections and can have "pick-ups". I will describe the shorter sections but will probably run them longer then do pickups.

All the 2 shots will need two passes and an Empty blue screen shot.

Wide 2 Shot OS Listener favouring Reader for:

"Opening" till: "Isle of swans."

"Then turn and his slow steps retrace..." till: "...once so long alone together"

"Yes after so long a lapse" till "Then disappeared without a word"

"The sad tale a last time told" till "End" ie hands down

CU Reader for above.

Possibly some sense of Listener in the above ie hair entering frame etc.

Tight 2 Shot favouring Listener for:

"Opening" till: "Isle of swans."

"Then turn and his slow steps retrace..." till: "...once so long alone together"

"Yes after so long a lapse" till "Then disappeared with out a word"

"The sad tale a last time told" till "End" ie hands down

CU Listener for above.

Possibly some sense of Reader in the above ie hair entering frame.

SMALL MOVES:

Close slow track (ie revolve rostrum) from Reader to Listener to start "Seen the dear face (II.34) and move on Could he not now turn back

Start on MCU hand for Knock after “Little is left to tell” (II.57) pan up to Listener over “One night as he sat trembling” then track right (ie revolve rostrum) onto Reader. (Possible tilt to book and track to hand)

Medium 2 Shot favouring Reader track to favour listener. Start move on “Till the night came at last” (II.78). End on “So the sad...” (II.88)

BCU’s of objects.

CU Listeners hand for knocks (various) and final hands down.

Page 4.

CU Book (from front) to cover: “Page forty paragraph four and page turns etc” with stand in hand entering pan up to CU Reader after page turn for braving sleep till...”

CU Reader closing book and hand comes down (from front)

CU Book Readers POV for opening (page turn into: “Little is left to tell...”

CU Book Readers POV for closing (Nothing is left to tell)

MCU Arms coming down to end

Page 5.

OHIO IMPROMPTU

Outline plan of physical requirements:

Very wide shot. A table, 2 chairs, Two men: Listener and Reader (both played by the same actor), dressed in black, cropped white hair, sitting as described. A hat.

Possibly the table is a lightbox (ie light coming from the surface). Beyond and around the table is darkness.

The camera moves slowly towards the table then in a wide arc, slowly starts to circle it, moving gradually closer. It will move through two 360° circles when it will be moving in big close up round the faces of the Reader and Listener.

The first cut will come after the line “My shade will comfort you”.

The mid-section of the text will have some picture cuts (this will probably need to be storyboarded)

There is a second 360° track

Then more cuts until:

After the final knock, the camera tracks backwards to a wider shot (not as wide as the opening) and both men lower their hands. As they do so the Reader begins to dissolve and disappear as directly behind the table a window appears and we are in an apartment flooded with early morning light. The listener does not move.

End.

The effect must be very simple, very emotional.

Getting there is technically complex!!

We need to discuss:

Shoot Days: 1 day Prelight and Camera Rehearsal, 1 day Motion Control, 1/2 Days Normal Camera.

Motion Control Camera: 1 day rehearsal, 1 day shoot.

Page 6.

Turntable rigged into Motion control computer.

Blue Screen

Post Production Budget

Set/Location for apartment

Costume

Wigs

Crew

Dates and availability

Originate on colour finish in Black and White

Music??

Page 7.

OHIO IMPROMPTU

Here is my current HeathRobinsonion on thinking.

I am convinced that an apparently simple visual style coupled with a moving camera is the key to the film.

The problem is the co-ordination of the repetition to allow the matt to be flawless.

So...

A turntable with a precision motor.

A 30 or possibly 40' length of track centred at right angles to the turntable.

As the table turns a pulley system driven by the turntable draws the camera towards the table (at a fixed ratio of 2:1 or 3:1)

Thus the Camera distance and turntable position should be constant.

There are three passes:

Pass One: The reader who sits at a small table surface (ie not a whole table that has to be exactly matched). This may be blue or possible white.

Pass Two: The Listener who sits at the real table.

Pass Three: The table with no one sitting at it.

Lighting:

It would be theoretically possible for the turntable to drive another spindle separated to the left or right of the action which in turn would drive a lighting rig at the same speed at the table.

End shot.

The idea of the end (which leads to the bleed in of the real apartment) should be a reverse of the opening shot.

Can the system be operated in reverse? I don't know.

Can the action be reversed? Possibly if the shot occurs after the last dialogue line.

Either way the end can be solved if the above solves the beginning.

Blue screen.

What should be blue?

Bearing in mind we are finishing on black and white I suspect that the background/turntable and floor should all be blue.

That Time

Transcript for *That Time*, a production by the *Beckett on Film* project.

Interviewee: Director: Charles Garrad

Interviewer: Annette Balaam

Telephone Interview

Date: 9 March 2017

Time: Start: 5pm

Length: 1 hour and 14 minutes, 33 seconds. 1: 14: 33.

MP3 recording No.14

Voice recording Microsoft Windows Smart Phone, and downloaded onto laptop.

AB: How was technology used in your production in the *Beckett on Film* project?

I'm looking at the use of dimensional space, as I'm suggesting that Beckett and the *Beckett on Film* project explored how the body works in a particular dimensional space. As *That Time* seems to give a 3D experience in a 2D screen, the eye and then body seems to be being pulled into the image. I think it's either to do with the camera spinning or the head spinning, turning round and the movement above.

CG: Well it's interesting that you should have described it like that because I think I actually broke some of the Beckett rules in actually doing it. I'm sure you know the play as written, it's just flat on, it's the head of the man, as if seen from above but flat on, through a hole in the back [black?] space. The liberty I took was in order to, in a way to animate it, because in a way it is quite an uncinematic sounding thing. When you picture it being a static face, with his eyes shut for 20 minutes, it doesn't sound very promising, from a film point of view – so I decided to create a space around it, which might you could say, went against the Estate directions, which of course are sacred, although I don't think it breaks as many rules as some of the other *Beckett on Films* do. But the main thing is from a completely technical point of view – the hair is supposed to be spread out like a halo all around the guy's head – but in fact I sat him up so that I could move around him.

AB: The camera was moving around him rather than he was moving?

CG: Yes, technically what we did was make a completely black space and pop the actors head – Niall Buggy's head up through a hole in some black cloth that was in the centre of the space. I did a storyboard – actually I did it by making a little model of his head and it was a

sort of subjective response to the three voices. Because these A, B, and C they represent a different age of his life and they're cut-up – they're intercut and so my interpretation was quite liberal in the sense that I just put the headphones on and just listened, listened to it over and over again and pictured how – relating to where the voice was coming from – how the pictures should be constructed.

AB: The script doesn't say whether the old or young voice should come from the left or right, it just says there's an old and young voice. The young comes from above, and certainly yours the old voice comes from the right side and the middle age comes from the left side of the face, [looking from outside of the screen].

CG: That could be because I'm left-handed. I'm glad you could – I presume you only watched it on the monitor [television screen], because it was really designed to be seen in the cinema where the voices are separated much more, much wider.

AB: Because then the speakers would have been separated?

CG: Yes, you really do get the feeling of Left, Right and Centre. The way we recorded the voice, Niall Buggy did the voice and the part, the silent man listening to the voice, and we recorded – we put the A, B, and C's together, all of the A's, all the B's and all the C's – and then got him to read them taking on the persona of the different ages, so that they would sound subtly different. And then I reassembled, cut them up and put them back again in the right position to be shot.

AB: You did all of A, all of B and all of C?

CG: We did them in chunks; it may be so subtle you don't notice it, but it helped him to do it properly, and then he'd have all day under this black cloth and he listened to the voices and reacted, and in actual fact he had some violent reactions. At one point he started weeping, I was actually thrilled of course, [truth and veracity and reality] but as I say it got me worried and I went over to him and said are you ok, would you like to stop and he said no I'm ok, it's very sad.

AB: You can tell the different voice tonalities, because the older man is quite different from the younger one, the younger one has a softer, slower and a kinder clarity and the middle aged one starts to get a bit nasally and vicious and speeds up and the older one gets sharper and quite callous, but there's a real bass note in the tone, so you can really tell the difference. That was actually what helped me realise which side they were coming from, because they were quite, you knew it was the same voice but the tones and the rhythms were quite different, because that's something else I found about it, it was beautiful.

CG: I'm glad you noticed it, because that was the idea, I wondered at times ... I wondered if it was too subtle.

AB: Yes, it does. I think Beckett wrote it very musically, he was listening to a lot of music and other bits and pieces that were going on at the time. I found that the whole script has no punctuation, but somehow you have scored it as a piece of music with the punctuation. The pauses, tone and speed of the voices and the movement of the camera as in close-up and in distance and then as it spins from left – [to] centre and from right – [to] centre, there's a very strong musical rhythm to it, was that a conscious decision?

CG: I think it was because it was a response to the sound, in that sense it must be musical because it was just – we made the soundtrack first in that method, and I just spent ages and ages and ages listening to it and walking around this little plasticine head that I'd made – with the lens to my eye, so that it would look like it did with a film, and so whether its farther away or closer to or to the left or the right. To the left or the right is to do with where the voices are coming from, but being further away or closer to is literally an intuitive response to the content, to the lines. Some bits he is saying “far, far away” and you are far away.

AB: The more distant the camera was or the closer to focus, it was representing how far or distant that memory is, so when you're above with the younger lad, younger voice, and you're above him, the cameras much more distant and it was almost like your representing the distance of memory, just as the older man was closer to the side of the right hand side of the face it was almost like the immediacy of the memory.

CG: That's right.

AB: So, it seemed to represent how – compelling ...

CG: I'm delighted, cause I think it's a very – it obviously delivered to you what I was hoping it would all those years ago.

AB: So, it was to do with how far or close the memory of that particular voice was?

CG: Well I'm not quite, as specific as that – but I think it probable is because it responds to the words.

AB: Responding to the script and the script is saying this.

CG: Yes, yes that's the way I did it.

AB: The motivating factor is always going back to the script?

CG: Oh, yes, yes completely.

AB: That was what was interesting, why the close-ups, why the pulling away and why the camera coming from the left or right to the centre face, so it's actually to do with what that word is saying in that moment?

CG: I would need to go back to the storyboard to check; because I did the storyboard for every single line ... and I'd have to watch the film again ... we made the film in the year 2000.

AB: Yes.

CG: I watched it a lot at the time ... That's it, that was the whole idea – it was quite a liberty to take with it in a way because you are supposed to be sitting in an auditorium with the thing in a fixed position and just responding to the sound coming from left, right or centre, but I wanted to articulate the space with the camera.

AB: It did work.

CG: If you'd put it straight onto the screen it probably wouldn't of held you the way it would in the theatre.

AB: That's why you've got that 3D aspect of it. Because it was the moving camera and it was coming from different directions and you're trying to work out what's going on and why and ... that immersive kind of thing ... was just starting in the 2000s.

CG: Oh yes. There wasn't anything digital about it, it was shot on film, it was cut using digital equipment rather than old fashioned film, but it may well be that the methodology you could connect with some sort of digital awareness – I'm not really sure about that. I know what I was interested in because ... I designed some of the other films in the series.

AB: Yes, *Waiting for Godot* and *Act Without Words I*.

CG: And I had done a lot of production design and my own art work which is purely visual scene setting in a way, and I was really intrigued to get the chance to direct something which has absolutely no background or context at all, it's pure film, pure film making and not about a sense of place or anything else, and in fact I did have one idea which I didn't use and I'm glad I didn't use which was to reflect some images in the pupil of the eye, of the places. I researched all the places quite carefully, the old post office and the library and the picture and all that sort of thing, but the whole point, it would have been completely off the mark, which I think some of the *Beckett on Film* things did slightly take that direction, because really all the content had to be within Beckett's own lines and not in images of applied.

AB: But the fact you had no punctuation did that open up a space for you to put your own aesthetic imprint onto it, because you were so constrained by what you were able to do?

CG: I think it probably did because Niall Buggy who did it really beautifully had done it on stage and he knew the piece well, but he hadn't done it the way we did it ... I'm not sure how they did the sound in the theatre. The way we arrived at the interpretation was he would read it and I would suggest something about the way he'd done it, like it needs to be a bit more reflective, or a bit more sadder, or a bit happier, to get the changes in tone – I wouldn't say it

was just me, I would say it was me and him, or maybe it was more him than me ... he was very involved with the play.

AB: Did you know any Beckett before you met this one?

CG: Actually I always liked Beckett and was really interested in his work and I'd spent quite a lot, this particular chance for me to direct this particular film came at the very end of the process of making the films and so, yes, I had been aware of Beckett and been interested and gone to various plays and read things before we started on the project. In order to prepare for *Waiting for Godot* I went to quite a few productions and watched one or two films I could get. Of course we shot that for ten days, so not long, I listened to it a lot, then I got involved in the grading and so on, because neither the Director or the Director of Photography could have, they weren't available so I graded the film, ten more times or something and so I got very, very immersed in that particular play which was quite an early one. *That Time* was a very late one and I realised that there's an awful lot in common in the tone and the feel of it. But *That Time* was just incredibly boiled down, like another play, an earlier play edited and edited and edited until there's hardly anything left, just the kernel and everything was without a story.

AB: It's what every director has said, it's this boiling down to almost pure form and just taking away so much until you're right on the very limit of what is visually possible.

CG: Yes, and that's what I love about this particular piece, but it's interesting that everyone's said the same thing about whatever it was that they did. I think it's clear that his process of writing must have been fantastically rigorous and very, very careful and probably more and more and more so as he did more and more and more work and got more and more experienced at doing everything himself.

AB: So the difference you found with the early stuff like *Waiting for Godot* and the mime *Act Without Words I* ... so the design of those, was there anything obviously visual that you felt ...

CG: I think we did *Act Without Words* first and so tried to do something that was boiled down to the essence, something that was both completely real and utterly theatrical at the same time. Actually, *Act Without Words*, you see it is summed up at the beginning, because at the first shot you can't see that, because at the first shot it really does look like a desert, although it was shot in a small studio, we decided we would see, we would know everything about it. It would be quite clearly constructed, but in the first shot you don't, you can't see that. And when you come back you see the ropes and you see that it's just a pile of sand and then you deal with the sculptural reality of all the props, but at the same time you have this incredibly parched world which is made of real things but completely stylized.

AB: Because it is very surreal looking.

CG: And the same applies to *Waiting for Godot*, because that was quite a big thing. You know it's a two and a half hour play shot in one set, but it was done in a huge shed and we built the sky, we built a cyc [Cyclorama] all the way round the shed and then we just brought in fifty lorry loads of stone and sculptured the piles and put grass, bits of turf on them and drove a car up the bank to make the road, so actually everything in there was completely and utterly real and it looked, it has an unequivocal physical reality and it is also totally stylized as well.

AB: Yes. There is that paradox with both of them. You look, your brain is telling you it's real, it's real sand and there's real rock and real plants, you know this is real, but at the same time you know it's not because it is stylized, so you are caught in a little void place ...

CG: Yes, it was supposed to be sculpturally, and it was calling both of them 'Landscapes of Beckett', because that's what they were.

AB: Because they do come across as these worlds, worlds of their own, 3D worlds on a 2D screen and I think that was partly to do with the era, the 2000s, where we were just getting used to digital reality and immersion, it was still vaguely a novelty in a way. Then you came to *That Time* and you didn't have any opportunity to make any depth of image.

CG: No, well I think that had to be from him and the space, that's why we broke the rule and used the space, because it's the space that created the surroundings for the expression of the ideas through the words.

AB: The use of the camera is what I think is so clever, in that the making of the depth of the image is in the going around, and it did remind me of going around a Roman head on a plinth as you move around it in a museum or an art gallery, it reminded me of sculpture.

CG: Well that is great, I'm really pleased that you saw that and my own background is in sculpture and that's how I got into doing production design for films, because I made sculptural installations that looked a bit like sets superficially so in fact those Beckett sets were very, very close to my own art work. I felt that it was an opportunity to do something that was between two worlds in a way.

AB: Because it felt like art, they didn't just feel like an image that you usually get, there was a certain amount of an experience of art in the fact that it was more than just a flat 2D picture, you are actually going around it and this is what was so amazing is, I did feel as though I was going into his mind at times and it was quite an intense experience, so I can see why he cried, because it really does pull you in. I did think the lighting was fabulous.

CG: Yes, I think it was nicely done, I suppose it looks like a painting doesn't it.

AB: It did remind me of Caravaggio's (and Beckett's *Not I*) his light from God.

CG: Well that couldn't be better. He's supposed to be dead, isn't he?

AB: You think he's supposed to be dead?

CG: I've read that the reason his hair is spread around him is because he's lying on a slab.

Although that's where I cheated again slightly because his hair is long but it's not spread out in a halo as if he's lying on his back.

AB: I hadn't read that about the slab thing, because it's really difficult to see when you watch it on the screen, is he just remembering back, or is he dead, there is an ambiguity there, I think.

CG: I think there is and of course that was why it was very, very important to lose any sense of a body, for just a disembodied head, not to see anything else, the head was just floating.

AB: Yes, because that's how it felt. Because Beckett did say that this one was *Not I's* little brother.

CG: It's quite a good description isn't it.

AB: Where was the light source, was it coming from above as well as below or in the face or was it just above?

CG: I think it was above and behind, but it was lit ... there would have to have been a key light in front of it and then another one to the side, there's definitely more in shadow on one side.

AB: The older man on the right-hand side is definitely darker than the left-hand side and the younger one from above is quite bright.

CG: It wasn't changed; it was just that was how we lit it, to make it feel different from either of the three positions.

AB: You could definitely tell that. Did you have to put in a proposal with the Beckett Estate?

CG: Yes, we did.

AB: Was it accepted straight away?

CG: Well yes. I think my idea of having images in the pupils of the eye was rejected, I think I did ask if I could do that. The thing is it was pretty much the last one to be done. I think some of the more, sort of flamboyant interpretations may well have been nearer the beginning and I think when they saw them, they began to be more careful. I think so, but it suited me because I wanted it to be very, very plain.

AB: But simply because, here it gets a bit paradoxical because you're not allowed to do different interpretations but simply and purely down to the fact that there is no punctuation everything is going to be an interpretation.

CG: Yes.

AB: You can't not interpret if there is no punctuation?

CG: No, it's true you can't. Although have you ever read the 'The True History of the Kelly Gang' by Peter Carey, it's a novel which purports to be an autobiography of Ned Kelly. It's spoken with Ned Kelly's voice and there's no punctuation and no capital letters in the whole novel. But as you read it you hear his voice and you actually find the punctuation in the voice.

AB: Does that come from the words or your own imagination of them?

CG: I think it comes from the words and I think when you read *That Time* you probably self-punctuate it.

AB: You find the music?

CG: Yes. You find the musical tones in it, rhythms in it, by just the words.

AB: Yes.

CG: It's not quite as liberated, unless you were to be completely contrary, I suspect it tells you what the punctuation is.

AB: Yes. You have to do it in that way simply because of what the words are themselves.

CG: Yes. But then because they're broken up and put back in between each other, you don't get the continuous rhythm of it, so that provides the punctuation probably, when you put it back together and you read it as one thing you understand how you might deliver it.

AB: So, the film interpretation of the language because it was split into three different characters, read as three streams, three narratives and then split up again, that would not have happened on the stage? So, you'd get a different rhythm and music.

CG: Well I don't know; I suppose it depends how the people who did it on stage decided to do it. I imagine it was always recorded and played back. But maybe sometimes it was just read out live.

AB: It's interesting because if it's read as three separate streams, you're going to get this beautiful fluidity that you wouldn't get if they were read as separate ...

CG: Individual lines ...

AB: Separate blocks.

CG: That's why we decided to put it back together to get that.

AB: Yes, because that's what actually comes across, because it's incredibly musical and as I say the tones and the speed of the camera and the speed of the close up and pull away matches the tones and speed of the voice. So, you've got this real harmony of image going on, every separate element is harmonising with each other so you're getting this beautiful

music going on and it was astonishing, as it forced the questioning of how is this happening, how can you do all that from all these separate elements, it worked beautifully.

CG: I'm flabbergasted to hear you saying all this; you seem to have understood it far more far better than I can remember people understanding it when we last showed it. I also think it's a rare pleasure which you haven't had to see it on a big screen with the sound properly separated.

AB: It would be so different; I'm watching it on a very small screen. I'm watching it on analog TV, not even a digital TV. Trying to get that original experience, because flat screen digital TV's weren't around seventeen years ago. A fat TV and I will watch it now on a flat digital screen and see what happens to the images and how it's interpreted and how the technology itself may change how you receive that image, because it's a very haunting image. Did you have much rehearsal with Niall Buggy?

CG: No, we didn't, except we did have a good few hours recording the sound. In terms of the shooting day we, it took us a day to shot it, because we had to rehearse the moves, to get them right. But we just went through it, rather painstakingly and he just responded to what he heard – that was the brief.

AB: So, it was amazing that he'd done it before?

CG: Yes.

AB: To do it so quickly is quite remarkable, because it's a very complex piece, which comes across like a big orchestra all playing together and yet there's so many individual parts to it. A big part of my thesis is that it is really important to get the director and actor analysis ... talking about your interpretation, what your aesthetic was. Because it's very sculptural and that was what I was very aware of and I think that has penetrated the whole aesthetic, do you think that?

CG: Yes, and that was my intention. I'm very pleased that you can see that, because each of my contributions to each of those three, the visual part of *Waiting for Godot* and *Act Without Words* and the whole of *That Time* were hopefully physically purified and very, very acute and with nothing extra in them, just boiled down to an essence.

AB: That came across very much, certainly with *That Time*, it's just so still and yet there is a real fluidity in that stillness, and this is what made me think of sculpture, because when you look at amazing sculpture it's got that kind of fluidity that seems alive even though it's a piece of stone that can't be alive and yet, I remember seeing the 'Three Graces' and they were just luminous, it was almost like you could see them moving, there were echoes around

them, and that's what it felt with *That Time*, there was that slow movement and the rhythm and the music of it, it was almost like there were echoes of him, around him.

CG: Yes. And because he had his eyes shut nearly all the time.

AB: Yes.

CG: So, it's a shock when he does open his eyes, when anything actually happens it's quite a shock.

AB: And that's good because you're questioning why it's happening; I think that makes a difference. Did you think that beforehand, did you have any kind of preconceptions about doing Beckett because of his reputation?

CG: It was a bit challenging yes. I think by the time I got to directing *That Time* I'd been quite immersed in the whole thing for quite a few months and I was just really keen to do it. It's a big thing to take on such an incredibly esteemed and wonderful writer and try and do something with it. It's rather awe inspiring.

AB: It can carry a lot of baggage, and you want to put your own interpretation in, that was what was conveyed.

CG: I hope, it was a personal interpretation but it was definitely based on the instructions, although all of Beckett's plays have instructions don't, they, they're about how every single detail and how many seconds the pauses should be and all that sort of thing. But of course, there was a great liberty taken with moving the camera, because that wasn't ever legislated for, it became very personal that. It was just me responding, I suppose you could equate that to if you're sitting in a theatre, your concentration might be moving in and out, because when you're in a theatre you don't get close-ups or anything, you probably are concentrating and moving your head and looking at different parts of things, even though you're not being forced to do it in any particular order.

AB: Do you think it works being adapted, because it was basically an adaptation from the stage to the screen.

CG: I think probably Beckett purists/peers might well be quite horrified by some of the films, possibly that one. I think with a big play like *Waiting for Godot* you kind of expect it to have a set and you're expecting different acts and big ... do things normally in a way and Michael Lindsey Hogg shot list looked rather pure and good and plain and it worked. The collaboration that we all made with the costumes and the set and the actors, set ups and the camera movements were all very quiet and respectful. Whereas some of the others where there's more costume and more activity maybe perhaps didn't work quite so well. Didn't work so well in terms of what Beckett might have wanted from it.

AB: Would Beckett have done the same if he'd had the technology?

CG: Quite possibly. It's hard to say, because things get canonised and Beckett was very inventive man and goodness knows what he might have done had he been launched into the current age. You can say that about any missing artistic hero: what sort of rap artist would John Lennon have been?

AB: Personally, I think this one does work better on the screen, because on stage you would not get the close-up.

CG: No, you wouldn't get the chance to study the face and that's what it is, it's the sculptural nature of the face, having all those emotional beats which you couldn't see if you were sitting in the stalls and it was at ... or if it was a theatre, you would just see a little white thing in the middle of a black curtain.

AB: I think that is why some of his later work is so visual and so like pictures that actually do work better on the screen than on stage simply because of the way he was imagining – he was imagining in 3D – he's own imagination and the instructions on the page come across as very sculptural and very 3D. So, you go around the face and you go around, and the instructions are there, certainly with the later stuff, not so much with the earlier stuff, but you can almost see him imagining all of this.

CG: Yes, but then you get the sort of purity of the language, but you also get the descriptive, descriptions of places, which are very, very strong. You're talking about the old oil paintings; you really get the texture of everything and the smell and the sort of breath of the people in the literary.

AB: Yes, because this is how he manages to create this 3D world in your head as he's creating it as a performance, and I think that certainly came across in *That Time*, you were creating that image in your head [Me] as well as at the same time watching it happen in his head because of the descriptive language as well. And also, certainly where you put the music in the language, I think that in-itself was acting like a paintbrush, it was drawing, painting in the details as – it was almost like a baton painting – you were flowing with it, it was almost like you were going into the picture as you're imagining it as he was imagining it and that's where I think I get this idea of immersion is that you're both – we're both, Niall Buggy and myself, were doing the same thing at the same time, very immersive experience. It was like watching a painting come to life, but at the same time you've got that sort of sculptural thing happening.

CG: This is music to my ears.

AB: I watch them a lot.

CG: Yes, you probably have to watch them ... I've got the little plasticien Niall Buggy in a box.

AB: And you actually broke down the thing line by line?

CG: Yes, I did a storyboard, I thought it was the only way to do it, because we had to shoot it very quickly, all in a day, which is quite a lot to do in a day and that's why one or two shots are slightly bumpy which I was disappointed about. The idea was it would be completely smooth moving around and as I say I built a little dark box and I put the headphones on and I went round and when I worked out how to do it, I wrote it all down and then we just did it.

AB: How did you decide on the cut-a-ways or a smooth motion, [of camera] what was the motivation?

CG: As you've already suggested it all came from the language.

AB: What the language was telling you made you decide on whether to do a cut-away or a smooth fade in or fade out focus?

CG: Just moving in or out, closer or further away depending on which voice was speaking and how intensely it was being felt.

AB: Yes, because some of the cut-a-ways were very sharp, some of them, and it was quite dramatic I think, I was thinking why you choose to do a cut-a-way there instead of a smooth focus or transition.

CG: I can't really remember exactly, but I think if you and I were to watch it side by side it would be very easy for me to tell you.

AB: It was seventeen years ago.

CG: I was completely and utterly fascinated by it at the time and I think it was well watched and well accepted, but when you do something like that you put an awful lot of time and thought and energy into it, and I guess people still watch those films all over the place, but one never hears anything about it, so it's great to talk about it again.

AB: It's been a real privilege to speak to you about this because you don't know what the intentions were, but the intentions came across so well. *Beckett on Film* is still studied, still watched on a regular basis.

CG: That was the idea of the pieces was that it would become a kind of standard, a box set that would, universities, and schools and places would constantly refer to.

AB: That does happen. Even though the Estate didn't want any changes each director has still managed to imprint their own interpretation on it.

CG: I think it's probably impossible not to, because even the most clear, unembellished rendering of a text done by a different person will be different, whether it's a different

director or actor. I also think some people had a lot more money than others and in a way the more money doesn't necessarily make it any better with Beckett because Beckett's so in the text anyway.

AB: Absolutely, the money is irrelevant it's all down to form isn't it?

CG: Yes, it is, although I did think much the most expensive one was the Antony Minghella one and I thought that was really good.

AB: I wish I could have interviewed him. I've asked the two ladies and I'm still waiting to hear back from them.

CG: It was very sad what happened to him, it was tragic.

AB: Yes, very unexpected and unknown, nobody knew that that was going to happen.

CG: I did know him, not terribly well, but I had friends in common and socialised with him sometimes and he was just so young and so vigorous and cut down in his prime it was terrible.

AB: Yes, life just throws up things like this now and again and you just have to question it in that moment, I think Beckett does that all the time.

CG: It's the essence of it, isn't it?

AB: He's constantly questioning why, when, where, how and if, and I think here you get some of the answers coming through, echoing with yours. You do have a very clear aesthetic, it's very sculptural and very immersive, and it wants to take you into the image. I think that's what the whole experience was, was almost being pulled forward into it, that's why it reminded me of Caravaggio, because of the way he uses light pulls you into it, physically your vision is pulled in centrally all the time.

CG: Yes.

AB: Did you get any feedback from the Beckett Estate; did they give you any personal feedback at all?

CG: No, it all came through Michael Colgan. Alan Moloney and Michael Colgan were the producers have you spoken to them yet?

AB: Not yet, no.

CG: I think that Michael Colgan was friendly with Beckett's nephew Edward. He knew him because he'd done a lot of his plays and produced a lot of his plays at the Gate Theatre and so he was the motive force in getting Edward Beckett to allow it at all. He was the interface between the directors and the Beckett Estate. The Beckett Estate were not at all keen to be manipulated, I think it's a good idea, I think it's clever of them to have been clear about it all.

AB: Because you had boundaries?

CG: I think people still do have boundaries. I think possibly some of the earlier films of the set which probably made the boundaries, reinforced the boundaries.

AB: Oh, so it didn't make them elastic, it made them more solid?

CG: I think it made them take more care as they went along.

AB: It's such a beautiful thing, like watching a picture come to life. I think people do still watch them.

CG: I expect anyone interested in Beckett will find them on the internet, to get hold of the Box set. The fun would be to project them again, and perhaps sometimes they are projected.

AB: It would be brilliant in a cinema, to see it on a screen that size.

CG: At the time of the release the launch of it there were some big screenings in Dublin, and also at the Barbican in London. I think they might of shown them all in fact, over a weekend or a few days.

AB: Was it actually made for cinema or TV?

CG: Yes, yes that was the intention [cinema], but everybody knew, but since you're talking about the digital age, we already had DVD's, only just, but the dissemination of it now would be quite different.

AB: So it was definitely made for cinema?

CG: That was the hope, but I think everybody knew it wouldn't often shown in cinemas, but like many things it has a limited ... I think it was shown at a lot of festivals and a lot of places, particularly arts centres in different countries and place like the Barbican, in other parts of the world.

AB: It still is shown at Beckett Festivals and conferences.

CG: People show all the films or select a few and show some?

AB: I think it's more some, bits and pieces here and there. Were you aiming, when you filmed it as if it was going to be in the cinema or ...?

CG: Yes, definitely.

AB: Was it a different intention, a different kind of view or look or aesthetic when you're doing it for cinema, that if you are designing and filming for TV?

CG: It can be, but in the case of *That Time* not really because it's appropriate for both, being just a face on a black screen or a bigger face on a black screen, I think it's more the effect of the surround sound, the fact of having the property of the separation between the three voices which is certainly what you would get in a cinema and you would get in a theatre, so that's what's lost even if it's a stereo or if you've got your headphones on and you get proper it's

not as good as a proper big movie theatre, because you see what's on the left really is on the left and what's above really is above.

AB: Yes.

CG: Even if it's far enough apart, even if it's forty feet or sixty feet apart, it can't possibly be coming from the same place, it's a physical space.

AB: Yes, it would be a different experience, it would be different, even though on TV you've got the visual hooks you're linking into, you've got the visual links and hooks that are going on, I think it would be a different physical experience, not necessarily visual, but then that would I suppose, that the physical would affect the visual, but it would certainly be a different experience.

CG: If you've got the DVD's you can easily project those in a bigger space.

AB: Yes, because if your intention is cinema, I'm sure that affects how it done and received even if it's subconscious.

CG: Well I think that particular piece would, works, it works really well if you just listen to it, put the headphones on and don't look at anything, it's still brilliant. It's just a really, really wonderful bit of writing, where ... I've just made a film which I've been starting to screen and I did it with the same intention for cinema and I think sometimes when people watch a video link or a DVD they find the story may not be terribly strong, but when you watch it and you see it on a big screen things that may seem a bit slow about it are not slow, because you are looking at everything and you're looking at details that you can see on a big screen, whereas when it's TV people just write, and write and write and just talk and talk and talk because that's what people expect from TV and they follow the narrative very closely, it's great if it looks good, whereas with Beckett you barely need the pictures because the writings so good.

AB: I will do that. I'll just listen to it and see what the difference in the experience is and see what happens.

CG: If you've seen the film of *That Time* you'll probably remember it.

AB: Yes.

CG: But if it's the first go it would be an interesting thing to do.

AB: Yes, because I'm looking at the sensory reception of all of them, so doing it as individual and separate senses may give a stronger impression of where this sound is. It's like binaural sound, is it in the centre of my head, is it in front of my face, is it in my left ear or my right ear and then also I think it can help certainly with visualizing. I'm after how he visualizes the imagination and how somehow, he gets your imagination to synch with the

characters imagination, again it's always back to the language, its back to the purity of the language.

Ends with many thanks.

Word count: 7,267

A Piece of Monologue

Transcript for *A Piece of Monologue*, a production by the *Beckett on Film* Project.

Interviewee: Actor Stephen Brennan.

Interviewer: Annette Balaam.

Email communication.

Date: 16 March 2017.

One message.

From Stephen Brennan.

On University of Bristol email account, and sent to my private email, and I have a printed out copy of the email.

Dear Annette

Thank you for your recent enquiry. You were correct in your assumption that I am very busy at the moment, however I will try to assist as best I can in brief. I have to say at the outset that if you have been studying Beckett for eight years, not only are you likely to know a great deal more about him than I, but are also likely to be in need of a damn good holiday!

There is no secret formula in developing Beckett characters. In large measure he has already done most of the hard work for you, and to this end he is often very specific about how he wants his work to be done. This is not to deny interpretation, but to remind the venture that this is his work of art with his particular pallet of colours. He does not easily invite other peoples well intentioned colours to be mixed with his, as that can very often result in mud.

I suppose the most important thing to remember in Beckett's world is Lucky's thesis "The facts are there." Man is seen to shrink and dwindle, waste and pine, and the earth is an abode of stones. (in spite of the tennis.) Having lived with Godot for so long (!) when I came to work on "A Piece of Monologue" I recognised immediately the man, the place, the broken record. As you will be well aware much of Beckett's work is dealing with the same subject, the same questions, in a variety of ways. They are all part of the same story; us, here, now, or past, and no certain future that we know of. The facts are there.

There is a wonderful Hiberno-English in Beckett's work, which I think easily lets an Irish actor in particular, tap in to his sense of humour. I remember initially as a starting point thinking of the man in Monologue as more an old working class comedian of the Halls that I had once known, than anything else. In painting that would be like underpainting for tone or texture, but not intended as the statement for the finished product.

Apparently Sam was heard to say in later years when asked how he was, replying "Ah, the head's almost touchin' the wall." And indeed, were you to consider the book of evidence, your past life, your inevitable and imminent demise, with its thundering advance to that singular full stop, and dismissing all theories on its way, I suppose that you might as well be talking to the wall.

Several approaches face the actor in the immersion in Beckett's work. The intellectual, the physical, and the cognitive choices based on life experience, understanding, and collaboration with the director. The ability to bring all these forces together is called talent. There are in performance also, the little things that make each performance unique. Acting is not about repetition or mimicry. It is about re imagining, and self investigation. Any actor who hides behind a character will involve himself in something that has no heart. Good acting requires much more effort and bravery than that.

It is impossible for me to explain what processes I undertook to play "A Piece of Monologue" as they are many and disparate. For this piece the stillness alone requires great physicality ironically, and enormous concentration. Apart from the obvious stooped stance, we decided to have him with one foot forward, which is "active", rather than feet side by side which is passive, as if he were braced for the onslaught, ready to fight. The practical business of standing in the same place for twenty five minutes without movement or gesture apart from facial, has its own demands on personal discipline quite aside from the mental dexterity required for the mesmeric ponderings of this man's final whirlpool.

He is, in short, in fine, a compilation of people I have met, or not met, or seen, or heard about, in circumstances I have known, or considered or imagined, caressed, or wrought, with gentleness or sadness or anger, and brought all these fragments to bare in relating the great art involved in this little man's final departure, trying not to think of other matters. The play could represent one second, or any other part of accursed time, it doesn't matter, in its

delivery I must address the telling of his story with due observation of the rhythms and melody of the song I am singing.

Some of my greatest movements of agony on stage have been at the hands of the Master, but they also remain uniquely with me as some of the greatest works of Art with a capital "A" that I have had the trouble to involve myself in. As in all our lives it is the little bit of grist that makes the sweet moments all the sweeter.

In playing Lucky I worked with Walter Asmus who is Beckett's representative here on earth. He was Beckett's assistant on his last Schiller production, and so through him I felt I was getting Beckett's final cut and being directed indirectly by him. We freely took many of his production ideas and notes, and wouldn't we have been mad not to. From beyond the grave Beckett's hand still conducts the music.

I don't know if any of this has been of the slightest use to you, but for now I must bid you adieu, and every best wish with your studies, which are considerable. Good luck, and good health.

Kind Regards

Stephen Brennan.

Word Count: 983

That Time

Transcript for *That Time*, a production by the *Beckett on Film* Project.

Interviewee: Actor Niall Buggy

Interviewer: Annette Balaam

Telephone Interview

Date: 13 June 2017

Time: Start approx: 4.25pm

Length: 45 minutes, 38 seconds. 45: 38.

MP3 recording no.15

Voice recording Microsoft Windows Smart Phone, and downloaded onto laptop.

AB: Thank you so much for your time, it is fabulous of you.

NB: Whatever you want to ask me I'll do my best to answer.

AB: Thank you. I did recently have a conversation with the director Mr. Garrad.

NB: Yes, how is he, I only did that work with him on that film and I've never met him since, he is a lovely man.

AB: He was, a very kind man. In mentioning your performance, he remembered how concerned he was for you at the time, because it was such an intense experience for you, because of course you are just listening. How do you act when you are just listening, with one of the senses, it is very intense way to act? How did you get your ideas around how you were going to express yourself as an actor with just being able to listen?

NB: Beckett is just such a great master. I think I sent you an email mentioning that I had worked with Charles Garrad previously and I learnt quite a lot from that. Basically of course Beckett tells you the voices are different, that there's a differentiation between the voices and it's his thoughts at different stages of his life, of course he's an extremely old man at this point. So, listening you ... one can't as you know in acting, you can't plan on anything so you just see what happens. You know, the thing was about the voice, is usually when one is acting a role it varies from performance to performance, there is variation. But with *That Time* it's the same, but your reaction to it might be different, even so, the windows of the soul, the eyes are not seen, so the different reaction and eye reaction is not seen.

AB: Because you had done it on stage and as you say doing it on stage is so different from doing it on film.

NB: Yes, it was a very interesting experience, because after we had done *That Time* they then did *Breath*. I had read *Breath* and of course seen it ... two breaths in and two breaths out and two breaths in and two breaths out, and that's it. And it's a rubbish heap and when the curtain rose and then the curtain came down and the lights came down on *Breath* they roared with laughter.

AB: Did they?

NB: And I thought my God, how extraordinary, I don't think I'll be able to forget it, people roaring with laughter, without any words.

AB: That's really interesting.

NB: That happened every time, but of course you have *Breath* in the film.

AB: Yes, Damien Hirst produced that one.

NB: Yes.

AB: Yes, he did it from a swooping angle from above, and the rubbish was medical; trolleys', kidney dishes, sharps boxes, and shopping trolleys', computers, and computer keyboards and detritus. A very modern take on it, of all the rubbish, modern rubbish, rather than the general rubbish. It was a very clinical, very sharp focus, high definition, very white and bright light.

NB: Right, right.

AB: A view from God. It was very different from the original.

NB: I think Beckett did want it to be ... I don't know ... I suspect he would have wished it to be funny, to be something to laugh about.

AB: Really?

NB: Yes.

AB: That's very interesting, because I had never thought of it like that, perhaps you would laugh, but I have never seen it live.

NB: Oh, right, certainly this idea of this rubbish heap, and because you just hear this breath ...

AB: Yes, because it is so completely different from how I would imagine how it would be, with people laughing, when you are just reading it off the page ...

NB: Yes, I found *Breath* ... and *That Time* was very personal to Beckett, I think. I notice that some of the areas he was talking about in the play ... I can't remember the lines but; "that last time he went to look that last time was the ruins still there where you hid as a child, when was that?" and all of that area around Killiney(?) and you know it's all there. Going up the hill, you know, to see what is still there or wasn't there or was it his imagination?

AB: Yes ... did you record those three different strands separately?

NB: Yes. I had recorded them before for the stage production, and then I re-recorded them for the film. We recorded them separately, with the different voices.

AB: The voices were slightly different in time and speed, but it was very subtle, there was certainly a depth and resonance and a change of resonance, were you changing from chest to upper chest to throat voice?

NB: Right, yes. Of course, you get it all from Beckett. When you are doing his work, you get it from him and the rhythm of the speeches and because I think the only way I could personalise it, and I think it has to be personalised, was by obeying the rhythms.

AB: Because there is no punctuation, were you getting the rhythm from the words?

NB: Yes, exactly.

AB: Your own imagined narrative of it?

NB: Exactly, and a slight knowledge of where he was from Foxrock and Dublin and that sort of area, I do know that area.

AB: So, you had some image in your mind of where it was.

NB: Yes. But you could see that, he really does give it to you.

AB: It does make it sound like he is drawing pictures for you, do you have your imagination controlled in a way, but then as you say, and because there is no punctuation you have to find your own rhythms, your own music to it.

NB: Exactly, he was a stickler for that sort of work, for it to be precise, and there are many extraordinary images, I remember he spent a lot of time in art galleries and museums.

AB: I couldn't work out how you decided when to pause or how you decided to speed up or slow down with the text because there is no indication, such as commas and full stops to tell you.

NB: I think ...

AB: Where are you getting the inspiration from?

NB: It's through him, of course he was very Joycean [sound confused, I think we spoke about Beckett's precision and control, what does the actor do, Beckett's marionette; no freed from responsibility, freedom in relinquishing responsibility]. That's it really, it's through him and just obeying it as you went along.

AB: Did you find it harder to act it on the camera than it was on stage or just very different?

NB: I found that it is so truthful, the whole experience of looking back on your life and whether something was true or not, because we all do that don't we.

AB: Yes. So it was that kind of truth, a truth in the image, a kind of stimulating an image in your mind as you were saying the words, was it happening in the process of the performance, rather than pre-rehearsed?

NB: Oh, it was definitely in the process of performance, because that is all that can be conveyed to the audience, is that you are going through it at that moment with your whole ... I remember the feeling of holding on to something, the desire to hold onto something before you depart.

AB: Was there a physical desire to hold onto something as well.

NB: No, because I was stuck down in the [uncertain sound] I was sitting, I was all in black sitting on a stool for the filming

AB: The play reminded me of Shakespeare, with the three ages of man, youth, middle age and old, I think that's where I got the image of it being different tones of voices, and different speeds of voices, for the different ages, that seemed to be conveyed, I don't know if that was conscious of you or it just happened.

NB: I think that's him; I think he instructs us at the beginning of the play, that there are going to be these different voices and he tells us when they are ...

AB: Yes, did you consciously do that or did it just happen in the process of performance?

NB: Oh, you have to consciously do it; you've got to know when that is.

AB: Yes, because you were reacting, because it was a very internalized style of acting.

NB: Yes, but that's just Beckett, and just listening, listening to Beckett, it's intense listening though.

AB: Because it's so different on stage you tend to use all of your sensory perceptions, but on the screen we tend to just watch, but then you had no eyes, all you had was your ears, it was just really intense because I think the audience find themselves doing the same thing as you, mimicking the actor, mirroring the actor.

NB: Yes.

AB: Do we swap vision for sound, so we just end up listening.

NB: I imagine that was the intention of Sam Beckett, that that should be the case.

AB: That the audience mirror the actor and what's on stage?

NB: Yes.

AB: That would make sense.

NB: Yes.

AB: As you had done Beckett before did you have any preconceptions about what you were letting yourself in for, did you know what was expected of you, because you were performing it on the screen?

NB: The screen as compared to the stage? Maybe it was a bit more intimate, I think. It was fascinating doing it on the stage, but I had done *Godot* and *That*, but I haven't done any other Beckett yet. I'd love to do *Krapp's Last Tape* one day.

AB: There's always time for *Krapp's*. That again is another one that is in the dark and almost just a head, just lots of heads.

NB: It has similarities, because Krapp is looking at his work, his writing to see what was the truth or not, it's all about the truth really, isn't it?

AB: Yes, trying to find a truth. Did you find that when you were performing *That's*, that it was a collaborative experience? Did you find yourself and the director were working out what was going to happen in the process itself?

NB: I really think with Beckett, it's between you and Beckett.

AB: It's that personal?

NB: Oh, yes, it has to be, I think so.

AB: So, were you mining your own narratives of your own life while you were performing?

NB: I wasn't really doing anything except doing on the moment, because you couldn't preempt it by discovering it before hand, you had to let it happen in the moment, otherwise I think Beckett becomes too technical too ... it becomes more obscure than it needs to be.

AB: That may be a real problem with Beckett, I think.

NB: Yes, I think so.

AB: Perhaps it is just the simple story of a man re-imagining his life?

NB: Exactly. Then you wonder why he is doing that, for what purpose?

AB: Are you thinking that when you are listening, are you thinking of the why's and wherefores' as you are listening to the playback?

NB: I was thinking about what it is he says, thinking on the moment on what he's saying, that's all.

AB: An actual emotional response, because you cried? Mr. Garrad did worry about that because he wasn't expecting it, and he was very concerned for you.

NB: I haven't seen it for years and years.

AB: It is very powerful and it doesn't seem to date at all. It's very timeless. As I say it is very powerful and is as you say, you connected with it personally.

NB: Yes, it's a very personal piece.

AB: I felt as if I was imprinting my own story on top of it, almost, so it does become very personal, I think.

NB: Yes, I mean I never thought of it as playing a character or anything I just did it.

AB: Really?

NB: Yes, everything else is given to you, like the wig and everything else, so you just lie there and play it, but the only thing is the shock of the eyes opening.

AB: Yes.

NB: And I think that is related to fear.

AB: His fear?

NB: Yes, to do with the end, towards the end.

AB: OK.

NB: I think it is ...

AB: I'll go back and look at that, I think that may be important, of where those come. Because again Beckett was very specific in what he was after.

NB: Oh, very, very.

AB: But at the same time, you still have this space to do your own interpretation.

NB: Oh, yes, absolutely.

AB: Where did you find your own space to interpret what you were hearing?

NB: Well ...

AB: I realise it was a long time ago, and I've just spent a while watching it. But did you feel any sense that there was a certain weight of responsibility of performing Beckett?

NB: There is a weight of responsibility, but it is also a great present to an actor, this is a great thing to have the opportunity, it was wonderful.

AB: Did you ...

NB: Charles Garrad was wonderful to work with, he was very sympathetic ...

AB: Yes, he definitely conveyed that. Did you feel that there was a certain Beckett style, did you feel you had to act in a certain way, or did you feel that you could ...?

NB: I didn't feel anything like that, I just did it, whatever came out, came out. I was very aware of Beckett as a human being as I was doing it.

AB: Ahhh ...

NB: Yes, he was such an extraordinary man and such a human man, great humanity in him.

AB: Did he direct you in the stage one?

NB: No, that was directed by Robin Lefevre.

AB: Yes, of course he did another *Beckett on Film*.

NB: Did he?

AB: Yes. When you did that, again was there that certain freedom in the spontaneity of being able to do it just on that moment?

NB: Well, the freedom of having your eyes closed constantly does give you a freedom in a strange way, rather than the opposite.

AB: Humm?

NB: Because it's just constantly listening really.

AB: Yes.

NB: And how that affects you.

AB: So, one sense is gone but your ears, you're listening harder because you are not getting the information through the eyes?

NB: Exactly.

AB: So, you are listening harder than you would do normally?

NB: I think you are, absolutely.

AB: So, is that where the freedom of interpretation comes from?

NB: Yes, I think so.

AB: That's quite extraordinary when you come to think about it.

NB: I will look at it again.

AB: It is on *youtube*, and is very powerful.

NB: I'm so glad to hear that.

AB: You didn't move during the filming, the camera moved around you?

NB: No, I didn't move at all, the camera moved around me, but of course I didn't really know what the camera was doing because I couldn't see.

AB: Of course, you had your eyes closed, so you had no idea what was going on.

NB: It was a long day I do know that, and you know I had to ... when we filmed it it was over two days, and yes it was a long time to be still like that for hours each time without eating or doing anything like that.

AB: You couldn't move at all?

NB: No, no, because my hair was all stuck and I had to stay still for hours.

AB: There is the idea that Beckett tortures his actor and it is almost like a physical torture, because you can't move and you can't do anything.

NB: Yes, well I think that's true of quite a few of the plays, I saw ... the one with the blind man and ... *Act Without Words I ... Endgame*. I saw that done in New York by a group with MS (Multiple Sclerosis) and it was fascinating because they couldn't, he couldn't, the lad that

played the servant, he couldn't move very quickly, but it was one of the most exciting performances of a Beckett play.

AB: That would change the interpretation of it, it would be completely different?

NB: Well it was in many ways, apart from the man sitting down, the blind man, but it was fascinating.

AB: Did you feel that you could, you didn't have any restrictions from the Beckett Estate or anything, you were allowed to do ...

NB: For *That Time*? We weren't doing anything that was against the ... I mean it was extraordinary that the Beckett Estate allowed Michael Colgan to have these films, that it was allowed that was very unusual.

AB: Yes, it was but I think that it was because he had done so much Beckett at the Gate Theatre.

NB: Yes, he had, and I think that Beckett grew very fond of him and that was the real reason really.

AB: Yes. Did you meet Beckett?

NB: No, I didn't. I once hitched a lift from Dublin to Galway and the driver – I told him I was an actor and he said 'Oh, that's very interesting, have you ever come across a fella called Sam Beckett?' 'Well I know who he is', I said and he said 'Oh, I went to school with him' and I said 'what was he like?' and he said 'Oh, he was very quiet, very quiet fella, but he'd sometimes tell a joke'. That's all he had to say.

AB: That's great. What came across in the production for *Beckett on Film* was the sense of collaboration between you and the director Charles, that somehow you understood each other.

NB: Good.

AB: Because you, as you say just sat there and reacted, but you do see on your face, the very internalized, very small movements, which forces a very intense form of concentration from the viewer, and it becomes a much more intense experience for the viewer.

NB: It was quite intense to do, I do remember that, yes, but it was a good intensity, pleasant.

AB: So, it was a matter of trusting yourself to actually respond in the moment?

NB: Yes, seeing the rhythm of it, that's what made it truthful, was getting the rhythm.

AB: Yes.

NB: Getting the rhythm, you understand it better.

AB: I think a lot of that rhythm has to come from you, because there is no punctuation there to guide you.

NB: I love Beckett, I love him.

AB: He is a serious challenge; he really challenges you. Did you find with the acting that he was, was it different or more intense, how was it different doing Beckett to doing another author?

NB: Oh, very different, it's very disciplined. In that the freedom of Beckett is in its lack of freedom. Obeying him is very important; I think that is where the freedom lies.

AB: Yes, I think that's quite important actually, because it is very easy to fall into what could be called a Beckett style of acting.

NB: Oh, yes, yes.

AB: That would be easy to do, but I didn't get that from you or your acting.

NB: How interesting.

AB: I feel that this was a very spontaneous, in the moment and in the process – is that the script telling you that?

NB: Oh, yes it had to be. Absolutely on the moment.

AB: That is incredible, because I've never acted Beckett. It's funny that at first glance this doesn't come across in the script – perhaps it can't do, which is why I think it is important to get the actors perspective on this production with the Beckett on Film project. There is not a great deal of material on the actor's point of view with this project and it would seem to be a really important aspect, if we consider that Beckett was writing for actors.

NB: Yes, absolutely. Well as an actor I believe in the three A's 'Author, Actor, audience.

AB: Yes, that would seem to make sense.

NB: Yes, I think so.

AB: I think we've forgotten that he was a writer of plays for actors and performing, not for academia.

NB: No, No, I think ... because he has, not so much in *That Time*, but in many others, it was the Vaudevillian aspect, he was very influenced by all of those people, the Vaudevillians'.

AB: Yes.

NB: He was influenced by all of that, I think.

AB: Definitely. And it was all about the performance and the performance process.

NB: Yes.

AB: I think that seems to be where you are coming from. It seems to be a place where you just need to focus tightly on the need to listen and perform the act of listening, but in that moment.

NB: One of the interesting things about Beckett is that he is not contrived, there's nothing contrived about him.

AB: Does it come straight from ...

NB: Yes, but I think that is why he was so protective of it because it's very pure, he's very pure Beckett.

AB: Do you think he was afraid that it might become tainted – because it was so pure, distilled, that it was very easy ...

NB: Yes, I think you are right, I think [lose connection] ... I will try calling you in a different area.

AB: Ok.

NB: Beckett has given it to you, so you just do it.

AB: Maybe Beckett is rarely approached that way anymore, maybe because we have forgotten that he was writing for the actor.

NB: Absolutely, absolutely.

AB: Perhaps the fact that he was writing for an actor, has got a bit lost over the years.

NB: Yes, you are right, but that is what it is, that's what it is.

AB: That's where this whole idea of you in the moment, in the process – it is in the acting and that is where he is so clever, is, it is tapping into what the whole acting thing is about.

NB: Absolutely, that's what it is about, I mean that is what it is about and that's the truth of it.

AB: Yes, because that's where you get the truth and the purity of form from.

NB: I hope I have helped.

AB: Absolutely. It will give actors and directors get an idea of what the aesthetic was, the whole idea behind the image and the whole picture.

NB: Oh good, good. It is a wonderful piece.

AB: You must watch it again, it is a very powerful piece, very powerful. I cannot thank you enough.

NB: That time or another time.

Not I

Transcript for *Not I*, a production by the *Beckett on Film* Project.

Interviewee: Director Neil Jordan.

Interviewer: Annette Balaam.

Telephone Interview.

Date: 15 June 2017.

Time: Start approx: 11.30am.

Length: 15 minutes, 30 seconds approx. 15: 30.

MP3 recording no.16.

Voice recording Microsoft Windows Smart Phone, and downloaded onto laptop.

AB: Do you mind if I record this conversation? No, that's fabulous. What I was really interested in was the use of your camera, the camera use and the ideas behind it and the aesthetic behind it, where you got the ideas from?

NJ: You're talking about *Not I*?

AB: Yes

NJ: OK. The performance that people see and everybody knows is the one by Billy Whitelaw, I think the BBC did a version of it, they just put a simple camera in front of her face and mouth as she delivered the piece. I'll just talk about it roughly. Beckett's, all of his stage instructions, he physically hinders his actors, you know like Winnie in *Happy Days* buried up to her neck in sand, what's the one where they're both in jars ... and he gives very specific instructions as to how, the performer, should play that piece in *Not I*, how her head should be absolutely rigid, and all the mouth is meant to be illuminated to you. So basically, what I did was, the start of it I showed the context in which the actor has to place herself to deliver Beckett's piece. To sit in the chair with very ... with head confined, almost totally confined, it's almost like being in a coffin, a restraining box, something you'd see in a mental hospital really. And then I had it must be four digital cameras, we were using film. The piece lasts about 5½ - 6 minutes, the normal film reel is less than that, it's about 4 minutes, so we had to order these large reels of film which, and the only place that made them at the time was for that show 'Cheers', the one they shot in long takes, so they asked the lab to make them these 10 minute reels. So, we got those reels and I placed, I had 3 cameras ...

AB: I was going to ask how many cameras you had.

NJ: Well we had three, but I did it twice. So, I placed three cameras on Julianne, with different perspectives on Julianne Moore's mouth so she could deliver the piece in one long monologue, so the performance would have its own integrity, the integrity of a single performance. Actually, we had 5 cameras and I basically edited it. To a comparable, parallel rhythm to the speech itself, to the rhythm of the words themselves.

AB: Was it the text itself telling you what the rhythm or the music should be, was it that indicating which way or how faster ...

NJ: It's like any piece of dramatic photography when you begin to edit it you, I decided in advance that it was a heavily edited piece because I wanted to see how many, it was almost like an aesthetic challenge, I wanted to see how many different perspectives I could get on a woman's mouth.

AB: Trying to get as many different angles as possible?

NJ: Yes, absolutely. I wanted to get a selection of angles, rather than the one that was done by the BBC with Billie Whitelaw that was done slightly below the mouth so that you can see the tonsils. I wanted to find out how many different perspectives I could get on Julianne Moore's mouth and have the piece delivered with the integrity of a single performance like a theatrical performance, and basically, I edited it with my editor Tony Lawson, and the rhythm of the editing was dictated by the rhythms of the speech itself.

AB: It was the text itself telling you ...

NJ: Well the performance, the performance, the text dictates the performance and the performance, the editorial process is traced to the performance and the text by implication. Once we'd done it Julianne felt she'd delivered it a little bit slowly, too slowly, maybe she had, I don't know?

AB: No, the speed was very changed, there was a real music to it, so there was some parts that were faster and some parts that were slower. I think it was perfect.

NJ: Billie Whitelaw's version was a bit faster, marginally faster I did compare them.

AB: I don't think they're comparable really, because this one, is a much more modern version in the sense that you do have the context, and the context helps you realise that this isn't just a mouth, it is a person.

NJ: I wanted to set the context because I wanted to show what Beckett demanded of the actor, and that was an illustration of his stage directions.

AB: Yes, because he's definitely writing for the actor in performance ...

NJ: He absolutely defines how the head should be restrained so the mouth would only have one position throughout the whole thing.

AB: When you watch it, the changing angles make you think you are blinking, because the lips are moving at the same time as the edit changes the angle, so you feel as though you are blinking although you are not blinking.

NJ: The whole piece is, it's very difficult to make sense of it, the narrative, the story is going on. A woman's in a field and she seems to collapse under a flood of memories and ... but the essential dynamic of *Not I* is almost a physical one, the physical demands of the actor of delivering the piece, the physical experience of seeing a mouth which becomes, as your staring at a mouth, for however long it is, your forced to stare at a mouth for about 5-7 minutes it suggests all sorts of different things, some rather obvious, some rather vulgar, some of them metaphorical and mesmeric, that's why I photographed the mouth from several different angles. To see it from the side, implies one thing, a pair of lips seen from straight on you see the tongue, you see the tonsils, the teeth, the mouth shot from different angles suggests different things in the mind. The way I approached the text was almost as if it was a physical experience. When I was moving it through with Julianne we didn't try and, we approached the physicality of it as much as we did with the meaning of it in so far as it is amenable to meaning, it resists meaning on so many levels.

AB: I think the physicality of it comes across because the eye is constantly drawn to the stillness of the upper teeth, the eyes constantly drawn to that central POV because there's a stillness there, because everything else is moving and the eye can't make sense of it, so it's like a compound of images making one total image.

NJ: I did present it in a, as an art piece. I took all the five angles that I'd shot, and I presented them on different screens, and that piece of work is in the possession of the Irish Museum of Modern Art. Have you ever seen it?

AB: No, but I read about it, you did it on six screens. Was it like a surround?

NJ: Yes, a surrounding, again it's an immersive entirely physical experience.

AB: Was that what you were going for, the idea of people trying to get inside the mind?

NJ: No. I was just asked to do the *Beckett on Film* and I choose that, because I always found it was a fascinating piece. If there were a 105 ways of photographing a woman's mouth I would have explored them, but I could only find five, I think the mouth exhausted itself after five. But nowadays you could probably put a camera, some kind of fibre optic camera inside the mouth, which would be an interesting thing to do, but ...

AB: What made the idea of the real close-up, because it is quite extreme, did the camera move or just the lenses.

NJ: The camera didn't move at all; the camera didn't move at all.

AB: So, there are five static cameras, and yet it's incredibly close.

NJ: It's the closest we could get.

AB: Is that what you were aiming for?

NJ: Absolutely, absolutely.

AB: So where did you get the idea from, was, to do all the different angles, was there a kind of, an overall image or concept that you were trying to aim for.

NJ: Just a celebration of the mouth really.

AB: It's that whole idea of communicating that Beckett's trying to get across and how we don't communicate, that certainly comes across because it is an extraordinary experience, cause your eye just can't follow the speed of the editing, I think that was what was so fascinating was the fact it was happening so quickly.

NJ: Well, Beckett was very interested in the cinema, the idea of the verte, the action.

AB: Had you met Beckett's work before.

NJ: Yes, I've seen it all, I've seen it on stage. Years ago, I directed some Beckett productions, student productions.

Word count 1,508

Act Without Words II

Transcript for *Act Without Words II*, a production by the *Beckett on Film* Project.

Interviewee: Actor and Mime Artist: Marcello Magni

Interviewer: Annette Balaam

Telephone Interview

Date: 18 September 2017

Time: Start approx: 6.45pm

Length: 1 hour and 16 minutes, 30 seconds. 1:16:30.

MP3 recording no.18

Voice recording Microsoft Windows Smart Phone and downloaded onto laptop.

AB. I explain that part of my PhD consists of the *Beckett on Film* project. I am interested in the use of the body in the space in his performance, does the space speak? Does the space become a character in its own right? Is the space creating your movement or are you creating the character and movement in the process? Ask about the physicality of acting, and the intensity of the acting.

MM. Did I feel the same for the other *Act* in *Act Without Words I*?

AB. Yes. But the different speeds – the very fast and very slow – there is a different sense of the body in space. In *Act Without Words I* the context almost forms the character itself, the desert, setting, props, in *Act Without Words II* it is the reverse thing happening, your movement ...

MM. ... creates the ecology ... Well Beckett he creates a situation for *Act Without Words I* that is very strong; somebody trapped in a space and he has to achieve tasks, so the situation is dramatically clearer. *Act Without Words II* situation is totally emblematic of humanity. He's putting a paradox; he's putting us in a sack, saying we live like that every day of our lives. Either we are too hard for humanity – one is the optimist one is the pessimist – or even the one-self has these two energies, and if I understand what you are saying, because he leaves the space empty, it is our movement that projects our dramatic situation, instead of putting the inner space already on stage and then living the condition of that space. I must say, I knew one of the *Acts*, one with the boxes, one of the water and one of the palm [tree] when I was young, 16 or 17. When I was at the school of drama in Italy at graduation out of school I did with a friend a tiny section of *Waiting for Godot*. We had nothing, we did

another thing, we did an office *Waiting for Godot*. We wanted to be anarchic so we ... I know you cannot do it ...

AB. ... you can ...

MM. But the experiment for us was to treat it so Vladimir and Estragon were in an office, and later on when I went to 'Lecoq' one of the exercises of Lecoq is to put – there was a teacher who put – us in the situation of finding our Vladimir and Estragon in a post-war situation and we were on the side of the road waiting for cars that were not coming, our wait was punctuated occasionally by these – passages of a car that never stopped. So, for me to do [*Act Without Words II*], after my experiences at school in Italy, and other experiences in Italy, I went to study in Paris. Then I trained at the Jacques Lecoq school, and I always felt reading [*Act Without Words II*] there was some kind of clown situation in this man dressing-up, getting ready for life with optimism. There was something very endearing in terms of, you live life with optimism. And clowns are like that. And, so I didn't know the other performer, I didn't meet him, I met the Director. The Director was amazingly wonderful and very young and very ready to respond and react to what I was offering and he trusted me enough to say: "Come with some material", "with some action", "come with some solutions", "dressing-up, the hats or the carrots", and for one day we prepared for the filming for the next day.

AB. Just one day?

MM. Yes. The actions are quite easy, what was to my surprise when I arrived there is that – we had a chat before on the phone before, but physically, was the fact that he wanted me, and that is what is quite strange to realize, every attitude that I strike is being photographed, so I had to move from point-fixed to point-fixed to point-fixed to point-fixed.

AB. Oh, my God!

MM. Because he wanted the staccato movement, and the staccato movement is them reproducing the, I think every frame. If in a second there are so many frames, twenty-four I think, he would have taken maybe twelve. So, the staccato image comes because, it is not a flowing drama.

AB. How did you find that, doing it movement by movement?

MM. Difficult because, for example, one thing that I was slightly unhappy with, but what can you do? Is when he smiles, the smile becomes a grimace, while I was smiling. But if you miss one frame, you miss half of my beginning of my smile, so it becomes – it's like my mouth goes straight open and I thought that the humanity of the smile was fundamental. So even the professional smiling when you are trying to remember the entire routine is ... you're

not so precise to break down your own smile. Because you might rush it a little bit – while instead the filming might need to put in an extra ...

AB. ... frame in?

MM. Because every time I did a move, he would say: “hold”, “hold”, “hold”, “hold”, “hold”, so it was very complicated.

AB. A serious feat of body control to stop that and freeze is for an actor, even more so mime, that’s very ...

MM. ... it’s lively ... but certain gestures for me were quick, and they become quite quick, that’s ok, cause in life they’re quite quick and this technique, they almost become doubly quick. But it’s quite, I remember struggling and especially I struggled in the end I have to carry him backwards. Of course, he was not inside the sack, but the position I wanted to show, a very bent backward shape, like almost hyper-bent back, almost like to be a cartoon bent backwards. And cartoon, almost, not real, I remember I put out my back. So, my last sequence, my last, after the journey, I was in terrible pain. And I say: “ok, let’s continue, let’s continue”, they gave me a moment in the sequence, I tried to stretch the other way, but I continue because ... you have to do it. But I loved the openness of the Director, in which he picked-up ideas like the ... being hidden behind the map, the carrot being a bit more like a cigar. He was very attentive, and we worked together very well. I love when the Directors empower you instead of saying “do that, and do that” and the sequence of movement in the stretch exercises and indeed the boxing, which is not in Beckett, was, it was me warming-up my wrists, but it looked like a Boxer and he accepted what I was doing and made me very happy.

AB. You were doing all those different attitudes/poses and body movements were your own invention?

MM. Yes.

AB. What was he then saying when he was changing them slightly as you went along, was it that he was trying to create an image on top of those attitudes?

MM., I think I offered the big diagonals, sideways, the swinging of the arms, rotation, and he, I may have done ten variations and he picked up six – selected what he liked most, that was the collaboration. That’s why we found a very good dialogue, very open in that sense. Then, of course he gave me the costume, and I loved it and I had no idea what the other gentleman was doing, in attitude or whatever, and it was interesting for me to see the final product because I really loved the entire story scene of it. For me it was a wonderful parable of us as humans.

AB. Where did the inspiration from, the ideas from, to put together your own, the sequence of attitudes, the sequence of movements. Where did the inspiration come, was it just the clown or was it going further into making a narrative story?

MM., I think Beckett provides that, is very through in giving you a story. I feel that he is so clear in how he proscribes every single move, then the kind of moves that you choose; he's telling a story, he's saying: get-up, stretch, brush our teeth, you brush your hair, it's a normal day. He checks the time, you smile, you are an optimist and then off you go and dress-up, it's like we do every day in the morning. Simply I felt I wanted to be quite, not athletic but quite, I enjoyed the movement, I enjoyed my day, so I thought I have to find a movement that somehow, slightly, and I couldn't ... or anything complex like that because I would not have been able to perform them, since the technique they had chosen was that of filming frame-by-frame. So, I had to do – so when I understood that, I had to eliminate certain things, because I could not hold them.

AB. You had to tailor what you were doing to that method of filming?

MM. Yes. And he obviously helped me there a lot too, in the selection, but I would say that he let me come up with the kind of movement, most of it, I would say 99%. He then had an idea – maybe a position in relation to the camera: “Do that more in profile ... that's great”, “face us a bit more”. But he helped me there because he had a camera very far away and then another one close-up. One was zooming on me and one very far away to have the sense of a long ... and he shot everything at the same time.

AB. Both distance and far were filmed at the same time?

MM. Yes. He could then edit from one to the other.

AB. Did you film it all in one go?

MM. Yes. I think I remember it took a long time, because it (he) was slow, and I had, I remember – maybe I did it twice – I remember pulling the back, and I couldn't do it anymore so – I feel, my sensation, we did it once – or we went back once or twice in some sections and do that again. It was, in my vague memory. Because it was quite a few years ago anyway.

AB. Was it difficult to portray a life, when you were stopping the life?

MM. That's what I meant by my smile. If I have a comment on myself as a performer, I wish that my smile would have been my truer, while sometimes it feels a bit like a grimace. That was not my intention, but what can you do if you take two frames out of six and then it goes mechanically up and mechanically down, and, but that's ok. Because he wanted very much, he had this idea to make an homage to the silent movie. He wanted to do an homage to the Chaplinesque and the silent black and white film and also frame it more like a film, because

Beckett say something like – like a “Frieze” (*Act Without Words II*: 47), the image like a frieze, so he thought that the idea of the film came up to him ...

AB. The flickering of the ...?

MM. ... what do you call it? You see the frame of it, of a Super-8, in which you see the ... (?) the squares that pull it forward (Leader tape). You go back to the beginning there is the sense of the film slowing down.

AB. That’s very interesting, that’s something that Anthony Minghella did with *Play*. He used that.

MM. I think, I think, I’m sure they didn’t know, because they were filmed quite close to each other. I think, he must have had the idea by himself – I think, I’m sure he didn’t see the others, because I was not aware of other ones being done.

AB. The other character, you didn’t have any interaction with him at all (“No”), he was filmed separately?

MM. No. I might have met him and crossed, but not assisted to his performance or assisted to mine (his ...). Like he has this attitude with his hands to the cheek and - I didn’t notice, is he sad, is he thinking? And we didn’t talk. And I went through clarifying every attitude I was proposing. I was saying that’s clear, that’s clear – I didn’t know what their dialogue was, or how that developed – that would have been interesting to know, to share a bit. Because I think the two characters are, have to be in one way opposite but at the same time they are part of the same ... not energy, but way of performing. And while I took it quite in the space and open up the body, I felt that he kept his body (in) more closed. Even, I feel that’s because later on ... I went to Paris, and with Peter Brook, there I did *Act Without Words* again and the process was interesting because it was very, interesting how psychologically we worked the physical action. It motivated us by opposites. So, I played the pessimist and he didn’t tell me to be only pessimist, but he give me:

“O.K. I come out of my sack, and Oh, God! Well doesn’t matter, Oh OK., it doesn’t matter, I’m goner pray, let’s put some hope in this prayer ... fuck prayers never work! was constantly – ahhh! ... appeal, appeal, a good appeal; the best thing in the morning ... No, God damn it!”

Everything was an opposition, was not a constant pessimism.

AB. More rounded?

MM. More believable. The audience see that we do that every day in our life. We get out of bed and we say: “Off to work. Oh, damn it! It’s a grey day”. Instead, we have these impulses

that are not: “I don’t like life, I don’t like life”. Even if somebody doesn’t like life, when he goes to breakfast: “my love is toast” ... but it’s not ... or tragic.

AB. Beckett does beautifully; he does extreme opposition in everything, in content and form. This, apart from the two characters being opposites, you can see those nuances in your performances anyway, with the *Beckett on Film*. It is in the way you have opened your body to the space, the way your body is aware of the space, rather than you, it is your body. It’s almost like your body is creating you – without your conscious awareness of it and then the space becomes a character, it is almost like you and the space are creating each other.

MM. When Usain Bolt put his hand over his head, he’s making a shape with the hand and opening, that gesture is almost welcoming the stadium to his, to the top of his hand. (and the ‘Lightning bolt’, image). All the movement they touch ... they move space. Lecoq is about that and Jacques Lecoq in Paris, this teacher that I had in my twenties, makes you aware that Bolt when he does his arrow is not simply goes into an arrow, it goes **into** it, and his body, you can feel almost that his hands are reaching up to the sky. If he was simply doing the shape and there is no energy inside, his hand would not take the same dimension. So, when you – you have to inhabit the life of it, and not the shape of it. By inhabiting – if you imagine a disc thrower – a person throws with a disc – he swings and swings and goes in-between his legs, above his head and then he goes back and throws forward again the disc. All these lines, they can’t simply be mechanically moved, they have to be, you have to sense that your body is going backwards, almost, you have to imagine that you have got to go much further than you are going, almost, you could say that when your hands go towards the sky, you could contact God. Or when you go down you could contact the centre of the earth; I say God, I mean infinity. And when you gesture, your inner lines, inner sensation are beyond your body, the body, the gesture takes another significance.

AB. So you’re virtually projecting yourself?

MM. Normally in acting they say, when an actor stands in front of an audience, he should see a landscape, should see trees, should see water, mountains, his imagination takes him. If you simply look at the audience, the audience will see that you are looking at them, because your imagination is dead. The psychological life inside must be active. When you move somewhere, you can make yourself exist beyond the theatre, and your movement can have a space that is larger; also, you can add to that, that our actions and your passes are beyond, in the dimensions of what you are physically doing.

AB. Do you feel that?

MM. Well, you have to. You have to say that when you stretch, that it's like you're a lighthouse, when you stretch forward with your hands you are reaching like if you are a lighthouse, you have to, and the body just opens up a little more.

AB. Do you have a centre within the body to ground you? To ground you within the earth so that you can fly off?

MM. Well you have one, you have a centre; you have the solar plexus, then the head, it depends where you want to project your movement, you use different parts. If you want something that is much more earthy you might use your pelvis much more, your root, your pelvis.

AB. Do you have lines within the body that centre you to the earth, so that you can project upwards and outwards, out of the body? Centres or transverse, vertical lines up and down the body that keep you upright and centre you – so that you can project yourself further than yourself.

MM. I'm not so aware of all the chakras and the yoga. Instinctively if you are connected to your imagination naturally you will find that you have, can rest on natural resources that are part in your body. If somebody is very happy because you've just won the lottery your movement will be light and happy and wonderful. And I hate movements that are codified by culture. Example; as I've been talking about Usain Bolt, when African athletes win, the lightness of their feet and the movements of their hands in the sky it's almost like they are throwing their arms to the sky. When the Western world wins, we have learnt these ridged gestures of either, sorry if I pick Andy Murray, who plays tennis, they pump their arms and it's become codified. All the women in tennis, they do it, and it is close to the chest and it is tight and it is contracted. It's an imitation of a gesture, they have learnt it by doing it like that, and that means that: "I am strong". Maybe your own gesture, your personal gesture to be strong is different, but they don't question themselves, they've learnt it, and kids they do it at the age of seven, eight, nine, ten years old, and you go how is that possible, because they watch television, so they copy. Human beings copy each other. The point that I said; when you said did you pick any reference from any other movement; I was trying to – I have the limitation of not going frenzied and ... because of my strength – but can I be like a happy windmill and feeling that I am between an Olympic and Superhero movement. I was trying to be, at the same time mixing it with a childish like: "I can be a Boxer, and I can be good, and I can twist my wrists", and that is more like a child. So that in my head, to be in the mood to find these/these gestures when I present them to Enda, then the technique may and will coincide with them, and that if I were to perform it, I would let it go much more, a little more free.

AB. It's trying to get in contact with that innocence, that naivety and truth that gets rid of societies constructions.

MM. My mother had an activity in Italy, she's stopped now she's quite old, in which she taught young people how to paint, but not through an academy of painting. The space is enclosed and it's called the 'Le Closlieu' and it comes from a person that lives as Arno Stern who lives in Paris. And he developed his atelier where kids can think freely, in an enclosed space and I could see that she was trying for years to put them in a frame of mind in which they didn't copy. For example, when we paint a bird, we make two lines like a letter 'V' open, that's a code, no birds like that. But a kid when he paints freely makes the body of the bird very large, very tiny legs and maybe very tiny wings, because that's how he feels it. I make this parallel because I feel that within theatre, we have the Musical, we have the dramatic form of Shakespeare and people learn to move in a certain way, and consciously. And I feel that when you are in that stage of movement you are controlled by culture, instead of the performer, who's not at all in this, they are totally free and they are very individual, but the mass of us performers tend to fall into what is the code for being a; bully, the code for being a scared person, the code for being presumptuous etc. These are code, so the acting becomes more less free.

AB. When you try and access that naivety, that childlike naivety, do you, as you were saying create those little narratives for yourself; how do I be a lighthouse? How can I ...?

MM. Sometimes you don't even ask yourself 'how', you try to be in a 'state of' and you try to 'be' instead of thinking you want to be, more than impose yourself to do something.

Example; I did a show recently in which some member of the company would say: "I saw on *youtube* this movement, it would be wonderful to put it in our show", and I never think of going or seeing *youtube* to find something. The Director gives me the frame, I will come up with something right or wrong but it's mine. When I study with Lecoq in Paris, the school had all the journey in which you went through the neutral mask, into then doing ... first freeing up the movement from codifying way of moving, then you went through a neutral mask to find a – to get rid of ticks – and then there was a process of building up movement and learning the extension of what movement could be – by mimicking animals, colours, elements, anything – sounds, even poetry – you try to put in movement poetry or music. Not dancing, but putting the dynamic of the music; he was saying: "don't dance, find the energy of the music". Then you start to come to ... (unclear) and find a character, after having searching melodrama or tragedy or Commedia del arte, he makes you search for your own clown and you have to find the child in you, but not the childish yourself – you have to find

you're real, innocent, free – when one keeps running and they are really open and they are four, five, six years old and they don't think, they run, and when you put yourself in that state your clown will have a wickedness and shyness and openness and surprise and astonishment, that is not performed, not surface but real – it's deeper – you don't have to be a child to be – it's simply the impulse is freer. There was an exercise we used to get; he'd get, someone would throw tennis balls at us and the reaction is very instinctive and true – the pain is very real. When you're hit you go “Wow” and your body curls in a certain way. You see the people curl themselves – not in relation to the pain they just felt, but to the idea that they have, that they should perform that exercise. It is a very simple thing. You hit somebody in the bum and the person instead of going with the bum towards the front of the body because the tennis ball has hit your bum, they go backwards – how can that be possible? Or hit on the head on one side and they move their hands – it's your head that has been hit. There is a lie that we put up with reactions, and to let your body feel what happens you let it react, probably like a dancer would do, more instinctively. For an actor sometimes it is more complicated because an actor is taught to prepare mentally. If you 'prepare' you can't be fully free, so what's the balance between being very instinctive and original and not taught like at school. So, the work to the actor should be about that. It's not easy; on the contrary it's a big continuous sense of: “am I always doing the same thing, am I always myself in that way or am I very often?” – we can lie.

AB. So are you constantly aware of your constructed (codified) movement?

MM. No. It's something you think afterwards. You think: “Oh, God! That was really ... what am I doing here, I am pretending”. But the important thing is to say: “am I in a state in which I have a – I'm not pre-prepared; I am not like a pre-cooked soup”. Instead of letting the meal advance with the things that are in the fridge, you're forcing to achieve something, but you're missing in the moment – from the mental elements, because your fridge doesn't have it in that moment. When an actor has to cry, people force themselves to cry and very often that is why it is terrible, because you see the tension in them trying to cry. In life we don't know when we are going to cry and then suddenly it hits us. So, you have to be like that, you don't know and then suddenly its present and you don't know why but it's happened. And of course, as an actor you have learned there are certain things in your life that might trigger thoughts that make you cry. In movement for me, it is a state of being, in a state of not thinking about it.

AB. So it is completely instinctual?

MM. I would say it's more like trying to be an animal ... a cat, when you go "Boo!", the cat reacts, I don't think its instinct. I think you have to be more ... you have to prepare when you are in situations and all that, and, but at the same time to allow yourself, that today you don't want to force it because you are not ready.

AB. How did this work ...

MM. ... on that occasion? (*Act Without Words II*). It was quite complicated because it kept stopping. Because an optimist is required, but I felt I had to ... Ok ... for me optimism is a wonderful, wonderful state of life to be, so I was, in my spirit I was, to put myself into: "life is wonderful and is the most extraordinary, I am the blessed or what a wonderful sunny day – Oh, my God I feel so good in my body!", you engender thoughts of a different nature about the goodness of the day in relation to what's outside you or how you feel in your own body, about the things you love to do, like dressing-up and eating, you motivate everything with that.

AB. Is it a cognitive, you're actually, a cognitive motivation that then creates the body motivation?

MM. I think it's a bit between the chicken and the egg.

AB. It's an interaction between the mind and body?

MM. You have to let go of the body. I feel the body pricks me to feel, if I move in the right way, I will feel correct. If I'm not in the right state I will not – the movement, if I don't feel free to move, I will struggle. That comes very often when your creativity is allowed to exist. When you are the creator of your own material you have a truth, when you are an executor of somebody else's idea you don't have that.

AB. So that really helped with this project?

MM. ... because he allowed me to find my own language.

AB. You prepared most of it beforehand?

MM. Yes. But then with him, we carved it. But there was enough agility between me and him not for him to be a Dictator, but to be a good director. I mean somebody who stimulated me and induced me to find things. And I loved to work with him because he was a very open, creative and attentive and sensitive, and so I could be in the same frame of mind.

AB. Yes, so that meant that you could keep your, a sense of, a truth, a sense of innocence and naivety going, even though you had this frame-by-frame?

MM. Yes, Yes, Yes, Yes. Also, I found that the journey of the person, he gets out of the sack, he springs out, he says: "Beckett(?)", and then he moves, and then he prepares himself. I felt there was like, I feel in the morning, so the narrative of Beckett is totally – and then he goes

beyond, then he moves his body, and then he moves. He goes into his costume and then he prepares his journey and then he goes on his journey, and then again, he prepares his body. So, I felt Beckett was writing about: “What am I? What I am. I love to move, I love ...”, so he was telling the story of some body that is ... conscious and precise(?) and happy about his ritual, like I do, I like to be active and alive in that way, so his narrative, his sequence is correct.

AB. OK.

MM. I found he was writing perfectly good sense. I could see myself in it.

AB. It wasn't difficult apart from ...

MM. No. I loved it. I'll tell you an anecdote. When I was with Peter Brook and one moment there was; “what is our third piece of these five segments?” And he said: “*Act Without Words*”, and instinctively I went inside “I am the optimist”, and he gave it to the other friend of mine, and I went “Oh, no, no, no, no, I am the optimist”, “and you play the pessimist”, and I'm “Oh, God, no!” After one week he reversed roles and I went “Now, that's brilliant, I am the optimist” and I give so much work to the character in that week that I made it flourish. And a week later he, we turned back. It stimulated us to see the positive by us watching the other one doing it well in the one we were given. It was very, very clever. It made us be creative so that the other person says: “Oh, my God he's finding so much in the pessimist why did I give it up” and then I came back then “Alright, now I'm goner give myself in this pessimist and I'm goner take it far, far, far away from what ...” and I really enjoyed being the pessimist. We find an extraordinary comedic truth in ... even if I think I am an optimist, maybe he spotted something Peter Brook, maybe I am a pessimist.

AB. There's a little bit of the pessimist in the optimist?

MM. That's what he opened-up, that's what I missed when I did the ... that search, if I am honest, in the ... because the impulse in which you go: “right, I just move the sack, with the other hand on the earth, and now ...” that little sense of failing: “Oh, right, let's do the next” ... this movement of ... it's like you have to re-launch your optimism, and that's very human, and it becomes very empathic for an audience to feel the person is not fixed in one emotion.

AB. Yes, it has to be multi-dimensional, because a person has multiple personalities and moods, and changes moment-by-moment and you're never fixed in one idea. And I think that's what made it such a three-dimensional experience, in the sense – this is where I felt the space around you is almost a character in itself.

MM. I can't judge, but I'm ... I've been in class of school where people have tended to do a movement, and I've been in our classes of movement where the person that tells you a very

simple movement, like a swing of your arms above your head to one side and then go on to the other side, like an eight, like a windmill, and you can do those movements simply, as a mechanical movement, but I had a teacher who say: “Imagine where are you, are you flying, are you above the clouds, are you cutting air, are you touching air ... what are you doing with that movement? Where you are, what is the space that you are using?” I feel that the audience ... in dancers I’m sure they do that, they must do that, they have to engage a part of their imagination in which the movement is beyond the movement ... that’s why you say as a character [space is character, projecting the body into space] because it’s lived in another way. But I take the impulse, even in the story of these gentlemen; I do the sequence many times, to find the freedom of doing it, because it’s difficult to remember the sequence and not to fail. And when you find the sequence then you start to feel where the actual sequence makes you feel. It’s like when you read a book, one moment you want to read it again and you discover something else. Or when you listen to music and the first time you’re surprised, but after ten times, if you love it and if you go into it more and more, the music will carry you even beyond. So that movement is the same thing, and one moment if you do it and you love it and you feel great, in one movement you can engage in another way in that moment. And therefore, it becomes creative.

AB. It’s almost like the world and you are responding to each other?

MM. Yes.

AB. Yes. It’s an amazing philosophy, because, I’m studying Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy and he very much talks about how we communicate with the world and how we exist in the world and it’s this sense of moving through, a moving through, but it’s a persistent moving through air, communicating in a way that’s so sub-conscious and yet we construct over that and lose that childlike innocence which he studied in Cézanne, because Cézanne tried to get hold of that, and seeing as ... without constructed society on top of vision. This is what I felt you were doing with the movement, there was a sort of innocence and childlike naivety that ... you were somehow communicating with the space around you where it was almost creating you as you were creating it. And there was this physical communication going on, that was so ... I don’t know, it was so beautiful, it was very beautiful, it was like watching poetry, as you hear beautiful poetry or music, it was like watching that experience, that very visceral, physical experience, because every art form is a physical experience, and you communicated that very well, in the sense that, even when you were unhappy with the smile, it worked, because ...

MM. ... what I did, is probably half ok, but, then you select the frame, and then I go: “Oh, no, give me more, give me one frame more”, you can’t, but its ok. But I forgot to do enough smiles in that breaking down of the movement. It was technically ... it was something I’d never done before and it seems ... I’d never done something like that.

AB. Have you not?

MM. No, no, not this technique of shooting it frame by frame.

AB. Even though it mechanized you?

MM. Yes, yes, well he wanted it to be, as I say, this Chaplinesque ...

AB. Yes, which there was this mechanical ... which adds to the whole idea of a habitual life, repetition, the vicious never ending cycle of activity – it added to that – but I think you somehow projected beyond that, you got through the movement, the technology, the mechanicalizing, you somehow projected beyond that into a different place. There was a different space going on there that made it more of a visceral, three-dimensional experience, instead of this mechanical thing. I think that’s why it was so powerful is because you see the human underneath the mechanical.

MM. It was amazing that he managed to achieve that, when I saw the piece, I was very astonished by the parable of Beckett, about the humanity, because it is extraordinary what he writes there and by contrast, I thought – wow! It really works these two types and I thought: “Oh, there is a bit of life,” I would have wished to find even more, but, but people praised the ...

AB. It was beautiful – it still is – there is the human comes through all this mechanical, frame-by-frame mechanics going on which makes the human a puppet – so you’re almost made this marionette, but it goes beyond that – I think you take it beyond that.

MM. Because, when working with Peter was very interesting to understand how he live the, call it the Beckett – he’s been called an author of pessimism of the Absurd, but Peter Brook was very much against it. He was saying that Beckett, he was not that at all that, he didn’t buy that – the reception is of that – but that’s because he’s been codified down to a level in which you don’t want to see the actual Irish ‘Spring of Life’ inside, that of course springs/sings(?) wrong, but then of course there is a kick-up and you may not work a lot with this opposition ... even the prayer at the end, he made me perform the prayer like a true moment of hope, so the pessimist at the end has hope. And that put people in the theatrical – not in this version – in a total different dimension to that little story of two men, because if you have somebody depressed and all that and another optimist and he goes to his happy place(?) you could call it a prison, and the pessimist finds at the end a real look of openness –

like – “maybe, maybe, maybe”, it gives another sense(?) forward. And I feel there’s too many times we read Beckett as, and that was my hastening(?) because I didn’t know Peter Brook with ... before I did *Fragments* with Peter Brook. When I did this piece I caught that humorous, open, Irish spirit, more than the depressed theatrical; so I felt that there’s a hope – even for *Waiting for Godot* maybe a hope, God knows: “he’s not coming, ok, let’s hope again”. If you play he’s not going to come it’s going to be bad – well you are doomed; but I think the doom should be the effect that the audience feels but not what the performer does. It’s like we’re playing the end. The audience might receive that, that between Hamm and Clov it’s terrible, or between Vladimir and Estragon, but if you play the harshness you’re playing one note, and I felt that ... Peter say that he is not absurd at all, he loved human beings, I don’t know if you know, the little piece with three women on a bench?

AB. Yes, *Come and Go*.

MM. Yes, *Come and Go*, we played it as two men and one woman with Peter, and one day he come in and he said: “I think three girls and they were coming back from school and they were talking [he whispers] to each other about this boy, and the other, whatever, and one push away the other and one talks only to one [he whispers] like an affair, and one takes away another one and goes [he whispers] all that pleasure he said, these women aged whatever still have it – and they are bad, they are bad ... it was so funny *Come and Go* and at the end with the hands, that very, very ... well they finish their lives and they hold each other, they are very human. I really believe that in Beckett you have to find the human before finding the drama. And Peter Brook was a huge lesson, instinctively maybe I felt it somewhere, I don’t know why. To be positive and the absurd of the story will come out anyway.

AB. Because I’ve always thought Beckett was very optimistic, I always thought that he was positive, that he was optimistic and anything else is an unfortunate construction being put over the top of him. This is important, because your experience, the actor’s experience, the mime artist experience, they never get talked about, it’s always reviews and directors, never the actors, so it is very important to have a record of this, because there is no information on the *Beckett on Film* project, in academia, there is no information at all. So I am collecting as many as I can and I’ll transcribe them all and with your permission I’d offer them to the Beckett Archive at Reading University, that has the biggest Beckett Archive in the world, so that other students can have your words as a resource.

MM. I’d love to. My wife knows me and is a very good actress too and she might understand me, if I have expressed myself well.

AB. You very much have. You have opened-up a different world in terms of how the body exists in the world – how we as the body exists in the world.

MM. We could ... there is an acidic piece of theatre called *Spoonface Steinberg* which is a beautiful story by Lee Hall. My wife performed *Spoonface Steinberg* and I directed and it's a story for an acidic philosophy in which buried in the world are sparks, and these sparks love to come alive. And when we make love, when we eat, when we sing, they come alive. And I feel that, I believe when we are dancing and singing and movement – the body creates sparks and theatrically I believe that. We did a piece of theatre at the National called *The Birds* by Aristophanes and we had circus performers to perform the birds and the audience at the National were saying: "It's a very good production, it's a pity when they don't speak", meaning the acts of these extraordinary artists they by-passed. We understand music – but movement is still something people – if it is not music, we go: "I don't know?"

AB. We just put so much emphasis on language and vision that we forget there are other ways of communication – that the body communicates much more loudly than anything else, the body is constantly communicating and yet because we don't have a fixed language how to describe how the body moves, we don't understand it. You are living much more vibrantly; you're living much more intensely because you are in touch with your body in the world.

MM. When I teach, people try to understand. I try to use, to say the body, when we flirt, or when we look at the girl or whatever, or boy, our bodies are very clear and as animals we communicate a hell-of-a-lot and that communication theatrically we don't use it. We are like stiff boards when we are on stage. We don't feel the impulse, the tiny little closeness giving away, turning, circling, approaching, almost brushing against each other, it's a dance of the body. This dancing we deny it and very often we end-up sitting and talking – instead of saying: "I live with somebody and with this person I can sit at a remove and when we are in the intimate we go for it, we search for it (in the intimate) but socially we are scared to go to that intensity.

AB. It is not considered the norm.

MM. Well, it's considered a sin. The body is considered a sin. There were periods when the body was free – in the Seventies (1970's) and that between the Fifties-Seventies (1950's-1970's). But if you talk with your body now you are vulgar and whatever. This is denying, like the lower arts are the mimes and the high arts are Shakespeare. Of course, Shakespeare is something wonderful and: "the word" said Lecoq "is born in silence" and the word is the crown of the body, in the end. If there was no silence there would be no word – you have to have a moment of noticing, of recognition or "what the hell" reaction in order for the world to

be born, there must be a moment of impulse in order for the words to start: “Mama!” is the child’s needs. And I think it is interesting that he says that the word is a combination of our existence, the end part ... of somebody is looking for, is desperately, for something, a moment of: “Well, where is it?” It’s the situation that makes the word to be born. And I live this teaching, and I live this – and part of me without realising “all these beliefs”, I call it, about how the body is a – whatever, needs to exist.

AB. I cannot thank you enough, you have been extraordinarily generous.

MM. My art comes from many people.

Word count: 7,795