

Closed Spaces: Beckett and Confinement

James Little

Doctor of Philosophy in English

Trinity College Dublin

August 2017

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and it is entirely my own work. I agree to deposit this thesis in the University's open access institutional repository or allow the library to do so on my behalf, subject to Irish Copyright Legislation and Trinity College Library conditions of use and acknowledgement.

Signature James Little

Summary

This thesis is the first sustained study of Samuel Beckett's career-long engagement with confinement, examining both his use of institutions of coercive confinement as well as the closed spaces of his later prose and drama. Focussing on twenty-two case studies from Beckett's critical, poetic, dramatic and prose writing, including the seven prose works in which institutions of confinement feature as key locales, it combines a historicist approach to institutional and performance space with the methodologies of genetic criticism (which studies an author's manuscripts to investigate the geneses of his/her works) and spatial theory. Close readings of Beckett's texts form the basis for a re-evaluation of his development as a writer and director.

Chapter 1 analyses Beckett's use of images of confinement, which allowed him to formulate key aesthetic problems in his critical monograph *Proust*, his posthumously published novel *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* and his short stories 'Dante and the Lobster' and 'Fingal'. Chapters 2 and 3 examine the function of institutional space in *Murphy* and *Watt*, two novels in which an asylum setting is central to the narrative development, as well as to the development of Beckett's own poetics. Chapter 4 studies the 'decomposition' of institutional confinement in two of Beckett's postwar novellas, 'The End' and 'The Expelled', and his novel *Malone Dies*. Chapter 5 turns to Beckett's drama, considering four plays—*Endgame*, *Act Without Words I*, *Happy Days* and *Quad*—which allow for an analysis of Beckett's evolving use of closed space as writer and director for stage and screen.

Chapter 6 argues that an examination of Beckett's pronominal experimentation in his poetry, particularly 'they come' and 'Serena I', can help us understand the radical disintegration of closed space that occurs in his novel *The Unnamable*. Chapter 7 tracks the relation between space and voice in Beckett's stage play *Not I*, a key production of which had its main actor confined in her chair. Chapter 8 examines the intertextual dynamics of two of Beckett's so-called 'closed space'

prose pieces, *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *All Strange Away*. Chapter 9 uses the two plays Beckett wrote for inmates of institutions of confinement, *Catastrophe* and the unpublished 'Mongrel Mime', alongside the torture scenario of *What Where*, to argue that the study of coercive confinement provided in this thesis can give us a new understanding of Beckett as a political writer.

Through an examination of the textual development of Beckett's works both prior to publication (through a study of his compositional manuscripts) and after publication (with a particular focus on the changes Beckett made to his works in the inherently spatial art forms of performance), this thesis will challenge the model of Beckett's poetics as simply involving the 'vaguening' of topography, while contesting the view that his work takes place in 'empty space'. As well as giving fresh insight into Beckett's poetics and aesthetics, confinement provides a unique lens on important topics in his writing, such as the relation between subject and object and the production of space. Due to Beckett's use of confinement when engaging with such topics as well as his practical manipulation of space in performance, this study of his closed spaces can allow for a reconsideration of the way Beckett worked, the way his work means as well as what his works mean.

Table of Contents

	<i>Acknowledgements</i>	pages vi
	<i>Abbreviations</i>	vii
	<i>Notes on the Text</i>	x
	Introduction: The Production of Closed Space	xi
1	Images of Confinement: <i>Proust, Dream of Fair to Middling Women</i> , 'Dante and the Lobster', 'Fingal'	1
2	'Light in the Monad': <i>Murphy</i>	33
3	'Who, What, Where, by What Means, Why, in What Way, When': <i>Watt</i>	59
4	Forms and Forces of Confinement: 'The End', 'The Expelled', <i>Malone Dies</i>	82
5	Stages of Confinement: <i>Endgame, Act Without Words I, Happy Days</i> , <i>Quad</i>	104
6	Learning to Say 'Not I': 'they come', 'Serena I', <i>The Unnamable</i>	146
7	Confining Mouth: <i>Not I</i>	169
8	Confined Bodies in Closed Spaces: <i>Imagination Dead Imagine</i> , <i>All Strange Away</i>	190
9	The Politics of Confinement: 'Mongrel Mime', <i>Catastrophe</i> , <i>What Where</i>	222
	Conclusion: Decomposing Space in 14 Henrietta Street	255
	<i>Bibliography</i>	266

Acknowledgements

My greatest debt of gratitude with regard to this thesis is to my two supervisors, Nicholas Grene and Chris Morash. Nicky's excellence goes beyond what a simple acknowledgement can summarise and I have been extremely lucky to experience his enthusiastic conviction regarding the value of literature. Having joined the project in its second year, Chris provided insight and inspiration which was critical to its development. I have also been fortunate to benefit from the open-minded erudition of Sam Slote throughout my time in Trinity. Specific debts of gratitude to other scholars who provided important assistance are recorded in the footnotes.

I am grateful to the Irish Research Council for the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Research Scholarship which funded my research and to the funding bodies (the Graduate Studies Research Travel Fund, the Trinity Trust, TCD School of English, the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center and the benefactors of the A. J. Leventhal Scholarship) who supported vital research trips. I wish to thank the staff of the Houghton Library, the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, the John J. Burns Library, the Library of Trinity College Dublin, the Václav Havel Library and the University of Reading, Special Collections for their helpful professionalism. A special thank-you to the staff at the Library of the University of Nantes for assistance in sourcing research material there.

My parents have been a steady source of support throughout the project and I am very happy to record my thanks to them. I am also extremely grateful to my brother Conor and sister Úna for their diligent proofreading. I wish to thank Alice Galea for her advice regarding translation. Any remaining errors are my own.

I am grateful to Magda Hejna for her love. It is to her I dedicate this work.

Abbreviations

Published works by Beckett

- BDMP I – Stirrings Still / Soubresauts and Comment dire / what is the word*, digital genetic edn (The Beckett Digital Manuscript Project, module 1), ed. by Dirk Van Hulle and Vincent Neyt (Brussels: University Press Antwerp, 2011) <<http://www.beckettarchive.org>>
- BDMP II – L’Innommable / The Unnamable*, digital genetic edn (The Beckett Digital Manuscript Project, module 2), ed. by Dirk Van Hulle, Shane Weller and Vincent Neyt (Brussels: University Press Antwerp, 2013) <<http://www.beckettarchive.org>>
- BDMP III – Krapp’s Last Tape / La Dernière Bande*, digital genetic edn (The Beckett Digital Manuscript Project, module 3), ed. by Dirk Van Hulle and Vincent Neyt (Brussels: University Press Antwerp, 2015) <<http://www.beckettarchive.org>>
- BDMP IV – Molloy*, digital genetic edn (The Beckett Digital Manuscript Project, module 4), ed. by Magessa O’Reilly, Dirk Van Hulle, Pim Verhulst and Vincent Neyt (Brussels: University Press Antwerp, 2016) <<http://www.beckettarchive.org>>
- CDW – The Complete Dramatic Works* (1986; London: Faber, 2006)
- CPSB – The Collected Poems of Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Seán Lawlor and John Pilling (London: Faber, 2012)
- CSP – The Complete Short Prose, 1929–1989*, ed. by S. E. Gontarski (New York: Grove, 1995)
- D – Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, ed. by Eoin O’Brien and Edith Fournier (Dublin: Black Cat, 1992)
- Dis – Disjecta*, ed. by Ruby Cohn (1983; London: Calder, 2001)
- EB – Echo’s Bones*, ed. by Mark Nixon (London: Faber, 2014)
- LSB – The Letters of Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Lois More Overbeck, George Craig, Dan Gunn and Martha Fehsenfeld, 4 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009–16)
LSB I, 1929–1940 (2009)
LSB II, 1941–1956 (2011)
LSB III, 1957–1965 (2014)
LSB IV, 1966–1989 (2016)
- MC – Mercier and Camier*, ed. by Seán Kennedy (London: Faber, 2010)
- MD – Malone Dies*, ed. by Peter Boxall (London: Faber, 2010)
- Mo – Molloy*, ed. by Shane Weller (London: Faber, 2009)
- MPTK – More Pricks than Kicks*, ed. by Cassandra Nelson (London: Faber, 2010)

Mu – Murphy, ed. by J. C. C. Mays (London: Faber, 2009)

NHO – Nohow On (London: Calder, 1989)

PTD – Proust and Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit (1965; London: Calder, 1976)

TN – The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett, gen. ed. James Knowlson, 4 vols (London: Faber, 1992–1999)

TN I, Waiting for Godot, ed. by Dougald McMillan and James Knowlson (1993)

TN II, Endgame, ed. by S. E. Gontarski (1992)

TN IV, The Shorter Plays, ed. by S. E. Gontarski (1999)

TFN – Texts for Nothing and Other Shorter Prose, 1950–1976, ed. by Mark Nixon (London: Faber, 2010)

U – The Unnamable, ed. by Steven Connor (London: Faber, 2010)

W – Watt, ed. by C. J. Ackerley (London: Faber, 2009)

Archives

BDL – The Beckett Digital Library, ed. by Dirk Van Hulle, Mark Nixon, Vincent Neyt and Veronica Bălă (Brussels: University Press Antwerp, 2016) <<http://www.beckettarchive.org>>

HL – Houghton Library, Harvard College Library

HRC – Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin

HRC CL – Samuel Beckett papers in the HRC’s Carlton Lake collection

HRC SB – Samuel Beckett papers in the HRC’s Samuel Beckett collection

JBL – John J. Burns Library, Boston College

JBL SB – Samuel Beckett Collection, MS.1991.001, John J. Burns Library

OSU – Ohio State University Library

TCD – The Library of Trinity College Dublin

UoR – University of Reading, Special Collections

JEK – James and Elizabeth Knowlson Collection, The University of Reading

VHL – Václav Havel Library, Prague

Abbreviations for individual manuscripts

‘FD’ – ‘Fancy Dead Dying’ notebook, TCD MS 1122

Reference Works

OED – *Oxford English Dictionary*

PR – *Le Petit Robert*, iPad application, version 3.1 (Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert / Sejer, 2016)

All biblical references are to the King James Bible.

All Shakespeare citations are by line number and reference *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, ed. by Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson and David Scott Kastan, rev. edn (1998; London: Arden Shakespeare, 2001)

Proper Names in correspondence and diary entries

AS – Alan Schneider

BB – Barbara Bray

RC – Rick Cluchey

SB – Samuel Beckett

TM – Thomas MacGreevy¹

Journals

JOBS – *The Journal of Beckett Studies*

SBT/A – *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui*

¹ McGreevy changed his name to MacGreevy in 1943. I use the later spelling throughout.

Notes on the Text

Transcription Conventions

~~Deletions~~ are indicated using strikethrough. Illegible words of three or fewer letters are indicated using x's enclosed in square brackets, with each x representing one letter of the word: [x], [xx], [xxx]. Where the word contains four letters or more, four x's are used: [xxxx]. [? Uncertain readings] are enclosed in square brackets and preceded by a question mark.

Dates

Following the first mention of one of Beckett's works, the date of initial publication will be given in parentheses or a footnote. French titles in parentheses denote first publication in that language.

Translations

Translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

Introduction:

The Production of Closed Space

On a draft translation of his short prose piece ‘Se voir’, dated 8 February 1974, Beckett made an edit which points to a key feature of his use of closed space.¹ Having translated the opening line ‘[e]ndroit clos’ as ‘[c]losed space’, he then put a line through ‘space’ and replaced it with ‘place’.² Beckett chose not to focus on the literal meaning of ‘se voir’ [to see oneself/each other] when translating the title into English. Instead, he favoured ‘Closed Place’.³ But when the story was first published in Britain, it was entitled ‘Closed place’ only in the contents list and ‘Closed Space’ in the text.⁴ According to Yi-fu Tuan, ‘[p]lace is security, space is freedom: we are attached to the one and long for the other’.⁵ In light of this definition of ‘place’ as representing a fixity which opposes itself to the openness of ‘space’, Beckett could be said to have made the locale of the piece more confined in his work on the English translation. However, given the connotations of openness and

¹ ‘Se voir’ was first published in *Minuit*, 4 (1973), 71–72 and later as part of the collection *Pour finir encore et autre foirades* (Paris: Minuit, 1976). It appeared in English in three separate editions, all published the same year: *Fizzles* (New York: Grove, 1976); *For to End Yet Again and Other Fizzles* (London: Calder, 1976); and *Foirades / Fizzles*, with etchings by Jasper Johns, ed. by Véra Lindsay (New York: Petersburg Press, 1976). Details from *TFN*, p. 180 and John Pilling, *A Samuel Beckett Chronology* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 192.

² UoR MS 1550/19, f. 1.

³ For evidence that Beckett favoured the title ‘Closed Place’ over ‘Closed Space’, see SB to Christopher Ricks, 4 November 1976, *LSB IV*, p. 440.

⁴ Beckett, *For to End Yet Again*, pp. 5, 47. *CSP* uses ‘Closed place’, and this title is retained in *TFN*.

⁵ Yi-fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), p. 3. Though Tuan’s view is standard in spatial studies, Michel de Certeau views space and place in opposite relation: ‘To de Certeau place is the empty grid over which practice occurs while space is what is created by practice.’ (Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (2004; Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 38–39) For Edward Casey, ‘[w]hile place solicits questions of limit and boundary, and of location and surrounding, space sets these questions aside in favor of a concern with the absolute and the infinite, the immense and the indefinitely extended. If place bears on what lies *in*—in a container, dwelling, or vessel—space characteristically moves *out*, so far out as to explode the closely confining perimeters within which Aristotle attempted to ensconce material things.’ (Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (1997; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 77) Emphasis in the original.

expanse carried by the word ‘space’, the phrase ‘closed space’ encapsulates very well the seeming paradox, frequently encountered in Beckett’s work, of imagining a space of confinement which nonetheless suggests other spaces beyond. While spatially closed, Beckett’s works tend to be hermeneutically open.

Before asking ‘[w]hat is space?’ or ‘[w]hat is a place?’, Tuan asks ‘[w]hat is home?’⁶ While for Gaston Bachelard, the enclosure of domestic space is ‘the tap root of the function of inhabiting’, the closed spaces of Beckett’s work are very frequently uninhabitable, resulting in a home which is not a home, as when Mouth in *Not I* speaks of herself in the third person ‘being brought up [...] with the other waifs’ in what seems to be an institutional setting (*CDW*, pp. 377).⁷ The link between the topographical and ontological homelessness of Beckett’s characters has been examined in previous research.⁸ It is my contention that a study of his closed spaces can give us a better understanding of Beckett’s working process as well as new interpretations of his works.

Beckett repeatedly used images of confinement when outlining aesthetic concerns central to his own work. In his essay ‘Peintres de l’empêchement’ (1948), he described the painting of Bram van Velde, in which he saw ‘the refusal to accept as given the old subject–object relation’, as an ‘art of confinement’ [art d’incarcération].⁹ He also used institutions of confinement as key locales in seven works of prose fiction (see Chapters 1–4). Beckett’s interest in prisons and asylums and their inmates has been frequently noted in biographical scholarship.¹⁰ It is evident in his letter to Karl-

⁶ Tuan, pp. 3–4.

⁷ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by Maria Jolas (1969; Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), p. 31.

⁸ David Addyman, ‘Beckett and Place: The Lie of the Land’ (unpublished PhD thesis, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2008).

⁹ ‘[Le] refus d’accepter comme donné le vieux rapport sujet-objet’ (*Dis*, p. 137). Translation in Samuel Beckett, ‘The New Object’, *Modernism/modernity*, 18.4 (2011), 878–80 (p. 880). This translation of ‘roughly three quarters’ of ‘Peintres de l’empêchement’ ‘was originally published in the catalogue of the Samuel M. Kootz Gallery in New York, in 1948’, for an exhibition entitled *Introducing Two Modern French Painters: Geer Van Velde, Bram Van Velde*. (Peter Fifield, ‘Introduction to Samuel Beckett, “The New Object”’, *Modernism/modernity*, 18.4 (2011), 873–77 (p. 873)). As Fifield provides convincing evidence that this is Beckett’s own translation, I use it here. An alternative draft translation of part of this text in Beckett’s ‘Eté 56’ notebook has ‘art of incarceration’ instead of ‘art of confinement’ (‘Eté 56’ notebook, UoR MS 1227/7/7/1, f. 22v., *BDMP* III [accessed 13 March 2017]).

¹⁰ See Eoin O’Brien, *The Beckett Country: Samuel Beckett’s Ireland* (Monkstown: Black Cat, 1986), pp. 225–45; James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (1996; London: Bloomsbury, 1997), pp. 409–11, 611–14, 647–49. See also ‘Rick Cluchey’ and ‘Jan Jönson’, in *Beckett Remembering, Remembering Beckett: Uncollected Interviews with Samuel Beckett and Memories of Those Who Knew Him*, ed. by James Knowlson and Elizabeth Knowlson (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), pp. 195–211, 272–79.

Franz Lembke, a German prisoner who translated, cast, rehearsed and acted in a prisoners' production of *Waiting for Godot* (*En attendant Godot*, 1952) in 1953:

My dear Prisoner. I read and re-read your letter. [...] For a long time now, more or less aware of this extraordinary Lüttringhausen affair, I've thought often of the man who, in his cage, read, translated, and put on my play. In all my life as man and writer, nothing like this has ever happened to me. To someone moved as I am, phrases come easily, but from a sloppy way of talking, not at all your style, given that I am no longer the same, and will never again be able to be the same, after what you have done, all of you. In the place where I have always found myself, where I will always find myself, turning round and round, falling over, getting up again, it is no longer wholly dark nor wholly silent. (SB to Lembke, on or after 14 October, 1954, *LSB II*, p. 506)¹¹

This interest in inmates of confinement served on occasion as a direct impetus for Beckett's dramatic writing (see Chapter 9). But confinement is much more than a point of personal interest to which Beckett returned across his writing career. A study of Beckett's closed spaces can provide not only new readings of his works and an exploration of the multiple political and philosophical meanings that Beckett's manipulation of bodies in these spaces entail; crucially, it can also open the way for a fresh approach towards Beckett's working process, from his 'notesnatching' of the 1930s (see Chapters 1 and 2) to his production notebooks of the 1960s, 70s and 80s (see Chapters 5 and 9).

Why does a study of confinement allow for this? There are two main reasons: firstly, different forms of closed space are found at key points throughout the Beckett canon, the 'white' as

¹¹ 'Mon cher Prisonnier. Je lis et relis votre lettre. [...] Depuis longtemps déjà, un peu au courant de cette extraordinaire histoire de Lüttringhausen, je rêve souvent à celui qui, dans sa cage, a lu, traduit, fait jouer ma pièce. De ma vie d'homme-écrivain il ne m'est jamais rien arrivé de pareil. Emu comme je le suis on fait facilement des phrases, mais d'un [? boniment] peu à vous dès que je ne suis plus le même et ne pourrai plus être le même après ce que vous avez fait vous tous. Là où depuis toujours et pour toujours je tourne en rond, tombe et me relève, il ne fait plus tout à fait noir ni tout à fait silencieux' (*LSB II*, p. 505).

well as the ‘grey’, in his prose, poetic, dramatic and other writing.¹² This alone would be grounds enough for a study of this crucially important topic in twentieth-century thought as it is refracted through Beckett’s work, intersecting as it does so with the spatial philosophies of Tuan, Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre. But the second reason is even more important: Beckett not only created space in his writing, he also worked with it. As Chapter 5 will make clear, Beckett’s move to the theatre is vital to understanding his shift from writing about prisons and asylums to creating the ‘[b]are room[s]’ of his later work.¹³ My analysis of the works Beckett produced over five decades of creative endeavour will allow for a reconsideration of the way Beckett worked, the way his work means as well as what his works mean. Part of this analysis will fit the remit of structuralist poetics, which studies a text’s ‘attested meanings or effects and seeks to understand what structures or devices make them possible’, and opposes itself to hermeneutics, which ‘argues about what the meanings are or should be’.¹⁴ However, on the basis that the analysis of a text’s structure can never be divorced from the meanings we bring to bear upon it and because interpretations are always contested, even as they are being attested, I will provide readings of my textual case studies alongside an account of how closed spaces create meaning in Beckett’s work.¹⁵

My goal in the following nine chapters is to delineate how confinement functions in different forms, at different points in Beckett’s body of work. Given that it is such a pervasive topic, many different texts could have served this purpose, and alongside the twenty-two I have chosen to

¹² S. E. Gontarski coined the term ‘grey canon’ to denote Beckett’s ‘letters, notebooks, manuscripts’ and other written material which falls outside the published ‘white canon’ (S. E. Gontarski, ‘Greying the Canon: Beckett in Performance’, in *Beckett after Beckett*, ed. by S. E. Gontarski and Anthony Uhlmann (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006), pp. 141–57, (p. 143).

¹³ UoR MS 2934, f. 2r., *BDMP I* [accessed 19 July 2017]. For an account of Beckett’s abandoned dramatic piece ‘Bare Room’ (written 1984), see Dirk Van Hulle and Mark Nixon, ‘Performance and Beckett’s “Bare Room”’, *JOBS*, 23.1 (2014), v–xi. Anne Atik reports a conversation she had with Beckett in 1984 in which he discussed ‘[h]ow interesting it would be to write a play *about* reading a poem’ (Anne Atik, *How It Was: A Memoir of Samuel Beckett* (London: Faber, 2001), p. 120). Emphasis in the original. This cross-generic compositional process is evident in ‘Bare Room’, which involves the recitation of the two poems Beckett mentioned in his conversation with Atik, Shakespeare’s Sonnets LXXI and CXVI.

¹⁴ Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*, rev. edn (2002; London: Routledge, 2004), p. vii. For a discussion of genetic criticism as a branch of structuralist poetics, see Dirk Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics: Joyce’s Know-How, Beckett’s Nohow* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), p. 43.

¹⁵ Culler himself admits that, in spite of the stated distance between structuralist poetics and hermeneutics, ‘it is obvious that structuralism and even structuralist poetics also offer a theory of literature and a mode of interpretation’ (Culler, p. 301).

focus on, I will discuss many others. Why use these specific case studies? My first such case study in Chapter 1 is *Proust* (1931), in which images of confinement helped Beckett formulate aesthetic problems, such as the rupture between subject and object, which would be important throughout his career. Following on from this, the chapter shows how a concern with the politics of vision is central to the role of the prison in ‘Dante and the Lobster’ (1932) and the asylum in ‘Fingal’ (1934). In *Murphy* (1938), the politics of Beckett’s writing begins to take the shape which would inform his move away from broadly realist representations of carceral institutions; I explore this in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, I turn to the relation between the asylum and the narrative gaps of *Watt* (written 1941–45; published 1953), a key work in the development of Beckett’s poetics of missing parts, before focussing in Chapter 4 on the forced movement, as well as the enforced stasis, of the protagonists of his postwar prose. Running through these first four chapters is an analysis of how Beckett used closed space to move from the ‘he am’ of *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (written 1931–32; published 1992) (see Chapter 1) to the ‘I’ of ‘The End’ (1954), ‘The Expelled’ (‘L’Expulsé’, 1946) and *Malone Dies* (*Malone meurt*, 1951) (see Chapter 4).¹⁶

In Chapter 5, I switch gears by turning to Beckett’s drama, considering four plays—*Endgame* (*Fin de partie*, 1957), *Act Without Words I* (*Acte sans paroles I*, 1957), *Happy Days* (1961) and *Quad* (1984)—which will allow for a broad diachronic perspective on how Beckett worked with closed space on stage and screen. This analysis of Beckett’s writing for the spaces of drama will help us understand the spatial aesthetic underpinning his non-dramatic work (see Chapter 8).

The final four chapters alternate between works conceived for the page and those written for

¹⁶ The first part of ‘La Fin’ was published as ‘Suite’ in *Les Temps modernes*, 1.10 (1946). An English translation was published in *Merlin*, 3.2 (1954), trans. by Richard Seaver in collaboration with Beckett. The French version appeared in full in *Nouvelles et Textes pour rien* (Paris: Minuit, 1955). In 1960, Beckett revised the English translation for publication in the *Evergreen Review*, 4.15 (1960) but retained the credit for Seaver. Details from Dirk Van Hulle, ‘Publishing “The End”: Beckett and *Les Temps modernes*’, in *Publishing Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Mark Nixon (London: British Library, 2011), pp. 73–82; Ruby Cohn, *A Beckett Canon* (2001; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), p. 129; and Sam Slote, ‘Continuing the End: Variation between Beckett’s French and English Prose Works’, in *Publishing Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Mark Nixon (London: British Library, 2011), pp. 205–18, (p. 206).

the stage. Chapter 6 argues that the pronominal experimentation in Beckett's poems, especially 'they come' (1946) and 'Serena I' (1935), is crucial to understanding the way in which the narrator of *The Unnamable* (*L'Innommable*, 1953) comes to say 'me' when attempting to 'say I' and studies the breakdown of the textual subject as it turns to saying 'not I'. Chapter 7 tracks this assault on the first-person pronoun in *Not I* (1973), which in a key production had its stage image created through the confinement of its main actor in her chair. For most artists, being involved in such stage business would be the limit of their involvement with physical confinement. But Beckett's most extreme spatial restrictions on the body come in what have been termed the 'closed space' pieces of the 1960s and 70s.¹⁷ In Chapter 8, I zoom in on two of these—*Imagination Dead Imagine* (*Imagination morte imaginez*, 1965) and *All Strange Away* (1976)—both of which Beckett started working on in 1964, the year after he had commenced the drafts which later became *Not I*. By choosing to publish *All Strange Away* more than a decade later than its shorter textual twin *Imagination Dead Imagine*, Beckett put aspects of his compositional production of space on display for the reading public, making this a fascinating pair of texts through which to study the geneses of these barest of his closed spaces as well as the ways in which such spaces bear upon intertextuality in Beckett's work. My final chapter shows that the study of imposed confinement provided in this thesis can give us a new understanding of Beckett as a political writer; one which takes into account both the historical context of the work's production, the temporal nature of its textual production as well as the power dynamics so central to interpretations of individual works. This will be achieved by examining the two pieces Beckett wrote for inmates of institutions of confinement, 'Mongrel Mime' (written 1982–83) and *Catastrophe* (1982), which, together with *What Where* (*Quoi où*, 1983), exemplify the relation between Beckett's resistance to 'explicitation' and the political charge of his oeuvre.

¹⁷ Cohn, *A Beckett Canon*, p. 285.

Making space

Beckett moved away from creating recognisable representations of institutional confinement in his writing during and after the war.¹⁸ A central argument of this thesis is that the bare rooms created thereafter are never empty, be they written for stage, page or screen. In 1957, John Cage told an audience of music teachers: ‘There is no such thing as an empty space or an empty time. There is always something to see, something to hear.’¹⁹ Delivered eleven years before the publication of Peter Brook’s *The Empty Space*, Cage’s speech challenges the trajectory of ‘the rise and fall of the “empty space”’ in discourse around twentieth-century performance.²⁰ Indeed, as early as 1907, in a different intellectual context, mathematician Henri Poincaré was arguing that ‘[i]t is impossible to imagine empty space’.²¹ In truth, competing ideas about the conceptualisation of space do not evolve in a smooth trajectory but are frequently in conflict, even in the work of the same writer, as can be seen in Beckett’s use of the concept of the void.

‘There’s no lack of void’, declares Estragon, refuting Vladimir’s claim in Act II of *Waiting for Godot* that the tree beside which they wait is a reliable marker of place (*CDW*, p. 61). In view of his use of void as a concept, the same could be argued of Beckett’s oeuvre. Given that he identified ‘empty space’ as his ‘old friend’ (SB to AS, 22 April 1981, *LSB IV*, p. 550), it may seem reasonable to suggest that Beckett was trying not just to create theatre in empty space (Brook’s description of his own working process) but to stage empty space itself. Beckett’s late prose works also use the term, with the second of the *Faux départs* (1965) referring to the darkness and silence of ‘l’autre vide’ [the other void] and the rotunda in the English version of *Imagination Dead Imagination* ‘[r]ediscovered miraculously after what absence in perfect voids’ (*TFN*, pp. 69, 88).²²

¹⁸ See Chapters 3 and 4.

¹⁹ John Cage, ‘Experimental Music’, in John Cage, *Silence*, 50th anniversary edn (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2011), pp. 7–12 (p. 8).

²⁰ David Wiles, *A Short History of Western Performance Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 3.

²¹ ‘Il est impossible de se représenter l’espace vide.’ (Henri Poincaré, ‘La relativité de l’espace’, *L’année psychologique*, 13.1 (1906), 1–17 (p. 1)) The sixteenth-century philosopher Giordano Bruno also argued against the existence of empty space, believing that all space was necessarily plenary (Casey, p. 120). Though Beckett’s first publication, ‘Dante ... Bruno. Vico .. Joyce’ (1929), nominally deals with Bruno, it does so only in very small part.

²² The term used in the French version is ‘déserts’ (Samuel Beckett, *Têtes-mortes* (1967; Paris: Minuit, 2013), p. 55). In an early draft of the English translation, Beckett leaves ‘voids^{deserts}’ as an open variant (UoR MS 1541/1, f. 4r.).

In Beckett's earlier writing on aesthetics and poetics, the void frequently appears figuratively as that which lies behind the veil of language, as when he declares his intention to set up a 'Logoclasts' League': 'The idea is ruptured writing, so that the void may protrude, like a hernia.' (SB to Mary Manning Howe, 11 July 1937, *LSB* I, p. 521 n. 8) Such spatial metaphors of the void and its concomitant veil can also be found in Beckett's writing on painting, alongside images of confinement. Here he is on the van Velde brothers in 'Peintres de l'empêchement':

Their painting is an analysis of privation. An analysis for the one [Geer van Velde] in terms of the without, of light and void, for the other [Bram van Velde] in terms of the within, of dark and full and fulguration. [...] An endless unveiling, veil behind veil, plane after plane of imperfect transparencies, light and space themselves veils, an unveiling towards the unveilable, the nothing, the thing again.²³

This essay opens with an attack on those who try to form, through rote repetition, an immovable aesthetic statement on the fugitive aesthetic object of modern art. As I will argue in the following chapters, in his own aesthetic practice, Beckett himself never comes up with what he sarcastically calls 'a nice, solid opinion to last you all your life'.²⁴ The attempts in his writing on the van Velde brothers to address the breakdown of the subject-object relation are indeed crucial to understanding 'his response to postwar debates on politics and culture'.²⁵ However, we should not read such statements simply as abstract concepts later concretised in Beckett's postwar work. Rather, it is necessary to follow the evolution of these concepts as they move between different forms and genres. While my first chapter will provide the required focus on Beckett's early attempts at

²³ Beckett, 'The New Object', p. 880. 'Leur peinture est l'analyse d'un état de privation, analyse empruntant chez l'un les termes du dehors, la lumière et le vide, chez l'autre ceux du dedans, l'obscurité, le plein, la phosphorescence. [...] Un dévoilement sans fin, voile derrière voile, plan sur plan de transparences imparfaites, un dévoilement vers l'indévoilable, le rien, la chose à nouveau' (*Dis*, p. 136).

²⁴ '[U]ne bonne opinion bien solide capable de durer toute la vie' (*Dis*, p. 133).

²⁵ David Lloyd, 'Beckett's Thing: Bram Van Velde and the Gaze', *Modernist Cultures*, 6.2 (2011), 269–95 (p. 270).

defining his own artistic stance, concepts such as the relation between subject and object will be returned to at different points during the thesis.

Beckett admired what he called the ‘incoercible absence of relation’ between artist and world in Bram van Velde’s work, seeing in this a conviction that, as stated in the *Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit* (1949) ‘to be an artist is to fail, as no other dare fail’ (*PTD*, p. 125).²⁶ Key to Beckett’s own art of failure are his repeated and various failures to implement fixed aesthetic positions, including those regarding space. In this regard, his stated admiration of the void is similar to the unattainable goal he sets up of creating ‘l’objet pur’ [the pure object] in ‘La peinture des van Velde ou le monde et le pantalon’ (1945).²⁷ In *Imagination Dead Imagine*, the very existence of a rotunda containing two bodies in the void prevents it from being a perfectly empty space. As I will argue in Chapter 5, this aesthetic impurity, the ‘mongrel’ nature of his closed spaces, is an important part of Beckett’s use of confinement. In spite of his dismissal of Tal Coat’s painting in the *Three Dialogues* as ‘[t]otal object, complete with missing parts’, Beckett’s spaces are always in productive relation with what surrounds them—or with what might be imagined surrounding them (*PTD*, p. 101).

Decomposing space

In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre states that space should be studied ‘genetically’, examining not just the relations between things as they occur in space but also how such relations come to be constructed in the social sphere.²⁸ Genetic methodologies are common in materialist-based approaches to cultural production such as Lefebvre’s, which often ‘prioritize the understanding of

²⁶ *Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit*, first published in *Transition*, 49.5 (1949), reprinted in *PTD*.

²⁷ See Chapter 5.

²⁸ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), p. 171.

processes over things'.²⁹ When studying the work of a writer genetically, we can draw on an established set of methodological tools and material.

Myriam Jeantroux, using the manuscripts of Beckett's theatre work, has argued that there is 'a *huis clos* structure in Beckett's theatre, a structure on which rests all the organisation of the scenic space'.³⁰ The broad-based analytic framework of this thesis will allow me to take account of the variety of ways in which Beckett used closed space across genres and to pose key comparative questions: What is the relation between the asylum cell of *Murphy* and the carceral space of 'Mongrel Mime'? How do the closed-space texts of the 1960s and 70s relate to the 'sanctuary' described in the prose of the 1930s? And how is Beckett's 'denarration' of spaces of confinement within the 'pronominal vertigo' of *The Unnamable* linked to stylistic features of his early poetry?³¹ In order to address such questions, which will give a fuller understanding of Beckett's use of closed space, it is necessary to follow the developmental arcs of particular works as well as the development of Beckett's own writing career.

S. E. Gontarski has provided an account of the hermeneutic indeterminacy of Beckett's work by using prepublication manuscripts to develop an influential model of the 'undoing' of his dramatic texts, whereby concrete details are progressively erased from successive drafts:

the plays most often emerge from and rest on a realistic and traditional substructure, against which the final work develops dialectically. While Beckett labors to undo that traditional structure and

²⁹ David Harvey, *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 25. This is Harvey's description of Raymond Williams' assertion that '[t]he strongest barrier to the recognition of human cultural activity is [the] immediate and regular conversion of experience into finished products' (qtd in Harvey, *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference*, pp. 24–25). See also Harvey's discussion of Marx's statement that dialectical materialism aims to study 'every historical form as in fluid movement' (p. 62).

³⁰ '[U]ne structure du huis clos dans le théâtre de Beckett, une structure sur laquelle repose toute l'organisation de l'espace scénique' (Myriam Jeantroux, 'La structure du huis clos dans le théâtre de Samuel Beckett: un "art d'incarcération"' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Franche-Comté, 2004), p. 6). See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Huis clos suivi de Les mouches* (1947; Paris: Gallimard, 1998). *Huis clos* is most often translated as *No Exit* or *In Camera*.

³¹ See Chapters 9, 8 and 6 respectively.

realistic content, he never wholly does so. The final work retains those originary traces and is virtually a palimpsest.³²

Rosemary Pountney, who favours the term ‘vaguening’, based on a note on a typescript draft of *Happy Days*, argues that ‘[t]he process of drafting each play [...] may be seen as a microcosm of the development of Beckett’s oeuvre as a whole, a refining and scaling down of the text’.³³ Terms like ‘undoing’ and ‘vaguening’ can become vague themselves if applied as blanket terms without taking into account the different ways in which Beckett approached various creative problems. Such models oversimplify the complex balancing of material involved in the creation of his works.

Dirk Van Hulle describes Beckett’s poetics in terms of a process of decomposition, a term particularly apt for representing the topographical disintegration that occurs in much of Beckett’s postwar work, given that ‘decompose’ has its roots in the French verb *poser*, meaning ‘to place’. Van Hulle cites Malone, a victim of physical decay himself, who claims to have ‘lost the faculty of decomposing’ the buzzing that assails him, a buzzing that is caused by the sounds of the world that he hears merging into one (*MD*, p. 33). Decomposition is here an ‘analytical activity’ which separates out elements of information and tries to follow them back to their sources in order to make sense of them.³⁴ Such source-hunting is crucial to literary scholarship, particularly when working out the status of the ‘demented particulars’ Beckett used in his work (*Mu*, p. 11). But, as Malone’s allusion to his own bodily and textual ‘decomposition’ suggests, the process also works in the opposite direction—up to and beyond the finishing line of existence, as well as back to its sources (*MD*, p. 83).³⁵

³² S. E. Gontarski, *The Intent of ‘Undoing’ in Samuel Beckett’s Dramatic Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. 2.

³³ Rosemary Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows: Samuel Beckett’s Drama, 1956–76, from ‘All That Fall’ to ‘Footfalls’, with Commentaries on the Latest Plays* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1988), pp. 149, 195.

³⁴ Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, p. 172.

³⁵ ‘[M]a décomposition’ (Samuel Beckett, *Malone meurt* (1951; Paris: Minuit, 2012), p. 130).

As the example of the translation of ‘Se voir’ demonstrates, the most interesting moments in the compositional process often occur after a work has been published, in what has been called a text’s ‘epigenesis’.³⁶ When a writer such as Beckett directs his own plays, the potential for critical analysis of this phase of textual development is particularly rich, as ‘incompletion is not only a criterion of the dramatic text, it is more precisely its *définition*’.³⁷ The French term for a theatrical rehearsal—‘*répétition*’—evokes this continuous aspect of performance texts.³⁸ It also points to the fact that Beckett’s was not just a one-way working process of ‘undoing’, but also involved the repetitious ‘redoing’ of his work in performance (see Chapter 7). On some occasions, this involved adding rather than subtracting detail, as when Beckett asked his publisher Jérôme Lindon to replace the ‘*maison de correction*’ [house of correction/borstal] mentioned in the typescript of *En attendant Godot* with a specific example for the first published edition of the play; this generic term was replaced by ‘*la Roquette*’, a prison in Paris (SB to Lindon, 2 March 1952, *LSB II*, pp. 325–26).³⁹ While the predominant tendency in Beckett’s work is towards reduction—the prison reference in *Godot*, for instance, was deleted completely in Beckett’s subsequent English translation—we need an analytic model that takes into account both the particulars utilised and the fermentation to which they were subjected in his working process (see *CDW*, p. 13).

It no surprise that the two major early manuscript studies of Beckett’s work were written by two scholars, Gontarski and Pountney, who both had experience in the inherently mutable form of theatre, in which one can step into a rehearsal room and see changes being made to the work in real

³⁶ Dirk Van Hulle, *Modern Manuscripts: The Extended Mind and Creative Undoing from Darwin to Beckett and Beyond* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 230. The concept of epigenesis is modelled on that of endogenesis (‘the process by which the writer conceives of, elaborates, and transfigures pre-textual material, without recourse to outside documents or information, through simple reformulation or internal transformation of previous pre-textual data’) and exogenesis (‘any writing process devoted to research, selection, and incorporation, focused on information stemming from a source exterior to the writing’) (Pierre-Marc de Biasi, ‘What Is a Literary Draft? Toward a Functional Typology of Genetic Documentation’, trans. by Ingrid Wassenaar, *Yale French Studies*, 89 (1996), 26–58 (pp. 43–44)). See also Raymonde Debray-Genette, ‘Génétique et poétique: le cas Flaubert’, in *Essais de critique génétique*, ed. by Louis Hay (Paris: Flammarion, 1979), pp. 21–67 (p. 29).

³⁷ ‘L’inachèvement n’est [...] pas seulement un critère du texte dramatique, c’est plus précisément sa *définition*’ (Jean-Loup Rivièrè, ‘La matière noire. Génétique et théâtralité’, *Genesis*, 26.5 (2005), 11–17 (p. 11)).

³⁸ Gontarski, ‘Greying the Canon’, p. 153; Van Hulle, *Modern Manuscripts*, p. 221.

³⁹ Samuel Beckett, *En attendant Godot* (1952; Paris: Minuit, 1997), p. 16.

time.⁴⁰ Because ‘performing arts are spatial arts’, studying Beckett’s work as a director also provides an important opportunity to analyse his use of confined space in particular performance spaces.⁴¹ Often this involved the reconceptualisation of the spatial setup of the same play at different stages of his career (see Chapter 5). When Almuth Grésillon published *Éléments de critique génétique* in 1994, she could point to ‘the almost inexistent study of the genesis of theatre texts’.⁴² The years since have seen scholars gain unprecedented levels of access to Beckett’s archive, including the publication of the notebooks he used as a director.⁴³ A full genetic analysis of Beckett’s dramatic writing is now underway.⁴⁴ My critical analysis of the function of confinement across Beckett’s career will draw on compositional manuscripts, reading notebooks, production notebooks and other material from his ‘grey canon’ to analyse Beckett’s use of space as a writer and director. I will use evidence from Beckett’s various ‘genetic dossier[s]’ alongside theories of space and historicist analyses of specific institutional and performance spaces.⁴⁵ This will involve constructing as well as drawing on existing chronologies of textual development both prior to publication (the so-called *avant-texte*) and after publication (the *après-texte*).⁴⁶

Iain Bailey makes the point that genetic criticism, ‘which grounds its knowledge about what external material made its way into the author’s oeuvre wholly on the “written traces”, also relies on

⁴⁰ See the documentation of the rehearsal process by Gay McAuley in the University of Sydney and by the Samuel Beckett Laboratory in Trinity College Dublin (Gay McAuley, ‘Not Magic but Work: Rehearsal and the Production of Meaning’, *Theatre Research International*, 33.3 (2008), 276–88; Jonathan Heron and others, ‘The Samuel Beckett Laboratory 2013’, *JOBS*, 23.1 (2014), 73–94).

⁴¹ Max Herrmann qtd in Benjamin Wihstutz, ‘Introduction’ to *Performance and the Politics of Space: Theatre and Topology*, ed. by Erika Fischer-Lichte and Benjamin Wihstutz (New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 1–12 (p. 1).

⁴² ‘[L]’étude des genèses de textes de théâtre quasi inexistante’ (Almuth Grésillon, *Éléments de critique génétique: lire les manuscrits modernes* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1994), p. 105).

⁴³ See *TN*.

⁴⁴ For an example, see *BDMP III* and the accompanying monograph, Dirk Van Hulle, *The Making of Samuel Beckett’s ‘Krapp’s Last Tape’ / ‘La Dernière Bande’* (Brussels: University Press Antwerp, 2015).

⁴⁵ I use Almuth Grésillon’s definition of the genetic dossier as a ‘set of all the preserved written genetic witnesses of a work or of a project of writing, classed according to successive stages of their chronology. Synonym: “*avant-texte*”.’ [‘ensemble de tous les témoins génétiques écrits conservés d’une œuvre ou d’un projet d’écriture, et classés en fonction de leur chronologie des étapes successives. Synonyme: “*avant-texte*”.’] Grésillon suggests this term as an alternative to ‘*avant-texte*’, to allow for the genetic analysis of written evidence of the creative process for which a textual model is not suitable (Grésillon, pp. 242, 109). For a discussion of the genetic study of architecture, including the problems of applying a textual model to this field of study, see Pierre-Marc de Biasi, ‘Pour une approche génétique de l’architecture’, *Genesis*, 14 (2000), 13–65.

⁴⁶ I follow Van Hulle in ‘regarding the variants of the *après-texte* as epigenetic transformations’ (Van Hulle, *Modern Manuscripts*, p. 230).

a tacit understanding that the documentation represents only a portion of the author's activity'.⁴⁷ It is therefore particularly important to find ways of using genetic methodologies in parallel with historicist approaches so as to allow for analysis of material which does not belong in the written evidence contained in the genetic dossier. This will be one of the strategies of my thesis. Though genetic criticism 'grows out of a structuralist and poststructuralist notion of "text"', it generally retains a stricter idea of the text than some of its theoretical stablemates.⁴⁸ When analysing a literary work, it makes sense to use a relatively narrow definition of the text as 'the sequence of words and pauses recorded in a document', rather than expanding its boundaries, and consequently those of the genetic dossier, to the extent that both become unmanageably large.⁴⁹ This has direct implications for the study of texts in performance, which cannot be divorced from the study of the spaces in which these performances take place. Anne Ubersfeld has pointed out that 'a refusal to accept the text–performance distinction will lead to all kinds of confusion since the same tools are not used for the analysis of both'.⁵⁰ Because of the spatial nature of performance, and because of the important role performance played in Beckett's production of space, my study of his closed spaces will use the tools of spatial theory and historicism in parallel with those of genetic criticism.

One of the key aims of genetic criticism is a heightened awareness of the text's 'temporal dimension', a concept which underpins methodologies for analysing continuous textual development.⁵¹ With regard to Beckett's work, this is more accurately described as 'continuing

⁴⁷ Iain Bailey, 'Samuel Beckett, Intertextuality, and the Bible' (PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2010), p. 92. Later published as *Samuel Beckett and the Bible* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014). Bailey here cites Grésillon, who states: 'toute investigation génétique se fonde sur l'existence de traces écrites' [all genetic investigation is based on the existence of written traces] (Grésillon, p. 215). Translation in Bailey.

⁴⁸ Daniel Ferrer and Michael Groden, 'Introduction: A Genesis of French Genetic Criticism', in *Genetic Criticism: Texts and Avant-textes*, ed. by Jed Deppman, Daniel Ferrer and Michael Groden (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 1–16 (p. 2).

⁴⁹ Peter L. Shillingsburg, *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age: Theory and Practice*, 3rd edn (1996; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), p. 174. For a more open definition of the text, see Roland Barthes, 'From Work to Text', in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-structuralist Criticism*, ed. by Josué V. Harari (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp. 73–81.

⁵⁰ Anne Ubersfeld, *Reading Theatre*, ed. by Paul Perron and Patrick Debbèche, trans. by Frank Collins (1996; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), p. 5.

⁵¹ Pierre-Marc de Biasi, 'Toward a Science of Literature: Manuscript Analysis and the Genesis of the Work', trans. by Jed Deppman, in *Genetic Criticism: Texts and Avant-textes*, ed. by Jed Deppman, Daniel Ferrer and Michael Groden (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 36–68, (p. 37).

incompletion', exemplified in the fact that his texts 'go on' after publication in translation and performance.⁵² Beckett's interest in the word 'on' is usually associated with its adverbial function, as in the closing phrases of *The Unnamable*—'you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on' (*U*, p. 134).⁵³ However, given that space was such an important part of Beckett's creative process, and given that particular performance spaces provide much of this work with the possibility of 'going on', we must analyse its spatial as well as its temporal aspects (*U*, p. 1). As indicated in its title, this thesis will not analyse closed space *per se* but rather the confinement in different spaces of various bodies, be they the bodies of protagonist, actor or other individual related to the work. A recurring spatial arrangement in Beckett's late prose is that of a body in a confined space, as outlined at the start of *Worstward Ho* (1983):

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. (*NHO*, p. 101)

The narrator here posits 'staying in' as an alternative impasse to 'going on', the latter being extremely difficult for those Beckett characters who find themselves in places where space is severely curtailed. If we want to better understand Beckett's work—both in terms of how he worked and what he created—it is crucial to study the confined spaces that these figures have to 'go on' in.

⁵² H. Porter Abbott, *Beckett Writing Beckett: The Author in the Autograph* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 20.

⁵³ See, for example, Dirk Van Hulle, 'Introduction: A Beckett Continuum', in *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Dirk Van Hulle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. xvii–xxvi (p. xxv). Shane Weller calls 'on' Beckett's 'signature preposition' (Weller, 'Beckett and Late Modernism', in *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Van Hulle, pp. 89–102 (p. 99)). Alain Badiou contends that even on's negation in 'nohow on' is 'circumscribed by the imperative of saying', which he sees as fundamental to Beckett's work (Alain Badiou, *On Beckett*, ed. and trans. by Alberto Toscano and Nina Power (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2003), pp. 81–82). For an analysis of Beckett's 'deconstruction' of the 'Victorian trope of onwardness', see Abbott, *Beckett Writing Beckett*, pp. 32–42. The original 1953 French edition of *L'Innommable* read: 'il faut continuer, je vais continuer'. Beckett added the middle phrase in his English translation: 'you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on'. He then 'retrofitted' this middle phrase into the revised 1971 version of the French text: 'il faut continuer, je ne peux pas continuer, je vais continuer' (Sam Slote, 'Bilingual Beckett: Beyond the Linguistic Turn', in *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Van Hulle, pp. 114–25 (p. 123)).

1

Images of Confinement:***Proust, Dream of Fair to Middling Women, 'Dante and the Lobster',
'Fingal'***

Beckett's appropriation of metaphors of confinement from other writers was crucial to outlining in his writing of the 1930s what he described as 'the universal antithesis between the individual & collective'.¹ However, as this statement, recorded while Beckett was on his formative tour of German art galleries in 1936–37 suggests, the breakdown of subject–object relations was for him more than just a linguistic issue, important as this aspect was to the development of a budding writer. Rather, Beckett's engagement with images of confinement from across the arts and other intellectual disciplines is also concerned with how the subject perceives the world visually. Anthony Uhlmann has compared Beckett's use of philosophical concepts to the way in which he used painters' images in his work: 'Images can pass between literary and philosophical discourse, no doubt being transformed in the process of translation, but also carrying with them something in common, a translatable component which inheres in the image which is put into circulation.'² As this chapter will demonstrate, Beckett drew on and transformed spatial imagery, particularly images of closed space, when formulating key positions on literature, philosophy, painting and music. All of these fields served as testing grounds in which Beckett explored the 'universal antithesis'

¹ SB, diary entry, 12 January 1937, Mark Nixon, *Samuel Beckett's German Diaries 1936–1937* (London: Continuum, 2011), p. 53.

² Anthony Uhlmann, *Samuel Beckett and the Philosophical Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 3.

between the perceiving subject and the perceived world in ways which would remain important to his work throughout his career. It is with this multi-generic formation in mind that I have chosen in my title the term ‘image’, which incorporates metaphor while also emphasising the spatio-visual aspects of Beckett’s early aesthetic development. If ‘when philosophers come to a gap within their system they tend to cover this gap, or connect the two sides of this gap, by using images or metaphors’, Beckett used images of confinement to draw attention to something beyond what is presented, be it the ‘unword’ of language, the ‘not I’ of subjectivity or the unseen spaces in his drama.³

Upon winning the Nobel Prize in 1969, Beckett came under pressure to re-issue *More Pricks than Kicks* (1934) so that his publishers could capitalise on the publicity garnered by the award: ‘I answered that this was against my wish. But in the last few days pressure on all sides has grown so strong, and I so tired, that I capitulate. You may therefore proceed with trade editions of this juvenilium.’⁴ Throughout his career, Beckett was a harsh critic of his own work but, with a few exceptions, juvenilia seems a fair term of judgement for his writing prior to *Murphy*. As the publishers’ rejection letters he received in the 1930s repeatedly stress, the main problem for readers of Beckett’s early writing is an over-abundance of erudite references which he had stored up in his reading notebooks, and which he in turn spray-gunned at his first readers, ticking them off in his notes as he went. Beckett put ‘all I knew and plenty that I was better still aware of’ into the short story *Echo’s Bones* (2014), which was written on publisher Charles Prentice’s request in order to fill out *More Pricks* (SB to TM, 5 December 1933, *LSB* I, p. 171). Upon reading it, Prentice rejected the story as ‘a nightmare’ and it was published only seventy-one years later.⁵ Beckett described *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* similarly, as ‘the chest into which I threw my wild thoughts’.⁶ The ‘wild thoughts’ and wilder images of Beckett’s early work may be alienating to a reader, but to

³ Anthony Uhlmann, ‘Beckett’s Intertexts’, in *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Van Hulle, pp. 103–13 (p. 111).

⁴ SB to John Calder, 31 January 1970, qtd in Cassandra Nelson, ‘Preface’ to *MPTK*, p. xvii.

⁵ Prentice to SB, 13 November 1933, qtd in *EB*, p. 114.

⁶ Qtd in Eoin O’Brien, ‘Forward’ to *D*, p. x.

a scholar looking to track the development of his aesthetics in the 1930s they are illuminating.

John Pilling has remarked that Beckett's early poetry is marked by 'inwardness', with Beckett regularly using a first-person voice that deliberately excludes the reader with its range of references.⁷ As the speaker of the poem 'Casket of Pralinen for a Daughter of a Dissipated Mandarin' (1931) would put it, somewhat understatedly, Beckett's early writing 'was perhaps inclined to be just a shade too self-conscious' (*CPSB*, p. 33). In his fiction, alongside this hermeneutic enclosure, there is a strong focus on alienation from the outside world which is frequently described using images of confinement. From the 'caged resentment' of the protagonist of his debut short story 'Assumption' (1929) onwards, Beckett's characters are repeatedly portrayed as being trapped within themselves (*CSP*, p. 4).⁸ This self-confinement of Beckett's early protagonists is part of a focus on alienation which he developed not only through his writing but also through his reading, his listening to music and his viewing of art works in the 1930s.

A key metaphor in Beckett's writing during this period is that of a veil which cuts the subject off from reality. In a much-quoted letter of 1937, Beckett wrote to German publisher Axel Kaun:

It is indeed getting more and more difficult, even pointless, for me to write in formal English. And more and more my language appears to me like a veil [Schleier] which one has to tear apart in order to get to those things (or the nothingness) lying behind it. (SB to Kaun, 9 July 1937, *LSB I*, p. 518)⁹

Beckett's image of language as a veil is indebted to the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer, whose own highly figurative style has made him extremely popular among literary writers. Beckett was

⁷ John Pilling, *Beckett before Godot* (1997; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 5.

⁸ See also Samuel Beckett, 'Assumption', *transition*, 16–17 (1929), 268–71 (p. 269).

⁹ Translation in *LSB I*. The text included in *LSB I* is a draft of the Kaun letter, though Beckett's enclosure of part of this letter in correspondence with Arland Ussher on 11 July 1937 suggests that he sent his letter to the German publisher (see *LSB I*, p. 516 n.).

attracted to read the philosopher while composing his monograph on Proust in 1930 and returned to his writing later in his career, finding that Schopenhauer could be read ‘like a poet, with an entire indifference to the apriori forms of verification’ (SB to TM, 21 September 1937, *LSB I*, p. 550).¹⁰ Schopenhauer was a rich source of philosophical images for Beckett.¹¹ In *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer uses the Buddhist concept of the ‘veil of *mâyâ*’ to describe the self’s alienation from the outside world. This veil obstructs the self from seeing the thing-in-itself by clothing it in the ‘*principium individuationis*’ of appearance, through which time, space and causality divide a unitary reality into individuated representation.¹² In an August 1936 entry in his ‘Clare Street’ notebook, Beckett echoes this, writing of a ‘veil of hope’ which can be momentarily torn apart so that ‘the liberated eyes can see *their* world, as it is, as it must be. Alas, it does not last long, the revelation quickly passes, the eyes can only bear such pitiless light for a short while, the membrane of hope grows again and one returns to the world of phenomena’.¹³ In Schopenhauer’s philosophy, the body is the one object in the world of ideas that can also be experienced subjectively, giving us a means of accessing the blind, desiring will by escaping the categories of thought. For Beckett, language—specifically formal English—performs a similarly obstructive function to Schopenhauer’s principle of individuation with regard to the something, or nothing, that lurks behind it.

If the formal language of his mother tongue functioned as a deceptive veil, then it is perhaps no surprise that in Beckett’s texts, the incapacity of words to express reality leads often to gaps in

¹⁰ See also SB to Joseph Hone, 3 July 1937, *LSB I*, p. 509. For an account of Beckett’s reading of Schopenhauer, see Dirk Van Hulle and Mark Nixon, *Samuel Beckett’s Library* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 143–51.

¹¹ Among the images Beckett draws from Schopenhauer are those of life as a pendulum between pain and boredom, life as a *pensum* and the intellect as a magic lantern. See Ulrich Pothast, *The Metaphysical Vision: Arthur Schopenhauer’s Philosophy of Art and Life and Samuel Beckett’s Own Way to Make Use of It* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), pp. 119, 122; Dirk Van Hulle, ‘Figures of Script: The Development of Beckett’s Short Prose and the “Aesthetic of Inaudibilities”’, in *A Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. by S. E. Gontarski (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 244–62 (p. 256).

¹² Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, ed. and trans. by Judith Norman, Alistair Welchman and Christopher Janaway, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010–), I, p. 280.

¹³ Qtd in Nixon, *Beckett’s German Diaries*, p. 170. Translation by Nixon. Schopenhauer uses both ‘Gewebe’ and ‘Schleier’ to describe this membrane of hope. These terms are translated respectively as ‘web’ and ‘veil’ (Schopenhauer, I, pp. 38, 378). Beckett uses ‘Schleier’ in his letter to Kaun (see below) and the compound ‘Hoffnungsschleier’ in his August 1936 diary entry.

the form of silence, a pervasive concern in his work from the opening line of ‘Assumption’—‘[h]e could have shouted and could not’—to the main protagonist of his first published novel, *Murphy*, whose ‘silence’ is ‘one of [his] highest attributes’, to his last dramatic fragment, the unpublished ‘Endhörspiel’ (written 1988), comprising a brief dialogue between Silence and Voice, to the title of Beckett’s last original work published during his lifetime: ‘what is the word’ (‘Comment dire’, 1989) (*CSP*, p. 3; *CPSB*, pp. 228–29; *Mu*, p. 103).¹⁴ Beckett’s attempts in the 1930s to articulate what the narrator of *Dream* calls an ‘aesthetic of inaudibilities’ frequently references the use of silence in the music of Ludwig van Beethoven (*D*, p. 141). For instance, he complained about the shortcomings of an edition of Paul Éluard’s poetry translated into English in which he had been involved: ‘no attempt seems to have been made to translate the pauses. Like Beethoven played strictly to time’ (SB to TM, 17 July 1936, *LSB* I, p. 359). The narrator of ‘Ding-Dong’ (1934) tells us that *Dream*’s central protagonist Belacqua Shuah ‘lived a Beethoven pause, he said, whatever he meant by that’ (*MPTK*, p. 32). Beckett’s use of silence has its hermeneutic equivalent in the physical gaps that appear in his work, both at a textual level and in the often stripped back stage spaces he created. In *Dream*, a spatial analysis of Beethoven’s music follows Belacqua’s fantasy of writing a book which would be experienced ‘between the phrases, in the silence, communicated by the intervals, not the terms, of the statement’ (*D*, p. 137):

I think of his earlier compositions where into the body of the musical statement he incorporates a punctuation of dehiscence, flottements, the coherence gone to pieces, the continuity bitched to hell because the units of continuity have abdicated their unity, they have gone multiple, they fall apart, the notes fly about, a blizzard of electrons; [...] pitted with dire storms of silence, in which has been engulfed the hysteria that he used to let speak up, pipe up, for itself. (*D*, p. 138–39)

¹⁴ Two undated versions of the very short ‘Endhörspiel’, which differ slightly from one another, were posted by Beckett to Barbara Bray, one in an envelope postmarked 22 January 1987, the other in an envelope postmarked 21 March 1988 (TCD MS 10948/1/700–701). I would like to thank Sam Slote for drawing my attention to this piece.

In his 1937 letter to Kaun, Beckett again uses spatial imagery when writing about Beethoven. He asks:

Is there any reason why that terrifyingly arbitrary materiality of the word surface should not be dissolved, as for example the sound surface of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony is devoured by huge black pauses, so that for pages on end we cannot perceive it as other than a dizzying path of sounds connecting unfathomable chasms of silence? (*LSB I*, pp. 518–19)¹⁵

Beckett wanted his 'Literatur des Unworts' [literature of the non-word] to perform a similar function with regard to language (*LSB I*, p. 515, trans. p. 520).¹⁶ Language then could become a screen which would create an impression of there being 'something or nothing' beyond it. Here, the veil is something to be broken through, rather than removed:

To drill one hole after another into it until that which lurks behind, be it something or nothing, starts seeping through—I cannot imagine a higher goal for today's writer. (*LSB I*, p. 518)¹⁷

As well as thinking of the 'sound surface' of music as a material screen which composers like Beethoven could puncture, allowing for an articulation of seeming nothingness through the framing of silence within a particular aural context, Beckett also wrote about music itself as a means of breaking through what he terms in *Proust* the 'screen' of habit, which 'spare[s] its victims the spectacle of reality' (*PTD*, p. 21). This again echoes Schopenhauer's veil, while also drawing on

¹⁵ Translation in *LSB I*.

¹⁶ This has also been translated as 'literature of the unword' (Dirk Van Hulle and Shane Weller, *The Making of Samuel Beckett's 'L'Innommable' / 'The Unnamable'* (Brussels: University Press Antwerp, 2014), p. 162).

¹⁷ Translation in *LSB I*.

the exalted place of music in the German philosopher's aesthetics. For Schopenhauer, music 'stands completely apart from all the others [other art forms]' and beyond the individuating principle of appearance governed by time, space and causality. As it is 'wholly independent of the appearing world', music is able to get behind this veil and access 'the inner essence, the in-itself of all appearance, the will itself'.¹⁸ Beckett's definition of music in *Proust* as 'the Idea itself' (*PTD*, p. 92), which momentarily transcends the suffering endured by the physical body but still exists within time, is a modified version of the aesthetics of Schopenhauer, who states: 'unlike the other arts, music is in no way a copy of the Ideas; instead, it is a *copy of the will itself*, whose objecthood the Ideas are as well'.¹⁹ Aside from this misreading—or intentional modification—of Schopenhauer's philosophy, what is interesting about *Proust* is that it quite baldly lays out an essentialist version of being. Given that his work is so dominated by incompleteness and fragmentation, it might seem strange to come across Beckett writing about getting at 'the essence of ourselves' through involuntary memory (*PTD*, p. 31).²⁰ However, in much of Beckett's aesthetic writing, there is a tension between the system described and the practice evident in his work. As the following close readings of his early short fiction will show, his attempts to get at a character's essence, primarily through a central protagonist who intensifies Schopenhauer's metaphysical isolation by actively shunning the world of phenomena, are fraught with difficulty.

Beckett's repeated recourse to other art forms in formulating his own aesthetics came from his view that literature was at risk of being 'left behind on that old, foul road long ago abandoned by music and painting' (SB to Kaun, 9 July 1937, *LSB* I, p. 518).²¹ Beckett's extensive study of paintings in Dublin, London, Paris and Germany played a major part in his development as a 'postpicassian' writer, giving him a visual language through which he could explore the gap

¹⁸ Schopenhauer, I, pp. 283, 285, 289.

¹⁹ Schopenhauer, I, p. 285. Emphasis in the original.

²⁰ Ulrich Poehast sees Beckett's retention of the temporal structure of the Idea as part of his 'tendency to do without unchanging entities, existing outside all time in a sphere of special ontological status' (Poehast, p. 125). John Pilling argues that the alteration of Schopenhauer's philosophy could either be a case of misremembering or intentional modification on Beckett's part (John Pilling, 'Proust and Schopenhauer: Music and Shadows', in *Samuel Beckett and Music*, ed. by Mary Bryden (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 173–78 (pp. 177–78)).

²¹ Translation in *LSB* I.

between subject and object which he was having such difficulty dealing with in his own prose and poetry (*D*, p. 46).²² The art of Paul Cézanne was key to this. In 1938 he would write from Paris to George Reavey in London: ‘Nothing new here. Painting still began with Cézanne.’ (8 Mar 1938, *LSB* I, p. 612) The winter after publishing *More Pricks than Kicks*, Beckett stated in a letter that, rather than try to tame the object through representation, ‘Cézanne seems to have been the first to see landscape & state it as material of a strictly peculiar order, incommensurable with all human expressions whatsoever.’ (SB to TM, 8 Sep 1934, *LSB* I, p. 222) As his writing developed, what Beckett saw in Cézanne’s art as ‘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’ would become central to his own renderings of the subject as object (SB to TM, 16 September 1934, *LSB* I, p. 227). It is this series of ‘deanthropomorphizations’ found in Cézanne’s work, through his emphasis on the gap between the viewing subject and the landscape represented, that helped Beckett develop his spatial aesthetic in the 1930s (SB to TM, 8 September 1934, *LSB* I, p. 223). Alienation is given its most forceful description in Beckett’s review ‘Recent Irish Poetry’ (1934) in which he describes ‘the new thing that has happened, or the old thing that has happened again, namely the breakdown of the object’ in terms of a physical gap between the artist and the world:

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, according as he happens to be feeling resentful, nostalgic or merely depressed. (*Dis*, p. 70)

The artist, according to Beckett, is able to articulate this gap, and Beckett would spend most of his writing career doing so, but his early figures are as dammed-up as their erudite author, who stated that he had ‘enough “butin verbal” [verbal booty] to strangle anything I’m likely to want to say’

²² See ‘prepicassian era’ entry in Samuel Beckett, *Beckett’s ‘Dream’ Notebook*, ed. by John Pilling (Reading: Beckett International Foundation, 1999), p. 142.

(SB to TM, 8 November 1931, *LSB I*, p. 93).²³

The self-confinement in Beckett's early prose and poetry follows directly from the incommensurability outlined in his aesthetics with regard to the world of objects. While Schopenhauer's 'veil of *mâyâ*' and Beckett's 'veil of hope' protect the self from the harsh light of the real by masking reality with individuated phenomena, it is the threatening exposure of social life that causes early Beckett protagonists, such as Belacqua, to turn inwards towards a supposedly truer form of self-expression. However, like Belacqua's retreats into his 'wombtomb' and the character's own professed 'aesthetic of inaudibilities', Beckett's aesthetic of alienation only makes sense in relation to what it avoids (*D*, p. 141). Belacqua shrouds himself not in a veil of hope, but in a mask of intellectual superiority displayed to his peers in order to escape the 'pestiferous sunlight' of social interaction, which shatters his mental retreat in *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* 'after the furious divers [Belacqua's friends] had hauled him out like a crab to fry in the sun' (*D*, pp. 46, 122). Beckett outlines his own quietism in a discussion of portraiture which closes one of his letters on Cézanne:

the individual feels himself more & more hermetic & alone & his neighbour a coagulum as alien as a protoplast or God, incapable of loving or hating anyone but himself or of being loved or hated by anyone but himself.

God love thee & forgive the dégueulade [long puke].

Ever

Sam (SB to TM, 8 September 1934, *LSB I*, p. 223)²⁴

Beckett's professed turn away from the world, announced in the very many letters which kept him

²³ Translation in *LSB I*.

²⁴ Translation in *LSB I*.

involved in that world, was not an abandonment of social interaction. Similarly, the characters he created—from Belacqua, to Victor Krapp (in *Eleutheria*, written in French, 1947; published 1995), to Krapp (in *Krapp's Last Tape*, 1958)—through closing themselves off in confined spaces, exist in antagonistic relation with the societies in which they refuse to fully participate. Belacqua's wombtomb, Victor's room and Krapp's den are all spatially reduced zones which mirror the desired self-enclosure of these characters. However, just as Beckett's diary account of the 'veil of hope' which shields us from the reality of the phenomenal world emphasises the existence of that phenomenal world and just as his mention of the veil of language in the letter to Kaun draws attention to the possibility of the 'something or nothing' which lies beyond language, so too do the confined spaces he creates implicitly suggest other places beyond.²⁵

Proust and 'the labours of poetical excavation'

'At least I have finished reading the bastard', wrote Beckett to Thomas MacGreevy in the summer of 1930 (17 July 1930, *LSB* I, p. 26). In preparation for writing a critical monograph on Proust, Beckett had swallowed whole the sixteen-volume *Nouvelle Revue française* edition of *À la recherche du temps perdu* and was feeling the effects of literary indigestion.²⁶ Having sent the manuscript of his book to Charles Prentice for publication, Beckett turned his caustic critical gaze inwards, declaring that *Proust* was 'at its best a distorted steam-rolled equivalent of some aspect or confusion of aspects of myself' and that as criticism it was 'blafard [wan], gritty like the Civic Guard's anus' (SB to TM, 11 March 1931, *LSB* I, p. 72).²⁷

Beckett's self-criticism points towards the fact that the monograph is more a reflection of his own developing aesthetics than it is an examination of Proust's writing, there being, according to its

²⁵ For an analysis of Beckett's late prose which argues that the veil in Beckett's letter to Kaun draws attention to whatever is behind it, see Dirk Van Hulle, 'Beckett and Shakespeare on Nothing, or, Whatever Lurks behind the Veil', *Limit(e) Beckett*, 1 (2010), 123–36 <<http://www.limitebeckett.paris-sorbonne.fr/one/vanhulle.pdf>> [accessed 5 June 2014].

²⁶ Beckett started reading *À la recherche* in 1929 (see SB to TM, summer 1929, *LSB* I, pp. 11–12). He returned to read it again in August 1930 (Pilling, *A Samuel Beckett Chronology*, p. 26).

²⁷ Translation in *LSB* I.

author, '[n]o sinewy membrane between it & its official motive' (SB to TM, 11 March 1931, *LSB I*, p. 72). As John Pilling puts it, '[s]ix sentences into the enterprise, with four references to "Proust" and "Proustian" to establish his own good faith, Beckett disrupts it, draws breath and plunges into composition on his own behalf'.²⁸ What follows is an investigation into the 'rupture of the lines of communication' between subject and object later described in 'Recent Irish Poetry' (*Dis*, p. 70). Beckett argues that the subject cannot achieve identification with the 'object of his desire' due to the havoc time wreaks on the continuity of being (*PTD*, p. 14). But communication between two thinking subjects is even harder. '[W]hen it is a case of human intercourse, we are faced by the problem of an object whose mobility is not merely a function of the subject's, but independent and personal: two separate and immanent dynamisms related by no system of synchronisation' (*PTD*, p. 17). Having defined habit as 'the ballast that chains the dog to his vomit' which allows the subject to create a semblance of continuity between its present and past selves, Beckett turns to the use of 'involuntary memory' in *À la recherche* through which Proust retrieves 'the real' from the 'inaccessible dungeon of [...] being' (*PTD*, pp. 19, 32, 33, 31). In Beckett's reading of Proust, this is 'the mystery, the essence, the Idea, imprisoned in matter', access to which is first triggered by the flavour of a madeleine soaked in tea for Proust's narrator Marcel (*PTD*, p. 76).²⁹ This approach is contrasted with that of realists such as Balzac who are 'content to transcribe the surface, the façade, behind which the Idea is prisoner' (*PTD*, p. 79).

In spite of opening with a declaration of intent to follow Proust's refusal to fashion his 'creatures' according to 'spatial scales' and focus instead on the 'double-headed monster of damnation and salvation—Time', Beckett continually returns to metaphors of spatial restriction (*PTD*, pp. 12, 11). In Beckett's monograph, written over a decade before his first completed play, *Eleutheria*, in which he would physicalise the alienation of central character Victor Krap by using a

²⁸ Pilling, *Beckett before Godot*, p. 37.

²⁹ See Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, trans. by C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, rev. by D. J. Enright, 6 vols (New York: Modern Library, 2003), I: *Swann's Way*, pp. 60–64.

split stage, Beckett is already conceiving of the alienated subject in terms of confinement.³⁰ He compares Marcel's inability to accommodate himself to the unfamiliar surroundings of a strange hotel room to 'the tortured body of [French cardinal Jean] La Balue in his cage, where he could neither stand upright nor sit down' (*PTD*, p. 24).³¹ The 'spacious annexe of mental alienation' from which 'Proust hoisted his world' foreshadows the monadic selves of Beckett's mature fiction (*PTD*, p. 32). Proust's characters, according to Beckett, are 'hermetic' and the only way for the writer to approach reality is through the imposition of solitary confinement within the 'imprisoned microcosm' of experience stored within the self (*PTD*, p. 74):

The artistic tendency is not expansive, but a contraction. And art is the apotheosis of solitude. There is no communication because there are no vehicles of communication. [...] Either we speak and act for ourselves—in which case speech and action are distorted and emptied of their meaning by an intelligence that is not ours, or else we speak and act for others—in which case we speak and act a lie. (*PTD*, p. 64)

This leads Beckett to his quietist aesthetic manifesto: 'The only fertile research is excavatory, immersive, a contraction of the spirit, a descent.' (*PTD*, p. 65) '[I]f I may add this nux vomica to an apéritif of metaphors', he begs of his reader, 'the heart of the cauliflower or the ideal core of the onion would represent a more appropriate tribute to the labours of poetical excavation than the crown of bay' (*PTD*, p. 29).³² In the years following the publication of *Proust*, contraction within the self became a byword for Beckett when referring to his own artistic creation. In 1937 he sent a letter to MacGreevy in which he described writing poetry as 'the frail sense of beginning life behind

³⁰ Beckett was involved in producing a Corneille spoof, *Le Kid*, when working as a lecturer in Trinity College in 1931. However, his friend and co-author Georges Pelorson claims most of the writing credit for this work. See Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 123.

³¹ French cardinal Jean Balue was imprisoned by King Louis XI of France from 1469–80 'but not, as has been alleged, in an iron cage' ('Jean Balue (French Cardinal)', *Britannica Online Encyclopedia* <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/51084/Jean-Balue>> [accessed 25 August 2014]). See also *MC*, p. 62.

³² Nux vomica is a poisonous Asian tree seed used to induce vomiting in cases of over-eating (*OED*).

the eyes' (SB to TM, 16 February 1937, *LSB* I, p. 447). In 1932, he wrote of good poetry as that which goes 'into the burrow of the "private life"' and praised 'what I find in Homer & Dante & Racine & sometimes Rimbaud, the integrity of the eyelids coming down before the brain knows of grit in the wind' (SB to TM, 18 October 1932, *LSB* I, pp. 134–35). In writing his first novel, Beckett would burrow into his own private life, as well as the lives of those around him, in an effort to excavate material for his 'German comedy', *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (SB to TM, 29 May 1931, *LSB* I, p. 78).

Dream of Fair to Middling Women: 'the mind at last its own asylum'

As is clear from his writing on Beethoven, music was an important conceptual apparatus for Beckett when thinking and writing about literature. In a diary entry for 26 March 1936, Beckett outlined the poetics of dissonance which he saw at work in James Joyce's latest project:

The dissonance that has become principle & that the word cannot express, because literature can no more escape from chronologies to simultaneities, from nebeneinander [sequential] to miteinander [simultaneous], that [*sic*] the human voice can sing chords. As I talk & listen realise suddenly how Work in Progress is the only possible development from Ulysses, the heroic attempt to make literature accomplish what belongs to music—the miteinander & the simultaneous.³³

In the composer's stacking of sound units in space, both as groups of individual notes piled vertically on the stave and their aural manifestation as chords in the concert hall, Beckett saw and heard an analogy for the way Joyce was packing portmanteau words with a multiplicity of meanings. Some of *Dream* undoubtedly 'stinks of Joyce' —particularly the two sections published

³³ Qtd in Nixon, *Beckett's German Diaries*, p. 167. Translations by Nixon.

in Paris magazines in 1932—but the book as a whole ultimately fails to utilise successfully the linguistic dissonance and hermeneutic complexity that propelled Joyce’s final literary machine (SB to Charles Prentice, 15 August 1931, *LSB* I, p. 81).³⁴ It also fails to accommodate this dissonance in the narrative form of a novel. As a result, *Dream* cannot get its characters to ‘play [their] part’ on the ‘liǔ’, a Chinese stringed instrument which appears in Beckett’s reading notes for *Dream* via Louis Laloy’s *La musique chinoise* (*D*, p. 116).³⁵ Beckett uses the liǔ as a model for the harmonious interaction of fictional characters in the novel but, according to the narrator, his characters refuse to obey the system:

The lius do just what they please, they just please themselves. [...] We are afraid to call for the simplest chord. Belacqua drifts about, it is true, doing his best to thicken the tune, but harmonic composition properly speaking, music in depth on the considerable scale is, and this is a terrible thing to have to say, ausgeschlossen [impossible]. (*D*, p. 117)

Dream’s narrative voice highlights this disjunction between fictional subjects, while also foregrounding the gap between its central protagonist and society. Beckett uses a narrative voice that can be both singular and plural, with ‘we, extenuate concensus [*sic*] of me’ relating Belacqua’s adventures in the dimly defined surroundings of Ireland, France and Germany (*D*, p. 112). However, the mental life of Belacqua, the ‘great big, inward man’, will not conjugate easily with the outside world:

We find we have written *he is* when of course we meant *he was*. For a postpicassian man with a pen in his fist, doomed to a literature of saving clauses, it is frankly out of the question, it would

³⁴ The separately published sections are ‘Sedendo et Quiescendo’, in *transition*, 21 (1932) and ‘Text’, in *The New Review*, 2 (1932).

³⁵ See Beckett’s ‘*Dream*’ Notebook, p. 70.

seem to be an impertinence—perhaps we should rather say an excess, an indiscretion—stolidly to conjugate *to be* without a shudder. (*D*, p. 46)

Belacqua himself discusses the difficulty of narrative composition with the Mandarin (based on Beckett's uncle Boss Sinclair) as they are celebrating the ringing in of the new year in a German brothel: 'The notion of an unqualified present—the mere "I am"—is an ideal notion. That of an incoherent present—"I am this and that"—altogether abominable.' (*D*, p. 102) These two passages point to Beckett's own difficulty as he 'learnt to say "I"' over the course of the 1930s; the development of the narrative voice of *Dream* is an important, if faltering, early step on the way to his doing so.³⁶

Beckett's 'veil of hope' protects the self from facing the harsh light of the phenomenal world. In *Proust*, he advocates a retreat into the self as part of the process of artistic creation. When Belacqua performs a similar act of self-enclosure, his mind is described as being 'enwombed and entombed' (*D*, p. 6). The most extensive description of Belacqua's wombtombing comes after the narrator admits to an inability to compare the beauty of two of Belacqua's love interests—the Smeraldina-Rima (based on Boss Sinclair's daughter Peggy) and the Syra Cusa (based on Lucia Joyce)—using an altered phrase from Dante's *Paradiso*: '*Da questo passo vinti ci concediamo*' [from this point on, we must admit defeat] (*D*, p. 43).³⁷ Beckett changes Dante's first-person singular 'concedo' to the plural 'concediamo' and his 'mi' to 'ci', so that Dante's declaration of the limitation of his style in describing Beatrice's beauty can be accommodated in *Dream*'s first-person plural narrative. For Belacqua, this contemplation of beauty in the female form is intimately bound up with the unbearable socialisation that life on earth entails. Upon arriving in Paris, he performs

³⁶ Nixon, *Beckett's German Diaries*, p. 35.

³⁷ Dante Alighieri, *Paradiso*, in *The Divine Comedy*, bilingual edn, ed. by Robert Hollander, trans. by Robert Hollander and Jean Hollander, canto XXX, line 22 <<http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/pdp/>> [accessed 13 October 2014]; translation in Pilling, *Beckett before Godot*, p. 63. See also *Beckett's 'Dream' Notebook*, pp. 152–53.

his own personal ‘anabasis’ [retreat].³⁸

The labour of nesting in a strange place is properly extenuating. The first week and more went to throwing up a ring of earthworks; this to break not so much the flow of people and things to him as the ebb of him to people and things. It was his instinct to make himself captive [...]. [F]or two months and more he lay stretched in the cup, sheltered from the winds and sheltered from the waters, knowing that his own velleities of radiation would never scale the high rim that he had contrived all around and about, that they would trickle back and replenish his rumination as marriage the earth and virginity paradise, that he could release the boomerangs of his fantasy on all sides unanxiously, that one by one they would return with the trophy of an echo. [...] If that is what is meant by going back into one’s heart, could anything be better, in this world or the next? The mind, dim and hushed like a sick-room, like a chapelle ardente [mortuary chamber], thronged with shades; the mind at last its own asylum, disinterested, indifferent, its miserable erethisms and discriminations and futile sallies suppressed, the mind suddenly reprieved, ceasing to be an annex of the restless body, the glare of understanding switched off. (*D*, pp. 43–44)

To Belacqua, the ‘mind gone wombtomb’ is ‘real thought and real living, living thought’ (*D*, p. 45). This mental ‘enwombing’ is ‘assumption upside down’: rather than the body ascending to immaterial paradise, the mind retreats into physical purgatory, as it does for the ‘flesh-locked’ protagonist of Beckett’s debut short story, ‘Assumption’ (*D*, p. 181; *CSP*, p. 5). As well as enabling a retreat from society, Belacqua’s wombtomb is also a place where material gathered from the outside world can sit and decompose in the ‘dear slush’ of Belacqua’s mind (*D*, p. 181). Hence even a typically unsuccessful social encounter with the third of his fair to middling women, the Alba, can be salvaged as an occasion during which ‘[p]erhaps even he had got copy for his wombtomb’ (*D*, p.

³⁸ ‘[A]nabasis’ (*OED*): ‘a march from the coast to the interior’. See Beckett’s discussion of T. S. Eliot’s translation of Saint-John Perse’s poem ‘Anabase’ in SB to TM, 11 March 1931, *LSB* I, pp. 73, 75 n. 6 as well as his use of the term in a letter to Nuala Costello, 27 February 1934, *LSB* I, pp. 184, 186.

175). From the image in *Godot* of ‘giv[ing] birth astride of a grave’ to the opening line of *A Piece of Monologue* (1979)—‘[b]irth was the death of him’—the enclosed spaces of birth and death are in close proximity throughout Beckett’s oeuvre (*CDW*, pp. 83, 425). Beckett would use similar imagery when asked about his use of other writer’s lines in his own work in 1972: ‘I suppose all is reminiscence from womb to tomb.’³⁹

The narrative of *Dream* avoids blending Belacqua’s mental slush with the social detail fundamental to the work of realists like Balzac, whom Beckett had attacked so forcefully in *Proust*: ‘Mileu, race, family, structure, temperament, past and present and consequent and antecedent back to the first combination and the papas and mammas and paramours and cicisbei and the morals of Nanny and the nursery wallpapers and the third and fourth generation snuffles’. As the narrator admits, ‘[t]hat tires us. [...] The only perspective worth stating is the site of the unknotting that could be, landscape of a dream of integration, prospective’ (*D*, p. 13). This impossibility of narrative harmony between protagonist and the world he inhabits is expressed in terms of grammatical disjunction. When the narrator asks the reader regarding Belacqua, ‘surely you see now what he am?’ the clash between subject and verb recalls Arthur Rimbaud’s statement ‘[j]e est un autre’ [I is another] and anticipates the more radical self-alienation of postwar protagonists (*D*, p. 72).⁴⁰

Belacqua’s ‘being at home to nobody’ allows him to distance himself from the world of abortive social engagements, romantic relationships and parties, such as the new year’s celebration which precipitates the termination of his relationship with the Smeraldina-Rima, during which he completely falls apart (*D*, p. 128). For Beckett’s early male protagonists, a woman’s romantic love

³⁹ SB to James Knowlson, 11 April 1972, *LSB IV*, p. 291. See also James Knowlson, ‘Beckett’s “Bits of Pipe”’, in *Samuel Beckett: Humanistic Perspectives*, ed. by Morris Beja, S. E. Gontarski and Pierre Astier (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1983), pp. 16–25 (p. 16).

⁴⁰ Rimbaud to Paul Demeny, 15 May 1871, Arthur Rimbaud, *Œuvres*, ed. by Suzanne Bernard and André Guyaux, rev. edn (Paris: Bordas, 1991), p. 347. This use of pronominal disjunction may well be the result of the apprenticeship Beckett served to Rimbaud as translator of his poem ‘Le Bateau ivre’ while writing *Dream*. As Marjorie Perloff argues, the strength of Beckett’s translation lies in the way it uses indeterminate personal pronouns. See ‘Drunken Boat’ (1976), *CPSB*, pp. 64–67 and Marjorie Perloff, *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage* (1983; Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1999), p. 219.

is a key part of the process of socialisation which they fail or refuse to participate in. Whereas in the novels of the ‘divine Jane [Austen]’ (*D*, p. 119; SB to TM, 14 February 1935, *LSB* I, p. 250), whose work Beckett admitted ‘has much to teach me’, central characters progress towards some degree of accommodation with the social world through marriage, it is Belacqua’s lack of ‘success’ with women, his friends and ‘the people’ that marks this novel of discontinuity (SB to TM, 14 February 1935, *LSB* I, p. 250; *D*, p. 127).⁴¹ Belacqua is ‘doomed to leave no trace [...] on the popular sensibility’ and as the Cherbourg–Cobh ferry pulls into dock, class alienation combines with the narrator’s misogyny in a mocking description of what seems to be a prostitute returning home (*D*, p. 127):

Next to Belacqua the slut bawn is now weeping, she is weeping and waving a fairly clean portion of Bourbon bloomer. That is very meet, proper and, given her present condition, her bounden duty. Before Xmas she shall be in Green St, she shall be in Railway St under the new government. She was born well, she lived well and she died well, Colleen Cresswell in Clerkenwell and Bridewell. (*D*, p. 140)

These Dublin street names give the briefest of glimpses into the slide down the social scale of a good many of the prostitutes Belacqua slinks off to visit on Railway Street at the end of ‘Ding Dong’ (*MPTK*, p. 39). In the 1920s and 30s, Green Street contained a courthouse a short walk from the cluster of brothels on and around Railway Street.⁴² However, the narrator shows no real interest in the people that such institutions of law deal with. The final sentence is copied almost verbatim from a late nineteenth-century account of a prostitute’s funeral, with ‘Madame Cresswell’

⁴¹ See also SB to TM, 20 February 1935, *LSB* I, pp. 252–53. Beckett visited Austen’s one-time hometown of Winchester in 1935 (Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, pp. 202–03). For Beckett’s later, far more negative reaction to Austen’s work, see Atik, p. 76.

⁴² See O’Brien, *The Beckett Country*, p. 302.

hibernicised as a Boucicauldian ‘Colleen’ Bawn in Beckett’s version.⁴³ This is a far cry from the core strain of protest against coercive confinement in more recent Irish writing dealing with prostitution in the red-light district of Dublin’s north inner city, called Nighttown in Joyce’s *Ulysses* and known locally as The Monto.⁴⁴ Typical of the Joycean ‘notesnatching’ that marks Beckett’s intertextuality of the period, this first mention of specific institutions of confinement in his fictional writing uses the names of two famous London prisons, ‘Clerkenwell and Bridewell’, primarily as a source of rhyming wordplay.⁴⁵ In two episodes of *More Pricks than Kicks*, institutions of confinement, penal and psychiatric, begin to move into narrative focus.

***More Pricks than Kicks*: ‘bottled climates’**

In her lecture notes taken during Beckett’s spell as Lecturer in French at Trinity College Dublin from 1930–31, Rachel Burrows records yet another of Beckett’s musical images, recording his claim that in the novels of André Gide, ‘[a]ction instead of being treated methodically is treated symphonically’ and that Gide preserves the ‘integrity of incoherence’ in his writing.⁴⁶ Towards the end of his course, Beckett returned to Proust and spoke about ‘a screen of self consciousness established by subject between himself & the object’ in his writing.⁴⁷ Beckett tried to get behind this screen to incorporate psychological incoherence into *Dream*, but was unable to contain in novelistic form the dissonance between his central protagonist and the outside world. Having had the novel rejected by numerous publishers over the summer of 1932, including the Hogarth Press—termed by Beckett ‘[t]he Hogarth Private Lunatic Asylum’—he mined it for material for his next book, the short story collection *More Pricks than Kicks*, reusing two episodes from the rejected novel as ‘A Wet Night’ (1934) and ‘The Smeraldina’s Billet Doux’ (1934), and retaining its central

⁴³ See Beckett’s ‘*Dream*’ Notebook, p. 55.

⁴⁴ Beckett draws on his own time in the Monto brothels in ‘Sanies II’ (1935) (*CPSB*, pp. 14–15). See Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, pp. 139–40.

⁴⁵ SB to TM, early August 1931, qtd in Nixon, *Beckett’s German Diaries*, p. 183.

⁴⁶ Rachel Burrows lecture notes, TCD MIC 60/33, /37. I follow the TCD numbering.

⁴⁷ TCD MIC 60/97–99.

character (SB to George Reavey, 8 October 1932, *LSB I*, p. 125).

Between starting *Dream* and completing *More Pricks*, Beckett became part of a project aimed at ‘systematizing [the] confusion’ of insanity, translating André Breton and Paul Éluard’s writings for a special issue of *This Quarter* on surrealism and madness. This was published in September 1932.⁴⁸ As Benjamin Keatinge has argued, such a project was close to personal aesthetic concerns for Beckett.⁴⁹ Two years earlier, in 1930, he had translated Breton and Éluard’s *Immaculate Conception* and in 1928, Beckett had translated Breton and Louis Aragon’s ‘The Fiftieth Anniversary of Hysteria’.⁵⁰ However, in spite of this close engagement with modernist appropriations of mental illness and a deep personal interest in the subject, due both to his own persistent bouts of anxiety and his close personal relationship with Lucia Joyce, who suffered from schizophrenia, the problem of formalising incoherence went beyond the investigation of any specific pathological condition for Beckett.

While having trouble with his own mental and physical health, Beckett was struggling with the problem of accommodating the chaos of experience in aesthetic form. In *Dream*, the Mandarin retorts angrily when Belacqua mocks his inability to articulate his own theory of life: ‘The reality of the individual, you had the cheek to inform me once, is an incoherent reality and must be expressed incoherently. And now you demand a stable architecture of sentiment.’ (*D*, p. 101) In constructing *More Pricks*, Beckett abandoned the ‘architectonics’ of the novel in favour of more restricted textual spaces—what he termed the ‘bottled climates’ of short story writing—marking, at a formal level, the start of what Steven Connor has called the ‘self-constraining movement’ in his oeuvre (*D*, p. 179; SB to TM, 13 May 1933, *LSB I*, p. 157).⁵¹ This formal constraint is accompanied by the advent of Beckett’s ‘continuous process’ as a writer, a process which included the recycling of

⁴⁸ Salvador Dali qtd in ‘Surrealism and Madness’, *This Quarter*, 5.1 (1932), 101–20 (p. 117).

⁴⁹ See Benjamin Keatinge, ‘Beckett and Language Pathology’, *Journal of Modern Literature*, 31.4 (2008), 86–101. See also Elizabeth Barry, ‘All in my Head: Beckett, Schizophrenia and the Self’, *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 37.2 (2016), 183–92.

⁵⁰ Ulrika Maude, *Beckett, Technology and the Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 89.

⁵¹ Steven Connor, *Samuel Beckett: Repetition, Theory and Text*, rev. edn (Aurora, CO: The Davies Group, 2007), p. 2.

characters, phrases and even entire episodes from one work to the next.⁵² Such a process is common for an aspiring writer with unpublished material to spare. Beckett would make it central to his entire poetics.

As John Pilling rightly states, incarceration is ‘a pervasive metaphor in *More Pricks*’ and, as in *Dream*, imagery of physical containment is used throughout the collection to emphasise Belacqua’s self-enclosure, from his heart making ‘a hopeless dash against the wall of its box, the church suddenly cruciform cage’ when he is about to be married in ‘What a Misfortune’ (1934) to him wishing he could ‘barricade his mind against the idea’ of being cut open by a surgeon in ‘Yellow’ (1934) (*MPTK*, pp. 129, 154).⁵³ Many of the episodes use the figurative confinement that is such a prominent feature of *Dream*, like the depiction of life in the interpolated poem ‘Calvary by Night’ (1934) as a journey from ‘the spouting forth | to the re-enwombing’.⁵⁴ The narrator of ‘Love and Lethe’ (1934) even goes so far as to state that ‘a mental home was the place for him [Belacqua] (*MPTK*, p. 82). But ‘Dante and the Lobster’ and ‘Fingal’ make institutional confinement a visible presence in Beckett’s writing for the first time. These are the only two episodes in *More Pricks* where Belacqua comes face-to-face with inmates of actual institutions—firstly mediated as an image of a prisoner in a newspaper; then more directly, in the figure of an inmate looking over an asylum wall. In his early writing, the distance between inmate and observer progressively lessens, from ‘Dante and the Lobster’ to ‘Fingal’ to *Murphy*. In this regard, the ‘Judas-hole’, fashioned by his own knees, through which Belacqua views the world while immersed in his wombtomb in *Dream* is as important an image in these early depictions of institutional confinement as the carceral cell itself, as it draws attention to the process of interpretation involved in writing a closed space (*D*, p. 52).

⁵² See Van Hulle, ‘Figures of Script’, p. 244; S. E. Gontarski, ‘From Unabandoned Works: Samuel Beckett’s Short Prose’, introduction to *CSP*, p. xxx.

⁵³ John Pilling, *Samuel Beckett’s ‘More Pricks than Kicks’: in a Strait of Two Wills* (London: Continuum, 2011), p. 145.

⁵⁴ Beckett put this poem into the mouth of the ‘homespun Poet’ in *Dream* and revised it for inclusion in *More Pricks* (*D*, pp. 213–14; *MPTK*, pp. 53–54).

‘Dante and the Lobster’

The opening story of *More Pricks* begins with an invocation of the grand astral space of Dante’s *Divine Comedy* and for the first paragraph, Beckett’s first-time readers may have been hard-pressed to identify his Belacqua as a Dubliner and not the figure that Dante meets in canto IV of the *Purgatorio*. To add to this confusion, the first reference to the *Comedy* is not to the *Purgatorio* but to ‘the canti in the moon’, which are found in *Paradiso*, cantos II–V. It is only when his copy of Dante’s *Commedia* is ‘slammed [...] shut’ that Belacqua Shuah is clearly differentiated from his medieval namesake and brought back to earth from his lunar exegesis into the much more restrictive ‘bottled climate’ of Beckett’s story (*MPTK*, p. 3).

Beckett based Belacqua Shuah, ‘bogged in [...] an unsurveyed marsh of sloth’, on a character from the *Comedy* whose indolence is of a piece with the self-enclosed rejection of worldly activity so common to Beckett’s early writing (*D*, p. 121). However, this ‘wilful seclusion’ is pursued very differently by the Dantean and the Beckettian Belacquas; indeed, it is the degree of will in their respective retreats from society that separates them. Paget Toynbee, whose *Dictionary of Proper Names and Notable Matters in the Work of Dante* was a key secondary text for Beckett, quotes late medieval critic the Anonimo Fiorentino’s description of the man on whom it was presumed Dante’s Belacqua was based. He is portrayed as ‘the laziest man who ever existed; and it is said of him that he used to come to the [music] shop in the morning and sit down, and he would never rise but when he wanted to go to eat and sleep’.⁵⁵ In ‘Dante and the Lobster’ social retreat is undertaken with a kind of neurotic intensity that would have been alien to the figure who asks Dante ‘what’s the good of going up?’ and waits for his lifespan to pass before climbing the mountain of purgatory.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Toynbee qtd in Daniela Caselli, *Beckett’s Dantes: Intertextuality in the Fiction and Criticism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 39.

⁵⁶ Dante, *Purgatorio*, canto IV, line 127
<<http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/pdp/>> [accessed 30 September 2014].

Dante notices Belacqua's laziness before realising who he is:

'O my dear lord', I said, 'just look at him.

He shows himself more indolent

than if sloth had been his very sister.'⁵⁷

Writing of the Belacqua of *Dream*, Daniela Caselli describes Beckett's figure as the result of a 'negative comparison' with Dante's slothful friend, as Belacqua Shuah 'does *not* have indolence as his sister, and does *not* care about playing or making lutes'.⁵⁸ The very marginality of Dante's Belacqua allows Beckett both to show off his scholarly knowledge and to base his first central protagonist on something of a blank canvas, with all of the detail of Belacqua's life as a lute-maker drawn from secondary sources and not the *Comedy* itself. As he does with the work of Proust and Schopenhauer, Beckett uses Dante as a dynamic figure of authority, an *auctoritas* whose work and reputation he can draw on in the process of making his own name as a writer.⁵⁹

To an even greater extent than in other episodes of *More Pricks*, images of spatial restriction abound in 'Dante and the Lobster': Belacqua is so 'bogged' in the moon cantos that he can 'move neither backward nor forward'; in making his lunch, the narrator tells us that '[t]he first thing to do was to lock the door' so 'nobody could come at him'; and when he is finished with the loaf of bread from which he makes his lunchtime sandwich, it goes 'back into prison' (*MPTK*, pp. 3–5). Most importantly for my analysis of Beckett's use of closed space, 'Dante and Lobster' is the only story in which a penal institution of confinement, Dublin's Mountjoy Prison, functions beyond the level of metaphor.

The jail is introduced through the *Evening Herald* newspaper. Having closed his *Commedia*,

⁵⁷ Dante, *Purgatorio*, canto IV, lines 109–11

<<http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/pdp/>> [accessed 30 September 2014]).

⁵⁸ Caselli, p. 37. Emphasis in the original.

⁵⁹ For Caselli, 'Virgil's role as an *auctoritas* within Dante's text fashions Dante as an *auctoritas* within Beckett's text' (Caselli, pp. 113–14).

Belacqua opens his copy of the paper on which he cuts his bread for lunch, and ‘[t]he rather handsome face of McCabe the assassin stare[s] up at him’ (*MPTK*, p. 4). Later, he hears that the petition appealing McCabe’s execution has been unsuccessful and that he ‘must swing at dawn in Mountjoy’ (*MPTK*, p. 10). Jeri Kroll has written a detailed analysis of the real-life execution of gardener Henry McCabe in 1926, which Beckett, a student in Trinity College, would almost certainly have been aware of at the time.⁶⁰ McCabe was initially charged with the murder of six members of the family he worked for, whose bodies were found in their burning home in the north Dublin suburb of Malahide. However, he was tried and convicted, on what Kroll argues was quite flimsy evidence, for just one of those murders. While the *Irish Times* approved of the sentence, news of McCabe’s execution prompted a public outcry, which in turn led to a public petition for clemency. Beckett, in using the case as one of his sources, is doing something other than a critique of capital punishment, however. If many writers of prison literature are, as Ioan Davies puts it, ‘the eyes in a sightless world’, who try to give their reader an authentic experience of the world behind bars, Beckett is interested in how such experiences are observed ‘through the keyhole’ of writing (SB to Morris Sinclair, 5 May 1934, *LSB* I, p. 205).⁶¹ The politics of visibility is evident in Beckett’s later work, from the interrogative spotlight of *Play* (1964), to the eye (E) in pursuit of its object (O) in *Film* (1967), to the returned gaze of the Protagonist at the climax of *Catastrophe* (*Catastrophe*, 1982). In ‘Dante and the Lobster’, the visual image of McCabe mediated through the evening newspaper stresses the distance between him and Belacqua.

Details from the speculative prosecution case against McCabe resurface to provide a grim end to ‘Draff’ (1934) when, during Belacqua’s funeral, his gardener rapes a servant girl named Mary Ann and sets the house on fire. Both before and after committing these crimes, the gardener shuts himself up in a tool shed, initially to escape from Mary Ann’s ‘opinions and impressions’ which she ‘commit[s]’ on him from the garden (*MPTK*, p. 176). The same verb is used to describe

⁶⁰ See Jeri L. Kroll, ‘The Surd as Inadmissible Evidence: The Case of Attorney-General v. Henry McCabe’, *JOBS*, 2 (1977), no pagination <<http://www.english.fsu.edu/jobs/num02/Num2JeriKroll.htm>> [accessed 25 July 2012].

⁶¹ Ioan Davies, *Writers in Prison* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 240; translation in *LSB* I.

Belacqua's aversion to social contact in 'Dante and the Lobster' as he makes his way to collect his gorgonzola: 'Now the great thing was to avoid being accosted. To be stopped at this stage and have conversational nuisance committed all over him would be a disaster.' (*MPTK*, p. 6) For student and soon-to-be convicted felon alike, conversational intrusion into one's mental refuge is a serious crime. To prevent it, both men retreat into what the narrator of *Echo's Bones* calls the 'uterotaph', a word which combines Latin root for 'womb' and the Greek root for 'tomb'.⁶² It is in the light of Belacqua's profound unwillingness to deal with social interaction that Beckett's use of the case of the 'Malahide murderer' must be read (*MPTK*, p. 10). In McCabe, Belacqua comes across someone whose dereliction almost shakes him out of his own self-absorption.

Beckett structures Belacqua's contemplation of the McCabe hanging and his realisation that the lobster he has bought his aunt for dinner will be boiled alive around a 'superb pun' taken from the eighth circle of hell in the *Inferno*, where Virgil rebukes Dante for his tears on seeing the suffering of the damned sorcerers. Belacqua asks his Italian teacher, the Ottolenghi, to translate '*qui vive la pietà quando è ben morta*', which can be translated as 'here lives pity when it is quite dead', 'here lives piety when it is quite dead' or, as in Robert and Jean Hollander's translation of the *Comedy*, '[h]ere piety lives when pity is quite dead' (*MPTK*, p. 11).⁶³ At the end of the story, as he brings the unfortunate lobster to his aunt's house, Belacqua reflects on the cruelty of both divine and penal justice:

Why not piety and pity both, even down below? Why not mercy and Godliness together? A little mercy in the stress of sacrifice, a little mercy to rejoice against judgement. He thought of Jonah and the gourd and the pity of a jealous God on Nineveh. And poor McCabe, he would get it in the neck at dawn. What was he doing now, how was he feeling? He would relish one more meal, one

⁶² *EB*, pp. 35, 97.

⁶³ Sam Slote, 'Stuck in Translation: Beckett and Borges on Dante', *JOBS*, 19.1 (2010), 15–28 (p. 20); Dante, *Inferno*, canto XX, line 28 <<http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/pdp/>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

more night. (*MPTK*, p. 13)

This is the lyrical set piece of ‘Dante and the Lobster’, a strain that would become so familiar in the endings of plays like *Waiting for Godot*, *Krapp’s Last Tape* and *Endgame*. As in *Godot*, there is a sudden, purposefully un-naturalistic rising of the moon just before the emotional high point of the piece. Belacqua, quite unusually for him, reaches beyond himself towards another human being and allows for the prospect that there may be someone even more isolated than he is—someone whose physical incarceration would make his own mental self-imprisonment seem like a luxury in comparison. However, this expression of empathy is framed squarely in terms of the problem of translation Belacqua has been puzzling over since morning. He only finally engages with the injustice of capital punishment as a coda to his reflection on his Italian lesson, initiated by his recalling the words of the Ottolenghi, which signal stasis rather than self-development: ‘where we were, as we were’ (*MPTK*, p. 13). Earlier on in the day, he is too obsessed with his lunch for McCabe’s case to be anything more than a visual backdrop to his culinary preparations or a garnish which renders his sandwich ‘further spiced’ (*MPTK*, p. 10). Indeed, in an earlier version of the story, Belacqua’s reaction to the news of the failure of petition for McCabe’s pardoning is anything but empathetic: ‘If anything was wanted to crown that exquisite gastronomical experience, it was just such a piece of news.’⁶⁴

Beckett, like Belacqua, was not averse to using instances of capital punishment as intellectual cannon fodder. Written the same month *More Pricks* was published, the following thought experiment in the psychology of emotion—a heavy-handed attempt at explaining Beckett’s own emotional problems—would seem likely to be based on the McCabe case:

If [...] I read in the paper that poor Mr. So-and-so is to be executed early in the morning, before I get

⁶⁴ Samuel Beckett, ‘Dante and the Lobster’, *This Quarter*, 5.2 (1932), 222–36 (p. 231).

out of bed, and immediately start to congratulate myself that I do not have to spend such a night, I deceive myself in as much as I compare two circumstances instead of two emotions. And it is highly probable that the man condemned to death is less afraid than I. At least he knows exactly what is at stake and exactly what he has to attend to, and that is a greater comfort than one is generally inclined to believe. (SB to Morris Sinclair, 5 May 1934, *LSB* I, pp. 204–05)⁶⁵

As Sam Slote points out, Beckett had already emphasised pity over piety in his translation of Dante's line in his poem 'Text 3' (1931): 'pity is quick with death' (*CPSB*, p. 39).⁶⁶ In his Dante reading notes Beckett noted that pity is permitted in Limbo 'but not among the damned proper', before taking down the phrase that would give Belacqua such trouble.⁶⁷ However, the only pity Belacqua allows himself is a peculiar form of 'impersonal pity'. In 'What a Misfortune', the narrator explains Belacqua's lack of reaction to the death of his wife Lucy, 'his small stock of pity being devoted entirely to the living, by which is not meant this or that particular unfortunate, but the nameless multitude of the current quick, life, we dare almost say, in the abstract' (*MPTK*, p. 109). This form of pity is again evident in 'Yellow', when he worries that any tears he sheds will be interpreted as marks of his fear of undergoing surgery and not as a reaction to 'the follies of humanity at large' and also in his cold response to the death of a girl under a tram in 'Ding-Dong', after which he wonders '[w]hether the trituration [grinding to a fine powder] of the child in Pearse Street had upset him *without his knowing it*' (*MPTK*, pp. 156, 36).⁶⁸ Sitting in a nearby pub, 'the objects in which he was used to find [...] recreation and repose lost gradually their hold upon him, he became insensible to them little by little, the old itch and algos crept back into his mind' (*MPTK*, p. 37). The immediate cause of what seems to be some kind of mental breakdown may be hidden

⁶⁵ Translation in *LSB* I.

⁶⁶ Slote, 'Stuck in Translation', p. 22. 'Text 3' was first published as 'Text' in *The European Caravan* (*CPSB*, p. 315). Belacqua's 'impersonal pity' recalls that of the cook Françoise in *À la recherche*, who cries if she reads of the suffering in a newspaper of someone she has never met, but is insensitive to the birth pangs of one of the kitchen maids. See Proust, I: *Swann's Way*, pp. 171–72.

⁶⁷ TCD MS 10966/4r. I follow the TCD numbering. See also Van Hulle, 'Figures of Script', p. 248.

⁶⁸ Emphasis added.

from Belacqua, but it is crystal clear to the reader. With similar ironic distance, the ending of ‘Dante and the Lobster’ critiques Belacqua’s rueful rationalisation of the lobster’s impending death: ‘Well, thought Belacqua, it’s a quick death, God help us all.’ The final line lifts us out of the bottled climate of Belacqua’s world: ‘It is not.’ (*MPTK*, p. 14)⁶⁹ These occasional instances of narrative distancing in *More Pricks* serve to highlight Belacqua’s lack of protest at the cruelty of the world he inhabits.

Davies rightly sees much prison writing as an interpretation of incarcerated experience through the figure of translation and argues that ‘translation is in many respects the central theme of prison writing’.⁷⁰ For Beckett in *Proust*, it is not the true ‘artist’ but merely the artisanal ‘writer’ who is involved in the work of translation (*PTD*, p. 84). However, Belacqua is neither artist nor writer: he can translate neither the Dante passage nor the experience of McCabe’s last night alive into terms he can understand. For him, the Dante passage remains untranslatable and his question about McCabe’s emotional state unanswered. Alienation from society, as is frequently the case in Beckett’s juvenilia, is something of a narrative dead end here. If the novel Belacqua dreams of writing in *Dream* is to be experienced in the gaps left between the terms of expression, the most important gap in *More Pricks than Kicks* is the one between Belacqua and the objects of the world he inhabits—even those objects who should by rights be perceived as subjects.

‘Fingal’

While it is the intertexts of ‘Dante and the Lobster’ that point beyond its inner-city setting to places as far apart as Malahide, Mountjoy Prison and the moon, the very title of ‘Fingal’ immediately establishes a specific sense of location. The detailed description of this region of north Dublin derives from Beckett’s own daytrips there while writing *More Pricks*: ‘I was down at Donabate on Boxing Day and walked all about Portrane lunatic asylum in the rain.’ (SB to TM, 5 January 1933,

⁶⁹ Beckett considered changing this line to ‘[I]like hell it is’, but decided against this (*CSP*, p. 280).

⁷⁰ Davies, p. 5.

LSB I, p. 150) He returned at Easter: ‘I wrote another [story] [...]. On [Easter] Saturday [15 April] I went off for the day on the bike, through Malahide & round the estuary to Portrane and back by Swords. The penny pleasure of homing in the gloaming.’ (SB to TM, 23 April 1933, *LSB* I, p. 154)⁷¹ If the hypothesis is correct that the story Beckett refers to in the same letter as having been recently completed is indeed ‘Fingal’, it seems likely that he was using the return visit to check details for an episode heavy on topographical features.⁷²

Upon his arrival in the area, Belacqua promptly alienates his companion Winnie through his translation of the landscape into terms which she cannot understand. These include references to the *Confessions* of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and to Alphonse de Lamartine, author of the Romantic poem ‘L’Isolement’ [‘Solitude’], which contains the line ‘[u]n seul être vous manque, et tout est dépeuplé’ [[y]ou lack a single person, and your whole world is empty].⁷³ Beckett adapted this line for the title of his prose piece *Le Dépeupleur* (1970; published in English as *The Lost Ones* in 1972) and, suitably enough, one can yet again sense Belacqua’s isolation in company here. The poetic work of André Breton furnishes *More Pricks* with another carceral simile when Winnie’s words of advice to Belacqua regarding the impetigo on his face come to him ‘like a drink of water to drink in a dungeon’ (*MPTK*, p. 18).⁷⁴ However, Belacqua soon decides to stop trying to persuade her of the merits of the district: ‘He would drop the subject, he would not try to communicate Fingal, he would lock it up in his mind.’

No sooner has he resolved to do so than he catches sight of Portrane Lunatic Asylum: “‘Do you know what that is’” he said “‘because my heart’s right there.’” (*MPTK*, p. 19) When they eventually reach an elevated viewing point, they see some of the inmates exercising:

⁷¹ An experience also recorded in ‘Sanies I’ (*CPSB*, pp. 12–13).

⁷² Pilling, *A Samuel Beckett Chronology*, p. 42.

⁷³ Alphonse de Lamartine, *Poetical Meditations / Méditations poétiques*, trans. by Gervase Hittle (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1993), pp. 4–5. See also Pilling, *Samuel Beckett’s ‘More Pricks than Kicks’*, p. 150.

⁷⁴ See Beckett’s translation of Breton’s ‘L’Union libre’ as ‘The Free Union’ (1932) in *CPSB*, pp. 68–69, which includes the line: ‘My woman whose eyes are water to drink in prison’. The simile is also used in *Dream* (*D*, p. 108) and in ‘A Wet Night’ the water is upgraded to ‘a pint of Perrier’ (*MPTK*, p. 70).

Now the loonies poured out in the sun, the better behaved left to their own devices, the others in herds in charge of warders. The whistle blew and the herd stopped; again, and it proceeded. [...] Below in the playground on their right some of the milder patients were kicking a football. Others were lounging about, alone and in knots, taking their ease in the sun. The head of one appeared over the wall, the hands on the wall, the cheek on the hands. Another, he must have been a very tame one, came half-way up the slope, disappeared into a hollow, emerged after a moment and went back the way he had come. Another, his back turned to them, stood fumbling at the wall that divided the grounds of the asylum from the field where they were. One of the gangs was walking round and round the playground. Below on the other hand a long line of workmen's dwellings, in the gardens children playing and crying. Abstract the asylum and there was little left of Portrane but ruins. (*MPTK*, pp. 22–23)

The animalistic terms 'herds' and 'tame' give the descriptive passage of the inmates of Portrane Asylum the air of a disturbing, anti-bucolic scene of institutional life. C. J. Ackerley points out that asylum in *Murphy* has a 'double articulation [...] as both a place of madness and of sanctuary'.⁷⁵ With regard to the way the asylum functions in 'Fingal', sanctuary needs to be understood in terms of incarceration, which is never far away in this story. After Belacqua abandons her to the company of Dr Sholto, who works in the asylum, Winnie hears the local legend of Swift's incarceration of his 'motte' Stella in a local tower (*MPTK*, pp. 25–26). The additional allusion in the Dublin slang word for girlfriend to Madame de la Motte, who is named in Beckett's poem 'Sanies II' and was the last woman to be publicly flogged in France, adds a further sadistic layer to these institutional references (*CPSB*, p. 14).⁷⁶ Belacqua's earlier description of Fingal as 'a land of sanctuary [...] where much has been suffered in secret, especially by women' now appears much more sinister

⁷⁵ C. J. Ackerley, "'The Last Ditch': Shades of Swift in Samuel Beckett's 'Fingal'", *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 32.2 (2008), 60–67 (p. 60).

⁷⁶ The punishment of Madame de la Motte is referenced twice in Beckett's reading notes. See Pilling, *Samuel Beckett's 'More Pricks than Kicks'*, p. 41 and *CPSB*, p. 281.

(*MPTK*, p. 18).

‘Landscapes’, we are told, ‘were of interest to Belacqua only in so far as they furnished him with a pretext for a long face.’ (*MPTK*, p. 23) Beckett was interested in representations of landscape which portrayed the observer’s separation from the countryside and described his admiration for Paul Cézanne as an artist who ‘leaves landscape maison d’aliénés [lunatic asylum]’. This he contrasted with the ‘anthropomorphised landscape’ of pre-modernist painting (SB to TM, 8 Sep 1934, *LSB* I, p. 222).⁷⁷ In the asylum scene in ‘Fingal’, instead of animating the landscape, the narrative animalises the inmates, turning individual subjects into narrative objects. Winnie expresses surprise at their ‘docility’ and Belacqua agrees with her, but thinks that ‘the head over the wall told a tale’ (*MPTK*, p. 23). In ‘Dante and the Lobster’, the mediation of the tale of McCabe through the text of the newspaper and the discussion overheard in the pub means that he may as well be as distant from Belacqua as the sorcerers in Dante’s eighth circle of hell. The encounter in ‘Fingal’ gives Belacqua at least a view into the grounds of an actual institution of confinement, provoking curiosity regarding the stories of its inmates. Beckett’s next two novels, *Murphy* and *Watt*, would engage at closer proximity with such tales.

In using *Dream* to explore the metaphysical alienation outlined in *Proust*, Beckett moved from outlining a theory of how involuntary memory accesses inner reality to the apparently impossible task of formalising the dissonance of inner experience with the outer world by means of ‘an involuntary unity’ (*D*, p. 132). This aesthetic of alienation is evident in the traditionally tragic protagonist of ‘Assumption’, the reclusive Belacqua and the ‘sad’ Dr Nye of the short story ‘A Case in a Thousand’ (1934) (*CSP*, p. 18). However, in spite of outlining the gap between the subject and the world in images used in his letters, essays and other writings, Beckett, by the time of the publication of *More Pricks than Kicks*, had not yet found a way of integrating such gaps into the structure of his prose fiction. While the narrator of *Dream* virtually snorts with derision at the

⁷⁷ Translation in *LSB* I.

prospect of the institutionalisation of a prostitute, 'Dante and the Lobster' finds Belacqua trying to empathise with a textually mediated image of a prisoner on death row. In turn, 'Fingal' brings him somewhat closer to contact with an inmate, albeit of a psychiatric, not a penal, institution. In *Murphy* and *Watt*, the asylum becomes central to Beckett's endeavour to not simply 'state the space that intervenes' between subject and object but to make that gap the productive focus of his work (*Dis*, p. 70).

2

‘Light in the Monad’:*Murphy*

At a party in Dresden on 18 February 1937, Beckett was asked what he most wished to create. He recorded his response in his diary: ‘I say light in the monad: That the book, picture, music, etc. is incidental, what matters, the primary, is the illumination of which they are the vulgarisations, falsifications, etc.’¹ As is evident in his comments on Proust, Cézanne and Gide, Beckett admired artists who, in his opinion, avoided falsifying the complexity of human experience in their work. The attempts Beckett made to ‘find a form that accommodates the mess’, which receive their most stark spatial manifestation in the highly formal enclosures of his short prose pieces of the 1960s and 70s, began to bear important results with the composition of *Murphy*, his first published novel.² As his diary writings show, the monad gave Beckett a key spatial figure for the incommunicability of experience, as when using confined spatial imagery to describe the relationship between Rainer Maria Rilke and Paula Modersohn-Becker in a diary entry of 15 January 1937: ‘I say “Die Monade ist doch Fensterlos [But the monad is windowless]”’.³ In *Murphy*, Beckett used the windowless monad as a means of conceptualising both the architecture of the cells of a psychiatric hospital and the minds of those who occupy them, allowing him to shape his novel around the imagined impenetrability of specific kinds of mental alienation. What results is a critique of both institutional

¹ Beckett recorded the question and his answer in a diary entry of 18 February 1937. See Nixon, *Beckett’s German Diaries*, p. 162 and Erik Tonning, *Samuel Beckett’s Abstract Drama: Works for Stage and Screen, 1962–1985* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), p. 210.

² Tom Driver, interview with Beckett in *Samuel Beckett, The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Lawrence Graver and Raymond Federman (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 217–23 (p. 219).

³ Nixon, *Beckett’s German Diaries*, p. 163. Translation by Nixon.

confinement and the unquestioning valorisation of the experience of an asylum inmate.

Uhlmann's concept of a philosophical image as something which is 'transformed in the process of translation' is a particularly apt way of thinking of Beckett's use of Leibniz, whose status as an arch-rationalist, convinced that we live in the best of all possible worlds, is about as far as one can get from the pessimism that attracted Beckett to Schopenhauer.⁴ The earliest extant structural sketch for *Murphy* is replete with Leibnizian imagery. It contains two elements: X, who becomes Murphy, and H, which becomes the horoscope which Murphy lives by, described in the sketch as a 'force to be obeyed' by X.⁵ X and H are characterised as '[m]onads in arcanum of circumstance, each apperceiving in the other till no more of the petites perceptions, that are life'.⁶ For Leibniz, monads are indivisible, self-sufficient mental entities which are the only true substances in the world. For Beckett, the monad provides a model not only for the seemingly hermetic selves of Murphy and Mr Endon but also for the institutional space they occupy. In line with his remark regarding his reading of Schopenhauer that he was 'not reading philosophy, nor caring whether he is right or wrong or a good or worthless metaphysician', Beckett, rather than building on Leibniz's work to construct a coherent metaphysical system, as a philosopher might do, draws on the

⁴ 'I am reading Schopenhauer. Everyone laughs at that. Beaufret & Alfy etc. But I am not reading philosophy, nor caring whether he is right or wrong or a good or worthless metaphysician. An intellectual justification of unhappiness—the greatest that has ever been attempted—is worth the examination of one who is interested in Leopardi & Proust rather than in Carducci & Barrès' (SB to TM, c. 18 to 25 July 1930, *LSB I*, pp. 32–33).

⁵ 'Whoroscope' notebook, UoR MS 3000, f. 1r.

⁶ UoR MS 3000, f. 1r. Beckett uses 'petites perceptions' further on in the sketch, as well as the Leibnizian term '[e]ntelechies' (f. 2r.). Apperception is also a Leibnizian concept denoting the mind's reflection on its own inner states. Matthew Feldman points out that the phrase 'petites perceptions'—which Windelband describes as the 'infinite small impulses' which constitute the '[r]epresentative life of monads'—is not found in any of the contemporary English translations of Leibniz's *Monadology* and is therefore very probably taken from Windelband. (Matthew Feldman, *Beckett's Books: A Cultural History of Samuel Beckett's 'Interwar Notes'* (London: Continuum, 2006), p. 65; Wilhelm Windelband, *A History Of Philosophy*, trans. by James H. Tufts (New York: Macmillan, 1907), p. 424 <<https://archive.org/details/historyofphiloso00winduoft>> [accessed 26 November 2014]; TCD MS 10967, f. 191v.) However, while Windelband's influence on Beckett's reading of Leibniz is undoubtedly substantial, it is by no means out of the question that Beckett read the *Monadology* in the original French, where he also would have come across the phrase 'petites perceptions'. In his correspondence with MacGreevy, Beckett does not mention the language in which he read Leibniz. The National Library of Ireland, Beckett's favoured library in 1936, holds a 19th-century edition of Leibniz's works in French, bearing an accession stamp of 1903, which includes the *Monadologie*, containing the phrase 'petites perceptions' (Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Monadologie*, in *Œuvres de Leibniz*, ed. by M. A. Jacques, rev. edn, 2 vols (Paris: Charpentier, 1842–1846), II, pp. 391–404 (p. 394)). Erik Tønning's argument that the 'preponderance of English terms in the ['Whoroscope'] notebook entry', allied with the fact that there are many other terms drawn from Windelband in the notebook, means that 'a French source' for the phrase 'petites perceptions' 'is most unlikely' again strengthens the argument that Windelband was a significant source for the notes, but does not prove the absence of another source (Tønning, p. 207 n. 2).

windowless image of one of what he called the ‘splendid little pictures’ in Leibniz’s *Monadology* to create a model of the self, an important architectural space as well as a central formal gap in his own literary text (SB to TM, 5 December 1933, *LSB* I, p. 172). In addition to further tracking the narratological development which brings Beckett closer to saying ‘I’ in his prose, this chapter will investigate the political and aesthetic effects of his use of confined space in *Murphy*, focussing on the importance to Beckett’s poetics of his own engagement with psychoanalysis, his use of ‘demented particulars’ gathered from a psychiatric institution in which he encountered conditions such as dementia as well as his appropriation of the image of the windowless monad which he most fully engaged with through his study of Leibniz.

Beckett and psychoanalysis

In a Paris retirement home in 1989, Beckett recalled an experience from his youth which echoes Belacqua’s apparent breakdown in ‘Ding-Dong’:

After my father’s death, I had trouble psychologically. The bad years were between when I had to crawl home in 1932 and after my father’s death in 1933 [when I was] in London. I’ll tell you how it was. I was walking up Dawson Street and I felt I couldn’t go on. It was a strange experience I can’t really describe. I found I couldn’t go on moving. So I had to rush in to the famous pub in Dawson Street, Davy Byrne’s. I don’t know where I was going, maybe up to Harcourt Street [station]. So I went into the nearest pub and got a drink—just to stay still. And I felt I needed help. So I went to Geoffrey Thompson’s surgery. Geoffrey at that time was still working in Dublin, working in the Lower Baggot Street Hospital as a heart specialist. And he wasn’t there; [he was] still at Baggot Street. He hadn’t finished his consultations. So I waited outside. When he got there, I was standing by the door. He gave me a look over, found nothing physically wrong. Then he recommended psychoanalysis for me. Psychoanalysis was not allowed in Dublin at that time. It was not legal. So in order to have psychoanalysis, you had to come to London. He himself wanted to get some training as a psychiatrist. So very bravely he took himself off to London—he was an established doctor in

Dublin at the time.⁷

In late 1933, Beckett acted on Thompson's advice and moved to London. For almost two years he visited psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion in the Tavistock Clinic, seeing him three times a week. In spite of his resistance to overly prescriptive forms of mental health treatment, derided by the narrator of *Murphy* as 'therapeutic voodoo' and 'the text-book attitude' towards asylum patients, Beckett's craft as a writer was deeply affected by his time with his therapist (*Mu*, pp. 148, 111).⁸ Beckett's subsequent keeping of a diary was an extension of the therapeutic 'writing cure' encouraged by Bion and, as his use of 'I say' in the diary entries quoted above suggests, this prepared the ground for his wartime shift to first-person narration in his prose fiction.⁹

The development of Beckett's poetics in this period was also affected by his engagement with mental health theory and practice. While part of this experience—such as what took place during the sessions with Bion—remains a matter for speculation, Beckett's extensive notes on psychology and psychoanalysis allow for an analysis of how some of this new set of 'butin verbal', which could provide an account of inner experience, was absorbed into his work. In his attempt to better understand his own mental condition, Beckett plundered the texts he was reading, significantly expanding the private arsenal of psychoanalytic language he had built up as a translator of texts on madness for Surrealists like André Breton and Paul Éluard. *Murphy* is studded with such terminology, the majority of which comes from the psychology and psychoanalysis texts he started studying a few months after commencing therapy with Bion.¹⁰ The characters in *Murphy* suffer from some of the psychosomatic conditions he read about. Cooper's acathisia—glossed by Beckett in his notes as an 'inability to sit down'—is one of his central character traits and was

⁷ James Knowlson, interview with Beckett, 10 November 1989, in Knowlson and Knowlson, pp. 67–68; see also Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, pp. 172–73. Davy Byrne's pub is on Duke Street, which is off Dawson Street.

⁸ Beckett's nickname for Bion, 'the covey', comes from the Sean O'Casey character who backs up all views on human existence by referring to a socialist textbook. See SB to TM, 8 and 16 September 1934, *LSB I*, pp. 222, 227 and Sean O'Casey, *The Plough and the Stars*, in Sean O'Casey, *Three Dublin Plays* (London: Faber, 1998), pp. 149–247.

⁹ Nixon, *Beckett's German Diaries*, p. 38.

¹⁰ See Phil Baker, *Beckett and the Mythology of Psychoanalysis* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), p. xi; Feldman, p. 99.

copied from Wilhelm Stekel's *Psychoanalysis and Suggestion Theory*, one of the books Beckett read as part of his research.¹¹

As Clov's inheritance of Cooper's complaint in *Endgame* demonstrates, Beckett would draw on conditions taken from his research on psychoanalysis long after *Murphy* was published. Similarly, the mental images of confinement dredged up during his sessions with Bion, and the terms used by psychoanalysts to describe these experiences, were reported by him late in life. In 1989, he told James Knowlson that the sessions provoked 'extraordinary memories of being in the womb, intra-uterine memories. I remember feeling trapped, being imprisoned and unable to escape, of crying to be let out but no one could hear, no one was listening'.¹² A similarly vivid description of intrauterine enclosure is found in Beckett's notes on 'Angst', taken from Ernest Jones's *Treatment of the Neuroses*: 'The entire range of morbid anxiety phenomena stand in intimate relation to actual birth [~~xx~~] event, which is the [~~xxx~~] [~~xxxx~~] first anxiety experience of the individual & serves as archetype of all later manifestations (claustrophobia, compression, suffocation, etc)'.¹³ Though his writing would not follow the reductive psychological theory of Jones, or of Rank's *The Trauma of Birth*, which in Beckett's words relates '[w]hole circle of human creation' to the 'primal trauma' of parturition, Beckett would use confinement as the conceptual lynchpin of *Murphy*.¹⁴ His research into psychoanalytic theory and practice gave him a narratological, terminological and spatial framework through which he could further develop his poetics.

Boswell's Bedlam; Beckett's Mercyseat

In a letter written shortly after starting his own sessions of psychotherapy, Beckett imagines some

¹¹ TCD MS 10971/8/24. I follow the TCD numbering.

¹² Knowlson and Knowlson, p. 68; see also Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 177. In his notes on Otto Rank's *The Trauma of Birth*, Beckett noted the '[a]nxiety of child left alone in dark room due to his unconscious being reminded (er-innert) of *intrauterine* situation, terminated by frightening severance from mother' (TCD MS 10971/8/34, italics my own).

¹³ TCD MS 10971/8/15–16.

¹⁴ TCD MS 10971/8/35.

of the most eminent names in British psychoanalysis confined with the animals of London Zoo:

I spoke of changing for Harley Street and the Zoological Gardens. Of course one does not change, one alights. Alight for Monkey Hill, alight for the Wild Asses House, Small Rodents House [...], alight for Karin Stephen, Melanie Klein, Creighton Miller [for Crichton-Miller] and Burt White, alight to them that sprawl in darkness and in the shadow of—resurrection. (SB to Nuala Costello, 27 February 1934, *LSB* I, p. 186)

From the opening description of Murphy tied to a chair in ‘a medium-sized cage of north-western aspect’ to his circuits as he paces around Pentonville Prison to waste time instead of jobhunting, *Murphy* is yet another Beckett prose text in which carceral imagery proliferates (*Mu*, pp. 3, 48). The novel’s first reference to an institution of coercive confinement relates to the mental health system of 1930s Dublin. When Neary attempts to headbutt the statue of Cuchulain, erected to commemorate the leaders of the 1916 Rising in the General Post Office, his former student Wylie pleads insanity to the on-duty Civic Guard:

Wylie turned back, tapped his forehead and said, as one sane man to another:

‘John o’ God’s. Hundred per cent harmless.’ [...] ‘Stillorgan’, said Wylie. ‘Not Dundrum.’ [...]

‘John o’ God’s,’ said Wylie. ‘As quiet as a child.’ (*Mu*, pp. 29, 30)

The implication is that Neary is a ‘harmless’ rather than a ‘criminal’ lunatic who would have been kept in the Saint John of God Hospital in Stillorgan rather than Dundrum Criminal Lunatic Asylum. Such fine institutional distinctions are again at play when Murphy, newly hired as a psychiatric nurse, is shown around the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat (M.M.M.) for the first time: he is told in no uncertain terms that, contrary to appearances, the institution is not an asylum but ‘a hospital for the better-class mentally deranged’ (*Mu*, p. 56).

Having drawn on Robert Burton’s sprawling 17th-century treatise *The Anatomy of*

Melancholy as the most frequently used source in his *Dream* notebook, Beckett moved on to study other laureates of mental disorder as part of his programme of philosophical, psychoanalytic, linguistic and literary self-education in the 1930s. Foremost amongst these was Samuel Johnson, who reportedly said that Burton's *Anatomy* 'was the only book that ever took him out of bed two hours sooner than he wished to rise'.¹⁵ In the personal library Beckett held at the time of his death, '[b]y far the largest proportion of books in English relate to eighteenth-century literature' and 'the largest number of books in Beckett's library is dedicated to the work of Samuel Johnson'.¹⁶ This is symptomatic of the interest he expressed in the unreason that underpinned the 'age of reason':

The 18th century was full of ahurris [bewildered people]—perhaps that is why it looked like the age of 'reason'—but there can hardly have been many so completely at sea in their solitude as he [Johnson] was or so horrifiedly aware of it—not even [William] Cowper. Read the Prayers & Meditations if you don't believe me. (SB to TM, 4 August 1937, *LSB* I, p. 529)¹⁷

As early as 1929, in 'Dante ... Bruno. Vico .. Joyce', Beckett had called Joyce's critics 'monodialectical arcadians', who mistook an emerging masterpiece, 'Work in Progress', for 'the "ravings of a Bedlamite"', thus drawing on a long tradition of Anglophone writing on mental disorder which saw 'bedlam' enter the *OED* to denote 'a scene of uproar and confusion' (*Dis*, p. 31). Central to this tradition of literary melancholy, madness and, later, neurosis, was London's Bethlem Royal Hospital, whose status as a national institution of mental illness from the 1600s onwards Beckett came across in his reading. '[B]edlam scenes' were common in early modern theatre and, in his notes on English literature, Beckett ticks off the works of Thomas Dekker and

¹⁵ James Boswell, *Boswell's Life of Johnson: Including their Tour to the Hebrides*, rev. edn, ed. by John Wilson Croker (London: John Murray, 1848), p. 217, qtd in 'Account of the Author', in Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (Philadelphia, E. Claxton and Company, 1883), pp. v–x (p. ix) <<http://archive.org/details/anatomyofmelanch00burt>> [accessed 7 November 2014]. There were a number of editions of Boswell's *Life* containing Croker's footnote that were in the National Library of Ireland at the time Beckett was doing his research on Johnson there. I use the 1848 Croker edition as the page number beside the reference in question in Beckett's *Human Wishes* notebook matches up with it (see below). Beckett later obtained the 1887 edition edited by George Birkbeck Hill (*BDL* [accessed 31 July 2017]).

¹⁶ Van Hulle and Nixon, *Samuel Beckett's Library*, pp. 29, 32.

¹⁷ Translation in *LSB* I.

Ben Jonson, both of whom refer to Bethlem in their plays.¹⁸ Beckett would have encountered Jonathan Swift's vicious satire on the confinement of the insane when reading *A Tale of a Tub*, whose narrator claims to have been an inmate in Bethlem.¹⁹ In Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Beckett read a passage from the *Tatler* describing Bethlem in the eighteenth century as 'one of the sights of London, like the *Abbey* and the *Tower*'.²⁰ Beckett, like his eighteenth-century predecessors, drew on Bethlem as a 'resource of spectacular material' for his novel.²¹ Following on from the function of the 'Judas-hole' in *Dream*, *Murphy* is more concerned with the representation of coercive confinement from without than with the experiential quality of being incarcerated.

Beckett greeted the news of Geoffrey Thompson's installation as senior physician in Bethlem with interest: 'Perhaps it will be somewhere to go in the spring.' (SB to TM, 8 February 1935, *LSB* I, p. 246) Like Johnson before him, Beckett paid multiple visits to the hospital, which had recently moved to a new location in south-east London. A letter to Thomas MacGreevy relates that he 'was down at Bedlam this day week & went round the wards for the first time, with scarcely any sense of horror, though I saw everything, from mild depression to profound dementia' (SB to TM, 22 September 1935, *LSB* I, p. 277). As well as clarifying certain aspects of mental health treatment, the visits gave Beckett access to people who were suffering from some of the conditions he was reading about at the time. As it had been for Boswell 160 years earlier, 'the general contemplation of insanity was very affecting' for Beckett and in the 1960s he still recalled one such encounter with a patient suffering from schizophrenia: 'There was no one there. He was absent.'²²

The description of patients and their symptoms in *Murphy*'s M.M.M. displays the detailed knowledge Beckett accumulated in his research notebooks as he made his way around in Bethlem: He took notes on the procedure for putting patients on suicide watch, the practice of patients 'bein

¹⁸ Jonathan Andrews and others, *The History of Bethlem* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 133; see also Natsu Hattori, "'The Pleasure of your Bedlam": The Theatre of Madness in the Renaissance', *History of Psychiatry*, 6.23 (1995), 283–308 (p. 283).

¹⁹ Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub* (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 98.

²⁰ Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, p. 455 n. 2. Emphasis in the original.

²¹ Andrews and others, p. 132.

²² Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, p. 456. Beckett interviewed by Lawrence Harvey, 2 February 1962, qtd in Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 209.

[sic] bullied' by the staff, the specific terminology used to describe the asylum cells, the hierarchy among the staff and the living arrangements for nurses.²³ As well as these organisational aspects of the hospital, Beckett also drew on mental disorders he had seen during his visit to Bethlem when portraying the patients in the M.M.M.:

Melancholics, motionless and brooding, holding their heads or bellies according to type. Paranoids, feverishly covering sheets of paper with complaints against their treatment or verbatim reports of their inner voices. A hebephrenic playing the piano intently. A hypomanic teaching slosh to a Korsakow's syndrome. An emaciated schizoid, petrified in a toppling attitude as though condemned to an eternal *tableau vivant*, his left hand rhetorically extended holding a cigarette half smoked and out, his right, quivering and rigid, pointing upward. (*Mu*, p. 106)

This passage performs a literary dissection of madness reminiscent of Burton's opening to his *Anatomy*, which tells of Democritus cutting up various animals in order to find 'the seat of this *atrabilis*, or melancholy'.²⁴ In spite of his assertion that *Proust* contained 'no allusion [...] to the legendary life and death' of its subject, Beckett did like to get under the skin of writers he admired and, like Johnson, put an emphasis on 'the biographical part of literature' (*PTD*, p. 9).²⁵ This was certainly the case during his most intensive period of study on Johnson, from 1937 to 1940, when he was doing research for a never-to-be-completed play entitled *Human Wishes* (written 1940; published 1983), centred around the love triangle of 'the Lexicographer', Henry Thrale and Henry's wife Hester (SB to TM, 8 September 1934, *LSB* I, p. 223).²⁶ In Beckett's own creative process, the decantation of personal experience into art took the form not of autobiography, but what H. Porter

²³ UoR MS 3000, ff. 11r.–13r.

²⁴ Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. by A. R. Shilleto, 3 vols (London: George Bell, 1912–13), I, p. 16. See UoR MS 3000, f. 84r.–85v. for Beckett's notes from Burton, including a description of Democritus cutting up animals 'in search of cause of madness in men' (f. 84r.). Beckett owned an 1893 copy of the Shilleto edition of Burton's *Anatomy* (*BDL* [accessed 31 July 2017]).

²⁵ Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, p. 145.

²⁶ See *Human Wishes*, in *Dis*, pp. 153–66. For an account of the notebooks, see Ruby Cohn, *Just Play: Samuel Beckett's Theater* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 149–60.

Abbott calls ‘autography’, which includes a plurality of forms of self-writing, rather than just the narrative of one’s own life. A study of texts of self-writing, argues Abbott, must take account of the ‘autographical action’ of the writing of these texts.²⁷ This ‘autographical action’ can be fruitfully studied through Beckett’s reading notes.

Beckett noted Johnson and Boswell’s asylum visit of 8 May 1775 in one of his research notebooks: ‘He calls the cells of Bedlam “the mansions” (and the corridors the galleries)’.²⁸ As Ackerley points out, the detail in parentheses is taken from a footnote added by John Wilson Croker to his edition of Boswell’s *Life*.²⁹ This kind of reading is in line with Beckett’s meticulous notetaking from Windelband’s *History of Philosophy*.³⁰ In *Murphy*’s description of the architecture of the M.M.M., Beckett explicitly references Boswell in an addition made at typescript stage: ‘There were no open wards in the ordinary sense, but single rooms, or as some would say, cells, **or as Boswell said, mansions**’ (*Mu*, p. 105).³¹ This reference shows Beckett filtering the London architecture he knew through the lens of the literature he was reading, and then decanting the finished product of that experience into his novel. The use of the terms of church architecture—‘the

²⁷ Abbott, *Beckett Writing Beckett*, p. x.

²⁸ Beckett’s transcription of the relevant passage in the *Human Wishes* notebook reads:

Boswell.

He calls the cells in Bedlam the ‘mansions’ (& the corridors the galleries). 455 N. (UoR MS 3461/1, f. 15r., qtd in Frederik N. Smith, *Beckett’s Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 24. See also TCD MS 10948/2/92, f. 1r.)

The phrase in parentheses mentioning the galleries is not an expansion on the original (as Smith posits (pp. 178–79 n. 62) but is found in an editorial note in the edition Beckett read. Beckett’s ‘455 N.’ shows that he is aware that it is a note.

²⁹ C. J. Ackerley, *Demented Particulars: The Annotated ‘Murphy’* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 150. The edition Beckett read has the following lines:

Old Bedlam was one of the sights of London, like the *Abbey* and the *Tower*. (See *Tatler*, No. 70.) The public were admitted for a small fee to perambulate long galleries into which the cells opened (these Boswell called the *mansions*), and even to converse with the maniacs (Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, p. 455 n. 2. Emphasis in the original).

In his transcription, Beckett mistakenly attributes the word ‘galleries’ to Boswell.

³⁰ ‘[T]ime and again, Beckett turns to the German’s [Windelband’s] footnotes, copying them painstakingly’ (David Addyman and Matthew Feldman, ‘Samuel Beckett, Wilhelm Windelband, and the Interwar “Philosophy Notes”’, *Modernism/modernity*, 18.4 (2011), 755–70 (p. 763)).

³¹ The passage in bold was added at typescript stage (HRC SB MS 5/2, p. 114). I follow the pagination on the typescript.

layout of the wards was that of nave and transepts’—to describe the M.M.M. points towards Beckett’s interest in architectural space and his preoccupation with the process of finding words to describe the physical structure of institutions of confinement. This continues in the description of ‘the padded cells, known to the wittier as the “quiet rooms”, “rubber rooms”, or, in a notable clip, “pads”’, all of which are terms he picked up on his visits to Bethlem (*Mu*, p. 105).³² However, in mirroring the enclosure of the asylum cell in his description of Murphy’s mind, Beckett goes further than mere mental health nomenclature; instead, the monadic cell becomes a crucial symbolic space in the novel.

Murphy’s monadic mind

As well as drawing heavily on Anglophone literary tradition, *Murphy* became, following the publication of its French translation in 1947, ‘le premier roman bilingue’ [the first bilingual novel] in Beckett’s canon.³³ One significant change in the translated version is an addition regarding the claustrophobic garret that Murphy is so keen to have as his lodging in the M.M.M.:

Fewer years ago than he cared to remember, while still in the first cyanosis of youth, Murphy had occupied a garret in Hanover, not for long, but for long enough to experience all its advantages. Since then he had sought high and low for another, even half as good. In vain. [...] But the garret that he now saw was [...] a genuine garret, not half, but twice as good as the one in Hanover, because half as large. (*Mu*, p. 102)

In the French version of the novel, the garret is specified as having been found ‘dans la belle maison renaissance de la Schmiedestrasse où avait vécu, mais surtout où était mort, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz’ [in the beautiful Renaissance house on the Schmiedestrasse, where Gottfried Wilhelm

³² ‘Euphemism for padded cell: “quiet room” “rubber room”, “pad”’ (UoR MS 3000, f. 11v.).

³³ Chiara Montini, *‘La bataille du soliloque’: genèse de la poésie bilingue de Samuel Beckett (1929–1946)* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), p. 66.

Leibniz had lived, and above all had died].³⁴ Beckett had visited this house while travelling around Germany in late 1936, at the same time that his English typescript was doing the rounds of different publishing houses, and this trip provided him with the extra detail when he came to translate *Murphy* into French. Showing a keen awareness of the restricted lighting in Leibniz's room, Beckett wrote on a postcard entitled 'Hannover: Leibniz-Haus':

C'est ici que pendant 50 ans il se faisait des idées distinctes, ou, pire, s'en laissait faire. [...]

Solidement assis dans une lumière nord il barrait à tombeau ouvert. [This is where, for fifty years, he formed distinct ideas, or, worse, let them form in him. [...]] Solidly seated in a north light he did his deleting and striking out over an open tomb.] (SB to Brian Coffey, 5 December 1936, *LSB I*, pp. 394–95)³⁵

This concern with dying light recurs in Beckett's late prose pieces such as *Company* (*Compagnie*, 1980):

As the window might close of a dark empty room. The single window giving on outer dark. Then nothing more. No. Unhappily no. Pangs of faint light and stirrings still. (*NHO*, p. 18)

Murphy's garret, as well as being one of a series of enclosed spaces in *Murphy* itself, is an early instance of the single-windowed rooms which come to populate Beckett's oeuvre.³⁶ Creating '[l]ight in the monad' requires an aperture, however restricted, through which such light may pass.

As well as providing him with extreme instances of psychological dereliction and an institutional link with the history of writing madness, Bethlem Royal Hospital, specifically its padded cells, gave Beckett an architectural form through which he could represent Murphy's ideal

³⁴ Samuel Beckett, *Murphy* (1953; Paris: Minuit, 2013), p. 140. Translation in Ackerley, *Demented Particulars*, p. 148.

³⁵ Translation in *LSB I*.

³⁶ For an analysis of single-windowed rooms in Beckett's oeuvre, see Naoya Mori, 'Beckett's Windows and the Windowless Self', *SBT/A*, 14 (2004), 357–70. See also the 'solitary sky-light' of the house of Quin (later Knott) in the first *Watt* notebook (HRC SB MS 6/5/104). In all *Watt* notebook references, I follow the HRC numbering.

mental state of detached self-confinement, represented in a spatial model of the mind: ‘what he called his mind functioned not as an instrument but as a place’, elsewhere termed his ‘mental chamber’ (*Mu*, pp. 112, 70). The Leibnizian monad provides a crucial conceptual nexus between *Murphy*’s confined architectural spaces, specifically the asylum cell, and the representation of Murphy’s mind as an enclosed space; his mind being the narrative and structural centre of the book around which everything else revolves. Following Windelband’s claim that Leibniz’s monads prefigure the ‘unconscious mental states’ of 20th-century psychology, Beckett himself linked Leibniz’s philosophy of mind with modern theories of psychoanalysis in his Philosophy notes.³⁷ Crucially, the monad also serves as a model for the clinical space in which modern mental disorder is treated.

In the seventh section of his *Monadology* Leibniz describes the monad, a simple, unalterable entity which underpins the existence of everything in the universe, as having ‘no windows, through which anything could come in or go out’.³⁸ Having already drawn on Giordano Bruno’s concept of the monad in ‘Dante ... Bruno. Vico .. Joyce’, Beckett noted down this feature when reading the section on Leibniz in Windelband’s *History of Philosophy*, in which the ‘windowlessness’ of the monads is put down to their ‘metaphysical impenetrability’.³⁹ Indeed, though Windelband’s Leibniz is undoubtedly the major influence on the creation of a ‘Beckettian Leibniz’ and on Beckett’s use of the monad in *Murphy*, his earlier notes on Pythagoreanism also contain a description: ‘Monad of monads conceived as a compact, impermeable sphere, afloat in the void: the original plenum, existing independently of circumambient vacuum.’⁴⁰ When describing the asylum cells which Murphy inspects in the M.M.M., Beckett draws on Windelband directly:

³⁷ ‘In the language of to-day the *petites perceptions* would be *unconscious mental states* (*Vorstellungen*).’ (Windelband, p. 424) Emphasis in the original. When taking notes from Windelband on Leibniz’s theory of ‘the development [of the soul] from unconscious to conscious, obscure to clear’, Beckett added ‘[c]f. psychoanalysis’, which is not in Windelband (TCD MS 10967, f. 205r., qtd in Tønning, p. 208).

³⁸ Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *The Monadology and Other Philosophical Writings*, trans. by Robert Latta (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), p. 219 <<http://archive.org/details/monadologyandot01lattgoog>> [accessed 21 April 2014].

³⁹ ‘[A]ll things are ultimately identified with God, the universal monad, Monad of monads’ (*Dis*, p. 21). A possible source is J. Lewis MacIntyre, *Giordano Bruno* (London: Macmillan, 1903) (see Ackerley, *Demented Particulars*, p. 118); Windelband, p. 423 and Beckett’s Philosophy notes, TCD MS 10967, ff. 191r.–191v.

⁴⁰ Tønning, p. 214; TCD MS 10967, f. 16r.

The compartment was windowless, like a monad, except for the shuttered judas in the door, at which a sane eye appeared, or was employed to appear, at frequent and regular intervals throughout the twenty-four hours. Within the narrow limits of domestic architecture he had never been able to imagine a more creditable representation of what he kept on calling, indefatigably, the little world. (*Mu*, p. 114)

In the M.M.M., the judas hole is the only means of visually penetrating the closed, windowless cell. What is more, unlike most windows, the judas hole is a device designed according to an asymmetrical power relation: while the observer can see in, the patient cannot easily get a clear picture of what is outside. Confinement here entails a politics of vision which reverses the perspective of Belacqua's view of the world from the willed enclosure of his wombtomb.⁴¹

In *Company*, the room in which the central protagonist resides is described using the term taken from Windleband: 'The place is windowless' (*NHO*, p. 49). While composing the paragraph which describes the room in this way, Beckett erased references to a carceral setting in one of his typescripts: 'When you could go out no more you sat huddled (~~at the centre of your lair~~) ^{dwelling cell in} the dark'.⁴² Similarly, in describing the dwelling of the single protagonist in the manuscript for *Stirrings Still* (1989), Beckett linked the monadic with the carceral: 'So dark is his windowless cell that no knowing whether day or night.'⁴³ However, this indicator of place is absent from the published text. If one of Beckett's strategies while writing *Murphy* was to 'keep [the] whole Dantesque analogy' outlined in his initial plan 'out of sight', these examples from *Company* and *Stirrings Still* indicate a similar textual reticence with regard to Beckett's use of institutional

⁴¹ For a reading of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon as a model for the disciplining of post-Enlightenment society, see Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (1977; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), pp. 200–10.

⁴² HRC CL MS 17/2, f. 1r. Beckett uses and deletes 'cell' a second time on the same page when referring to the room. See also Samuel Beckett, *Company / Compagnie and A Piece of Monologue / Solo: A Bilingual Variorum Edition*, ed. by Charles Krance (London: Garland, 1993), p. 106.

⁴³ UoR MS 2935/1/5, f. 1r., *BDMP* I [accessed 23 June 2017].

confinement which my following chapters will explore.⁴⁴

Chapter 6 of *Murphy* is the book's most striking example of Beckett's attempt to shine a narrative light in 'the cell of [the] mind' (*Mu*, p. 94). In doing so, it anticipates the confinement of the asylum cell which, three chapters later, Murphy will find so attractive in the M.M.M.: 'Murphy's mind pictured itself as a large hollow sphere, hermetically closed to the universe without.' (*Mu*, p. 69) Murphy's mind sees itself a 'closed system' within which there are three zones: 'light, half light, dark', recalling the 'trine' mind of Belacqua in *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*: 'centripetal, centrifugal and not' (*Mu*, pp. 70, 71; *D*, p. 120). While the light and half-light allow some form of detached mental activity, Murphy favours retreat into the darkness of the third zone, in which he can be 'a mote in the dark of absolute freedom' (*Mu*, p. 72). In a letter written while trying in vain to get *Murphy* published, Beckett describes his own version of this retreat, again referencing the monad:

There is an end to the temptation of light, its polite scorplings & consolations. [...] The real consciousness is the chaos, a grey commotion of mind, with no premises or conclusions or problems or solutions or cases or judgements. I lie for days on the floor, or in the woods, accompanied & unaccompanied, in a coenaesthesia of mind, a fullness of mental self-aesthesia that is entirely useless. The monad without the conflict, lightless & darkless. (SB to Mary Manning Howe, 30 August 1937, *LSB* I, p. 546)

The description of the third zone of Murphy's mind, a 'successor to the wombtomb' of *Dream*, as 'nothing but forms becoming and crumbling into the fragments of a new becoming' (*Mu*, p. 72) mirrors Beckett's own struggle in the 1930s in laying out this 'grey commotion of mind' on the page and giving his writing shape.⁴⁵ Shortly after finishing the chaotically structured *Dream*,

⁴⁴ UoR MS 3000, f. 2r.

⁴⁵ Damian Love, 'Doing Him into the Eye: Samuel Beckett's Rimbaud', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 66.4 (2005), 477–503 (p. 481).

this struggle for form attracted him to Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*: 'Such a thing never to have read! I think the very short chapters are an idea.' (SB to TM, 8 October 1932, *LSB I*, p. 129)

The short story format of the subsequent *More Pricks than Kicks* gave a shape to some of the sprawling narrative material of *Dream*. In his first published novel, it is the description of Murphy's monadic mind which provides a structural focal point for the novel.

As well as its extensive use of philosophical images, Chapter 6 of *Murphy* constitutes a key gap in the novel's narrative, during which the reader is made to wait to find out what 'shocking thing' has caused Celia to abandon her domestic chores in Chapter 5 (*Mu*, p. 68). By weaving his text around this central gap, Beckett took a step towards the textual dynamics which would govern the composition of *Watt*, as well as his later residual poetics. It is through the use of such gaps that Beckett would give shape to the knowledge he built up in the 1930s while he was suffering from, as he memorably put it, 'Detailkrankheit [detail-illness]'.⁴⁶ Whereas he would later express surprise that, in Franz Kafka's writing, 'the form is not shaken by the experience it conveys', the form of *Murphy* comes directly out of a conception of mental alienation.⁴⁷ The gap between the desired alienation of Murphy and the actual alienation of Mr Endon constitutes a critique of Murphy's identification with the asylum inmate.

'Seen and unseen': Murphy and Mr Endon

Murphy's disdain for 'the complacent scientific conceptualism that made contact with outer reality the index of mental well-being' signals his preference for the 'little world' of psychotic mental experience over the 'outer reality' privileged by the psychiatric community (*Mu*, pp. 111, 112):

The issue therefore, as lovingly simplified and perverted by Murphy, lay between nothing less fundamental than the big world and the little world, decided by the patients in favour of the latter,

⁴⁶ UoR MS 3000, f. 35r., qtd in Nixon, *Beckett's German Diaries*, p. 48. Translation by Nixon.

⁴⁷ SB to Ruby Cohn, 17 January 1962, qtd in Nixon, *Beckett's German Diaries*, p. 49.

revived by the psychiatrists on behalf of the former, in his own case unresolved. In fact, it was unresolved, only in fact. His vote was cast. 'I am not of the big world, I am of the little world' was an old refrain with Murphy, and a conviction, two convictions, the negative first. (*Mu*, p. 112)

As Ackerley notes, "[a] little world" is used for the microcosm throughout Burton's *Anatomy* and Swift's *Tale of the Tub*.⁴⁸ Gaining access to the 'little world' of Mr Endon, 'a schizophrenic of the most amiable variety', becomes Murphy's prime focus and acts as a narrative catalyst that propels the book towards its conclusion of the death by fire of its central protagonist (*Mu*, p. 116).

When Murphy leaves her to take up his post in the asylum, Celia adopts the habit of her lover and retreats from the world:

Most of the time that he was out she spent sitting in the rocking-chair with her face to the light. There was not much light, the room devoured it, but she kept her face turned to what there was. The small single window condensed its changes, as half-closed eyes see the finer values of tones, so that it was never quiet in the room, but brightening and darkening in a slow ample flicker that went on all day, brightening against the darkening that was its end. A peristalsis of light, worming its way into the dark. (*Mu*, p. 44)

As well as setting up a scenario of fading light in a single-windowed room with a lone protagonist sitting in a rocking-chair, various elements of which are replayed throughout the Beckett canon, this passage of poetic prose is typical of many others in *Murphy* in its heightened use of language when describing visual experience, particularly interpersonal encounters.⁴⁹ The aestheticisation of the fading light as it is filtered by the window recalls Beckett's position in 'Dante ... Bruno. Vico ..

⁴⁸ Ackerley, *Demented Particulars*, p. 156.

⁴⁹ See Beckett's use of the rocking-chair in *Film* and *Rockaby* (1981).

Joyce' that poetic language 'animates the inanimate' (*Dis*, p. 24). At the other end of the linguistic scale, when Neary describes his apprehension of Miss Dwyer, his ideal woman, as '[t]he one **closed figure** in the waste without form' in a world of '**figure and ground**'—both phrases in bold taken directly from Beckett's notes on Gestalt psychology—Beckett deliberately uses jarring technical terminology to show how ridiculous such jargon can sound when used to describe personal encounters (*Mu*, pp. 5, 4).⁵⁰ In *Murphy*, 'neither love nor human experience is depicted as particularly suited to a Gestalt analysis' and the felt experience of perception requires a different register.⁵¹ Unlike Murphy, who seeks the dark zone of his cloistered mind, or Belacqua, for whom the 'pestiferous sunlight' of social contact is too much to bear, Celia keeps herself turned towards what light remains of the day, anticipating the use of confinement in Beckett's later work, in which a monadic space frequently suggests a world beyond.

Anna McMullan has rightly observed that, with regard to his theatre work, 'the concern with being seen, as either need or coercion, haunts Beckett's characters'.⁵² From Pozzo's demand in *Waiting for Godot* '[i]s everybody looking at me?' to the 'famished eyes' of *Rockaby* straining to 'see' and 'be seen', the politics of vision is central to Beckett's drama (*CDW*, pp. 30, 439). The same is true of his early prose. In spite of the statement voiced by his interlocutor D. in the *Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit* that B. (a foil for Beckett) is searching for an art form which is 'authentically fruitless, incapable of any image whatsoever', it is striking how many of Beckett's aesthetic problems are worked out through the 'fleshly eyes' of perception (*PTD*, p. 113).⁵³ In such instances, it is evident that Cézanne's attack on the model of aesthetics in which the viewer can be safely distanced from the object of representation continues to play an important role in Beckett's use of space.

⁵⁰ See TCD MS 10971/7/12. I follow the TCD numbering.

⁵¹ Feldman, p. 104.

⁵² Anna McMullan, 'Performing Vision(s): Perspectives on Spectatorship in Beckett's Theatre', in *Samuel Beckett: A Casebook*, ed. by Jennifer M. Jeffers (London: Garland, 1998), pp. 133–58 (p. 133).

⁵³ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Eye and Mind', in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, ed. by Galen A. Johnson and Michael B. Smith (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993), pp. 121–49 (p. 127).

There is a concern with the politics of visual interpretation in *Murphy*, as is evident in the detailed notes Beckett took on visual aspects of Bethlem during his visits to the hospital, such as the procedure for the surveillance of a suicidal patient—nicknamed a ‘tab’—and the frequency of inspections required through the judas hole on a nurse’s night round.⁵⁴ These arrangements are an important part of the decisive final encounter between Murphy and the patient Mr Endon. But in *Murphy*, ‘*percipere*’ [to perceive] is as important as ‘*percipi*’ [to be perceived] and the aesthetic aspects of the act of seeing are crucial to the power relations that McMullan recognises in Beckett’s theatre work (*Mu*, p. 154). This is the case in Murphy’s encounter with his favourite patient, which hinges on a problem of perception and is the novel’s structural climax.

Trumping his interest in outward perception is the inward-orientated vision that turns up repeatedly in Beckett’s aesthetic formulations of the 1930s, particularly the model of what he called ‘eye suicide’, practised by children rubbing their eyes to induce starry ‘visions’, which he had found in Arthur Rimbaud’s ‘Les Poètes de Sept Ans’ (SB to TM, 11 March 1931, *LSB* I, p. 73).⁵⁵ The inward poetic visions of Rimbaud—described in *Dream* as ‘the Ailing Seer’ who (in a draft version) Belacqua ‘did [...] into the eye in English’—is also evoked in the narrator’s comparison of Murphy to Neary and Wylie: ‘Wylie came a little closer to Murphy, but his way of looking was as different from Murphy’s as a *voyeur*’s from a *voyant*’s, though Wylie was no more the one in the indecent sense than Murphy was the other in the supradecent sense.’ (*Mu*, p. 58, italics in the original)⁵⁶ In his TCD lectures as well as in letters to MacGreevy, Beckett expressed an inclination to follow Rimbaud’s imperative to ‘make oneself a seer’ [*se faire voyant*].⁵⁷ In lecture notes taken by his student Leslie Daiken, Beckett counts Rimbaud as paradigmatic of the move by the

⁵⁴ ‘Night round: must visit wards every 15 or 20 minutes, stop at every cell, switch on light from outside & look through judas’ (UoR MS 3000, ff. 11r., 12r.).

⁵⁵ See Van Hulle and Nixon, *Samuel Beckett’s Library*, p. 62; and ‘Les Poètes de Sept Ans’ (1871), in Rimbaud, pp. 95–97.

⁵⁶ The published editions read ‘did him pat into English’ to describe the work of translation (*D*, p. 137; Samuel Beckett, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, ed. by Eoin O’Brien and Edith Fournier (New York: Arcade, 1992), p. 138). However, the typescript reads ‘did him into the eye’ (S. E. Gontarski, ‘Editing Beckett’, *Twentieth Century Literature*, 41.2 (1995), 190–207 (p. 191)).

⁵⁷ Rimbaud to Paul Demeny, 15 May 1871, Rimbaud, p. 348. Emphasis in the original.

Symbolist poets ‘inward upon the selves of their own imagination’.⁵⁸

When Murphy peers through the judas hole to check on his suicide ‘tab’ Mr Endon and sees a chessboard laid out for a game, he is glad (*Mu*, pp. 115–16): ‘Mr. Endon had recognised the feel of his friend’s eye upon him and had made his preparations accordingly.’ The narrative interpretation of Mr Endon’s response takes Murphy’s estimation of himself down a peg or two:

Friend’s eye? Say rather, Murphy’s eye. Mr. Endon had felt Murphy’s eye upon him. Mr. Endon would have been less than Mr. Endon if he had known what it was to have a friend; and Murphy more than Murphy if he had not hoped against his better judgment that his feeling for Mr. Endon was in some small degree reciprocated. Whereas the sad truth was, that while Mr. Endon for Murphy was no less than bliss, Murphy for Mr. Endon was no more than chess. Murphy’s eye? Say rather, the chessy eye. Mr. Endon had vibrated to the chessy eye upon him and made his preparations accordingly. (*Mu*, p. 150)

Through his identification with the insane, Murphy wants to turn himself from a voyeur on the little worlds of psychosis, into a ‘*voyant*’ who can view such worlds from within. He would presumably agree with French Surrealist poet Robert Desnos, who wrote that ‘it is us [*sic*] who are locked up when one shuts the door to the asylum: the prison is outside, liberty within’.⁵⁹ In the Surrealist volume Beckett translated, Breton argues: ‘the complete indifference of lunatics to the way the rest of us criticize their behaviour [...] allows one to suppose that they find their imagination to be a great comfort and sufficiently enjoy their delirium to be able to put up with its being valid for them alone’.⁶⁰ *Murphy*, while drawing on material directly related to the experience of psychological alienation, questions the notion that Murphy can gain direct access to the experience of an inmate.

⁵⁸ Qtd in Love, p. 480.

⁵⁹ Qtd in Sinéad Mooney, *A Tongue Not Mine: Beckett and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 60.

⁶⁰ André Breton qtd in ‘Surrealism and Madness’, p. 101.

Instead of the transparent communicative model that allows Desnos to presuppose liberty in confinement, in *Murphy*, there is no representation of incarceration (of the subject) without a necessarily mediated interpretation (of that subject position).

Murphy's chess games with Mr Endon typically are non-competitive, non-communicative affairs. In their final game, after forty-three moves each, all of Mr Endon's pieces except the king and queen's pawns are all back in their original positions. An early instance of Beckett's experiments with 'combinatory literature', which would include the inversion of sentences and their elements in *Watt*, the chess game in *Murphy* is also a precursor of the constrained spatial configuration of *Quad*, which also uses restricted spatial patterning as a means of foregrounding issues of communication.⁶¹ Having realised that competitive interaction over the chessboard is impossible, Murphy concedes defeat by laying down his king and fixes his gaze on Mr Endon's remarkably coloured clothes:

[L]ittle by little his eyes were captured by the brilliant swallow-tail of Mr. Endon's arms and legs, purple, scarlet, black and glitter, till they saw nothing else, and that in a short time only as a vivid blur, Neary's big blooming buzzing confusion or ground, mercifully free of figure. Wearying soon of this he dropped his head on his arms in the midst of the chessmen, which scattered with a terrible noise. Mr. Endon's finery persisted for a little in an after-image scarcely inferior to the original. Then this also faded and Murphy began to see nothing, that colourlessness which is such a rare postnatal treat, being the absence (to abuse a nice distinction) not of *percipere* but of *percipi*. His other senses also found themselves at peace, an unexpected pleasure. Not the numb peace of their own suspension, but the positive peace that comes when the somethings give way, or perhaps simply add up, to the Nothing, than which in the guffaw of the Abderite naught is more real. (*Mu*, pp. 153–

⁶¹ See Chapter 5. I take the term 'combinatory literature' from Claude Berge, 'For a Potential Analysis of Combinatory Literature', in *The New Media Reader*, ed. by Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), pp. 177–81. Another instance of this is Mr Endon's light-pressing pattern, which is much more explicitly combinatorial in the manuscript draft than in the published version (UoR MS 5517/6/51). I follow the UoR numbering.

54)

Beckett here draws directly on his philosophy and psychology reading to describe Murphy's encounter with the perceptual void that replaces his projected 'brotherhood' with Mr Endon (*Mu*, p. 111).⁶² While putting him to bed it becomes clear to Murphy that 'the most biddable little gaga in the entire institution' is not only a solipsistic chess player, but that any form of communication with this exemplar of 'the race of people he had long since despaired of finding' is impossible (*Mu*, pp. 149, 106). Murphy stares at the vacant eyes of his patient 'across a narrow gulf of air, the merest hand's-breadth of air' (*Mu*, p. 155):

Kneeling at the bedside, the hair starting in thick black ridges between his fingers, his lips, nose and forehead almost touching Mr. Endon's, seeing himself stigmatised in those eyes that did not see him, Murphy heard words demanding so strongly to be spoken that he spoke them, right into Mr. Endon's face, Murphy who did not speak at all in the ordinary way unless spoken to, and not always even then.

'the last at last seen of him
himself unseen by him
and of himself'

A rest. 'The last Mr. Murphy saw of Mr. Endon was Mr. Murphy unseen by Mr. Endon. This was also the last Murphy saw of Murphy.' A rest. 'The relation between Mr. Murphy and Mr. Endon could not have been better summed up than by the former's sorrow at seeing himself in the latter's

⁶² Beckett took down the phrase 'big blooming buzzing confusion' in his notes on Robert S. Woodworth's *Contemporary Schools of Psychology* (TCD MS 10971/7/12). His notes on Democritus of Abdera are found in TCD MS 10967, f. 75r., but there is no description there of Democritus as the laughing philosopher. However, Beckett would have come across such a description in Burton, *Anatomy* (1912–13), I, pp. 48–54.

immunity from seeing anything but himself.’ A long rest. ‘Mr. Murphy is a speck in Mr. Endon’s unseen.’ (*Mu*, p. 156)

The proximity of Murphy and Mr Endon is such that they are ‘all set [...] for a butterfly kiss’, in which the eyelashes of one kisses the skin of another (*Mu*, p. 156). The eyes here prove to be inadequate as organs of interpersonal perception and, as in Beckett’s dramatic work, ‘when vision falters the sense of touch comes to the fore’.⁶³ In both the minutely physical description of Mr Endon’s eye and the near butterfly kiss, the eye becomes almost an organ of touch rather than of sight. Instead of being a passage through which Murphy can perceive ‘[l]ight in the monad’, Mr Endon’s ‘fleshy eye[s]’ are simply part of the world of objects from which he feels so alienated.⁶⁴ Rather than poetry’s animation of the inanimate described in ‘Dante ... Bruno. Vico .. Joyce’, here, Beckett’s lines in verse serve to emphasise Mr Endon’s disregard of other subjects. Murphy’s alienation foreshadows the disconnection of the encounters at the climax of *Ohio Impromptu* (1981) and *Catastrophe*. Both in the latter play and in *Murphy*, communicative failure is used to refashion the kind of direct socio-political critique which depends on giving voice to voiceless. While Murphy gets closer than Belacqua ever did to an actual inmate, his hero-worship of Mr Endon is shown up as a fetishisation of difference.

Conclusion

While writing the final chapters of *Murphy* was a struggle for Beckett, the material for the book’s closing kite-flying scene was found very early on in the compositional process.⁶⁵ Only nineteen days after starting work on the manuscript entitled ‘Sasha Murphy’, the experience which gave rise

⁶³ Trish McTighe, *The Haptic Aesthetic in Samuel Beckett’s Drama* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 9.

⁶⁴ Merleau-Ponty, p. 127.

⁶⁵ See Pilling, *Beckett before Godot*, pp. 127–28.

to this scene was outlined in a letter to MacGreevy:⁶⁶

I begin to think I have gerontophilia on top of the rest.⁶⁷ The little shabby respectable old men you see on Saturday afternoon and Sunday, pottering about doing odd jobs in the garden, or flying kites immense distances at the Round Pond, Kensington. Yesterday there was a regular club of the latter, with a sprinkling of grandchildren, sitting in a crescent waiting for a wind. The kites lying in the grass with their long tails beautifully cared for, all assembled and ready. For they bring them in separate pieces, the sticks and tail rolled up in the canvas and a huge spool of string. [...] Then great perturbation to get them off at the first breath of wind. They fly them almost out of sight, yesterday it was over the trees to the south, into an absolutely cloudless viridescent evening sky. Then when the string is run out they simply sit there watching them, chucking at the string, the way coachmen do at a reins, presumably to keep them from losing height. There seems to be no competition at all involved. Then after about an hour they wind them gently in and go home. I was really rooted to the spot yesterday, unable to go away and wondering what was keeping me. Extraordinary effect too of birds flying close to the kites but beneath them. My next old man, or old young man, not of the big world but of the little world, must be a kite-flyer. (SB to TM, 8 September 1935, *LSB* I, p. 274)

The use of this weekend afternoon in the park as the basis for *Murphy*'s final chapter provides a specific instance of 'autographical action' taking the initial form of letter-writing. As in his reading of philosophy, here it is a specific image, rather than a ready-made narrative or conceptual system, which makes its way from Beckett's life into his work. While foreshadowing Murphy's preference for the little over the big world, the letter, in its description of the kites hovering 'almost out of sight' over the trees and birds of Kensington Gardens, also contains a focus on the limit of vision which is as crucial to the novel's closing scene as it is to Murphy's encounter with Mr Endon:

⁶⁶ See Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 203.

⁶⁷ Beckett noted this term in his Psychology notes: 'Gerontophilia: special fondness for old people' (TCD MS 10971/8/18).

Except for the sagging soar of line, undoubtedly superb so far as it went, there was nothing to be seen, for the kite had disappeared from view. Mr. Kelly was enraptured. Now he could measure the distance from the unseen to the seen, now he was in a position to determine the point at which seen and unseen met. It would be an unscientific observation, so many and so fitful were the imponderables involved. But the pleasure accruing to Mr. Kelly would be in no way inferior to that conferred (presumably) on Mr. Adams by his beautiful deduction of Neptune from Uranus. He fixed with his eagle eyes a point in the empty sky where he fancied the kite to swim into view, and wound carefully in. (*Mu*, p. 174)

In his fascination with the point at which seen and unseen meet, Mr Kelly provides a contrast to Murphy's reaction to the unseeing seeing of Mr Endon. This space beyond the limits of immediate perception anticipates the spatial dynamic of Beckett's theatre writing, in which the 'big world' of offstage space plays a crucial role in our interpretations of confined space onstage.

The boundary zone described between seen and unseen, known and unknown, would be subjected to increased focus in Beckett's wartime writing. In a letter to Mary Manning Howe, written while still trying to get the book published, Beckett's frustrated reaction to publisher Houghton Mifflin's proposed cuts to *Murphy* satirically anticipates the punctured textual surfaces through which he would explore this epistemological nomansland:

I am exhorted to ablate 33.3 recurring to all eternity of my work. I have thought of a better plan. Take every 500th word, punctuate carefully and publish a poem in prose in the Paris Daily Mail. Then the rest separately and privately, with a forewarning from Geoffrey [Thompson], as the ravings of a schizoid, or serially, in translation, in the Zeitschrift für Kitsch [Magazine for Kitsch]. (SB to Manning Howe, 14 November 1936, *LSB* I, pp. 382–83)⁶⁸

Such textual gaps, used to represent a derelict psychological perspective, were central to the

⁶⁸ Translation in *LSB* I.

composition of his next novel, *Watt*.

3

‘Who, What, Where, by What Means, Why, in What Way, When’:*Watt*

In late 1942, Beckett fled Paris with his partner Suzanne Deschevaux-Dumesnil following the infiltration of the Resistance cell he had been working with.¹ Their arrival in the southern French village of Roussillon is marked in the third compositional notebook of *Watt*, interrupting a long passage about a parlour maid called Mary:

[xxxx] continued with hardly a break—

Roussillon Nov. 18

Continuing then again, continued with hardly a break

[xx xxx xxx xx xxxx xx]—[xxxx], ~~winter + summer~~ [xxxx xx xxx xxxx]

Roussillon March 1st

Continuing then again, to the words ‘we had done better to sleep’ we ~~made no reply~~ said nothing²

Following this narrative ‘break’, the story about Mary never gets finished. In a typescript version, the terminal interruption is somewhat smoothed over:

Now with regard to Mary’s limbs ~~ahem~~, of which I think I am correct in saying no mention has yet been made,
winter ~~and summer~~ and summer

¹ See Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, pp. 319–39.

² HRC SB MS 6/7/55.

Continuing then again, winter and summer

Continuing then again again, to the words, We had done better to sleep, Watt said nothing³

In the published text, a tiny ‘textual scar’, consisting of an oddly placed dash and some phrasal repetition, bears witness to the tumultuous context in which *Watt* was composed: ‘Now with regard to Mary’s limbs, ahem, of which I think I am correct in saying that no mention has yet been made, winter and summer—. Winter and summer. And so on.’ (*W*, p. 46)⁴ This scar has a very minor effect on the reading process, especially when compared to the major structural disjunctions elsewhere in the novel. Nevertheless, the tiny textual blemish retains a ‘contextual memory’ [‘*mémoire du contexte*’] which points beyond the text itself, to important information about the way in which *Watt* was written.⁵ In this chapter, I will argue that by paying attention to the spaces Beckett leaves in his narrative, we can learn a lot about his deployment of confined space in the novel. In particular, I will investigate the relation between the narrative locale of the asylum and this important stage in the development of Beckett’s poetics of missing parts.

Watt is presented as a compositional manuscript, riddled with question marks in place of missing words and, increasingly as the novel progresses, spaces marked ‘hiatus in MS’ or ‘MS illegible’.⁶ As I have shown, lacunae and silences were central to Beckett’s early work; *Watt*, which dissolves into fragmented ‘Addenda’, a closing section made up mainly of unused manuscript material and notes, signals an increased focus on textual gaps. In a diary entry for 19 November 1936, in response to his reading of texts by German Expressionist painter Franz Marc, Beckett wrote of his interest being ‘not in the relation between subject & object [...] but the alienation (my

³ HRC SB MS 7/5/235.

⁴ Dirk Van Hulle, ‘Textual Scars: Beckett, Genetic Criticism and Textual Scholarship’, in *The Edinburgh Companion to Samuel Beckett and the Arts*, ed. by S. E. Gontarski (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), pp. 306–19.

⁵ Daniel Ferrer, ‘La toque de Clementis: rétroaction et rémanence dans les processus génétiques’, *Genesis*, 6 (1994), 93–106 (p. 104).

⁶ For examples of lexical gaps in the *Watt* manuscripts, see HRC SB MS 7/5/95, /109, /127; HRC SB MS 7/6/373, /375, /377; HRC SB MS 6/7/3, /53; HRC SB MS 7/1/2, /30, /33, /138, /234; HRC SB MS 7/3/74, /85, /111. For a full catalogue of the gaps in these manuscripts, see the forthcoming BDMP module, edited by Mark Byron. Gaps in the published text are discussed below.

nomansland)'.⁷ Our understanding of how Beckett gave form to this nomansland in his work can be greatly enriched by looking at *Watt*'s genetic dossier. The *Watt* notebooks are now held at the University of Austin, Texas and reflect a long and complicated process of composition. A record of Beckett's stylistic experimentation during the war, these compositional materials number over one thousand pages, comprising six notebooks, loose leaves and a typescript marked 'incomplete' which was created in stages as the notebooks were drafted.⁸ It is to these materials I will turn in my analysis of the novel's fragmented narrative of alienation.

Daniela Caselli has made the point that Beckett's entire oeuvre can be read in terms of fragmentation, with titles like *From an Abandoned Work* (1956), *A Piece of Monologue*, *Abandonné* [abandoned] (1972), *Rough for Theatre I* (*Fragment de théâtre I*, 1974) and collections such as the *Faux départs* [false starts] and *Six Residua* (1978) advertising the incompleteness of his works.⁹ Rather than think of Beckett as a writer who 'distilled essences', I will argue that Beckett's is a residual poetics: one that uses the gaps left in hermeneutic puzzles as an integral part of its structure.¹⁰ The most well-known example of this is *Waiting for Godot*, in which an absent central figure leaves a gap around which the dynamics of Beckett's breakthrough play function. Instead of reducing his texts to purified essences, Beckett created pieces of writing which appear as draff, left over from the distillation undergone in the writing process. In its use of an obsessional narrative style which increases, rather than decreases, the gap between subject and object and results in a fragmented world which fails to meaningfully cohere, *Watt* is a crucial work in the development of Beckett's 'art of incompleteness'.¹¹

A thirst for the bread-and-butter information of realist narrative is evident in Hackett's early

⁷ Qtd in Nixon, *Beckett's German Diaries*, p. 164.

⁸ HRC SB MS 7/5/1. See *No Symbols Where None Intended: A Catalogue of Books, Manuscripts, and Other Material Relating to Samuel Beckett in the Collections of the Humanities Research Center*, ed. by Carlton Lake (Austin: Humanities Research Center, 1984), pp. 75–79; and Richard L. Admussen, *The Samuel Beckett Manuscripts: A Study* (London: G. Prior, 1979), pp. 90–92. I follow C. J. Ackerley in numbering the notebooks 1–6.

⁹ Thanks to Daniela Caselli, who discussed this concept of Beckett's work in her 'Beckett and Dante' seminar at the 3rd Samuel Beckett Summer School, Trinity College Dublin, 11–16 August 2013. See also Caselli, p. 86.

¹⁰ Gontarski, 'From Unabandoned Works', introduction to *CSP*, p. xi.

¹¹ S. E. Gontarski, 'An Art of Incompletion: A Preface', in Ackerley, *Obscure Locks*, p. 10.

enquiries to Nixon regarding Watt: ‘Nationality, family, birthplace, confession, occupation, means of existence, distinctive signs, you cannot be in ignorance of all this. Utter ignorance, said Mr Nixon.’ (*W*, p. 16) This recalls an episode at a similar point of Beckett’s previous novel in which Celia Kelly brings home news of her relationship with Murphy to her grandfather, who wants to know ‘the who, what, where, by what means, why, in what way and when’. This list of interrogative words forms the basis of Willoughby Kelly’s investigation into the nature of his granddaughter’s new boyfriend: ‘Who is this Murphy [...]? What is he? Where does he come from? What is his family? What does he do? Has he any money? Has he any prospects? Has he any retrospects? Is he, has he, anything at all?’ (*Mu*, p. 13) A similar list of interrogative words appears at the beginning of a set of loose pages stored with NB 1 of *Watt*.¹² Further down the same page, Beckett copied a sentence from his notes on Aristotle, taken from Archibald Alexander’s *Short History of Philosophy*, which is an example of the ‘10 modes of mental representation corresponding with 10 capital modes of existence’; these being ‘Substance, Quantity, Quality, Relation, Place, Time, Position, (^{Condition} Possession, Active, Passive.’¹³ The sentence is broken into three columns:

Socrates is a man	(Substance)	who
70 years old	(quantity)	what
wise	(quality)	how (mental)
teacher of Plato	(relation)	in what way ^{what to} whom
at evening	(time)	when
in prison	(place)	where
sitting on his bed	(position)	how (physical)
having fetters on his legs	(possession) !	Whose

¹² HRC SB MS 6/5/3.

¹³ TCD MS 10967, f. 99r. ‘[C]ondition’ is bracketed with ‘possession’ in Beckett’s notes.

teaching his disciples	(action)	} by what means
being questioned by them	(passion)	

14

Beckett's exclamation point following 'possession' marks the incongruous nature of Socrates' carceral leg chains, which possess him more than he possesses them, restricting his freedom of movement in a manner that Beckett would explore in later plays (see Chapter 9). Further down the page comes Beckett's first delineation of his central protagonist, who both looks back to Kelly and foreshadows the narrator of *Malone Dies*: 'X is a man, ignorant, 70 years old, ignorant, alone, at evening, in his room, in bed, having pains, listening, remembering'.¹⁵

While Murphy struggles to communicate with Mr Endon, Watt tries and fails to accumulate knowledge about the character who evolved out the bedbound figure described on these loose pages. In the drafting process, this figure eventually became Watt's master, Knott. Hackett and Nixon, for their part, remain none the wiser regarding Watt's personal details, pieces of information which are normally key to a novel's development. Ruby Cohn points out: 'Watt is the first Beckett protagonist to lack all these, for they are irrelevant to his quest.'¹⁶ I would qualify this by saying that *Watt* prompts the reader to search for this information, but that it is structured so as to avoid giving answers. Many of the key facts about the book's main protagonist and the world around him remain hidden or missing and it contains but a handful of instances of direct speech from its central character. This leads to the 'thematizing [of] the act of interpretation' in the novel.¹⁷ This is an important theme in Beckett's oeuvre, running from *Watt*, whose 'Addenda' end with the

¹⁴ HRC SB MS 6/5/3. The entire page is erased with blue crayon. See also Archibald Alexander, *A Short History of Philosophy*, 3rd edn (Glasgow: Maclehose, Jackson and Co., 1922), p. 95 <<https://archive.org/stream/ashorthistoryofp00alexuoft#page/94/mode/2up>> [accessed 17 December 2014]. Archibald's version of the sentence, and Beckett's transcription of it in his Philosophy notes, lacks one of the modes: time. The addition of the phrases 'at cock-sparrow fart' in the Philosophy notes (i.e., at the crack of dawn (*Obscure Locks, Simple Keys: The Annotated 'Watt'* (Florida: Journal of Beckett Studies Books, 2005), p. 100)) and 'at evening' in the *Watt* notebook corrects this.

¹⁵ HRC SB MS 6/5/3. As well as the erasure across the entire page in blue crayon, this passage is erased using black ink.

¹⁶ Cohn, *A Beckett Canon*, p. 123.

¹⁷ Shane Weller, *A Taste for the Negative: Beckett and Nihilism* (London: Legenda, 2005), p. 94.

hermeneutic teaser ‘no symbols where none intended’ to *What Where*, with its penultimate spoken line ‘make sense who may’ (*W*, p. 223; *CDW*, p. 476). The hermeneutic difficulties in *Watt* are closely related to two stylistic developments which would be important to Beckett’s postwar writing: a reduced visibility of intertextual and biographical references as well as a shift towards first-person narration. My next chapter will discuss two of Beckett’s postwar prose pieces which use ex-inmates as first-person narrators. Halfway through the book, it becomes clear that Watt and the narrator Sam are likewise former inmates.

Beckett’s representations of institutions of confinement gradually zoom in on the carceral space itself: first, Mountjoy Prison is an unseen space evoked by the image of McCabe’s face in the *Evening Herald* newspaper in ‘Dante and the Lobster’; next, Portrane Asylum is viewed from a narrative perspective just outside its playing fields in *More Pricks than Kicks*; then, using an omniscient third-person narrator, the M.M.M. is meticulously described in *Murphy*. *Watt* is the first of Beckett’s prose works to use a first-person narrator coming out of an institution of confinement. In a novel which ‘solicits and resists’ interpretation, Beckett’s use of the asylum is a crucial part of his stylistic development.¹⁸ The asylum was important for Beckett in his creation of narratives based around the psychological indeterminacy he admired in Gide, who, according to Beckett, was interested in ‘getting away from statistical psychology [*sic*] to incoherent material’.¹⁹ In his book which argues for Gide’s importance to Beckett, John Bolin argues: ‘Beckett’s dilemma is never primarily the philosopher’s question: “comment savoir?” It is always the writer’s question: “comment dire?”’²⁰ In this chapter I will go beyond the title of Beckett’s final poem and frame the ‘writer’s question’ as ‘comment écrire?’ [how does one write?] Here and in the following chapter, my own research questions are: How does Beckett construct the confined spaces of his wartime and postwar prose? What use does Beckett make of his repeated return to confinement, especially when those spaces start to become traces themselves? And how can we interpret the texts which result?

¹⁸ Weller, *A Taste for the Negative*, p. 95.

¹⁹ TCD MIC 60/101.

²⁰ John Bolin, *Beckett and the Modern Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 169.

Asylum

Institutions of coercive confinement were on Beckett's mind as he was drafting *Watt*. In one draft version, the gardener Mr Green (Mr Graves in the published text) tells his master of his time spent incarcerated in Dublin: 'the roses of my prime withered in Windy Arbour [site of the Central Criminal Lunatic Asylum, now the Central Mental Hospital], Beggar's Bush [site of a barracks used for internment during the Irish Civil War], Richmond [Asylum], Portrane [Asylum], Stillorgan [site of Saint John of God Hospital] and Foxrock'.²¹ When he came to provide a locale that would anchor the narrative of his story, Beckett chose again to use such an institution. The first two of *Watt's* four numbered parts contain a narrative voice that flickers briefly in the foreground; in the opening paragraph of Part III, that voice is given a body as well as a place from which to speak. Beckett had previously used a first-person pronoun in 'Ding-Dong' and in ten of the thirteen poems of *Echo's Bones and Other Precipitates* (1935), but this is the first sustained attempt at first-person narration in Beckett's published fiction:

It was about this time that Watt was transferred to another pavilion, leaving me behind in the old pavilion. We consequently met, and conversed, less than formerly [...]. For we seldom left our mansions, Watt seldom left his mansion and I seldom left mine. (*W*, p. 129)

This disclosure of narrative focaliser is accompanied by a change of space. Whereas the previous two parts centre on life in the house of Watt's master, Knott, the shift to an institutional space provides a hinge from which the structure of the narrative emerges. It is no great surprise that this first-person speaker, who has been telling the story of Watt's alienated psyche in an obsessional narrative style, comes to us out of a psychiatric institution. As an asylum inmate, Sam—whose name is not revealed until later in Part III—is well-placed both to receive and to tell Watt's

²¹ HRC SB MS 7/5/7. Foxrock, Beckett's birthplace, is the only one of these Dublin townlands not to feature a carceral institution.

fractured story of inhabiting what the narrator of *Malone Dies* terms ‘a mad world, in the midst of strangers’ (*MD*, p. 18).

Sam and Watt’s place of meeting is never explicitly mentioned. However, the ‘pavilions’ which constitute their site of confinement strongly suggest some kind of medical facility (*W*, p. 185).²² If, for Umberto Eco, the best way of verifying any interpretative conjecture is to ‘check it against the text as whole’, the best way to verify that Watt and Sam are in an asylum is to check *Watt* against a text which relatively few people would have read at the time of *Watt*’s publication in 1953. In the denouement of *Murphy*, Beckett refers directly to James Boswell’s use of the term ‘mansions’ to describe Bethlem asylum cells; *Watt* uses the same reference in a way which demonstrates a ‘vaguening’ of his textual source. Instead of the walking tour of the asylum provided in *Murphy*, *Watt*’s ‘mansion’ is the first in a trail of interpretative breadcrumbs which points the reader back to Boswell’s *Life of Johnson* via the description of the madhouse cells in the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat. Other elements of this trail include references to the ‘windowlessness’ and ‘bloodheat’ of the inmates, both of which terms are used in *Murphy* to describe confinement in the M.M.M. (*W*, p. 129). Rather than the promise of lasting habitation denoted by the biblical use of the term in John 14: 2—‘[i]n my father’s house there are many mansions’—Sam and Watt’s institutional home is associated with alienation.

The way in which the asylum is presented exemplifies the development of Beckett’s approach to intertextuality in which ‘references [are] absorbed rather than overtly visible’.²³ For the reader of the French translation in 1968, the reference would have been even less visible. In this text, the ‘mansions’ of the English-language *Watt* have all been turned into ‘pavillons’.²⁴ While this word recalls the ‘pavillons de convalescence’ [convalescent houses] of the M.M.M.M. (La Maison Madeleine de Miséricorde Mentale) in the French version of *Murphy*, including ‘Pavillon Skinner’

²² ‘Any one of several detached or semi-detached blocks designed to form part of a group of buildings on a large site (as opposed to a single large building), esp. that of a hospital or university’ (*OED*, def. 6).

²³ Nixon, *Beckett’s German Diaries*, p. 187.

²⁴ Samuel Beckett, *Watt*, trans. by Samuel Beckett, Agnès Janvier and Ludovic Janvier (1968; Paris: Minuit, 1969), p. 155. Though ‘mansions’ is used in the section of the French translation of *Murphy* which mentions Boswell, it is usually only used in French as a term describing medieval scenography (Beckett, *Murphy*, p. 144; *PR*).

[Skinner's House], the French *Watt* lacks the clear intertextual trail of its English counterpart which evokes Boswell's Bethlem.²⁵ Does this lack make my focus on institutional confinement in readings of *Watt* an act of undue hermeneutic constraint? I would argue, rather, that it gives us an important example of Beckett's poetics in development, a trajectory of progress which, in his increasingly vague delineation of topographical detail, also involved regress. Writing of the then unpublished *Watt* in 1947, soon after commencing the composition of *Molloy*, Beckett described his extant oeuvre as a 'series', something which is evident in his mistaken insertion of Murphy's name into a draft of Part IV of *Watt*, a slip which he later corrected.²⁶ Judging by the way in which his references to confinement developed from *Murphy* to *Watt* and then later in the translations of the two texts, it is clear that this series is fruitfully read backwards as well as forwards.

As opposed to the omniscient narrative perspective used to describe institutional life in *Murphy*, *Watt*, in purporting to be narrated by an asylum inmate, contains what is necessarily a much more selective narrative. This narrative is full of gaps. In Part III it becomes clear why this is so. The conditions under which Watt tells Sam his story are far from ideal. There is a 'rushing wind' and he speaks in 'a low and rapid voice' with 'scant regard for grammar, for syntax, for pronunciation, for enunciation, and very likely, if the truth were known, for spelling too, as these are generally received', though quite how someone can speak with scant regard for spelling is difficult to imagine. Sam himself is hard of hearing and admits to having an imperfect grasp of what Watt is saying (*W*, p. 133). These conditions, coupled with the mental states of the two inmates, may account for some of the gaps in the previous two parts—as Cohn puts it, 'the lacunae and sudden leaps in the text may reflect those of a mind alienated—or emancipated—from the causal sequence of our world'—and the latter would also provide an explanation for the obsessional nature

²⁵ Beckett, *Murphy*, p. 143; *Mu*, p. 104.

²⁶ HRC SB MS 7/3/101; Pilling, *A Samuel Beckett Chronology*, p. 101. In a letter to George Reavey, who was acting as Beckett's literary agent at the time, Beckett responded positively to Reavey mixing up *Murphy* and *Watt*: 'I am glad to see you confusing them.' In the same letter, Beckett went on to write of *Watt*: 'It is an unsatisfactory book, written in dribs and drabs, first on the run, then of an evening after the clodhopping, during the occupation. But it has its place in a series, as will perhaps appear in time' (SB to Reavey, 14 May 1947, *LSB* II, pp. 55, 56 n. 2).

in which things like Watt's gait and Knott's meal arrangements are described.²⁷ However, it cannot account for the structural discontinuities in the narrative brought about by episodes which could not have been experienced by either Sam or Watt, such as the scene preceding the latter's arrival at the tram station which opens the book or the scene following his departure from the train station at the end (*W*, pp. 3–17, 213–14).

Documents

The wartime turmoil reduced Beckett's usually substantial output of correspondence. This, coupled with a reluctance to talk freely about his wartime experiences, has left a significant material gap in Beckett studies which is reflected in the absence of any letters relating to *Watt* during its composition. Gaps are therefore central not only to Beckett's wartime work, but also to scholarly accounts of the period during which this work was produced, as the editors of his letters note:

Given the exceptional fact of the gap in Beckett's letters, it was the editors' original intention to signal it by entitling the present volume *1945–1956*. Yet the War years were decisive and formative, and the editors had no wish to diminish, still less elide, their significance. After much deliberation, it was decided that the helpfulness of identifying the gap in Beckett's correspondence was less important than establishing the continuity of the period and of the edition; hence the title *1941–1956*.²⁸

The scarcity of letters make the *Watt* notebooks the most important documentary evidence of Beckett's work during the war, just as they were his primary compositional material while cut off from his library while on the run from 16 August 1942 to 12 October 1944.²⁹ It is worth noting, however, that Beckett started and finished work on the manuscripts within reach of his reference

²⁷ Ruby Cohn, 'Watt in the Light of *The Castle*', *Comparative Literature*, 13.2 (1961), 154–66 (p. 159).

²⁸ George Craig, 'General Introduction' to *LSB II*, p. xx.

²⁹ Pilling, *A Samuel Beckett Chronology*, pp. 90, 93; 'Chronology', *LSB II*, pp. 5–6.

materials.³⁰ This makes his decisions to leave gaps in the narrative all the more interesting. So, for instance, towards the end of the novel, the reader misses out on a quotation from *Homeward: Songs by the Way*, the first published collection of poetry by Irish theosophist Æ (aka George Russell), which is being read by a railway worker: ‘Mr Case, his head flung back, held this book out at arm’s length. Mr Case had a very superior taste in books, for a signal-man. Mr Case read:

?’ (*W*, p. 197)

In a NB 6, Beckett wrote the word ‘(Quotation)’ in this gap.³¹ Another such instance involves a missing piece of philosophical scaffolding. In NB 4, when accompanying Watt in their unnamed institution, Sam describes his mental faculties, ‘faculties properly so called of (- - - Locke - - -)’.³² In the published text, the brackets containing Locke’s name are replaced by a series of spaces and question marks (*W*, p. 145). It would appear that Beckett had planned to come back to these passages and fill them in with material from Æ’s and Locke’s works but that, by the time the text of *Watt* was published in 1953, he decided to keep the gaps.³³

The complexity of *Watt*’s compositional process is closely related to the development of the published text’s pockmarked narrative and unique style. Ann Beer argues: ‘The variety of narrative modes that are experimented with in the Ms. shows that Beckett was attempting to free himself from the archly omniscient and mannered third-person narrator of *Murphy*, but had not yet hit upon the subjective [...] narrators of his trilogy.’³⁴ Early on in the compositional process, Beckett

³⁰ On a loose page in NB 1, Beckett wrote ‘Begun evening of Tuesday 11/2/41’. On the cover of NB 1, he wrote: ‘Watt was written in France during the war 1940–45 and published in [xxx] 1953 by the Olympia Press.’ (HRC SB MS 6/5/front cover) On one of the loose leaves stored with NB 6, he wrote, ‘Dec 28th 1944 END’ (HRC SB MS 7/3/119) but the cover of NB 5 contains the words ‘Watt V | Suite et fin | 18.2.45’, indicating that revision continued into 1945 (HRC SB MS 7/2/front cover).

³¹ HRC SB 7/3/53, qtd in Ackerley, *Obscure Locks*, p. 195.

³² HRC SB MS 7/1/138.

³³ Beckett even created gaps in the published text that were not there in the manuscript. In a draft of Part IV, Watt sees a picture of a horse with ‘an inscription of unusual [xxx] height, width + distinctness’ (HRC SB MS 7/3/91). In the published text, this becomes ‘an inscription of great ? ’ (*W*, p. 205).

³⁴ Ann Beer, ‘*Watt*, Knott and Beckett’s Bilingualism’, *JOBS*, 10 (1983), no pagination
<<http://www.english.fsu.edu/jobs/num10/Num10Beer.htm>> [accessed 22 November 2013].

experimented with an omniscient narrative perspective before shifting to a first-person plural perspective. On a typescript page, this pronoun is systematically replaced by ‘N’, denoting an as-yet unnamed narrator.³⁵ As was the case in his use of the letter ‘X’ for the figure who would eventually become *Murphy*, Beckett would often generate characters first and name them retrospectively. He would also frequently change names in a text, a practice alluded to in one of the addenda to *Watt*: ‘change all the names’ (*W*, p. 222). In one such instance, he changed the name of Knott’s servant Vincent to Walter nine times on the one page. Beckett wrote notes-to-self in his manuscript notebooks in French and it is in this language that he instructs himself to ‘Walterise’ this passage ‘selon [according to] p. 81’.³⁶ These different instances of retrospective naming are similar to the way in which Sam is introduced as narrator.

The introduction of Sam in NB 4 seems to have been a crucial point in the composition of the novel. As it is in the published book, the opening of the section based in the asylum is initially narrated in an anonymous first person: ‘It was about this time that Watt was transferred to another pavilion, leaving me behind in the old pavilion.’³⁷ Sam is inserted later, when the narrator describes the weather conditions under which he was likely to meet Watt outside, now that they were in separate parts of the asylum: ‘But whereas for Watt the important thing was the wind, the sun was the important thing for ~~me~~ Sam’.³⁸ Ackerley posits that ‘part II [was] presumably revised at this time to bring him [Sam] in incrementally’.³⁹ It would indeed appear that Sam acted as an anchor around which Beckett could shape his increasingly unwieldy material. At the end of NB 4, Beckett wrote a note to himself: ‘Present dogs, food, picture, etc. as told by W. as Committee told’.⁴⁰ In other words, having inserted Sam in NB 4, it would now be necessary to present episodes from the

³⁵ HRC SB MS 7/6/311.

³⁶ HRC SB MS 6/7/62. Beckett refers to his own numbering system, which differs from that of the HRC. On Beckett’s ‘p. 81’, a mainly blank verso, there is a list of sentences in which Arsene’s name has been replaced by Walter’s and a list of the house-servants: ‘~~Vincent~~ | ~~Walter~~ | ~~Arsene~~ | ~~Erskine~~ | ~~Watt~~’ (HRC SB MS 6/7/162).

³⁷ HRC SB MS 7/1/93. See *W*, p. 129.

³⁸ HRC SB MS 7/1/97. As this insertion is made on the same line as the rest of the sentence, it is likely that Beckett made it as he composed the passage, not afterwards.

³⁹ Ackerley, *Obscure Locks*, p. 244.

⁴⁰ HRC SB MS 7/1/175.

first two parts in a narrative frame so that it was clear they had been told to him by Watt, just as the story of the academic committee examining Louit is framed by a narrator telling this story in the garden to others.⁴¹

Having contextualised the narrative voice using the figure of Sam, Beckett then rewrote the first two parts of the novel on loose pages stored with NB 4 and in NB 5. In the revised draft version of Part II, he foreshadowed Sam's presence as the receiver of Watt's story and his appearance at the beginning of Part III by alluding to 'the material conditions in which these communications were made' in the institution grounds where Watt meets Sam.⁴² In the published text of Part II, Sam reflects on Watt's lack of knowledge regarding Knott's house: 'But even where there was no light for Watt, where there is none for his mouthpiece, there may be light for others.' (*W*, p. 57) '[M]outhpiece' was inserted instead of 'amanuensis' in NB 5, making this another addition to the *avant-texte*.⁴³ There is another hint at Sam's existence which was added even later concerning 'the period of Watt's revelation, to me' of events in Knott's house (*W*, p. 65). The phrase 'to me'—i.e., to Sam—is not in NB 5 and therefore must have been added at a later stage of composition.⁴⁴

Just like his poetics of 'vaguening', Beckett's move towards first-person narration was not a simple, one-way process, as can be seen using evidence from the undated typescript. Rather, as Beer notes, it was a matter of experimentation. The first-person plural perspective used early in the compositional process is as disjunctive as the narrative voice of *Dream*. '[W]e are asking ourself questions', states the narrator. Then, while conversing with the house-servant Arsene, 'we' states: 'there are moments when we feel that you are we, that we are you, that you and we are one'.⁴⁵ After being misnamed Tommy by Arsene, 'we' asserts that his name is Johnny, a name which then

⁴¹ In NB 4 and the typescript, it is Watt who tells the Louit story; in the published text, it is Arthur, with Watt as one of his audience (see HRC SB MS 7/1/25; HRC SB MS 7/6/367; *W*, p. 146).

⁴² HRC SB MS 7/2/19; see *W*, p. 62.

⁴³ 'But even there where there was no light for Watt, where there is none for his amanuensis, his mouth mouthpiece there may be light for others' (HRC SB MS 7/2/9).

⁴⁴ HRC SB MS 7/2/25, /27, cited in Ackerley, *Obscure Locks*, p. 97.

⁴⁵ HRC SB MS 7/5/139, /149.

alternates with the first-person plural pronoun: ‘(when we are tired of saying we we shall say Johnny, and when Johnny is tired of saying Johnny he will say we, it being well understood that Johnny ~~equals we~~ ^{is a tired we} and ~~that we equal~~ ^{a tired} Johnny)’.⁴⁶ Later on in typescript, ‘we’ is replaced by ‘Watt’ and, even later, ‘I’ makes an appearance, only to be replaced by ‘Watt’.⁴⁷ These changes, which are only a selection of those made in the compositional manuscripts, shows how Beckett’s process of learning to say ‘I’ did not follow a simple trajectory, but proceeded by fits, starts and a not insignificant number of dead ends.

On the set of loose squared copybook pages stored with NB 4, Beckett wrote a version of *Watt*’s opening passage which starts without Watt or Sam on the scene. Instead, we find a draft version almost identical to the novel’s opening line, setting up a section which focuses on a character who is marginal to Watt’s story: ‘Mr Hackett turned the corner and saw, in the failing light, at a ~~distance of~~ [x] ^{some} little distance, his seat.’⁴⁸ On another set of loose squared pages stored with the notebook, Beckett continued a draft of Part IV he had commenced in NB 6 which is close to the version in the published text.⁴⁹ The notebook version, like the published ending, tells of Watt being woken up in the waiting room of a train station before being kicked off the premises by the railway staff, who enjoy the morning light together after he departs.⁵⁰ Neither the opening nor the closing sections of the novel, drafted on these notebook pages, could have been told to Sam by Watt. Their existence suggests that, having rewritten parts of his huge manuscript, and anchored the narrative with Sam’s appearance in Part III, Beckett then added an opening and ending which he knew would not fit with the narrative schema of the rest of the text. This narrative flaw is highlighted in the published text when Watt makes his way to the train station, bags in hand:

He met no human being, on his way. A strayed ass, or goat, lying in the ditch, in the shadow raised

⁴⁶ HRC SB MS 7/5/195, /199.

⁴⁷ HRC SB MS 7/5/229, /249.

⁴⁸ HRC SB MS 7/1/177; see *W*, p. 1.

⁴⁹ All but four of these loose pages are of the same size and contain the same punctuation marks as those stored with NB 4.

⁵⁰ HRC SB MS 7/3/97–120; see *W*, pp. 206–14.

its head, as he passed. Watt did not see the ass, or goat, but the ass, or goat, saw Watt. And it followed him with its eyes while he passed, little by little, down the road, out of sight. Perhaps it thought that in the bags there was something good to eat. When it could see the bags no more, then it laid back its head, among the nettles. (*W*, p. 193)

Originally the passage spoke only of an ass; the addition of the possibility of there being a goat emphasises the fact that Watt could not have seen the animal and therefore could not have related the incident to Sam.⁵¹ The fact that Beckett highlighted this subsequent to drafting the passage in NB 6 indicates a strategy of exploiting the inconsistencies which remained at the narrative level following the introduction of Sam as a narrator in NB 4.

Alienation

While *Watt* alludes to *Murphy* in its representation of institutional space, it also features strongly the social dynamics which are key to novelistic form. In his notes made when planning *Murphy*, Beckett described a main character who would avoid social interaction: ‘X is realised by his failure to encounter & his progress depends on this failure being sustained. If he made terms with people the story would come to an end.’⁵² As I have shown, the asylum is an important element in the portrayal of Murphy’s failed attempt at connecting with another whose disconnection from the world he so admires. When Murphy reaches the apogee of his alienation in the M.M.M., realising that he is merely a ‘speck on Mr Endon’s unseen’, he does so from the outside looking in (*Mu*, p. 156). In using the ex-inmate Sam as its narrator, *Watt* stages an attempt at portraying such alienation from the inside looking out. Its manuscripts record a centrifugal narrative movement—the focus progressively moving from the centre to the periphery, away from the figure who in NB 4 becomes Knott. This character was initially called James Quin, visible central protagonist of the

⁵¹ HRC SB MS 7/3/33, /35, cited in Ackerley, *Obscure Locks*, p. 192.

⁵² UoR MS 3000, f. 3r.

first two notebooks and absent centre of compositional material which followed. As Mark Byron notes: ‘The first-person narrator of the first three notebooks is transformed into the character Watt in the later notebooks and in the published text.’⁵³ This initially unnamed character becomes Johnny Watt, who is trying to write a book about Quin called ‘A Clean Old Man’; it is only in NB 3 that Watt himself became the narrative focus, which led to NB 4 being entitled ‘Poor Johnny | Watt | Rousillon’.⁵⁴ Then, as I have shown, Beckett moved a step further from his narrative centre by using Sam as a means of further filtering Watt’s story of life as a servant in Knott’s house. In spite of this shift of perspective away from him, Knott, in the published text, plays the traditional role of a patriarchal figure who drives the narrative action in a novel. *Watt* is structured around, and draws most of its material from, Watt’s period of service with him. Without the magnetic pull of Knott’s house, Watt would have no reason to start his quest, Hackett and the Nixons would spend an unremarkable evening at the tram stop and Watt’s narrative as we know it would have neither material nor structure.

As the absent focal point of the narrative, Knott is subject to the same evasion of particulars that Hackett complains so vehemently about with regard to Watt in the first part of the novel and that Mr Kelly demands of Celia when she tells him of her romance with Murphy. As Watt ends his time on the ground floor of Knott’s house, he seems to be no wiser regarding his master than when he entered: ‘What had he learnt? Nothing. What did he know of Mr Knott? Nothing.’ (*W*, p. 127) At the close of his period on the first floor, where he is Knott’s personal assistant, he is no better off: ‘Of the nature of Mr Knott himself Watt remained in particular ignorance’ (*W*, p. 172). Through his alienated narrative style, Beckett leaves his reader in a similar state of ignorance. The closest we get to a physical description of Knott is when Watt runs into him in the garden one day and bends with his master to observe a little blue flower and a fat worm:

⁵³ Mark Byron, ‘Digital Scholarly Editions of Modernist Texts: Navigating the Text in Samuel Beckett’s *Watt* Manuscripts’, *Sydney Studies in English*, 36 (2010), 150–69 (p. 165).

⁵⁴ HRC SB MS 7/1/front cover.

So there for a short time they stood together, the master and the servant, the bowed heads almost touching (which gives Mr Knott's approximate height, does it not, assuming that the ground was level), until the worm was gone and only the flower remained. (*W*, p. 125)

As Ackerley has noted, the addition of the phrase 'assuming that the ground was level' to NB 4 weakens any assumption that Watt and Knott are of equal height.⁵⁵ Knott is not to be known.

Daniel Katz defines Watt's alienation from the world around him in terms of a 'culture shock' which involves an 'estrangement from and incomprehension of [...] rituals'.⁵⁶ As master of his house, Knott is central to the organisation of these rituals. In the asylum, Watt tells Sam of his time as a servant on the first floor of Knott's house. One particular recollection, in which word and sentence order are reversed, indicates an absurd and oppressive regime:

Say he'd, No, waistcoat the, vest the, trousers the, socks the, shoes the, shirt the, drawers the, coat the, dress to ready things got had when. Say he'd, Dress. Say he'd, No, water the, towel the, sponge the, soap the, salts the, glove the, brush the, basin the, wash to ready things got had when. Say he'd, Wash. Say he'd, No, water the, towel the, sponge the, soap the, razor the, powder the, brush the, bowl the, shave to ready things got had when. Say he'd, Shave. (W, p. 143)

Arsene tells Watt, upon entering Knott's house, that he will 'be in his midst at last, after so many years clinging to the perimeter', but his experience there only serves to marginalise him even further, with Mr Knott's 'waves, of depression, or oppression' seemingly pushing Watt towards some kind of mental collapse which precipitates his arrival in the asylum (*W*, p. 102). His failure to communicate meaningfully with any of Knott's other servants is summed up succinctly by Cohn: 'He learns nothing from Arsene's pertinent monologue; Erskine is noncommunicative, Arthur

⁵⁵ HRC SB MS 7/1/6–7. See Ackerley, *Obscure Locks*, p. 142.

⁵⁶ Daniel Katz, *Saying I No More: Subjectivity and Consciousness in the Prose of Samuel Beckett* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1999), p. 49.

noninformative; at the last he does not even bid Micks good-bye.⁵⁷ It is only in Sam that Watt finds a social companion who is also on the margins.

Watt's experience of alienation extends far beyond the walls of Knott's property. A down-at-heel 'university man', he is low in the pecking order of a harsh, hierarchical society (*W*, p. 17). That said, Sam's differentiation of himself and Watt from the other patients in the asylum suggests a further class bias towards those belonging to a lower social stratum:

No truck with the other scum, cluttering up the passageways, the hallways, grossly loud, blatantly morose, and playing at ball, always playing at ball but stiffly, delicately, out from our mansions, and through this jocose this sniggering muck, to the kind of weather we liked, and back as we went. (*W*, p. 130)⁵⁸

Both of Watt's visits to the train station, a hub of human activity, result in his blood being shed. Upon leaving the train on his way to Knott's house, he is attacked by Lady McCann, who throws a stone at him hard enough to leave a scar for five or six years. Watt's reaction to this shows that he is well used to such assaults:

Beyond stopping, and laying down his bags, and picking up his hat, and setting it on his head, and picking up his bags, and setting himself, after one or two false starts, again in motion, Watt, faithful to his rule, took no more notice of this aggression than if it had been an accident. This he found was the wisest attitude, to staunch, if necessary, inconspicuously, with the little red sudarium that he always carried in his pocket, the flow of blood, to pick up what had fallen, and to continue, as soon as possible, on his way, or in his station, like a victim of mere mischance. But he deserved no credit for this. For it was an attitude become, with frequent repetition, so part of his being, that there was no more room in his mind for resentment at a spit in the eye, to take a simple example, than if his

⁵⁷ Cohn, 'Watt in the Light of *The Castle*', p. 163.

⁵⁸ An early version of this passage, quite close to the published version, was added as a revision to NB 4 (HRC SB MS 7/1/95).

braces had burst, or a bomb fallen on his bum. (*W*, p. 25)

A sudarium is the name for the cloth wrapped around Christ's head while he lay in the tomb (*OED*). In the asylum, Sam is reminded by the state of Watt's head of the portrait of Christ by Bosch in London's National Gallery, which Beckett visited during his time in the city—these two incidents present Watt as a Christlike sufferer of persecution in his radical estrangement from society, albeit not without a dose of humour (*W*, p. 136).⁵⁹ However, Watt is not simply a victim of violence; he is also its perpetrator. In spite of their friendship being the only source of any real tenderness in the novel, one of Sam and Watt's favourite pastimes is to feed rats with birds eggs, frogs and even their own young, during which they agree that they come 'nearest to God' (*W*, p. 133). These acts of cruelty undermine any possible attempt to read Sam and Watt simply as persecuted outsiders. In *Murphy*, the central character's simplistic identification with an asylum inmate is critiqued. Any such identification that the reader of *Watt* may wish to make with Watt and Sam is likewise here called into question.

When Watt returns to the train station following his time spent in Knott's house, it is the signalman Mr Case who allows him to stay for the night locked into the waiting room. When Watt is found the next morning lying on the waiting-room floor, having been injured by another railway employee's over-zealous opening of the waiting-room door, the first instinct of Gorman, the stationmaster, is to call for a policeman rather than a doctor. He is more concerned about the state of Case's copy of Æ's *Songs by the Way* than he is about Watt's health: 'Mr Case picked his way, to where Watt lay. Bending he scraped, with his book, a little mire from the face. Oh, you'll spoil your nice book, cried Mr Gorman.' (*W*, p. 210) The only compassion shown to the bleeding Watt is by Cack-faced Miller, another outsider who never talks to any of the other passengers. This is a world in which social hierarchy is maintained with ferocity, where servants serve their masters without question and even convicted criminals retain their former social status: 'You remember Grehan?

⁵⁹ Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 741 n. 143.

said Mr Hackett. The poisoner, said the gentleman [Nixon]. The solicitor, said Mr Hackett.’ (*W*, pp. 5–6) The situation of people standing around and discussing possible courses of action while others lie suffering on the ground, rendered comic in *Godot*, is here used to spell out the disregard—even disgust—of a group of people who cannot wait to get rid of Watt from the train station (*CDW*, pp. 72–79). He rises from the ground to general hostility, headed up by his former attacker, Lady McCann, who asks whether Watt is a white man and comments on his ‘extraordinary accent’ (*W*, p. 212). She sums up the dawn events to the messenger boy:

Return, my little man, said Lady McCann, to him that sent you. Tell him that — has been the scene of terrible events, but that now all is well. Repeat now after me. The scene of terrible terrible events but that now all is well Very good. Here is a penny. (*W*, p. 211)

This last action shows that social order is close to being restored: as in ‘The End’ and *All That Fall* (1957), but unlike in *Godot*, the messenger boy gets his tip.

Conclusion: traces of spaces

Watt is a work in which Beckett’s emphasis on fragmentation was arrived both ‘[b]y force of circumstance and by force of will’, giving him a blueprint for a more fragmented postwar poetics.⁶⁰

In 1938–39, shortly before writing the novel, Beckett went through his most intense period of reading the Swabian poet Friedrich Hölderlin. In his early-1930s notes on the poet, Beckett writes that he was ‘[i]nsane from 1802 till his death’⁶¹ and it was to be the ‘terrific fragments of the Spätzeit [late period]’ that later came to interest Beckett most.⁶² As Watt lies on the floor of the

⁶⁰ Mark Byron, Abstract for “‘Change All the Names’: Revision and Narrative Structure in Samuel Beckett’s *Watt*”, paper presented at Storytelling in Literature, Language and Culture conference, AULLA 36, University of Auckland, 2011 <<http://msbyron27.wordpress.com/2011/09/30/“change-all-the-names”-revision-and-narrative-structure-in-samuel-beckett’s-watt”-storytelling-in-literature-language-and-culture-aulla-36-university-of-a/>> [accessed 3 June 2014].

⁶¹ Notes on German literature, TCD MS 10971/1, f. 32v.

⁶² SB to Arland Ussher, 14 June 1939, qtd in Van Hulle and Nixon, *Samuel Beckett’s Library*, p. 94. Translation in Van

train station, the world spinning round him following his collision with the waiting-room door, Hölderlin's early masterpiece 'Hyperions Schicksalslied' ['Hyperion's Song of Destiny'] comes to his mind. Suitably enough for a book in which gaps play such a significant role in the depiction of social alienation, Watt does not imagine the whole poem, but only 'fragments of a part':

..... von Klippe zu Klippe geworfen
 Endlos ins hinab. (*W*, p. 207)⁶³

The final pages of the novel, which surround this fragment, are more gap-ridden than any other part of the novel, an aspect which Frederik Smith links to Beckett's reading of *A Tale of a Tub*, in which Jonathan Swift uses 'Hiatus in MS' and '*Desunt nonnulla*' [something missing] as rhetorical tools in his polemical book.⁶⁴ In NB 6 of *Watt*, Beckett uses a similar metatextual tactic, writing '(nonnulla desunt)' to create a gap in the conversation between two railway staff on Watt's situation on the waiting-room floor.⁶⁵ This Latin phrase then becomes 'Hiatus in MS' in the published text (*W*, p. 207).⁶⁶

As Beckett knew from his reading of Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* in 1938, fragmentation runs deep in the history of the novel.⁶⁷ Discussing the work of another 18th-century writer, Henry Fielding, whose work Beckett admired greatly, Wolfgang Iser argues that 'the

Hulle and Nixon. Beckett visited Hölderlin's tower of confinement in Tübingen (Ackerley, *Obscure Locks*, p. 201).

⁶³ These lines are part of the final stanza of the poem, which Beckett had copied from John George Robertson's *History of German Literature*. Dirk Van Hulle and Mark Nixon argue: 'Beckett's increasing emphasis on notions of speechlessness, incompetence and fragmentation found a correlative within the late works of the German poet' (Van Hulle and Nixon, *Samuel Beckett's Library*, p. 94). The full stanza from Hölderlin reads:

But it is not given us to rest in any place; suffering humanity perishes and falls blindly from one hour to another, like water dashed from crag to crag year after year [Jahrlang], down into the unknown] (qtd and trans. in Ackerley, *Obscure Locks*, p. 201; original transcribed in TCD MS 10971/1, f. 32v.).

Beckett's decision to replace 'Jahrlang' [year after year] with 'endloss' [endless] in *Watt* deepens the sense of despair in Hölderlin's poem.

⁶⁴ Smith, p. 41.

⁶⁵ HRC SB MS 7/3/100. See also Smith, p. 183 n. 41.

⁶⁶ Beckett uses 'Locus illegibilis' to open up a similar textual gap a few pages later in the manuscript (HRC SB MS 7/3/105). This was replaced by '(MS illegible)' in the published text (*W*, p. 209).

⁶⁷ 'I seem to have read nothing for months but Vigny's *Journal* in the bowdlerized Larousse edition, which bored me, and *Tristram Shandy*, which irritated me in spite of its qualities' (SB to TM, 4 August 1938, *LSB I*, p. 637).

deliberate gaps in the narrative are the means by which the reader is enabled to bring both scenes and characters to life'.⁶⁸ *Watt* uses gaps at both a macro-level (through its structural discontinuities) and at a micro-level (through the erasure of individual words). The latter are in plain sight for the reader, signalled materially by gaps on the page. Crucially, a specific kind of narrative 'nomansland'—the asylum—which goes some way towards making sense of the text's fragmentary nature, is a key element in the development of Beckett's poetics of missing parts. Sam's appearance in Part III seems to answer one of the most important questions in novel-reading: who is narrating? However, interpretation of this gap depends on the intertextual trail which leads us back through *Murphy* to Boswell's description of Bethlem. As I have shown, in refusing to explain how the beginning and the end of the narrative could have been related to Sam, the creation of Beckett's narrator creates more questions, recalling the interrogatory words on the loose pages of NB 1: 'Who, what, where, by what means, why, in what way, when'.⁶⁹ Though these structural discontinuities take the fragmented novel beyond being simply the story of an estranged narrator, it is clear that in following his 18th-century predecessors and deploying gaps in his text, Beckett uses the space of institutional confinement as a key element in his creation of this narrative of alienation. As I have shown, paying attention to the production of this space by studying *Watt*'s compositional manuscripts can both deepen our understanding of Beckett's development as a writer and greatly enrich our interpretations of the novel by shedding further light on the social relations it depicts.

As well as lexical gaps, there are also entire passages which disappear between manuscript and publication, such as the long passage on the canine sex show organised by the Lynch family for the paying public. In the typescript, the narrator is sceptical of the hypothesis that a lack of archival evidence from former civilisations proves that similar dog sex shows did not take place there, a passage which also provides an excellent commentary on the dangers of archival positivism:

⁶⁸ Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (1974; Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 38–39. In 'Ex Cathedra' (1934), his review of Ezra Pound's *Make It New*, Beckett mocked the idea that Fielding lacked knowledge of the novel form: 'The suggestion that Fielding was deficient in comprehension of the novel as a form, because we have no notes (no?) from his hand on the subject, is very nice' (*Dis*, p. 78).

⁶⁹ HRC SB MS 6/5/3.

For traces cannot endure for ever, but the time comes, for every trace, when it must disappear and leave no trace behind, to tell where it had been. For as things vanish, so must traces vanish, and the traces of traces as the traces of things. And old accounts are notoriously incomplete.⁷⁰

In his prose fiction after *Watt*, Beckett vaguened further the spaces of institutional confinement in his writing, but, unlike the records of canine copulation, these traces do not quite vanish.

⁷⁰ HRC SB MS 7/5/296. For the manuscript version, see HRC SB MS 6/7/151.

4

**Forms and Forces of Confinement:
‘The End’, ‘The Expelled’, *Malone Dies***

As markers of recognisable institutions decompose in Beckett’s postwar prose, the relations between his narrators and society become increasingly oppressive. From the first line of ‘The End’ onwards—‘[t]hey clothed me and gave me money’—these first-person narrators are persistently opposed to a threatening, unidentified ‘they’ who impose limits upon their freedom of movement (*CSP*, p. 78).¹ In Chapter 3, I discussed Beckett’s move towards first-person narration in *Watt*, as well as his use of French in the notes he made while revising his manuscript. However, his composition of ‘The End’, Beckett’s first piece of prose fiction written in French, complicates a straightforwardly linear model of his turn to writing prose in his adopted language.² After 28 pages of writing in English, Beckett drew a line across the middle of the page of his compositional notebook and continued his story in French.³ Beckett made this switch after describing the death of the narrator’s tutor, who had donated him a pair of dark glasses as well as a copy of Arnold Geulincx’s *Ethics*, an important thinker in Beckett’s figuration of ‘freedom in constraint’.⁴

Beckett came across Geulincx in Wilhelm Windelband’s *History of Philosophy* in the early

¹ See Slotte, ‘Continuing the End’, p. 206; Cohn, *A Beckett Canon*, p. 129.

² Beckett’s first publication in French was the 1945 essay ‘La peinture des van Velde ou le monde et le pantalon’, which I discuss in Chapter 8 and elsewhere. He had already written poetry in French, a selection of which I discuss in Chapter 6. See SB to TM, 3 April 1938 (*LSB* I, p. 614): ‘I wrote a short poem in French but otherwise nothing. I have the feeling that any poems there may happen to be in the future will be in French.’

³ JBL SB MS 11/9/28r. I follow the Burns Library numbering. See also Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 358.

⁴ David Tucker, ‘Tracing “A Literary Fantasia”: Arnold Geulincx in the Works of Samuel Beckett’ (PhD thesis, University of Sussex, 2010), p. 172. Later published as *Samuel Beckett and Arnold Geulincx: Tracing ‘A Literary Fantasia’* (London: Continuum, 2012).

1930s and took detailed notes on his *Ethics* in 1936.⁵ The central axiom of the *Ethics*, ‘[u]bi nihil vales, ibi nihil velis’, translated by the editors of the recent English edition as ‘wherein you have no power, therein you should not will’, was used by Beckett throughout his career, notably to outline Murphy’s preference for psychosis over psychiatric rationality (*Mu*, p. 112).⁶ Beckett drew on Geulincx’s analogy for free will, in which a man can move eastward on the deck of a westbound ship, as an image in *Molloy*, when Molloy considers freedom:⁷

I [...] had loved the image of old Geulincx, dead young, who left me free, on the black boat of Ulysses, to crawl towards the East, along the deck. That is a great measure of freedom, for him who has not the pioneering spirit. (*Mo*, p. 50)⁸

In a letter to the first German translator of *Molloy*, Beckett described this image as being an amalgam of the ship analogy in Geulincx’s *Ethics* and the passage from Dante’s *Inferno* in which Ulysses relates his fatal voyage beyond the Pillars of Hercules (SB to Erich Franzen, 17 February 1954, *LSB* II, p. 458). Though Ulysses tells Dante that his crew comprised a loyal band ‘of shipmates who had not deserted me’, Molloy alters the social relations by imagining himself as ‘a sadly rejoicing slave’, the confines of the ship reflecting his subjugation (*Mo*, p. 50).⁹

⁵ Though Beckett’s Philosophy notes are undated, there is strong evidence that most were taken in 1932. See Matthijs Engelberts, Everett Frost and Jane Maxwell, ‘TCD MS 10967: History of Western Philosophy’, in *SBT/A*, 16 (2006), 67–89 (pp. 71–73).

⁶ Arnold Geulincx, *Ethics*, with Samuel Beckett’s notes, ed. by Han van Ruler, Anthony Uhlmann and Martin Wilson, trans. by Martin Wilson (Leiden: Brill, 2006), p. 178; Beckett’s transcription, p. 316. For Beckett’s use of Geulincx’s maxim, see Tucker, ‘Tracing “A Literary Fantasia”’ and Anthony Uhlmann, ‘Introduction to Beckett’s Notes to the *Ethics*’ in Geulincx, pp. 301–09. For an argument that the translation of this maxim should follow more closely Beckett’s paraphrased version in *Murphy*—‘it was not enough to want nothing where he was worth nothing’—see C. J. Ackerley’s review of van Ruler, Uhlmann and Wilson’s edition of Geulincx’s *Ethics*, ‘I think I am’, *JOBS*, 17.1–2 (2008), 199–210 (pp. 200–01).

⁷ *Molloy* was written in 1947, first published in French in 1951; then in English in 1955.

⁸ For a translation of the original passage, see Geulincx, p. 182; for Beckett’s transcription, see p. 317. See also Uhlmann, *Beckett and the Philosophical Image*, pp. 77–78.

⁹ Dante, *Inferno*, canto XXVI, line 102 <<http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/pdp/>> [accessed 30 April 2017]; *Mo*, p. 50.

Such socio-political dynamics are also prominent in a passage of *The Unnamable* in which the same Geulingian image appears. Dirk Van Hulle and Shane Weller have noted the push and pull of ‘semantic tightening’ and ‘loosening’ that plays out across the draft translations of this passage. On the one hand, the term ‘galley-slave’ is revised to ‘galley-man’, eliding the subjugation which the former noun evokes.¹⁰ But there is a contrary dynamic in Beckett’s revision of one of his verbs of movement. While the galley-slave is described as ‘sweeping towards the Pillars of Hercules’, the freedom hinted at in ‘sweeping’ is restrained in revision: ‘The galley-slave, ~~sweeping towards~~ bound for the Pillars of Hercules, who drops his oar under cover of night and crawls between the thwarts, towards the rising sun, unseen by the guard, praying for storm.’¹¹ However, while the galley-slave drops his oar, Beckett does not drop entirely the connotations of free movement associated with ‘sweep’, moving it from a verbal to a noun form, as it appears in the published English text:

I. Who might that be? The galley-man, bound for the Pillars of Hercules, who drops his sweep under cover of night and crawls between the thwarts, towards the rising sun, unseen by the guard, praying for storm. (*U*, p. 50)¹²

Ulrika Maude has argued: ‘From early on in his writing, Beckett foregrounded motility and its problems in his work.’¹³ As Beckett’s alteration of the nautical image in *Molloy* and his tightening and loosening of the modes of freedom in the draft translations of the related passage in *The Unnamable* demonstrate, his postwar prose displays a high level of alertness to the power

¹⁰ Van Hulle and Weller, p. 226.

¹¹ HRC SB MS 5/10, f. 55r., *BDMP* II [accessed 18 July 2017]; Van Hulle and Weller, p. 226.

¹² In the published French text, the word used is ‘galérien’ (Samuel Beckett, *L’Innommable* (1953; Paris: Minuit, 1987), p. 83. In an early draft version of the passage in *Molloy*, ‘to crawl’ was originally the more active ‘arpenter’ [to pace] before being revised to the equally active ‘marcher’ [to walk] (HRC SB MS 4/6, ff. 46v.–47r., *BDMP* IV [accessed 18 July 2017]).

¹³ Maude, *Beckett, Technology and the Body*, p. 83.

dynamics involved in such patterns of movement. This chapter is concerned with the forces of confinement that impose themselves upon Beckett's first-person protagonists and the forms of confinement which these protagonists find themselves both enclosed in and ejected out of. Alain Badiou divides the geography of Beckett's work into 'spaces of wandering' and 'closed places', opposing the 'closed space' of Malone's room in *Malone Dies* to the 'open, geographical space' of 'The Expelled'.¹⁴ In many of the prose pieces composed during Beckett's self-styled 'frenzy of writing' following the war, these spaces work in tandem.¹⁵ Beckett's first six works of prose fiction in French—the novellas 'The End', 'The Expelled', 'First Love' ('Premier Amour') and 'The Calmative' ('Le Calmant') and the novels *Mercier and Camier* (*Mercier et Camier*) and *Molloy*—are stories in which wandering in open spaces is punctuated by different forms of enclosure.¹⁶ In 'The End', 'The Expelled' and *Malone Dies*, such enclosure is identifiably institutional, even when the exact type of institution is not identifiable. In *Murphy*, the asylum acts as a key destination for both protagonist and narrative; in *Watt*, it serves as a turning point in the narrative form. 'The End' and 'The Expelled' use the barest shells of such institutions as a means of kick-starting their narrative journeys.

Forms of confinement

In a letter to George Reavey following the completion of 'The End', Beckett compared his new text to Albert Camus's *L'Étranger* (1942):

¹⁴ Badiou, *On Beckett*, pp. 5–6.

¹⁵ Beckett interviewed by Lawrence Harvey, undated (qtd in Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 358).

¹⁶ *Mercier et Camier*, 'Premier Amour' and 'Le Calmant' were written in 1946. *Mercier et Camier* was first published in 1970; *Mercier and Camier* in 1974. 'Le Calmant' was first published in 1955; 'The Calmative' in 1967. 'Premier Amour' was first published in 1970; 'First Love' in 1973.

I have finished my French Story, about 45:000 words I think. 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. In France they dont bother counting words. Camus's Etranger is not any longer. Try and read it, I think it is important. (SB to Reavey, 27 May 1946, *LSB II*, p. 32)

The word count may be way off (the published text of 'La Fin' is about 8,000 words long; its translation only slightly longer), but the comparison between the two stories is instructive because of the different strategies that are used to situate their alienated protagonists.¹⁷ Whereas the setting of *L'Étranger* is immediately fixed by reference to a specific institution—the Marengo Old Folks Home—the opening of 'The End', in which the protagonist is kicked out of an unidentified building, avoids any such contextualisation.¹⁸ We know that the place is some sort of 'charitable institution', that it has other branches, that people die there and that it is staffed by men dressed in white (*CSP*, p. 80). Based on the cloister in which the protagonist waits for the rain to ease, we might assume it is a religious institution. Beyond this, however, any desire on the part of the reader to fix the narrative action in a specific place is frustrated. In the earliest extant draft, the previous owner of the clothes which are donated to the narrator is described as having arrived at the institution as an outpatient before becoming an inmate.¹⁹ However, this level of specificity is absent from the published text, where the predecessor's appointment is the less specific 'consultation' (*CSP*, p. 78).²⁰

¹⁷ Such a miscalculation is surprising given that Beckett made a much more accurate calculation of the word count in his holograph notebook:

6000
2000
2500
10,000 (JBL SB MS 11/9/back fly leaf v.)

See also JBL SB MS 11/9/30v., on which Beckett sketched the calculations '6000 | 2000'.

¹⁸ Albert Camus, *L'Étranger*, ed. by Ray Davison (1988; London: Routledge, 2005), p. 44.

¹⁹ 'He had put on his best clothes to go to the out-patients' department' (JBL SB MS 11/9/2r.).

²⁰ Samuel Beckett, 'The End', trans. by Richard Seaver in collaboration with the author, *Merlin*, 3.2 (1954), 144–59 (p. 144); Samuel Beckett, *Nouvelles et Textes pour rien* (1955; Paris: Minuit, 2014), p. 78.

‘The Expelled’ opens with so intense a focus on the steps the protagonist is thrown down that the nature of the place they belong to is ignored. As in ‘The End’, this building is a nondescript residential institution, a fitting starting point for the protagonist’s journey in a world where he is not in the same ‘category’ as those he meets (*CSP*, p. 52). As he leaves his dwelling place, he looks back to see the window of his former room wide open:

A thorough cleansing was in full swing. [...] I wasn’t afraid to look, for I knew they were not spying on me from behind the curtains, as they could have done if they had wished. But I knew them. They had all gone back into their dens and resumed their occupations. (*CSP*, p. 49)

The indeterminate nature of the building is pointed up even further in the original French version of the story. Here, the ‘dens’ to which the staff members retreat are referred to as ‘alvéoles’, a word more commonly used to describe a cell constructed by a bee in its honeycomb, an anatomical cell or a cavity in a rock.²¹ There is no mention of the more explicitly institutional ‘cellule’ [cell], which Macmann inhabits in *Malone meurt*.²² The corresponding sentence in Beckett’s manuscript draft uses a similarly anatomical metaphor for the interior of the institution: ‘Ils étaient tous rentrés dans le ventre [the belly] et chacun vaquait à son travail.’²³ This is certainly a ‘vaguening’ of location, albeit in a different category to that described by Pountney and Gontarski. If the ‘realistic substructure’ that Gontarski claims is standard in the composition of Beckett’s drama was present in the conceptualisation of this institution, it is not available to the reader. Rather, Beckett seems to have decomposed this particular in the process of composing something quite close to the published text.

²¹ Beckett, *Nouvelles et Textes pour rien*, p. 17; ‘alvéole’ (*PR*).

²² Beckett, *Malone meurt*, pp. 132, 163.

²³ HRC SB MS 3/6, f. 7r.

David Addyman takes as the starting point for his study of Beckett and place the Greek philosopher Archytas's concept that 'to be is to be in place'.²⁴ The 'loss of the sense of place' in Beckett's postwar writing, Addyman argues, is key to generating the portraits of displaced selves that populate his work from *Watt* onwards.²⁵ Upon being driven out of the cloister, the narrator of 'The End' expresses both topographical disorientation and an ontological crisis:

In the street I was lost. I had not set foot in this part of the city for a long time and it seemed greatly changed. Whole buildings had disappeared, the palings had changed position, and on all sides I saw, in great letters, the names of tradesmen I had never seen before and would have been at a loss to pronounce. (*CSP*, p. 81)

The 'topophobia' of the narrators of the novellas does not consist in a complete detachment from place, but an uneasy relationship with it.²⁶ The protagonist of 'The Expelled' reacts in a remarkably similar manner to his counterpart in 'The End' on being kicked out into the street: 'I did not know the town very well, scene of my birth and of my first steps in this world'; he feels 'ill at ease with all this air about me, lost before the confusion of innumerable prospects' (*CSP*, p. 49). With so little other contextual information on offer, interpretations of such stories must take account of the sites of initial eviction and the very particular interpretative currency such places hold within Beckett's canon.

It has been argued that there is a primal psychodynamics in the novellas' quests for closed

²⁴ Qtd in David Addyman, 'Phenomenology "Less the Rosy Hue": Beckett and the Philosophy of Place', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 33.4 (2010), 112–28 (p. 125).

²⁵ Addyman, 'Phenomenology "Less the Rosy Hue"', p. 114.

²⁶ Addyman, 'Phenomenology "Less the Rosy Hue"', p. 125; David Addyman, 'Beckett and Place: The Lie of the Land', in *The Tragic Comedy of Samuel Beckett: 'Beckett in Rome', 17–19 April 2008*, ed. by Daniela Guardamagna and Rossana M. Sebellin (Rome: Università degli Studi di Roma, 2009), pp. 210–22 (p. 210) <<http://laterza.fastweb.it/up/9788842090700.pdf#page=228>> [accessed 1 July 2015].

spaces, which include a boat, bare rooms, a cloister, a cave, a stable and a cab.²⁷ The narrator of the ‘The End’ comes close to throwing himself onto the psychoanalyst’s couch when he expresses his desire to be enclosed: ‘I longed to be under cover again, in an empty place, close and warm, with artificial light, an oil lamp for choice, with a pink shade for preference.’ (*CSP*, p. 82) But to impose a diagnostic framework on interpretation restricts Beckett’s work to a single image—such as an ‘underlying assertion of the womb as paradigm’—rather than exploring the ways in which the various spaces within his work where figures are confined generate a multiplicity of possible interpretations.²⁸ The spaces of confinement are vague enough in themselves to be interpreted in different ways, but such spaces also point beyond themselves towards other refuges and other spaces of wandering.

Forces of confinement

When accosted by a park ranger in the first chapter of their story, Mercier asks Camier: ‘Can it I wonder be the fillip we needed, to get us moving?’ (*MC*, p. 9) The wanderings of Beckett’s postwar protagonists are variously halted, altered and re-started by figures of authority. For characters like Molloy, ‘the unavoidable police constable’ is always just around the next corner (*Mo*, p. 31). From Belacqua’s encounter with the Civic Guard in *Dream* onwards, the main function of such figures is to control characters’ movements by ordering them to ‘[h]old on there’ and ‘[m]ove on’ (*D*, p. 226). Or, as the Civic Guard in *Murphy* puts it: ‘Howlt on there, youze [...]. Come back in here owwathat. [...] Move on’. (*Mu*, pp. 29–30) ‘On’ carries an ontological imperative in late prose works like *Worstward Ho*: ‘On. Say on. Be said on. Somehow on. Till nohow on. Said nohow on.’ (*NHO*, p. 101). In Beckett’s prewar prose, however, it has a different kind of imperative force when spoken by one in official authority due to the particular social matrix in which the protagonist is

²⁷ See Baker, pp. 74, 76–103.

²⁸ Baker, p. 90.

reluctantly imbricated.

In contrast to the easily identifiable Dublin accent of the Civic Guard in *Murphy*, the policeman in ‘The Expelled’ speaks something close to a pure dialect of the law: ‘The street for vehicles, the sidewalk for pedestrians’. To the narrator, this sounds ‘[I]like a bit of Old Testament’ (*CSP*, p. 51). However, in a detail which does not appear in the English translation, the French version of the story has the policeman wearing a ‘képi’, a piece of headgear which has a particular socio-political resonance, given that it was part of the uniform of the French police in the postwar period and headgear of choice for General Charles de Gaulle. The narrator of ‘First Love’ is convinced of the importance of this article of clothing, but avoids wearing one himself: ‘Kepis [...] exist beyond a doubt, indeed there is little hope of their ever disappearing, but personally I never wore a kepi.’ (*CSP*, p. 35) In the version of ‘The End’ published in *Merlin* in 1954, the narrator wears a ‘British Kepi’, the nationality of which disappeared when Beckett came to revise the story.²⁹ Hats are crucial objects in Beckett’s work, no more so than in ‘The Expelled’, in which the protagonist takes over half a page to describe the purchase, in the company of his father, of the first one he ever owned. However, it is notable that no detail is provided on this hat itself. In a story in which so little is made explicit, headgear like the kepi has powerful resonance even as its meaning remains open. Seán Kennedy sees such objects as ‘resisting interpretation, even as they provide condensed expression of repressed historical materials’. ‘History has not disappeared’, he argues, ‘it just cannot readily be accounted for.’³⁰ In a similar way, the political dynamics of socialisation did not disappear from Beckett’s writing with the ‘vaguening’ of institutional space.

While relations between narrators and the social world become more oppressive in Beckett’s early postwar prose, it is also notable just how many characters try to help these protagonists. To

²⁹ Beckett, ‘The End’ (1954), p. 148. The hat is a mere ‘kepi’ in *Stories and Texts for Nothing* (New York: Grove, 1967), p. 53 and *CSP*, p. 83.

³⁰ Seán Kennedy, ‘“Humanity in Ruins”: Beckett and History’, in *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Van Hulle, pp. 185–99 (pp. 198, 188).

take only the novellas: the narrator of ‘The End’ is offered food and lodging by a friend; the protagonist of ‘The Expelled’ is housed by the cabman he meets; that of ‘First Love’ by the prostitute who takes him home; and even the narrator of ‘The Calmative’ is offered a sweet by a little boy he meets on his journey. By accepting the charity of others, the narrators feel themselves being sucked into an inescapable web of social relations, of which institutions form an important part.

In the closing passage of the English version of ‘The Calmative’, Beckett erased references to an imagined Samaritan, Salvation Army member and police officer which are present in ‘Le Calmant’.³¹ The narrators of Beckett’s prose hold figures from charitable institutions in as low esteem as the policemen who bully them about. It is Molloy who expresses this aversion towards institutional charity most eloquently:

Let me tell you this, when social workers offer you, free, gratis and for nothing, something to hinder you from swooning, which with them is an obsession, it is useless to recoil, they will pursue you to the ends of the earth, the vomitory in their hands. The Salvation Army is no better. Against the charitable gesture there is no defence, that I know of. You sink your head, you put out your hands all trembling and twined together and you say, Thank you, thank you lady, thank you kind lady. To him who has nothing it is forbidden not to relish filth. (*Mo*, p. 21)

But Molloy, in the end, is not forced to digest the ‘filth’ that is offered him by the woman he supposes to be a social worker. Instead, he flings the food and drink she brings at the wall of the

³¹ ‘Je dis, Reste là, étalé sur ces dalles amicales ou tout au moins neutres, n’ouvre pas les yeux, attends que vienne le Samaritain, ou que vienne le jour et avec lui les sergents de ville ou qui sait un salutiste.’ [I said, Stay where you are, down on the friendly stone, or at least indifferent, don’t open your eyes, wait until the Samaritan comes, or until day comes and with it police officers or, who knows, a Salvationist.] (Beckett, *Nouvelles et Textes pour rien*, p. 69) Translation based on *CSP*, p. 76.

guardroom he is being held in. Likewise, when the narrator of ‘The End’ becomes the target of political objectification by a left-wing orator, he folds up his begging board and walks away.

He was bellowing so loud that snatches of his discourse reached my ears. Union ... brothers ... Marx ... capital ... bread and butter ... love. It was all Greek to me. [...] All of a sudden he turned and pointed at me, as at an exhibit. Look at this down and out, he vociferated, this leftover. If he doesn't go down on all fours, it's for fear of being impounded. Old, lousy, rotten, ripe for the muckheap. And there are a thousand like him, worse than him, ten thousand, twenty thousand—[...]. Every day you pass them by, resumed the orator, and when you have backed a winner you fling them a farthing. [...] It never enters your head, resumed the orator, that your charity is a crime, an incentive to slavery, stultification and organized murder. (*CSP*, p. 94)

The narrator's considered reflection turns the tables on his antagonist: ‘He must have been a religious fanatic, I could find no other explanation. Perhaps he was an escaped lunatic. He had a nice face, a little on the red side.’ (*CSP*, p. 95)

Charity does indeed lead to murder in *Malone Dies*, but not in the way the Marxist orator in ‘The End’ might have expected. As they do in *Watt*, Beckett's postwar protagonists frequently carry out unexpected acts of violence: Molloy kills a charcoal burner, Moran an unidentified man by beating his head to a pulp; even the bedridden Malone has a club mysteriously stained with blood. When Mercier and Camier, having received the order to ‘[m]ove on’ from a constable, kill him by bashing in his skull, this is not presented as an inexplicable act, but as a furious reaction to the pain he causes Camier in arresting him (*MC*, p. 75). Anthony Uhlmann, citing Foucault's account of charitable institutions as being part of a network of social discipline, argues that this murder, as well as the axe-murder that closes *Malone Dies*, in which two male assistants to the philanthropic Lady

Pedal are killed by asylum keeper Lemuel on a day trip to a local island, is an act of resistance against an oppressive social order.³² Is Lemuel a rebel with a cause? Certainly, he is subject to the rules of the asylum and also has to enforce them, something he is not keen to do:

One evening Macmann went back to his cell with a branch torn from a dead bramble, for use as a stick to support him as he walked. Then Lemuel took it from him and struck him with it over and over again, no, that won't work, then Lemuel called a keeper by the name of Pat, a thorough brute though puny in appearance, and said to him, Pat, will you look at that. Then Pat snatched the stick from Macmann who, seeing the turn things were taking, was holding it clutched tight in his two hands, and struck him with it until Lemuel told him to stop, and even for some little time afterwards. All this without a word of explanation. (*MD*, pp. 105–06)

This use of epanorthosis—‘[a] figure of speech in which something said is corrected or commented on’—shifts the responsibility for the violence onto Pat and could also be read as Malone’s way of trying to conceal Lemuel’s impending murders from his reader.³³ Lemuel is unwilling to mete out corporal punishment, but beats himself violently and is described as ‘weak-minded’ and ‘subject to almost hypomaniacal fits of good-humour’ (*MD*, pp. 111, 96). The murderous rampage which closes the book would seem more likely to stem from the psychological oppression Lemuel is under, rather than being a conscious attack on an oppressive institutional system.

Where Foucault sees charitable institutions as having specific aims of social control, Lady Pedal’s charity is geared towards simple self-gratification. We are told that she is a member of

³² Anthony Uhlmann, *Beckett and Poststructuralism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 134–35; Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 212.

³³ ‘[E]panorthosis’, J. A. Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 4th edn, rev. by C. E. Preston (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998). For more on Beckett’s use of epanorthosis, see Van Hulle and Weller, p. 103; Montini, pp. 172–75.

society ‘who was all right in her head and to whom life had always smiled or, as she had it herself, returned her smile, enlarged as in a convex mirror, or a concave, I forget’ (*MD*, p. 111). While there is a nod here to the hyper-rational social order which Lady Pedal represents, as opposed to the overt mental disorder of the asylum patients, there is nothing in the novel to indicate that her kindly act is a conscious effort to shape the behaviour of the inmates. Rather, she is presented as being so self-absorbed that her greatest wish is to generate a grateful smile in the faces of those on whom she bestows her generosity. As the last of Beckett’s novels to contain a clearly identifiable asylum, *Malone Dies* is a fitting work through which to examine the final stages of the decomposition of recognisable forms of institutional confinement in his writing.

Malone decomposes

Towards the beginning of *Malone Dies*, which pays close attention to the ‘autographical action’ of Malone’s diary-like, homodiegetic narration, he distances himself from fictional predecessors such as Mr Endon by describing his room: ‘It is not a room in a hospital, or in a madhouse, I can feel that’ (*MD*, p. 7).³⁴ But the final section of the novel is located unambiguously in an asylum, in which the last of Malone’s own fictional creatures is confined:

One day, much later, to judge by his appearance, Macmann came to again, once again, in a kind of asylum. At first he did not know it was one, being plunged within it, but he was told so as soon as he was in a condition to receive news. They said in substance, You are now in the House of Saint John of God, with the number one hundred and sixty-six. Fear nothing, you are among friends. Friends!

³⁴ Gérard Genette uses homodiegetic and heterodiegetic to distinguish between first-person narratives in which the narrator is present in the story and those in which the narrator is not (Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (1972; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), p. 245). Given the importance of his stories-within-stories, Malone’s narrative also qualifies as being metadiegetic (Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, pp. 231–32). For a discussion of *Malone Dies* as diary writing, see Nixon, *Beckett’s German Diaries*, p. 190.

Well well. Take no thought for anything, it is we shall think and act for you, from now forward. We like it. (*MD*, p. 84)

Eoin O'Brien has outlined the correspondences between the asylum in Beckett's text and the Saint John of God Hospital in South County Dublin, a psychiatric institution less than fifteen minute's cycle from Beckett's childhood home.³⁵ Beckett recalls the Hospital as being part of the local topography of his youth in a 1971 letter to Barbara Bray.³⁶ However, it is not possible to trace a textual trail back to where this particular was picked up for inclusion in *Malone Dies*, though the level of descriptive detail in the novel suggests that Beckett, in line with his previous reconnoitring of psychiatric institutions for inclusion in 'Fingal' and *Murphy*, may well have made a trip there on one of his postwar visits home. While Beckett did draw on his research notebooks of the 1930s later in life, there is no surviving notebook for the early postwar fiction of a kind similar to the 'Whoroscope' notebook, in which the written descriptions of Beckett's visits to the Bethlem Royal Hospital form part of the genetic dossier of *Murphy*.³⁷ However, the Saint John of God Hospital is nevertheless a crucial element in the book's composition. Iain Bailey notes a similar issue when he argues that studying the Bible in Beckett's work necessarily takes us beyond the tracing of evidence in what Grésillon, discussing the benefit of knowing the exact editions that writers used when reading for their own work, calls a '*manière sûre*'.³⁸ As my analysis of Beckett's notes on Boswell demonstrated, such information is extremely useful. But we must also be able to track the function of elements in the compositional process which do not provide a detailed trail as part of the chronologically reconstituted *avant-texte*. In taking into account the social function of an institution like the Saint John of God Hospital, as Wylie encourages the Civic Guard to do when opposing it to

³⁵ See O'Brien, *The Beckett Country*, pp. 240–45.

³⁶ 'Cabinteely a little village not far from old home on main Dublin road. Remember letting out the old Swift [bicycle] to get up the hill. Near St. John of God's' (SB to BB, 2 November 1971, *LSB* IV, p. 272).

³⁷ See Beckett's mention of his 1930s Philosophy notes in a letter to Alan Schneider, 21 November 1957, *LSB* III, p. 73.

³⁸ Grésillon, p. 216, qtd in Bailey, p. 90.

the Dundrum Criminal Lunatic Asylum in *Murphy*, we can enrich our interpretation of the closing section of the *Malone Dies* by tracking the production of space using a historicist approach which complements the genetic study of Beckett's written traces.

The hospital setting would have had an interesting resonance for the novel's earliest readers when it was first published in 1951 as *Malone meurt*, in which Macmann is found in 'l'asile de Saint-Jean-de-Dieu'.³⁹ Only the most dedicated of Beckett's tiny cadre of early fans would have recognised this as the same hospital mentioned by Wylie in *Murphy*, the French translation of which was published in April 1947 and which had sold no more than 285 copies in 1951.⁴⁰ Certainly, it would have been less likely that Francophone readers would recognise the topological details taken from the surroundings of the Dublin hospital than their later Anglophone counterparts. But given the strong international presence of the Order of Saint John of God—with branches in France, the UK and the USA—the name of the institution is likely to have had a similarly vague association with some form of clerical medical care for the early readers of *Malone meurt* and those of *Malone Dies*. The reference ends up working in a similar way to the request of the lost narrator of 'The Expelled' that a cabman bring him to the zoo. 'It is rare for a capital to be without a Zoo', he tells us, thereby keeping the possible topographical interpretations of the story open (*CSP*, p. 53). Moran uses the same trick when confronted by a farmer, who angrily accuses him of trespassing, by telling him that he is on a pilgrimage to the local statue of the Virgin Mary: 'To the Turdy Madonna, I said. The Turdy Madonna? he said, as if he knew Turdy like the back of his hand and there were no Madonna in the length and breadth of it. But where is the place in which there is no Madonna?' (*Mo*, p. 181) It may be rare for a capital to be without a zoo or for a Christian, particularly a Catholic, country to be without a Marian statue; it is equally rare for a Western European country not to have a psychiatric institution named after a Christian saint. In spite of having a very specific, local source, the function of the reference to the House of Saint John of God becomes

³⁹ Beckett, *Malone meurt*, p. 132.

⁴⁰ Beckett, *Murphy*, pp. 43–44; Pilling, *A Samuel Beckett Chronology*, pp. 110–11.

hermeneutically open in reception and translation, taking us beyond the certainty of a one-to-one identification.

Another Dublin institution of religion, Glasnevin cemetery, is mentioned by name and receives a footnote in *Malone meurt* as ‘un cimetière local très estimé’, but is translated in *Malone Dies* as ‘the nearest cemetery’. The reference appears in a poem written by Macmann to his lover Moll: ‘La main dans la main vers Glasnevin | C’est le meilleur du chemin’ [Hand in hand towards Glasnevin | It is the best of ways].⁴¹ In the iambic English translation, ‘the nearest’ could have easily been replaced by the three-syllable ‘Glasnevin’. The fact that it was not highlights its absence all the more:

*To the lifelong promised land
Of the nearest cemetery
With his Sucky hand in hand
Love it is at last leads Hairy. (MD, p. 92)*

Seán Kennedy sees this topographical change between French and English versions of the novel as evidence of Beckett’s undoing in translation, part of the author’s ‘way of situating himself in oblique relation to his own personal and cultural history’.⁴² For Ann Beer, the footnote ‘gives the impression that the novel is a translation from the Anglo-Irish, the translator kindly providing his French reader with the information necessary for a full appreciation of the reference’.⁴³ However, while these interpretations hold true in this particular instance, the translation of ‘l’asile de Saint-

⁴¹ Beckett, *Malone meurt*, p. 143. Beckett wrote a draft version of the poem in one of his compositional notebooks, where he tried a now illegible alternative to ‘Glasnevin’ (HRC SB MS 7/4/158). I follow the HRC numbering.

⁴² Seán Kennedy, ‘Introduction to “Historicising Beckett”’, *SBT/A*, 15 (2005), 21–27 (p. 22).

⁴³ Ann Beer, ‘The Use of Two Languages in Samuel Beckett’s Art’ (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 1987), p. 229.

Jean-de-Dieu' into English brings a topographical reference closer to home and shows that Beckett did not have a fixed method of 'vaguening' place in translation. This demonstrates the complexity of Beckett's poetics. Institutional confinement, fundamental as it is to Beckett's work in this period, is not simply a substructure which has been 'vaguened' in the writing process.

Another way in which Beckett decomposed the asylum setting was to make the staff who administer it lay rather than clerical.⁴⁴ However, this decomposed space retains the local scenery taken from its source. Malone outlines a panoramic view of the surrounding countryside:

From here a fine view was to be obtained of the plain, the sea, the mountains, the smoke of the town and the buildings of the institution, bulking large in spite of their remoteness and all astir with little dots or flecks forever appearing and disappearing, in reality the keepers coming and going, perhaps mingled with I was going to say with the prisoners! For seen from this distance the striped cloak had no stripes, nor indeed any great resemblance to a cloak at all. So that one could only say, when the first shock of surprise was past, Those are men and women, you know, people, without being able to specify further. A stream at long intervals bestrid—but to hell with all this fucking scenery. (*MD*, pp. 107–08)

As Sam Slote points out, the English translation is far more violent than its French counterpart.⁴⁵ This makes it possible to read the passage as a focused attack on Beckett's own prewar English prose, such as the similar passage describing the asylum grounds in 'Fingal'.⁴⁶ The passage can also be seen as a critique of the institution itself. In spite of Malone's claim that he was only 'going to' use the term 'prisoners', both versions contain this term.⁴⁷ Like the use of the term 'alvéoles' (in

⁴⁴ O'Brien, *The Beckett Country*, p. 244.

⁴⁵ Slote, 'Continuing the End' p. 210; 'Mais il s'agit bien de la nature' (Beckett, *Malone meurt*, p. 167).

⁴⁶ See Chapter 1.

⁴⁷ '[P]risonniers' (Beckett, *Malone meurt*, p. 167).

‘L’Expulsé’) and ‘the terms of church architecture’ (in *Murphy*) to describe spaces of institutional confinement, this is typical of a narrative hesitation in Beckett’s work when trying to find the right phrases to express the dynamics of social alienation by drawing on spaces such as asylums and prisons. If Beckett regarded words as inadequate means of expression, those his narrators use to describe spaces of confinement seem frequently to have been ‘not quite the right word’ (*Mu*, p. 41).

While Beckett was writing *Malone meurt* in 1948, he lived in an apartment on the rue des Favorites in Paris. In the early months of 1948, the man who would become the most influential twentieth-century theorist of coercive confinement, Michel Foucault, was studying for his *licence de psychologie* in the nearby École Normale Supérieure, where Beckett had worked as a *lecteur* from 1928 to 1930. Uhlmann argues that, as well as sharing a common intellectual tradition with poststructuralist philosophers such as Foucault, Beckett’s way of ‘thinking differently’ was analogous to theirs.⁴⁸ In certain ways this is true. However, when it comes to their writing of institutional confinement, there are also important differences between Beckett and Foucault. Granted, the hospitalisation of Macmann could be seen as supporting Foucault’s argument that modern psychiatric practice is at base a means of incarcerating the abnormal in society, especially given that he is ‘found’ by the narrator in a derelict state occupying a park bench (*MD*, pp. 53–54).⁴⁹ Furthermore, as in many of the examples given in Foucault’s writing on confinement, the House of Saint John of God is essentially carceral, not therapeutic. However, within this carceral institution, there is a complete absence of what Foucault terms the ‘political tactic[s]’ of incarceration.⁵⁰ As against Nishi Chawla’s claim that the politics of Beckett’s writing involve a Foucauldian disciplining of the body, there is no sense that Macmann is being trained by the rules of the institution he inhabits.⁵¹ Foucault sees the task of various institutions within the ‘carceral

⁴⁸ Uhlmann, *Beckett and Poststructuralism*, pp. 4–5.

⁴⁹ David Watson uses the social dereliction of Beckett’s characters as his point of departure for a Foucauldian reading of discourse in Beckett’s work. See David Watson, *Paradox and Desire in Samuel Beckett’s Fiction* (London: Macmillan, 1991), pp. 1–30.

⁵⁰ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 23.

⁵¹ Nishi Chawla, *Samuel Beckett: Reading the Body in his Writings* (New Delhi: Prestige, 1999), pp. 93–126.

archipelago' as one of rendering its inmates 'docile and useful'.⁵² Macmann is anything but docile; his chances of being useful after his incarceration would appear to be nil. When the narrator of 'The End' offers to do some work in exchange for being allowed to remain institutionalised, staff member Mr Weir dismisses the idea out of hand: 'Useful, he said, joking apart you would be willing to make yourself useful? [...] If they believed you were really willing to make yourself useful they would keep you, I'm sure.' Here there does seem to be some kind of a reward for being 'useful', though this has not been enough to change the behaviour of the narrator: 'The number of times I had said I was going to make myself useful, I wasn't going to start that again.' (*CSP*, p. 80) Neither he nor Macmann fit the picture as victims of the soft coercion of modern disciplinary punishment. Ultimately, though institutional space is central to the construction of these prose pieces, the forces which oppress the narrators of 'The End', 'The Expelled' and *Malone Dies* extend beyond their forms of confinement in ways which differ from Foucault's model of disciplinary discourse based on a given set of carceral institutions.

While Foucault seeks to undo the silencing of madness that stemmed from the Enlightenment, Beckett's writing holds out no such hope.⁵³ As early as *Proust*, Beckett had written that to 'speak and act for others' constitutes 'a lie'. In *Murphy*, it is the impossibility of dialogue with a patient who has crossed the line into madness which is used as the key point in the novel's conclusion. This inability to testify on another's behalf is an important part of Beckett's postwar poetics; it also central to the politics of his writing (see Chapter 9). While Beckett would continue to use confined space throughout his prose, the forms it takes after *Malone Dies* move this work even further away from the direct social protest of a writer like Foucault.

⁵² Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 297, 231.

⁵³ In his study of madness, Foucault sets out to 'determine the realm in which the man of madness and the man of reason, moving apart, are not yet disjunct; and in an incipient and very crude language, antedating that of science, begin the dialogue of their breach' (Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. by Richard Howard (2001; London: Routledge, 2005), p. xii). For a critique of this project, see Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (2001; London: Routledge, 2005), p. 36–76.

Conclusion

While Beckett's postwar prose is frequently seen in terms of a dramatic stylistic shift—due to his decisions to write prose in French using first-person narration—these changes involved more of a gradual progression than a sudden turn. The same is true of his use of confinement. With 'The End', 'The Expelled' and *Malone Dies*, Beckett continued the decomposition of institutional spaces begun in *Watt*, using the vaguened outlines of forms of confinement as part of the creation of oppressive social forces, enabling his prose to work both within and against the form of the short story and the novel.

From the evictions which open 'The End' and 'The Expelled' to the wandering that unfolds from *Molloy's* opening line—'I am in my mother's room'—spaces of confinement immediately suggest an elsewhere: both in terms of the spaces of wandering which the narrators traverse in the stories and the various possible topographical interpretations the decomposed spaces of institutional confinement encourage the reader to make (*Mo*, p. 3). Within these open spaces, places of social and commercial interchange offer a good opportunity to see Beckett's protagonists ill at ease with the surrounding social sphere. In *Watt* and *All That Fall*, the train station serves as a locus of potential exchange; in 'The Calmative', it is the harbour. Appearing like a revenant, a small boy leading a goat along the otherwise deserted docks arouses acute social discomfort when he offers the protagonist a penny sweet. Interaction with this 'guttersnipe' automatically invokes a hierarchy of communication: 'His silence seemed natural to me, it befitted me as the elder to speak first.' But social as well as commercial exchange are dead and the protagonist's attempt at communication brings forth only 'a kind of rattle, unintelligible even to me who knew what was intended. But it was nothing, mere speechlessness due to long silence, as in the wood that darkens the mouth of hell, do you remember, I only just'. (*CSP*, p. 66)⁵⁴ This reference to the first canto of Dante's *Inferno*, in

⁵⁴ For in-depth discussion of this citation, see Caselli, pp. 123–25; Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, pp. 151–54; and

which Dante first meets his *maestro* and guide, Virgil, reinforces the suggestion that the ideal outcome of the narrator's interaction with the boy would be a relationship based on authority and respect, such as the one between Dante and Virgil in the *Comedy*. But in spite of bearing an authoritative intertextual signature, the narrator's efforts at speech 'increase, rather than soothe, his estrangement' and the next phrase he utters—no sooner spoken than regretted—could not be further from Dante's *bello stilo*: 'Where are you off to, my little man, with your nanny?' (CSP, p. 67).⁵⁵ The story ends with the narrator's attempt to use the constellation of the Great Bear to guide him, but the stars prove as useless a source of topographical orientation as Dante's authoritative text is a basis for social interaction.

The relationship between a fixed here and a distant elsewhere becomes clouded in the opening of the sixth of the *Texts for Nothing* (*Textes pour rien*, 1955): 'Elsewhere perhaps, by all means, elsewhere, what elsewhere can there be to this infinite here?' (CSP, p. 123). As it is in *The Unnamable*, the function of institutional confinement in this prose piece is different to that of the earlier prose, functioning as just one of a number of possible settings to be rejected. This destruction of topographical certainty throws the speaking subject into an even more forceful ontological quandary than its predecessors in the novellas:

How are the intervals filled between these apparitions? Do my keepers snatch a little rest and sleep before setting about me afresh, how would that be? [...] My keepers, why keepers, I'm in no danger of stirring an inch, ah I see, it's to make me think I'm a prisoner, frantic with corporeality, rearing to get out and away. Other times it's male nurses, white from head to foot [...]. Other times it's like ghouls [...]. Other times it's great clusters of bones. (CSP, p. 122–23)

Dirk Van Hulle, *The Making of Samuel Beckett's 'Stirrings Still' / 'Soubresauts' and 'Comment Dire' / 'what is the word'* (Brussels: University Press Antwerp, 2011), pp. 92–97.

⁵⁵ Caselli, p. 125.

Before discussing the relation between Beckett's voices and his spaces of confinement in Chapters 6 and 7, I will focus on the different kinds of enclosure that he put to use in his new career as a theatre practitioner from the 1950s onwards.

5

Stages of Confinement:***Endgame, Act Without Words I, Happy Days, Quad***

Just as the various forms of confinement in the closed rooms of ‘The End’, ‘The Expelled’, *Molloy* and *Malone Dies* point beyond themselves to spaces of narrative wandering, so too do the different forms of physical restriction Beckett used to create images of confinement onstage point towards the multiple contexts which frame the dramatic action. In ‘La peinture des van Velde’, Beckett praised Bram van Velde for presenting ‘[l]a chose immobile dans le vide, voilà enfin la chose visible, l’objet pur’ (*Dis*, p. 126) [the immobile thing in the void, here at last the visible thing, the pure object]. Beckett’s turn to theatre allowed for a deeper engagement with the aesthetic problems involved in the creation of visual images.¹ His drama frequently presents ‘immobile thing[s]’ in apparently empty spaces. However, as I have shown with regard to his prose fiction, ‘Beckett’s wonted austerity as an artist [...] has much to do with crafting spaces that are anything but empty.’² My central argument regarding Beckett’s drama is that the relations between his plays and the world in which they exist—be these relations physical, formal, intertextual or political—prevented him from ever achieving the purity of image he aspired to in his postwar writing on art. Rather, the theatre provided Beckett with a necessarily ‘impure’ spatial form in which he made striking use of what is unseen. The general proposition that no theatrical image can be cut off from the necessarily

¹ An argument made by David Lloyd during his keynote address, ‘Beckett’s Thing: The Late Plays as Visual Art’, at the Samuel Beckett Society Inaugural Conference, Phoenix, AZ, 19–20 February 2015.

² H. Porter Abbott, ‘Narrative’, in *Palgrave Advances in Samuel Beckett Studies*, ed. by Lois Oppenheim (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 7–29 (p. 15).

multiple and contested field of interpretation is one that has been asserted elsewhere.³ Investigating the particular relations between the work and the world in four of Beckett's plays for stage and screen will shed important light on these works and on Beckett's working process.

In her semiotics of theatre, Anne Ubersfeld argues that the overlapping of different spatial networks results in various codes being available through which a director or audience may interpret any given play. 'Staging a play', according to her, 'involves choosing between the different spatial networks'.⁴ However, the multiplicity of theatrical signs, both verbal and non-verbal, allied to 'the polysemic character of the theatrical sign', makes it extremely difficult to formulate an analytic system which can accommodate the rich semiotic diversity of performance.⁵ Because of such diversity, scholars have found it difficult to define a 'minimal unit' of communication on which such a system can be based.⁶ Nevertheless, because it treats the work of art as an act of communication, using semiotics with an awareness of its limitations—as a tool 'rather than [a] monolithic "theory"'—can be useful in investigating Beckett's oeuvre, precisely because Beckett's work is centrally concerned with the breakdown in communication between subject and object.⁷ In order to do so, it is important, due to 'the dazzling complexity of the messages generated by the theatre event', to take into account what Gay McAuley calls the 'minutiae that constitute the life and work processes of the group being studied' when trying to analyse the ways in which different dramatic spaces function.⁸ When a writer such as Beckett directs his own work, the rich body of documentation which results allows for a multi-faceted analysis of the different forms of spatial confinement he produced. In order to analyse the closed

³ See Marvin Carlson, *Theatre Semiotics: Signs of Life* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 3–9.

⁴ Ubersfeld, *Reading Theatre*, p. 111.

⁵ Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, 2nd edn (2002; London: Routledge, 2005), p. 10.

⁶ Ubersfeld, *Reading Theatre*, p. 15. For Elam, 'the theatrical "discrete unit" remains a semiotic philosopher's stone' (Elam, *Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, p. 44). My approach follows Elam's assertion, in his postscript to the second edition of *Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, that it is 'the very notion of the single theatrical sign unit, with its atomistic and positivistic implications, that needs to be questioned' (Elam, p. 202). See also the inquiry into 'what constitutes the object of semiotic segmentation' in Alessandro Serpieri and others, 'Toward a Segmentation of the Dramatic Text', *Poetics Today*, 2.3 (1981), 163–200 (p. 164). Emphasis in the original.

⁷ Elam, *Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, p. 192.

⁸ Carlson, *Theatre Semiotics*, p. xvii; McAuley, 'Not Magic but Work', p. 286.

spaces of Beckett's drama, I will take into account the work he did in theatres and studios as well as at the writing desk.

This chapter will examine forms of confinement in four of Beckett's plays: *Endgame*, *Act Without Words I*, *Happy Days* and *Quad*. Beckett's notebooks for *Endgame* and *Happy Days*, compiled during productions of the former in 1967 and 1980 and of the latter in 1971, 1974 and 1979, provide material which will allow me to track his various approaches to staging confinement. *Act Without Words I* and *Quad* demonstrate two very different uses of closed space than anything else in Beckett's drama, with the published text of the latter revealing interesting aspects of his working process. Confinement is an important feature across the dramatic works in Beckett's oeuvre. His drama, like his prose, is widely seen as having been subject to a 'vaguening' process that informed not just the drafting process of individual works but a developmental arc across his entire body of work. Examining three works from the late 1950s and early 60s—two of which he went on to direct in the 60s, 70s and 80s—and one written towards the end of his life will allow me to further interrogate this model, while taking into account both the temporal dimension of the individual work and the diachrony of Beckett's theatre career.

As well as being self-evidently spatial, 'theatre, more than any other art [...] shows itself to be a social practice'.⁹ For Beckett, directing was a skill learned primarily within the human networks of the playhouse and the recording studio. Having put most of his young energy into forging a career as a poet, prose writer and essayist, the sum total of Beckett's theatrical creations by the time he turned forty was a co-authored spoof of Corneille (*Le Kid*, performed 1931), the silent character Horace Egosmith in Mary Manning's *Youth's the Season-? [sic]* (performed 1931; published 1936) and an unfinished play about Samuel Johnson called *Human Wishes*.¹⁰ The progress of the last project can be tracked through the three notebooks and unbound notes he compiled in preparation for writing the play, an approach typical of the scholarly methods Beckett

⁹ Ubersfeld, *Reading Theatre*, p. 4.

¹⁰ Mary Manning married in 1934 and then went by Mary Manning Howe.

used when researching for his work prior to the war.¹¹

While Beckett's studious approach is reflected in the detailed analyses of his plays in his theatrical notebooks, there is no evidence, when it comes to his directorial work, of anything like the huge amount of preparatory notetaking that went into his early prose, poetry and criticism.¹² Beckett began his professional dramatic career as observer and adviser at productions of his own stage plays, starting with *Godot* in 1952, was closely involved with the production of his radio plays from *All That Fall* onwards and directed his own work on stage and screen following his directorial debuts on Robert Pinget's play *L'Hypothèse* in 1965 and his own *Eh Joe* (1967) for BBC television in 1966. Having all but retired from theatre directing in the 1980s, Beckett did most of his late directorial work in the television studio, including his last, *Was Wo*, the German TV adaptation (broadcast 1986) of the stage play *What Where*.¹³

Walter Asmus, Beckett's assistant on productions including *Was Wo*, has noted that 'at times he [Beckett] seemed almost to have a complex about not being a trained theatre director. He felt not in command because he was not a theatre man'.¹⁴ In spite of his non-traditional background in theatre, the spatial dynamics of the stage were central to Beckett's dramatic writing from very early on as a playwright. In his first completed play, the posthumously published (and still unperformed) *Eleutheria*, the 'dualist space' of a split stage effects the separation of Victor Krap's private living area from his family's living room and thus his existential struggles from their social milieu.¹⁵ Victor is as close as Beckett gets to putting a version of his early prose protagonist

¹¹ See *Human Wishes* notebooks, UoR MS 3461/1–3; notes towards *Human Wishes*, UoR MS 3460.

¹² The earliest published book on theatre theory contained in Beckett's library at his death was a 1958 English translation of Antonin Artaud's *The Theatre and Its Double*, discussed in Chapter 7. There is nothing in his library that could have served as either a theoretical guide or a practical training manual during Beckett's early career as a director (*BDL* [accessed 31 July 2017]).

¹³ Beckett is credited as director for the San Quentin Drama Workshop's 1980 Ireland and UK production of *Endgame* and their Australian 1984 production of *Godot*, but his involvement was limited to rehearsing the plays in London's Riverside Studio. See <<https://www.reading.ac.uk/staging-beckett/>> [accessed 31 July 2017]. He also assisted by phone with a production of *Rockaby* (1981), advised on productions of *Quoi où* [*What Where*], *Berceuse* [*Rockaby*], *Impromptu d'Ohio* [*Ohio Impromptu*] and *Catastrophe* in Paris in 1984 and by mail on productions of *Catastrophe* and *Krapp's Last Tape* (1989). See Cohn, *A Beckett Canon*, p. 386. In cases where the production in question is in a language other than English, I use the title of the play in that language.

¹⁴ Asmus in Knowlson and Knowlson, p. 192.

¹⁵ Samuel Beckett, *Eleutheria*, trans. by Barbara Wright (London: Faber, 1996), p. 5; 'espace dualiste' (Samuel Beckett, *Eleutheria* (Paris: Minuit, 1995), p. 14).

Belacqua Shuah on stage, expressing what one of his other novelistic characters calls ‘l’héroïque résolution de rester sur place’ against the velleities of contemporary social existence.¹⁶

Stage space remained a key element in Beckett’s compositional process. More than once, he mentioned how important it was ‘to visualize a play on your mental stage while you’re writing’.¹⁷ Indeed, it was a variety of spaces, both real and imagined, which helped Beckett to create different forms of confinement. In 1967, he got to play a part in the design process of an actual stage. The Samuel Beckett Theatre was to be built on the campus of Oxford University and it was hoped that it would stage student productions as well as the works of internationally celebrated playwrights like Beckett. When Beckett was sent an initial blueprint, he advised that the stage dimensions be increased:

Thank you for your letter and plans of theatre which I like. The only thing that troubles me is the exiguity of even the full stage. Hence the following suggestion. For certain plays use the side seats to make a further row of 13 seats at back of auditorium and by means of extra daises increase width of stage by 8 feet. From the plans this looks technically possible. The loss of 11 seats would be more than compensated by gains in stage space.¹⁸

Beckett later expressed his approval for the revised plans: ‘Like very much the look of extended stage.’¹⁹ While the theatre in Oxford was never built, this correspondence gives an important insight into the confidence Beckett had in his own spatial judgement at this stage in his career, having

¹⁶ Samuel Beckett, *Mercier et Camier* (1970; Paris: Minuit, 2013), pp. 57–58. ‘[T]he heroic resolution to stay where we are’ (*MC*, p. 33).

¹⁷ Beckett interviewed by Jonathan Kalb, qtd in Jonathan Kalb, *Beckett in Performance* (1989; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 72. See also SB to Judith Schmidt, 25 February 1964, *LSB* III, p. 593 and SB to Christian Ludvigsen, 8 December 1966, *LSB* IV, p. 54.

¹⁸ SB to Francis Warner, 2 October 1967, David Tucker, *A Dream and Its Legacies: The Samuel Beckett Theatre Project, Oxford, c. 1967–76* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 2013), pp. 6–7. The onstage acting area on the blueprint Warner sent Beckett is approximately 11 metres wide and 5 metres deep (Tucker, *A Dream and Its Legacies*, p. 7).

¹⁹ SB to Warner, 24 March 1968, Tucker, *A Dream and Its Legacies*, p. 48.

directed his artistically and critically successful production of *Endspiel* in Berlin the previous September.²⁰ The theatre director who recommended the expansion of the Oxford stage in 1967 was no longer the rookie playwright of twenty years earlier who had written *Eleutheria*. In the analyses which follow, I will take into account the extent to which Beckett's changing levels of theatrical experience affected the different dramatic functions of confinement across his oeuvre.

In early 1967, the same year that Beckett became involved in the Oxford theatre project, he started writing a piece (later abandoned) for actor Madeleine Renaud's new theatre, the Petit Odéon. While working on the play, he stated his interest to Ruby Cohn in 'reducing stage time the way one can stage space'.²¹ A plan from one of his manuscript drafts contains the stage direction '[r]éduction de l'espace par draps très légers' [reduction of space using very light sheets], possibly made of 'papier' [paper], which is mentioned elsewhere in the manuscript.²² This would have created a physical, theatrical version of the veil of his early aesthetic writing, suggesting a spatial beyond rather than a 'something or nothing' beyond language. He also included a word in one of his sketched plans for the piece 'which is symptomatic of many of his compositional manoeuvres': 'démétaphysiquer'.²³ It is no coincidence that language is strained to its limits when an effort is made to capture the unique spatial experiences that art creates, as when Martin Heidegger declares: 'In the vicinity of the work we are suddenly somewhere else than we usually tend to be'.²⁴ Writing specifically of the theatre, Ubersfeld, in similar terms, states that 'the stage space before us is simultaneously presented as an elsewhere (made distant or foreign)'.²⁵ My aim is to analyse the central role confinement played in the functioning of Beckett's sometimes recognisable, sometimes

²⁰ The production had received 'glowing reviews' (Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 554).

²¹ SB to Cohn, 30 January 1967, qtd in Mark Nixon, 'Beckett's Unpublished Canon', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Samuel Beckett and the Arts*, ed. by S. E. Gontarski (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), pp. 282–305 (p. 294).

²² UoR MS 2927, ff. 6r., 1v., transcribed in Jeantroux, pp. 210, 201.

²³ Nixon, 'Beckett's Unpublished Canon', p. 295; UoR MS 2927, f. 13r., transcribed in Jeantroux, p. 224.

²⁴ Qtd in Bert O. States, *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theater* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 4.

²⁵ Ubersfeld, *Reading Theatre*, p. 111.

vaguened and often utterly estranged ‘elsewheres’.

‘Living in confinement’: *Endgame*

Peter Brook declared that he could ‘take any empty space and call it a bare stage.’²⁶ From the ‘[b]are interior’ of *Endgame* to the late, unfinished fragment ‘Bare Room’, stripped down settings were central to Beckett’s dramatic writing (*CDW*, p. 92). But no matter how pared down these settings become, they are never empty of signifiers. Beckett’s minimalist strategy is aptly described by Theodor Adorno in the notes he took in preparation for a planned but unwritten essay on *The Unnamable*: ‘Not abstraction but subtraction’.²⁷ Beckett’s process of subtraction results in spaces which are hermeneutically productive in spite of their seeming bareness. As Chris Morash and Shaun Richards put it: ‘The bare, or almost bare, stages of Beckett’s late work [...] become a kind of testimony to the difficulty in escaping memory—and place—even on a stage that has been all but wiped clean of the physical markers of place that we associate with the realist theatre.’²⁸

Beckett told Michael Haerdter, his production assistant for the 1967 production of *Endspiel* in the Schiller Theater: ‘Theatre for me is first of all recreation from work on fiction. We are dealing with a given space and with people in that space. That is relaxing.’²⁹ For Beckett, the particulars of each ‘given space’ were crucial to what he saw as the proper functioning of his work. When, following the British and French premieres of *Fin de partie* in 1957, he was contacted about the possibility of another French-language production in Dublin, he enquired about the ‘stage

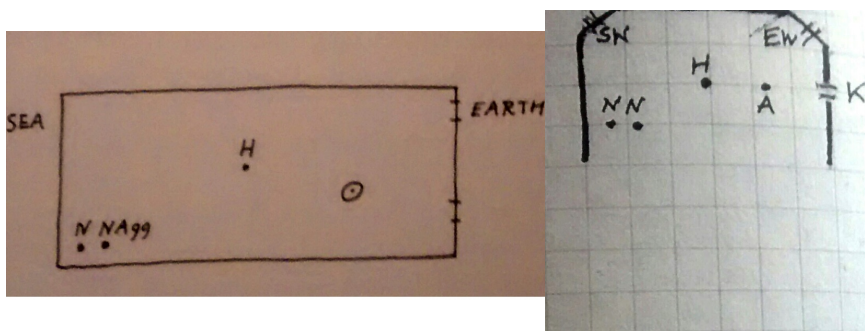
²⁶ Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), p. 7.

²⁷ Theodor W. Adorno, ‘Notes on Beckett’, trans. by Dirk Van Hulle and Shane Weller, *JOBS*, 19.2 (2010), 157–78 (p. 178). Adorno had written a similar note after a meeting with Beckett in 1958: ‘Beckett (after Godot). Not abstraction but subtraction’ (qtd in Jean-Michel Rabaté, ‘Philosophizing with Beckett: Adorno and Badiou’, in *A Companion to Beckett*, ed. by S. E. Gontarski (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 97–117 (p. 101); translation by Rabaté). Adorno developed this idea in his 1961 essay on *Endgame*, which opposes Beckett’s aesthetics to what Adorno sees as the insufficiently self-aware ontology of existentialism: ‘Ontology appeals to those who are weary of philosophical formalism but who yet cling to what is only accessible formally. To such unacknowledged abstraction, Beckett affixes the caustic antithesis by means of acknowledged subtraction’ (Theodor W. Adorno, ‘Trying to Understand Endgame’, trans. by Michael T. Jones, *New German Critique*, 26 (1982), pp. 119–50 (p. 124)).

²⁸ Chris Morash and Shaun Richards, *Mapping Irish Theatre: Theories of Space and Place* (2013; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 90.

²⁹ Haerdter’s rehearsal diary, qtd and trans. in Gontarski, ‘Introduction: “The No Against Nothingness”’, in *TN II*, p. xiii.

dimensions' of the theatre (SB to Sebastian Ryan, 11 November 1957, *LSB III*, p. 70). These dimensions varied from stage to stage. Having premiered in the Royal Court in April 1957, the production was brought to Paris and the Studio des Champs-Élysées, 'the smallness and intimacy' of which helped the play, according to its author (SB to A. J. Leventhal, 28 April 1957, *LSB III*, p. 45): 'The production has greatly improved since London and Blin gives now a very fine performance. The smaller theatre also helps.' (SB to Donald McWhinnie, 7 May 1957, *LSB III*, p. 46) Jean Martin, who played Clov to Blin's Hamm in the London premiere and subsequent Paris performance, remembers Beckett measuring the stage to make sure that Hamm would not be dead centre.³⁰ As his production notebooks testify, Beckett's interest in the spatial specifics of *Endgame*'s 'refuge'—revised from the 'shelter' of the US edition of the text—was expressed in the detailed spatial configuration of the different stages he worked on (*TN II*, p. 50). This interest in stage dimensions was evident in productions of other plays too. When directing *Warten auf Godot* in the Schiller Theater in 1975, Beckett was reportedly delighted to find out that his studio apartment was roughly the same width as the theatre's main stage, allowing him to 'physicalize actions when the theatre was not available to him'.³¹



- Beckett's diagrams of *Endgame*'s 'refuge' on two different stages: (left) his 1967 Berlin production; (right) his 1980 London production (*TN II*, pp. 270, 190). For a description of the spatial set-ups of various early productions of *Endgame*, see Cohn, *Just Play*, p. 22.

³⁰ Martin interviewed in Dougald McMillan and Martha Fehsenfeld, *Beckett in the Theatre: The Author as Practical Playwright and Director, From 'Waiting for Godot' to 'Krapp's Last Tape'* (London: Calder, 1988), p. 171.

³¹ Ruby Cohn, 'Beckett's German *Godot*', *JOBS*, 1 (1976), no pagination
<<http://www.english.fsu.edu/jobs/num01/Num1Cohn.htm>> [accessed 11 July 2017].

In 1958, Beckett described Hamm and Clov as ‘living in confinement’ (SB to AS, 10 January 1958, *LSB* III, p. 94). The particular forms of confinement Beckett favoured in his own productions were those which were not related to a recognisable institution. In 1973, Beckett was contacted by German dramaturge Peter Kleinschmidt who, working under director Rolf-Harold Kiefer, proposed to set a production of *Endspiel* in a space of institutional confinement, replacing Nagg and Nell’s dustbins with nursing home beds. By doing so, Kleinschmidt and Kiefer emphasised the medical strain in *Endgame*, one of Beckett’s painkiller plays. Beckett used a schedule of medicinal doses as a structural device in two of his unpublished dramatic pieces, ‘Mime du rêveur A’ [Mime of a Dreamer A] (written 1956) and the ‘Petit Odéon’ fragments (written 1967–68).³² Aside from May’s offer to inject her mother in *Footfalls* (1976), however, he avoided making such features central parts of his published work (*CDW*, p. 400). In the radio play *Embers* (1959), when we hear the story of Holloway, a doctor, suggesting to Bolton that he give him an injection to ease his suffering, it still remains unclear as to whether this treatment is the motivation for Bolton’s sending for him (*CDW*, pp. 263–64). In the published text of *Endgame*, the motivation behind Hamm’s request for his medication is clear but the medicine itself is absent. It is present, though unused, in an early draft entitled ‘Avant *Fin de partie*’ in which X (an early version of Hamm) gets F (an early version of Clov) to bring him a syringe filled with morphine, cocaine, cannabis and cyanide.³³ In the published text, Hamm instead begs unsuccessfully on six different occasions for his ‘*calmant*’.³⁴

³² See ‘Mime du rêveur A’, UoR MS 1227/7/16/1, ff. 1r.–4r., reproduced in Gontarski, *The Intent of ‘Undoing’*, pp. 195–98, transcribed in Jeantroux, pp. 167–70; ‘Petit Odéon’ MS, UoR MS 2927, ff. 1v.–18r., transcribed in Jeantroux, pp. 201–34; and ‘Petit Odéon’ TS, UoR MS 1227/7/16/3, ff. 1r.–4r., transcribed in Jeantroux, pp. 237–40. For descriptions, see Nixon, ‘Beckett’s Unpublished Canon’, pp. 292, 294.

³³ ‘X Va vite la remplir! [...] De morphine. De cocaïne. De hachich. De cyanure. [...]

F J’ai fait un mélange.’

[X Go fill it [the syringe] quickly! [...] With morphine. With cocaine. With cannabis. With cyanide.

F I made a mixture] (UoR MS 1227/7/16/7, f. 8r., transcribed in Jeantroux, p. 87).

³⁴ Samuel Beckett, *Fin de partie* (1957; Paris: Minuit, 2013), p. 19. Though Beckett named one of his short stories ‘The Calmative’, it is ‘The End’ in which his protagonist takes this form of medicine (*CSP*, p. 99).

HAMM: Is it not time for my pain-killer?

CLOV: Yes.

HAMM: Ah! At last! Give it to me! Quick!

[*Pause.*]

CLOV: There's no more pain-killer.

[*Pause.*]

HAMM: [*Appalled.*] Good ... ! [*Pause.*] No more pain-killer!

CLOV: No more pain-killer. You'll never get any more pain-killer.

[*Pause.*]

HAMM: But the little round box. It was full!

CLOV: Yes. But now it's empty. (*CDW*, p. 127)

Beckett's response to Kleinschmidt and Kiefer's institutional proposal was less than encouraging:

I am totally opposed to your idea of bringing Endgame up to date in an Altersheim [old people's home] or other fashionable hell. This play can only function if performed strictly as written and in accordance with its stage instructions, nothing added and nothing removed. The director's job is to ensure this, not to invent improvements. If and where such an approach is deemed incompatible with prevailing needs the play should be left in peace. There is no lack of others to fit the bill.³⁵

In spite of his objections, the production went ahead and placed what Hamm sardonically calls, when speaking of his parents Nagg and Nell, '[t]he old folks at home' into a representation of an

³⁵ SB to Kleinschmidt, 24 August 1973, reproduced on <<http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/buehne-und-konzert/dramatiker-gegen-dramaturg-beckett-will-nicht-ins-altersheim-12818579.html>> [accessed 12 July 2017]. See also Charles Juliet, *Conversations with Samuel Beckett and Bram van Velde*, trans. by Janey Tucker (Leiden: Academic Press Leiden, 1995), p. 147.

actual old folks home (*CDW*, p. 96). The stage space of *Endgame*, with its offstage kitchen, servant–master relationship and familial drama, evolved, as the early drafts show, from a recognisable—if highly unusual—domestic situation, ‘composed of a living room and a ~~box-room~~ hallway converted to a kitchen’.³⁶ Rosemary Pountney points out that one of the typescripts of the play contains clear identifications of Nagg, Nell, Hamm and Clov as ‘un homme’ [a man], ‘sa femme’ [his wife], ‘leur fils’ [their son], and ‘un factotum’, identifications which are absent from the published text.³⁷ By setting their production within an institutional version of the home, Kleinschmidt and Kiefer framed this residual domesticity with a context which the play’s author could not accept.

Beckett’s objections to productions of his plays in spaces he did not consider appropriate were informed by his own productions on sets he did like. ‘When I was working on *Watt*’, Beckett is reported to have said in 1983, ‘I felt the need to create for a smaller space, one in which I had some control of where people stood or moved, above all of a certain light. I wrote *Waiting for Godot*.’³⁸ While working on *Endspiel* in the Schiller Theater, Beckett again spoke of theatre work as a highly controlled process within a confined space: ‘One turns out a small world with its own laws, conducts the action as if upon a chessboard’.³⁹ In the German theatre scene where Beckett did much of his directorial work, the director rather than the author was usually in control of these laws and it was in this culture of ‘*Regietheater*’ [director’s theatre] that Kleinschmidt and Kiefer’s production of *Endspiel* took place.⁴⁰ When he heard from Alan Schneider that a Berlin production of *Krapp* planned to add an ‘extra speaker to tape recorder’, he wrote: ‘I dream sometimes of all German directors of plays with perhaps one exception united in one with his back to the wall and

³⁶ ‘F Votre habitation [...] comporte un living-room [...] et un ~~réduit~~ couloir transformé en cuisine’ (UoR MS 1227/7/16/7, f. 14, transcribed in Jeantroux, p. 93).

³⁷ Pountney, p. 75.

³⁸ Qtd in Enoch Brater, *Beyond Minimalism: Beckett’s Late Style in the Theater* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 176.

³⁹ McMillan and Fehsenfeld, p. 231.

⁴⁰ Marvin Carlson, *Theatre Is More Beautiful than War: German Stage Directing in the Late Twentieth Century* (Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 2009), p. ix.

me shooting a bullet into his balls every five minutes till he loses his taste for improving authors.⁴¹

However, when he came to direct his plays in Germany, it was, notwithstanding his already substantial reputation as an author, the high status afforded to directors in that country which allowed Beckett to have long and detailed rehearsals with his own actors.⁴²

Jonathan Kalb sees Kleinschmidt and Kiefer's production as part of a deliberate reaction in Germany against Beckett's own highly formalised 1967 production of *Endspiel* in the Schiller Theater Werkstatt.⁴³ 'We have to retrench everything even further', Beckett told his German cast in 1967, 'it's got to become simple, just a few small precise motions'.⁴⁴ Beckett went on to direct San Quentin Drama Workshop productions of *Endgame* in Berlin (1978) and London (1980).⁴⁵ In his notebook for the 1980 production, he recommends that Clov's movements be '[as] painful [and] as economical as possible. When possible none'.⁴⁶ This minimalism was also characteristic of other productions. Michael Haerdter recalls Beckett saying of the 1967 production that he had 'progressively simplified situations and persons, *toujours plus simple*'.⁴⁷ In his notebook for the 1974 National Theatre production of *Happy Days*, which Beckett attended but did not direct, he wrote 'BETTER SIMPLER'.⁴⁸

⁴¹ SB to AS, 4 January 1960, *No Author Better Served: The Correspondence of Samuel Beckett and Alan Schneider*, ed. by Maurice Harmon (1998; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 59.

⁴² Beckett spent six weeks in Berlin rehearsing *Endspiel* in 1967, five weeks in the city rehearsing *Glückliche Tage* [*Happy Days*] in 1971 and ten weeks there rehearsing *Warten auf Godot* in 1975 (Pilling, *A Samuel Beckett Chronology*, pp. 176, 187–88, 196). Writing of director Peter Zadek's return to Germany in the late 1950s, Carlson notes that the standard rehearsal time in German theatres at that time was 'six to eight weeks as contrasted with the normal three in London' (Carlson, *Theatre Is More Beautiful than War*, p. 28). Though Beckett did not direct his first play until 1965, it is notable that he generally spent less time at rehearsals of his plays in Paris and London than he did at those of his Berlin productions. Beckett attended 'just over a fortnight' of rehearsals for the 1964 Paris production of *Endgame*, no more than three weeks of the London rehearsals of *Play* in 1964–65 (see SB to BB, 17 March 1964, *LSB* III, p. 596), a little over three weeks of rehearsals for the 1964 production of *Godot* in London ('Chronology 1964', *LSB* III, p. 589) and a little over four weeks of the 1973 London production of *Not I*. He spent four weeks in London assisting at the 1974 production of *Happy Days*, five weeks in London assisting at productions of *Footfalls*, *That Time* and *Play* in 1976, a little over three weeks in London assisting at the 1976 production of *That Time*, and six weeks there directing *Happy Days* in 1979. He spent just over two weeks at rehearsals in London directing the San Quentin Drama Workshop production of *Godot* in 1980 (Pilling, *A Samuel Beckett Chronology*, pp. 164–65, 191, 196, 199, 201, 209, 211).

⁴³ Kalb, p. 77.

⁴⁴ Qtd in S. E. Gontarski, 'Introduction' to *TN* II, p. xvi.

⁴⁵ Cohn, *A Beckett Canon*, p. 386.

⁴⁶ UoR MS 1975, f. 2r., transcribed in *TN* II, p. 193.

⁴⁷ Haerdter's rehearsal diary, qtd and trans. in Gontarski, 'Introduction' to *TN* II, p. xvi.

⁴⁸ *Happy Days* production notebook (1974), UoR MS 1396/4/11, f. 1v.

The 1984 American Repertory Theatre (A.R.T.) production of *Endgame* directed by JoAnne Akalaitis, set ‘in and around a subway carriage’, followed a very different spatial aesthetic:⁴⁹

A wrecked subway car rests on its rusted shocks. Glaring light bulbs dangle from an unseen height. Seven oil drums are off to one side. The pitted cement floor is awash. Fixed ladders lead up steep walls. A plastic sheet hides a mound of debris center stage.⁵⁰

Natka Bianchini makes the point that, due to the death of Alan Schneider in a car accident earlier in 1984, Beckett had lost half of a two-man team who had monitored productions of his plays in the USA since 1957, setting the scene for a poorly managed confrontation between the A.R.T. and those representing Beckett.⁵¹ The other member of Beckett’s two-man monitoring team was his American publisher Barney Rosset. While Rosset and Schneider had exerted a large degree of control over Beckett performances in the USA, the A.R.T. had been granted permission for this production earlier in the year by Samuel French, the licensor for Beckett’s plays since 1971.⁵² Rosset, not having seen the preview himself, informed Beckett by telegram: ‘Boston Rep. company plans producing *Endgame* [*sic*] as taken place [*sic*] in Subway station and costuming Hamm and Clov as Black rastafarian and narcotics dealer’.⁵³ Beckett responded: ‘Please refuse permission.’⁵⁴ Rosset’s letter to the A.R.T. Artistic Director Robert Brustein, sent while previews of the

⁴⁹ David Addyman, ‘Rest of Stage in Darkness: Beckett, his Directors and Place’, *SBT/A*, 22 (2010), 301–14 (p. 306).

⁵⁰ Kevin Kelly, ‘*Endgame* Takes its Course’, *The Boston Globe* (13 December 1984), sec. D:68, qtd in Natka Bianchini, ‘Bare Interiors, Chicken Wire Cages and Subway Stations—Re-thinking Beckett’s Response to the ART *Endgame* in Light of Earlier Productions’, in *Samuel Beckett’s ‘Endgame’*, ed. by Mark Byron (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 121–43 (p. 132).

⁵¹ Bianchini, ‘Bare Interiors’, p. 139. See also Natka Bianchini, *Samuel Beckett’s Theatre in America: The Legacy of Alan Schneider as Beckett’s American Director* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 12. According to one newspaper article, the A.R.T.’s refusal to remove their dedication to Schneider was a sticking point in negotiations. See Jeff McLaughlin, ‘Play Goes on, with a Beckett Disclaimer’, *The Boston Globe*, 13 December 1984, f. 2r. (JBL SB MS 38/7).

⁵² Samuel French had granted rights for individual performances prior to 1971 and was appointed licensor on 30 April 1971. See Complaint by Grove Press addressed to Massachusetts District Court (not filed), 12 December 1984 (JBL SB MS 38/6, p. 3). I follow the pagination on the complaint. As the A.R.T. had not paid their agreed royalty prior to the play opening, Samuel French claimed: ‘Technically, they do not have the rights to the show at this point’ (Cassia Farkas, Samuel French, inc., to Martin Garbus, 10 December 1984, JBL SB MS 38/7, f. 1r.).

⁵³ Rosset to SB, n.d., JBL SB MS 38/7. Tickets were given to Grove Press Vice President Fred Jordan and Jack Garfein, who was producing *Endgame* in New York at the time (Bianchini, ‘Bare Interiors’, p. 133).

⁵⁴ SB to Rosset, 6 December 1984, JBL SB MS 38/7.

production were already underway, objected to the production under three categories: the changed set; the addition of music; and, incredibly, the casting ('two of the actors are purposefully black').⁵⁵ Akalaitis's fellow Mabou Mines member Frederick Neumann acted as a go-between in the dispute. According to Neumann, Beckett, who never saw the production either, was keen to distance himself from the last of these objections, focussing instead on what he had heard about the dimensions of the Loeb Drama Center's main stage, which is an expansive 28.65 metres wide and 9.75 metres deep.⁵⁶

Beckett said, 'It was meant for a small, tightly confined space.' That was the biggest thing he objected to, this enormous space. You never had the sense of Clov's enslavement or confinement. Beckett was not going to deny this claustrophobic tightness of space. [...] He just talked about it being a room, a small place where everybody was confined. [...] He said that with JoAnne's set there was no confinement.⁵⁷

As with Kleinschmidt and Kiefer's *Endspiel*, Akalaitis's production went ahead in spite of Beckett's protests, though this time his objections were printed in the programme:

Any production of *Endgame* which ignores my stage directions is completely unacceptable to me. My play requires an empty room and two small windows. The American Repertory Theater production which dismisses my directions is a complete parody of the play as conceived by me. Anybody who cares for the work couldn't fail to be disgusted by this.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Rosset to Brustein, 10 December 1984, JBL SB MS 38/6, f. 1r., qtd in Bianchini, 'Bare Interiors', p. 134. In Rosset's draft of the letter, 'purposefully' is a superlinear addition (undated draft, Rosset to Brustein, JBL SB MS 38/7, p. 2. I follow the pagination on the draft letter).

⁵⁶ 'Data Sheet for the Loeb Drama Center' <<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~loebinfo/loebinfo/loebdata.html>> [accessed 5 December 2015].

⁵⁷ Frederick Neumann interviewed in Lois Oppenheim, *Directing Beckett* (1994; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), pp. 25–39 (p. 37). Rosset described the production as having a 'big set' (Rosset to Brustein, 10 December 1984, JBL SB MS 38/6, f. 2r.).

⁵⁸ Beckett's statement, qtd in Kalb, p. 79. For more, see the interviews with Akalaitis in Oppenheim, pp. 135–40 and Kalb, pp. 165–72. As can be seen from the following telegram, it was Rosset who wrote the statement:

SAM—THE FOLLOWING IS THE STATEMENT OF YOURS I'M RELEASING TO THE PRESS.

Less than two weeks after the A.R.T. production of *Endgame*, a rider restricting the changes that could be made to Beckett's dramatic texts in performance was added to all contracts issued by licensor Samuel French.⁵⁹

Brustein complained during the course of the dispute: 'A playwright cannot serve as the designer, director and actor of his own play. He has to collaborate.'⁶⁰ In a letter of 8 December 1966 to Danish director Christian Ludvigsen in which he stated that *Godot* was 'insufficiently "visualized"' for the stage, Beckett expressed similar sentiments:

I dream of going into a theatre with no text, or hardly any, and getting together with all concerned before really setting out to write. That is to say a situation where the author would not have a privileged status, as is the case when he arrives with a text already set, but would simply function as a specialist of neither more nor less importance than the other specialists involved. (*LSB IV*, p. 55)

No doubt Beckett felt he could communicate such things to a director who he knew would treat his texts in a manner he approved. Though experimental versions of his work were authorised, Beckett was generally not keen on changes being made unless he was involved in the decision-making. This included changes to forms of onstage confinement, which, as is evident from Beckett's reactions to the Kleinschmidt and Kiefer *Endspiel* and the A.R.T. *Endgame*, were for him important aspects of

PLEASE OK OR CHANGE. 'ANY PRODUCTION OF "ENDGAME" WHICH IGNORES MY STAGE DIRECTIONS IS COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE TO ME. MY PLAY REQUIRES AN EMPTY ROOM AND TWO SMALL WINDOWS. THE AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATRE PRODUCTION, WHICH DISMISSES MY DIRECTION [*sic*] IS A COMPLETE PARODY OF THE PLAY AS CONCEIVED BY ME. ANYBODY WHO CARES FOR THE WORK COULDN'T FAIL TO BE DISCUSSTED [*sic*] BY THIS.'—SAMUEL BECKETT

LOVE BARNEY (Rosset to SB, n.d., JBL SB MS 38/6).

⁵⁹ Bianchini, 'Bare Interiors', pp. 137–38. The following text was suggested by Rosset and lawyer Martin Garbus to Samuel French:

There shall by no additions, omissions, or alterations of any kind or nature in the manuscript or presentation of the Play as indicated in the acting edition supplied hereunder: without limiting the foregoing: all stage directions indicated therein shall be followed without any such additions, omissions or alterations. No music, special effects, or other supplements shall be added to the presentation of the Play without our prior written consent (Garbus to M. Abbott Van Nostrand, Samuel French Inc., 21 December 1984, JBL SB MS 38/6, f. 2r.).

⁶⁰ Brustein qtd in Martin Garbus, 'Whose Play is it Anyway', *New York Law Journal*, 192.123, 28 December 1984, pp. 1–3 (p. 2) (JBL SB MS 38/6).

this play.



- *Endgame*, dir. by JoAnne Akalaitis (New York: American Repertory Theatre, 1984)
<<https://johnjburnslibrary.wordpress.com/2011/10/24/archives-diary-beckett-goes-head-to-head-with-a-r-t-1984/>> [accessed 5 December 2015]

As what has been termed ‘the last fully represented living space in Beckett’s theatre’, the ‘refuge’ of *Endgame* has a unique spatial function in his dramatic oeuvre. One critic argues: ‘The challenge of the play is [...] the way in which it imprisons an audience in that place, that world, without the let-out of symbolism or allegory.’⁶¹ Beckett emphasised this enclosure in his productions, cutting references to the audience and to Clov gathering sand from the seashore.⁶² As Uhlmann points out, ‘Beckett wanted his actors to imagine a fourth wall in *Endgame*, at the proscenium arch: he was not using this so much as the standard theatrical device, but because he wanted his actors to be aware of their confinement, the limitations of their world’.⁶³ By setting *Endgame* in a post-apocalyptic subway, Akalaitis gave her audience an escape from this confined space which ended up restricting its meaning. As versions of the play which experimented much more radically with the stage space caused no such reaction from its author, it is possible that it was this literalist let-out, and not only the increased stage space, that provoked Beckett’s objections.⁶⁴ This would be in line with his own minimalist practice as a director and his protest against the earlier setting of the play in a nursing home. By contrast, the only mention of an institution of

⁶¹ Nicholas Grene, *Home on the Stage: Domestic Spaces in Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 144, 130.

⁶² McMillan and Fehsenfeld, p. 193.

⁶³ Anthony Uhlmann, ‘Staging Plays’, in *Samuel Beckett in Context*, ed. by Anthony Uhlmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 173–82 (p. 180).

⁶⁴ For examples of experimental productions of *Endgame* in the 1970s and early 1980s, see Kalb, pp. 77–78.

confinement within the text emphatically lacks the certainty of a referent in the world outside the refuge:

HAMM: I once knew a madman who thought the end of the world had come. He was a painter—and engraver. I had a great fondness for him. I used to go and see him, in the asylum. I'd take him by the hand and drag him to the window. Look! There! All that rising corn! And there! Look! The sails of the herring fleet! All that loveliness! [*Pause.*] He'd snatch his hand away and go back into his corner. Appalled. All he had seen was ashes. (*CDW*, p. 113)⁶⁵

Clov's closing carceral metaphor as he hesitates on the threshold, 'I open the door of the cell and go', is not the last such image in Beckett's canon, but it is part of the move away from the representations of institutions of confinement in his earlier prose (*CDW*, p. 132). Beckett also removed figures of confinement from the play, as in the epigenetic transformation involving the deletion of Clov's song in *Fin de partie*, which starts with the line 'Joli oiseau, quitte ta cage' [Pretty bird, leave your cage].⁶⁶ By avoiding overtly institutional uses of confinement onstage, Beckett left the power dynamics between his characters open to multiple interpretations. Ironically, it was an effort to prevent productions which encouraged restrictive interpretations which led to the stipulations of increased control over his dramatic work in the last years of Beckett's life.

Act Without Words I: a 'closed box'

While the claustrophobia of a small stage may have suited the refuge of *Endgame*, other forms of confinement required different kinds of playing areas. In May 1959, Beckett told Barney Rosset that he was 'lepping to see Godot on a really beig [*sic*] stage like the Odéon's' in Paris, a proscenium

⁶⁵ In Beckett's two-act draft of the play, it is A (an early version of Hamm), who recalls receiving a visit in his 'cellule' [cell] (UoR MS 1660, f. 50r., transcribed in Jeantroux, p. 156).

⁶⁶ Beckett, *Fin de partie*, p. 105; see *TN II*, p. 266.

stage which, at 22 metres wide and 11.7 metres deep, is almost 2 metres deeper and only just over 6.5 metres narrower than that of the Loeb (SB to Barney Rosset, 5 May 1959, *LSB* III, p. 229).⁶⁷ When Alan Schneider suggested that *Godot* could be performed in the round, Beckett expressed his preference for a ‘very closed box’, referring to the rectangular space of a proscenium stage (SB to AS, 15 October 1956, *LSB* II, p. 659).⁶⁸ However, a closed box need not necessarily be small. Reacting to the 1961 TV production of *Godot*, Beckett is reported as having declared that his play ‘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’.⁶⁹ Stage designer Peter Snow, who worked on the English-language premiere of *Godot*, did indeed consider putting Beckett’s characters into a bigger theatrical box: he created a model set for the play which re-domesticated its ‘*country road*’ and ‘*tree*’ by framing them with an indoor box set (*CDW*, p. 11).⁷⁰ However, this model was never realised onstage.

The 1957 Royal Court premiere of *Fin de partie* shared the bill with *Acte sans paroles*, a mime that uses the limits of the proscenium stage very differently to anything Beckett had written previously. In *Act Without Words I*, the limits of stage itself frame the restriction of the central protagonist, as they do for Didi and Gogo in *Godot*. But *Act Without Words* is even more of a ‘closed box’ than its better-known predecessor. Apart from the opening sequence, in which a man is hurled onstage, tries to leave twice and is thrown back each time, there are no stage entrances. Though the offstage space is used, it is not like that of *Endgame* or *Godot*. In *Act Without Words*, there is no contiguous space to which the desert setting might lead, no unseen kitchen to which a character might temporarily retreat and no hint of a character like Godot—or any of his employees—waiting in the wings. Instead, this is oppression-in-a-box: throwing the protagonist back into the enclosed set is the basis for the power dynamics of the piece.

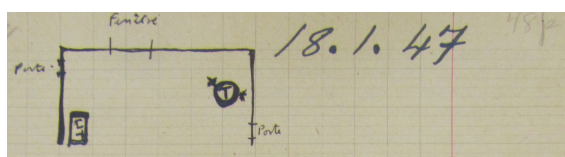
⁶⁷ ‘Technical Specifications’ for the Théâtre de l’Odéon <<http://www.theatre-odeon.eu/en/professionnels/technical-specifications>> [accessed 5 December 2015].

⁶⁸ In spite of his reservations, Beckett did give Schneider permission to perform *Godot* in the round.

⁶⁹ Peter Woodthorpe qtd in Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 488.

⁷⁰ Grene, p. 129.

In a realist play, the boundaries of the performance space suggest an imagined world beyond what is seen: ‘the bourgeois salon opens onto another, imagined room, or onto the garden, and behind the garden, it’s the street, the 16th *arrondissement* of Paris, the rest of the world.’⁷¹ Anne Ubersfeld has in mind here the so-called ‘*théâtre de boulevard*’, a popular form of theatre with formulaic plots which is usually performed in an Italianate theatre with a proscenium stage. Though such stage space was rejected by twentieth-century theatrical innovators such as Antonin Artaud and Jerzy Grotowski, Patrice Pavis points out that alternative forms of performance space have never had a monopoly on innovation. In his opinion, ‘the most striking achievements take place through a subversion or an overstatement of the principles of the proscenium-arch theatre’.⁷² Just as Cézanne challenged a model of perception from within the enclosure of the picture frame in his paintings, so too did Beckett redefine stage space through his use of the picture-frame stage of the proscenium. While Beckett’s plays continually break the conventions of realist drama, they were written for the closed proscenium set in which realism thrived.



- Beckett’s stage sketch on the first page of the *Eleutheria* manuscript notebook, clearly showing a proscenium stage. (HRC SB MS 3/2, f. 1)

Whereas the theatre’s fourth wall was explicitly broken in *Eleutheria* by an Audience Member clambering onstage and toyed with in *Godot* and *Endgame* through sardonic references to the audience, *Act Without Words* uses the limits of the stage as a different kind of restriction upon

⁷¹ ‘Le salon bourgeois ouvre sur une autre pièce que l’on devine, ou sur le jardin, et derrière le jardin c’est la rue, le XVI^e arrondissement, Paris, le reste du monde’ (Ubersfeld, *L’école du spectateur*, rev. edn (Paris: Belin, 1996), p. 55).

⁷² Patrice Pavis, *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis*, trans. by Christine Shantz (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), p. 134.

its protagonist. *Godot*'s tree functions as a vestigial marker of place, providing a focal point for Vladimir and Estragon's argument about their location at the beginning of the second act. The descent of a palm tree from the flies as the first prop on the otherwise bare stage of *Act Without Words* harks back to the overtly metatheatrical approach of *Eleutheria* and marks the stage explicitly as a performance space. In this use of the flies, the mime is similar to the typescript of the abandoned 'Coups de gong' / 'Espace souterrain'—an unfinished piece (written 1952) portraying a series of characters sinking into a hole—in which 'Le 1^{er} Envoyé' [The First Messenger] arrives onstage, as if from another world, by means of a descending ladder.⁷³ However, while props may enter and exit from above, for the protagonist of *Act Without Words* there is no respite from the self-contained stage space. 'Outside of here it's death', Hamm repeats in *Endgame* (CDW, pp. 96, 126). *Act Without Words* denies its audience the certainty of even this interpretation.

The oppression to which the protagonist is subjected is all the more severe for its coming from an unseen source. Of Beckett's earlier stage bullies, Pozzo depends upon Lucky and Hamm upon Clov in order to get about. There is no such interdependency between the protagonist of *Act Without Words* and his anonymous oppressor. Following the descent of the tree, he is subjected to a series of Pavlovian tests by an invisible offstage presence, identified only by a whistle which it uses to command the man's movements. Tormented by a carafe of water just beyond his reach, he is supplied with and then denied a rope and blade when it becomes obvious he wants to use them to end his life. He is finally left in a Belacqua-like posture, lying on stage, looking at his hands, refusing to respond to the whistle.

While the refuge of *Fin de partie* would have been vaguely recognisable to anyone at the Royal Court premiere with any knowledge of modern domestic drama, the '[d]esert' setting of *Acte sans paroles*, composed on request for the mime artist Deryk Mendel, was a new departure in

⁷³ 'Coups de gong', UoR MS 2932, f. 2r. The manuscript of the piece is entitled 'Espace souterrain'; the typescript is entitled 'Coups de gong'.

Beckett's use of confinement onstage (*CDW*, p. 203). The fact that he was in the middle of composing *Endgame* when he wrote the first draft of *Act Without Words* makes Mendel's claim that Beckett wrote *Endgame* as a companion piece for the mime implausible, but there are important relations between the two.⁷⁴

In the manuscript of 'Coups de gong' / 'Espace souterrain', Beckett wrote, 'autant de précision [...] que possible. Mais minimum d'explications.' [as much precision as possible. But minimum of explication.]⁷⁵ Confinement was key to the precisely crafted vagueness which became a hallmark of Beckett's theatre style. A reduction of contextual stage props, combined with various types of physical restraint, allows for an intense focus on the objects—animate and inanimate—that are left behind. As Ulrika Maude puts it with regard to bodily movement in Beckett's prose: 'The lack of contextual definition [...] functions in a manner which forces us to focus our attention on what *is* described in minute detail'.⁷⁶ As the most hermetic stage space Beckett had created in his career up to that point, with its opening image of a desert, *Act Without Words* would seem to exemplify the 'empty space' that Peter Brook described as being at the root of all theatre experience. However, 'for Beckett the stage is never empty': the more he shut his spaces off from the worlds outside them, the more strongly any remaining reference to those worlds pull his audiences' attention towards those spaces beyond.⁷⁷ It is this impurity of the stage images created by Beckett's closed onstage spaces that generates his plays' interpretative dynamics.

The opening gesture in the French text of the mime repeats Hamm's folding and refolding of his handkerchief in *Endgame*: 'Geste familier: il plie et déplie son mouchoir.' [Familiar gesture: he folds and unfolds his handkerchief.] (*CDW*, pp. 93, 125, 133)⁷⁸ Beckett had already recycled

⁷⁴ Mendel interviewed in McMillan and Fehsenfeld, p. 164. Beckett described the mime as a 'codicil' to the longer play (SB to Barney Rosset, 27 August 1957, *LSB* III, p. 64).

⁷⁵ 'Espace souterrain', UoR MS 2931, f. 6r.

⁷⁶ Maude, *Beckett, Technology and the Body*, p. 90. Emphasis in the original.

⁷⁷ S. E. Gontarski, 'Samuel Beckett and the "Idea" of a Theatre: Performance through Artaud and Deleuze', in *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Van Hulle, pp. 126–41 (p. 132).

⁷⁸ Samuel Beckett, *Comédie et actes divers: Va-et-vient, Cascando, Paroles et musique, Dis Joe, Actes sans paroles I et II, Film, Souffle* (1972; Paris: Minit, 2014), p. 95.

characters and texts from his early ‘literary waste’ in *More Pricks*, where we find the figure of Belacqua and the rejected poem ‘Calvary by Night’.⁷⁹ This decomposing body of work continued to be enriched by the recycling of characters in his postwar work, with Watt receiving a walk-on role in *Mercier and Camier*, Malone a cameo in *The Unnamable* and the narrators of *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable* namechecking their fictional predecessors (*MC*, pp. 90–96; *U*, pp. 2–7).⁸⁰ These references to characters from other works provide instances of what Raymonde Debray-Genette calls ‘autotextuality’ [auototextualité] and encourage us to read Beckett’s canon in regress as well as in chronological order.⁸¹ In Beckett’s early drama, such self-citation is much less prominent. The eponymous protagonist of *Krapp’s Last Tape* has a name which echoes that of the family in *Eleutheria*, but theirs is spelled with only one ‘p’. Camier is one of the main characters in ‘Coups de gong’ / ‘Espace souterrain’, but this piece was never published. Bim and Bom (nicknames for the Clinch brothers in *Murphy*) show up in the fair copy autograph manuscript of *En attendant Godot*, but do not appear in the published version.⁸² The actual quotation from *Endgame* of the folding and unfolding of the handkerchief was published in French, but deleted when *Act Without Words* was translated into English. In erasing this reference to another of his works in translation, Beckett created a dramatic world which seems self-contained, especially when compared to the self-referential echo chamber of his postwar prose. Yet it is because of this apparent hermeticism that the referential traces which remain in his plays are so open to different readings.

As well as having an intertextual relationship with *Endgame*, there were also important practical elements which linked *Act Without Words* with the world in which it was created. While

⁷⁹ SB to TM, 16 January 1936, qtd in Nixon, *Beckett’s German Diaries*, p. 59.

⁸⁰ ‘What a rabble in my head, what a gallery of moribunds. Murphy, Watt, Yerk, Mercier and all the others.’ (*Mo*, p. 143) ‘Then it will be all over with the Murphys, Merciers, Molloyes, Morans and Malones, unless it goes on beyond the grave.’ (*MD*, p. 63) ‘All these Murphys, Molloyes and Malones do not fool me’ (*U*, p. 14).

⁸¹ Debray-Genette, p. 33.

⁸² HRC SB MS 6/2/47. I follow the HRC numbering. Beckett made this fair copy of his original manuscript for bookseller Jake Schwartz (Lake, p. 66). Bim and Bom are also referred to in ‘Yellow’ (*MPTK*, p. 155) and in a draft of *Fin de partie* (UoR MS 1227/7/16/7, f. 21r., transcribed in Jeantroux, p. 100). See also Chapter 9.

composing the play, Beckett knew that he was writing a work to be performed by an agile mime artist who would survive being thrown about on stage and dropped from a height when falling from a rope (*CDW*, p. 205). Beckett must also have had a proscenium stage in mind, containing the flies necessary to lower various props onstage. A fascinating transposition of this boxed-in space was suggested in the proposal in 1960 to transfer the play into the closed boxes of a cartoon strip, an adaptation which Beckett strongly approved of and gave advice on.⁸³ Beckett set many of his theatrical experiments within the box-like proscenium and for one critic, '[t]he proscenium arch is central [...] to these works, defining and emphasizing the playing space, delimiting the margins'.⁸⁴ Just as Beckett needed a knowledge of the European literary canon in order to forge a distinctive style in his prose and poetry, so too does his remaking of theatrical space depend upon his undoing of the most frequently used European theatre space since the Renaissance—the proscenium-arch stage.⁸⁵

'Here all is strange': *Happy Days*

In addition to the abandoned 'Mime du rêveur A', the 1950s saw the composition of one more Beckett mime, *Act Without Words II* (1959). Though Beckett never directed any of his own mimes, his increased engagement with physical movement carried over into his directorial career. At the Berlin production of *Endspiel*, for example, he insisted that his actors separate their actions from their speech: 'Never let your changes of position and voice come together. First comes (a) the

⁸³ See Clas Zilliacus, 'Act Without Words I as Cartoon and Codicil', in *SBT/A*, 2 (1993), 295–304. The strip was never completed. See also SB to BB, 5 November 1960, *LSB* III, p. 371.

⁸⁴ S. E. Gontarski, 'Staging Himself, or Beckett's Late Style in the Theatre', *SBT/A*, 6 (1997), 87–97 (p. 93).

⁸⁵ See Elam, *Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, p. 61. For an argument that Beckett's theatre relies on a disruption of a 'dramatic system' of communication, see Serpieri and others, p. 174. Cal Revely-Calder has argued convincingly for the influence of Racine on Beckett's confined stage scenarios. Beckett quoted Racine when praising Ben Jonson's *Alchemist* for its claustrophobic setting: 'They are doing The Alchemist at the Embassy next week & I hope to go. What an admirable dramatic unity of place the besieged house provides & how much he makes of it. The feverish, obsidional atmosphere of Nourri dans le sérail etc—.' (SB to TM, 10 March 1935, *LSB* I, p. 261) As Revely-Calder notes, the line Beckett refers to in this closing quote ['[i]n the Seraglio reared, I know its ways'] is spoken by the vizir Acomat in Racine's *Bajazet*, which is, like *The Alchemist*, is a one-room play (Cal Revely-Calder, 'Racine Lighting Beckett', *JOBS*, 25.2 (2016), 225–42 (pp. 233–34)). Translation in *LSB* I.

altered bodily stance; after it, following a slight pause, comes (b) the corresponding utterance.’⁸⁶ It may have been the imbalance between the tightly controlled movements of his bound and submerged protagonists and the long, rambling monologue which concludes the typescript of ‘Coups de gong’ / ‘Espace souterrain’ that led him to abandon the piece. The punctuation of speech by physical movement in *Happy Days*, Beckett’s next play to feature a partially subterranean character, re-established a balance between these two dramatic elements.

Beckett initially envisioned *Happy Days* as another play featuring a male central protagonist.⁸⁷ However, he chose to make this his first ever ‘Female Solo’—an early draft title—hiding the man (first named Tom, then Bee, then Edward, then Willie) behind the mound in which his female lead (first named Mildred, then Winnie) was stuck.⁸⁸ This surreal stage image is now a classic of modern drama but its bizarreness is worth emphasising, pushing as it does to an extreme the perspectival conventions of the proscenium stage. In his earlier art criticism, Beckett imagined the opinion being passed on to an amateur art enthusiast that Salvador Dali’s work is ‘pompiér’ [conventional; pompous].⁸⁹ In *Happy Days*, the ‘[v]ery pompiér trompe l’oeil backcloth’ represents the sky in such a deliberately unrealistic way that the spatial dynamics of what happens beneath it are anything but conventional (*CDW*, p. 138).⁹⁰ As Winnie repeats, ‘[h]ere all is strange’ (*CDW*, pp. 155, 157).⁹¹

⁸⁶ Qtd in Gontarski, ‘Introduction’ to *TN II*, p. xix.

⁸⁷ ‘I have not been able to give much thought or none to give to the play we talked about. I shall start stalking it soon. I should like to know what exactly he has in those pockets—what he had.’ (SB to AS, 4 August 1960, *LSB III*, p. 350) The earliest extant draft is dated 8 October 1960 (‘Eté 56’ notebook, UoR MS 1227/7/7/1 (henceforth NB 1), f. 35r., *BDMP III* [accessed 23 June 2017]).

⁸⁸ NB 1, f. 35r. The male character is named Tom in NB 1, Tom, Bee and Edward in the *Happy Days* compositional notebook in Ohio State University (henceforth NB 2 (OSU, Spec.Rare.MS.Eng.28)), Bee, Edward and Willie in TS I and Willie from TS 2 onward (OSU, Spec.Rare.MS.Eng.28, TSS 1–4). For the first use of Mildred, see NB 2, f. 15r. In a section of NB 1 in which he made compositional notes, Beckett wrote:

Not Mildred, Winnie.

" [Not] Edward, Willie (f. 42r., *BDMP III* [accessed 23 June 2017]).

⁸⁹ ‘La peinture des van Velde’, in *Dis*, p. 122. ‘Pompiér’ is used to refer to excessively conventional academic art, especially that of the 19th century (*OED*; *PR*).

⁹⁰ This stage direction was added to a draft in NB 2, f. 81r. Responding to stage designer Jocelyn Herbert’s sketches for the 1962 Royal Court production, Beckett wrote to director George Devine: ‘The sky might perhaps be a little hotter (slightly more orange at the top only). Blue sky I’m afraid simply won’t work—tant pis [too bad] for the word in the text.’ (SB to Devine, 4 September 1962, *LSB III*, p. 498) Translation in *LSB III*.

⁹¹ In Beckett’s production notebook for the 1979 Royal Court production, he made a list of Winnie’s references to the strangeness of her situation (UoR MS 1730, reproduced and transcribed in Samuel Beckett, *Happy Days: The*

Winnie's situation was unusual from very early on in the compositional process. Here is the first extant draft of the opening stage directions of the play:

Grassy expanse rising gently front to a low mound, summit about 4' high. The swell of the ground is broken [xxx], on either side of the summit, by two ledges, the lower about 2' from the ground, the upper about 1' below the summit. The summit exactly in the centre and whole effect one of severe symmetry.⁹²

The image was developed as follows in TS 2:

Expanse of scorched grass rising front to low mound. The summit, 4' high and at exact centre of rise, is a flattened area about 3' square. The slopes leading up to it on either side are identical in contour. Effect of strict symmetry.⁹³

It was a term used in the crafting of this image that has become a commonplace for referring to Beckett's poetics. The version on TS 2 was cancelled, '[v]aguen' was written in the left margin and the following version was written in the top margin:

Expanse of scorched grass rising centre to low mound. From summit, a flattened area about 3' sq. The ground slopes gently down to [? front], left and right of stage. Behind mound abrupt drop to

Production Notebook of Samuel Beckett, ed. by James Knowlson (London: Faber, 1985), pp. 72–73).

⁹² NB 1, f. 35r. (*BDMP* III [accessed 23 June 2017]).

⁹³ TS 2, f. 1r.

normal stage level.⁹⁴

What would become the final version appeared in TS 3:

Expanse of scorched grass rising centre to low mound. Gentle slopes down to front and either side of stage. Back an abrupt fall to stage level. Maximum of simplicity and symmetry.⁹⁵

Rosemary Pountney sees the term ‘vaguening’ in TS 2 as ‘explicit testimony to Beckett’s policy of “vaguening” the later drafts of his plays’.⁹⁶ While there were topographical details erased elsewhere in the drafts—most notably regarding rocket attacks on Ireland, among other places—the main things Beckett vaguened in the versions of the opening paragraph on TSS 2 and 3 were the precise figures of his stage measurements.⁹⁷ Judging by the multiple changes he made to these figures in the drafting process, as well as his sketch of the mound in one of his compositional notebooks, these measurements seem to have caused Beckett particular difficulty.⁹⁸ S. E. Gontarski is right to note that an ‘expanse of scorched earth’ is far more ‘hostile’ than a ‘grassy expanse rising gently’.⁹⁹ But both locations are vague. The landscape in which Beckett’s female lead is confined was obscure, as well as bizarre, from the very start.

If the erasure of stage measurements reflects Beckett’s realisation that his own lack of experience in working with stage space meant he was better off leaving the precise dimensions of

⁹⁴ TS 2, f. 1r.

⁹⁵ TS 3, f. 1r. The same passage is reproduced on TS 4, f. 1r. See also *CDW*, p. 138.

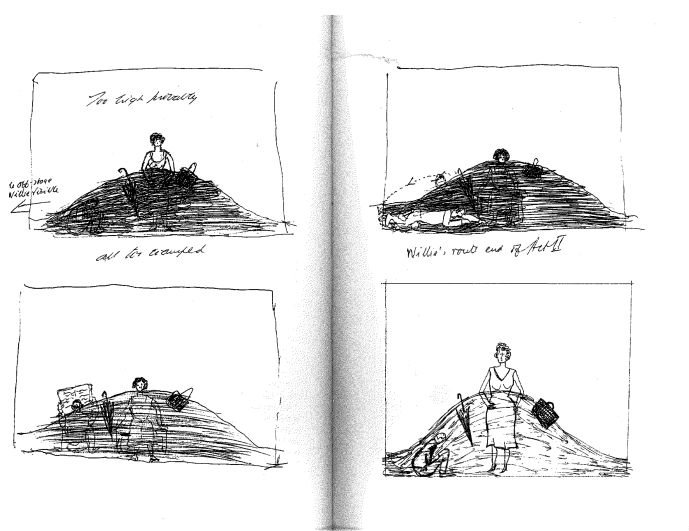
⁹⁶ Pountney, p. 149.

⁹⁷ See NB 2, f. 9r.; TS 1, f. 4r. In the first draft that mentions the rocket attacks, a dash is in the line where ‘Erin’ later appears, suggesting that Beckett, in a reversal of the process of ‘vaguening’, had not yet decided on a placename (NB 2, f. 9r.; TS 1, f. 4r.).

⁹⁸ See NB 2, ff. 1v., 2r.; TS 2, f. 1r.; TS 3, f. 1r. The sketch is in NB 2, f. 1v.

⁹⁹ S. E. Gontarski, *Beckett’s ‘Happy Days’: A Manuscript Study* (Columbus: Ohio State University Libraries, Publications Committee, 1977), p. 26.

the mound to those involved in the production, by the time he came to direct Billie Whitelaw and Leonard Fenton in the 1979 Royal Court production, he had developed a very distinctive theatrical working practice. Central to this was the compilation of a production notebook in which he analysed a given play before rehearsals began. For the 1961 world premiere of *Happy Days* in New York, the first time he could not personally attend rehearsals for the world premiere of one of his plays, Beckett sketched detailed diagrams for director Alan Schneider which anticipate those he would later make in the *Happy Days* production notebooks.¹⁰⁰ In the 1979 notebook, there are instructions as to which hand Winnie should use for picking objects out of her bag as well as the number of pages needed in Willie's newspaper.¹⁰¹ Not only does such material prove that Beckett was, at this stage in his career, an artist now fully involved in the specifics of theatre practice, they provide concrete examples of the crafting of specific detail involved in one of Beckett's bare stage images.



- A selection of Beckett's sketches for Schneider (SB to AS, 13 July 1961, Harmon, pp. 86–87).

¹⁰⁰ Sketches reproduced in SB to AS, 13 July 1961 and SB to AS, 17 August 1961, Harmon, pp. 86–89, 94. Schneider asked Beckett about 'the exact geography of Willie's position in and out of his hole' and 'how to do this exactly and in the particular theatre?????????' (AS to SB, 6 July 1961, Harmon, p. 83).

¹⁰¹ Beckett, *Happy Days: The Production Notebook*, pp. 85, 91. In the production notebook for the 1971 Berlin production of *Glückliche Tage*, which he directed, Beckett devoted a page to this topic. See UoR MS 1396/4/10, f. 24r.

It is hard to ‘go on’ when one is stuck in a mound. Beckett duly expressed concern to Schneider as to whether his theatre aesthetic could keep developing after *Happy Days*. Beckett wondered ‘whether this [*Happy Days*] is really a dramatic text or a complete aberration and whether there is justification for trying to push further this line of theatre’ (SB to AS, 15 September 1961, *LSB* III, p. 435). Central to this development was the increased restriction of his characters. ‘While Beckett had confined characters before, this [*Happy Days*] was a move toward immobilization of the actor’s body that he had not yet attempted.’¹⁰² All Beckett’s plays written prior to *Happy Days* feature locomotion, however constricted, of their central protagonists. Six of his next nine published works for theatre—*Play*, *Not I*, *That Time* (1976), *A Piece of Monologue*, *Rockaby* and *Ohio Impromptu*—fix their principal actors in place.

Through practical experience of the theatre, Beckett became more sensitive to the dramatic possibilities—and limits—of his stage grammar of confinement. *Happy Days* is a physically and mentally demanding text which taxed the endurance of the actors playing Winnie, causing problems for at least two of its early female leads.¹⁰³ Robert Puchner sees Beckett’s use of physical restriction onstage as part of his ‘crusade against imitative acting [...] primarily directed against the integrity of actors and their freedom of movement’.¹⁰⁴ While it is impossible to say what exactly Beckett’s intention was in developing his theatrical style, it seems much more likely that the difficulties created for actors were a by-product rather than a goal of the compositional process. After all, such problems had to be solved onstage by the director as well as the actors. In his working copy of the play for the 1979 Royal Court production, Beckett marked the description of Willie’s crawl in the stage directions as ‘inaccurate’.¹⁰⁵ In an effort to rectify this inaccuracy, Beckett crawled across the set and demonstrated to Leonard Fenton exactly how he wanted Willie to move during the play’s

¹⁰² Bianchini, *Beckett’s Theatre in America*, pp. 66–67.

¹⁰³ Billie Whitelaw, *Who He? An Autobiography* (1995; London: Sceptre, 1996), p. 155.

¹⁰⁴ Robert Puchner, *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-Theatricality, and Drama* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), p. 157.

¹⁰⁵ Samuel Beckett, *Happy Days*, Beckett’s 1979 rehearsal copy (London: Faber, 1973), UoR MS 1731, p. 45.

finale.¹⁰⁶ This incongruous image represents very well the extent to which Beckett was part of solving the spatial problems his texts helped to create.

Winnie puts a typically brave face on her own physical restriction when trying to direct Willie's crawl back into his hole: 'What a curse, mobility!' (*CDW*, p. 158) However, Beckett's confined characters have nothing like the security which Yi-Fu Tuan associates with place when he contrasts it with the fluidity and openness of space. For Tuan, the safety of a sense of place is created by the very kinds of routines and repetitions which Winnie tries and fails to build up. 'Place', Tuan writes, 'is an organized world of meaning. It is essentially a static concept. If we see the world as process, constantly changing, we should not be able to develop any sense of place.'¹⁰⁷ Beckett's stage directions and production notebooks show how highly organised the theatrical world of *Happy Days* is. However, as articulated in Winnie's story containing a passer-by called 'Shower—or Cooker' and his female companion which satirises the need for interpretation, the production of meaning does not necessarily follow:

What's the idea, he says—stuck up to her diddies in the bleeding ground—[...] What does it mean? he says—What's it meant to mean? [...] And you, she says, what's the idea of you, she says, what are you meant to mean? Is it because you're still on your two flat feet, with your old ditty full of tinned muck and changes of underwear, dragging me up and down this fornicating wilderness, coarse creature, fit mate—[with sudden violence]—let go of my hand and drop for God's sake, she says, drop! (*CDW*, pp. 156–57)

The most important spatial dynamic in the play's creation of meaning is the contrast

¹⁰⁶ Whitelaw, p. 153; Beckett had performed the same crawl during rehearsals for the 1963 Paris production. See SB to BB, 8 September 1963, *LSB* III, p. 569.

¹⁰⁷ Tuan, p. 179.

between Winnie's confinement in the mound and Willie's concealed movement behind it. As Beckett's stage sketches for Schneider suggest, this is a spatial dynamic particularly well suited to the proscenium stage, where it is much easier to keep Willie hidden than, for instance, on a thrust stage, or in the round. It is his emergence onto Winnie's side at the end of the second act which leads to the play's ambiguous conclusion, with Willie reaching out either to touch Winnie's face or to pick up the gun resting beside her. But these are not the only spaces created in the wilderness. As he had done in *Endgame*, Beckett included the sighting of an insect—in this case an emmet—which provides a change of perspective on the otherwise unchanging tableau of Act I (*CDW*, pp. 149–50). Winnie's inspection of this animal with her magnifying glass encourages an imagined zooming in for the audience.¹⁰⁸ The stories she tells about the passers-by, her romances with Mr Hunter and the traumatic tale of a girl called Milly, by contrast, pull us back from what we see before us, suggesting not only a different world in which those events took place but also that these events have a relation to the world she now lives in.

Though Winnie's memory of sitting on Mr Hunter's lap as a younger woman is rooted in a very specific place—the Kent village of 'Borough Green'—the precise nature of the link between that remembered place and the mound in which she finds herself is impossible to pin down (*CDW*, p. 142).¹⁰⁹ In an early holograph draft, Beckett put a question mark for this placename. In TSS 1 and 2, he left a gap; in TS 2 he inserted Seven Oaks (another Kent placename) in pen, before changing this to Borough Green in TS 3.¹¹⁰ This practice mirrors the gradual evolution of Mahood's name in the manuscript of *L'Innommable*. When the narrator first mentioned the character who would later become Mahood, gaps were left in the manuscript to be filled in later on: 'Je vais donc l'appeler M _____, j'aime mieux ça.' [I'm going to call him M _____, I prefer that].¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ In the *Beckett on Film* version of *Happy Days*, dir. by Patricia Rozema (Dublin: Blue Angel Films and Tyrone Productions, 2001) as well as the recorded version of *Oh les beaux jours*, dir. by Roger Blin (Paris: RTF, 1971) medium close-ups are used during this sequence <<http://www.ina.fr/video/CPF86628107>> [accessed 21 January 2016].

¹⁰⁹ See also James Knowlson, 'Preface' to Samuel Beckett, *Happy Days: A Play in Two Acts*, ed. by James Knowlson (London: Faber, 2009), pp. vii–xvii (p. viii).

¹¹⁰ NB 2, f. 9r.; TS 1, f. 4r.; TS 2, f. 4r.; TS 3, f. 4r.

¹¹¹ HRC SB MS 3/10, f. 20v., *BDMP II* [accessed 14 January 2016]. See also Van Hulle and Weller, p. 128 n. 10.

Similarly, the female lead of *Happy Days* was initially denoted by a W, which then became Mildred, then Winnie.¹¹² The names Borough Green, Mahood and Winnie do not fix irrevocably the context of the work in which they appear and ‘vaguening’ is an important part of Beckett’s poetics. However, all composition involves addition of some sort, even when this compositional accretion is part of the fermentation of decomposition. Such clear instances of addition in his notebooks complicate the received model of Beckett as a straightforward ‘vaguener’.

With so few markers of place onstage, the deployment of voice in the telling of Winnie’s stories is central to the spatial dynamics created by this confined protagonist. In her working copy of the play, Billie Whitelaw listed the voices needed to play her part and then marked the text with different colour crayons (marking, for example, instances of Winnie’s phrase ‘the old style’ in orange and ‘[a]h yes’ in green):

Voices – ~~School~~ [xxxx]

to self. - Be Reasonable

Aunty B.B.C.

Little Girl.

Voice to Willie.¹¹³

One voice not listed is the broad cockney accent she used when telling the Shower/Cooker story, indicating a world beyond Winnie and Willie’s wilderness which is governed by the same kinds of class distinctions as our own.¹¹⁴ An actor speaking words scripted by someone else is always

¹¹² For the first use of ‘W’, see NB 1, f. 36r. (*BDMP* III [accessed 23 June 2017]).

¹¹³ Samuel Beckett, *Happy Days*, Billie Whitelaw’s working copy (1966; London: Faber, 1976), UoR BW A/4/1, p. 4.

¹¹⁴ *Happy Days*, dir. by Tristram Powell (London: BBC, 1979) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40dUZK2CibQ>> [accessed 10 November 2015].

necessarily at a distance to what they speak. But the regional accents in which these words may be spoken also point beyond the confines of the stage space itself, out towards an unseen space, which, in Ubersfeld's analysis of realist urban drama, would normally root our topographic interpretations in a particular cityscape and social milieu. Though the relation between offstage and onstage space has been skewed in *Happy Days*, such regional inflections remain key choices for actor and director, particularly when a character is as textually and scenically dominant as Winnie.

When Beckett heard Brenda Bruce rehearsing Winnie in London's Royal Court in 1962, he stated: 'Felt her English voice was wrong and for her to give an edge of her semi-native Scots.' (SB to BB, 8 October 1962, *LSB* III, p. 505) Such criticism eventually got him kicked out of the theatre by director George Devine, who may well have felt that an RP accent fitted Winnie's reference to the Home Counties perfectly well. Before his expulsion, Beckett complained: 'He [Devine] has her back on her puke English [...]. I'll get the Scots back or perish in the attempt.' (SB to BB, 21 October 1962, *LSB* III, p. 510) In NB 1, the female protagonist referred to her own learning of English in the affluent Dublin suburb of Rathgar. On the same page, there is evidence that Beckett considered giving one of the characters a 'North of Ireland accent'.¹¹⁵ Changing Bruce's RP English would have pushed Devine's production away from the metropolitan centre in which it was played, back towards such regional dialects. The quotes that Winnie attempts to remember throughout the play are cultural 'debris', strewn across the text like architectural ruins; the voices used to utter them also have their own impact upon our interpretations of Beckett's spaces, something Chapters 6 and 7 will examine in more detail.¹¹⁶

'Motion in a stasis': *Quad*

In *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre argues that there is no such thing as empty space. He outlines a theory which moves away from the concept of space as 'an empty abstraction', arguing

¹¹⁵ NB 1, f. 40r. (*BDMP* III [accessed 23 June 2017]).

¹¹⁶ Knowlson, 'Preface' to Beckett, *Happy Days: A Play in Two Acts*, p. x.

that ‘(social) space is a (social) product’.¹¹⁷ The geometrically governed TV play *Quad* would appear to be based on the very model of space which Lefebvre sets out to challenge. In this play, four mimes, dressed in coloured gowns with cowls hiding their faces, are recorded from a raised angle pacing patterned paths around a lit square, avoiding a central ‘danger zone’ (*CDW*, p. 453). Apart from a small dot at the centre of the square, it is unmarked; aside from the different colours of their gowns, the actors look identical. However, in spite of—or rather, because of—its contextual bareness, the space created in *Quad* is dense with interpretative possibilities.

Beckett started work on *Quad* in late 1979 or early 1980, describing it as a ‘crazy’ piece for TV, and directed it in the studios of the Süddeutsche Rundfunk (SDR) Stuttgart in 1981.¹¹⁸ It received its first screening on German TV on 8 October 1981 as *Quadrat I & II*.¹¹⁹ Like *Act Without Words I*, this mime contains music—as each of the four protagonists enters the playing area, a percussion instrument starts to play—unlike the lost music of the earlier mime, *Quad*’s music is preserved due to the fact that it was recorded.¹²⁰ *Quadrat II* is a slower, black-and-white version of *Quadrat I*, created during playback in Stuttgart.

¹¹⁷ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 12, 27.

¹¹⁸ Beckett used the term in two letters: SB to AS, 1 January 1980, Harmon, p. 383; SB to Dr Müller-Freienfels, 30 January 1980, qtd in Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 672.

¹¹⁹ The same production was used for the first BBC broadcast on 16 December 1982. Production details taken from S. E. Gontarski, ‘Still at Issue after All These Years: The Beckettian Text, Printed and Performed’, *JOBS*, 24.1 (2015), 104–15 (p. 112).

¹²⁰ See *Quad* (Stuttgart: SDR, 1981), dir. by Samuel Beckett <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhIsLXGW99M>> [accessed 28 December 2015].



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

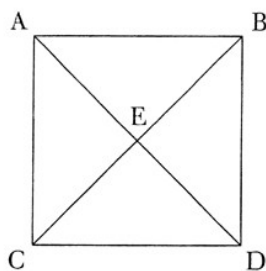


Fig. 3

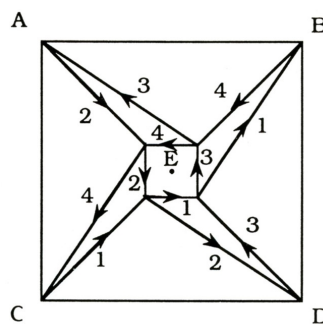


Fig. 4

- Fig. 1: *Quadrat I*
- Fig. 2: *Quadrat II*
- Fig. 3: Diagram from drafts Beckett made before going to Stuttgart, with 'O' instead of 'E' (UoR MS 2198, f. 2r.) and with 'O' erased and replaced by 'E' (UoR MS 2198, f. 3r.). Reproduced in *CDW*, p. 451. I would like to thank Mark Nixon for his help with my research on this manuscript.
- Fig. 4: Diagram created during or after Stuttgart rehearsals (typescript enclosed in a letter by SB to Barney Rosset, 5 September 1981, JBL SB MS 22/16, f. 3r.). Reproduced in *CDW*, p. 453.

Anne Atik recalled Beckett speaking about his 1975 production of *Warten auf Godot* in Berlin in which he ‘had made the translation more concise, had made the number of steps taken from the tree to the stone parallel the length of the sentence’.¹²¹ *Quad* is an even more refined version of the syntax of spatial control Beckett developed as a writer and director. Indeed, the published version of *Quad* in Faber’s *Complete Dramatic Works* resembles the production notebooks for other plays which he used as a director, collating material from the manuscript Beckett created before arriving in Stuttgart and changes made while directing there. During or after the production in Stuttgart, Beckett added some, but not all, of the alterations which had been made in production as endnotes, without integrating them into the main body of text.¹²² Beckett’s first play, *Eleutheria*, remains a text without a performance. There is an authorised, recorded performance of *Quad*, but no finished playscript.¹²³ As with Beckett’s radio play *Cascando* (1963), where ‘the best text’ is the one ‘broadcast by the BBC’, the best text of *Quad* is the 1981 SDR broadcast.¹²⁴

In an early draft of the stage space (fig. 3), made before Beckett worked on the play in the studio in Stuttgart, there is no obvious solution to the problem that Beckett envisaged from the very first draft: ‘Problem Negotiation of O without rupture of rhythm when [~~two~~], three—four ^{players} cross paths there.’¹²⁵ In Beckett’s 1981 production notebook, he began to work out a series of possible solutions to this problem, including a ‘brief halt’ of the crossing players at E which would coincide with the temporary silencing of percussion.¹²⁶ Though this particular solution did not make it into the filmed version, Beckett’s work in Stuttgart did prompt a much more detailed sketch (fig. 4), which now took into account the manoeuvres necessary to avoid collision in the centre of the square.¹²⁷

¹²¹ Atik, p. 93.

¹²² JBL SB MS 22/16, f. 3r; UoR MS 2199 QUA 3, f. 3r.; see *CDW*, pp. 453–54.

¹²³ See S. E. Gontarski, ‘Still at Issue after All These Years’, p. 112.

¹²⁴ Pim Verhulst, ‘“There Are Differences”: Variants and Errors in the Texts of Beckett’s Radio Plays’, *JOBS*, 24.1 (2015), 57–74 (p. 69).

¹²⁵ UoR MS 2198, f. 1r. This sentence appears with variations in each draft and in *CDW*, p. 453: ‘Negotiation of E without rupture of rhythm when three or four players cross paths at this point.’

¹²⁶ UoR MS 2100/9. See UoR MS 2100/2–5 for Beckett’s sketches of his solutions. I follow the UoR numbering.

¹²⁷ In the SDR version, the percussion is muted only once, when all players are in their corners. See <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ZDRfnICq9M>>, 6:26–6:38 [accessed 29 December 2015].

‘To speak of “producing space”’, argues Lefebvre, ‘sounds bizarre, so great is the sway still held by the idea that empty space is prior to whatever ends up filling it.’¹²⁸ This is particularly the case in *Quad*, whose playing area has no obvious historical markers. On first glance, this space would appear to exemplify what anthropologist Marc Augé has called the supermodern ‘non-place’, such as the airport lounge, which ‘cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity’.¹²⁹ However, as any traveller will confirm, even the seemingly vacuous space of an airport can be a placeholder for the most intense of emotional interactions. As at the airport, the space that is produced at the central ‘danger zone’ in *Quad* is necessarily social, depending not only on the interaction that took place between director, crew and actors in the SDR studio in 1981, but also on the negotiation of that space by four players each time they meet. Though the pattern by which the actors avoid one another is predefined, the way in which this pattern is enacted depends upon high levels of mutual awareness.

If Beckett had wanted to create an ‘entirely geometrically determined’ space and a play which ran smoothly without the interruption at the centre, he could have turned *Quad*’s square into a pentagon and added one more player.¹³⁰ This is what Pan Pan Theatre Company did in 2014, creating a five-sided companion piece to their presentation of Beckett’s play. This new piece was called *Quin* and due to the distribution of space in the pentagon, the five players passed unimpeded through the central zone.¹³¹ While *Quin* might seem to have ‘solved’ *Quad*, it creates a piece with a completely different spatial dynamic due to the missing central meeting point. The potential collision in the centre of the square may have been marked on the script of *Quad* as a ‘problem’, but, like the danger zone itself, this problem was something to be worked around in rehearsal and is literally and figuratively central to the piece. ‘Open to discussion with all concerned’, Beckett wrote

¹²⁸ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 15.

¹²⁹ Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. by John Howe (1995; London: Verso, 2000), pp. 77–78.

¹³⁰ Gilles Deleuze, ‘The Exhausted’, trans. by Anthony Uhlmann, *SubStance*, 24.3 (1995), 3–28 (p. 10). First published in Samuel Beckett, *Quad et autres pièces pour la télévision*, trans. by Edith Fournier (Paris: Minuit, 1992).

¹³¹ An excerpt from *Quin* is available at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34NNTgvUE7c>>, 1:42–2:04 [accessed 28 December 2015].

on the first typescript of the play.¹³² The danger zone became an opportunity for further development of Beckett's initial idea, producing the most important moments in the work.



- John Scott, Gavin Quinn, Conor Houghton, *Quad* (Dublin: Pan Pan Theatre Company, 2014).

Quad is the culmination of what Harry White sees as Beckett's move towards serialist modes of artistic creation. While serialist composers such as Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern and Pierre Boulez flattened out the hierarchy between tones in diatonic harmony, White argues that Beckett used 'a limited series of language, posture, movement, lighting, and sound' in his late work to move 'away from the pre-eminence of verbal discourse'.¹³³ In spite of this departure from traditional dramatic elements, Beckett's plays are never fully subordinated to a predetermined series. By highlighting its actors' interaction, *Quad*'s danger zone brings into focus the different

¹³² UoR MS 2199 QUA 2, f. 1r. A similar sentence appears on the first manuscript draft, but '[o]pen to' is erased and replaced by '[c]lose collaboration' (UoR MS 2198, f. 1r.).

¹³³ Harry White, *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 189; Harry White, "Something Is Taking its Course": Dramatic Exactitude and the Paradigm of Serialism in Samuel Beckett', in *Samuel Beckett and Music*, ed. by Bryden, pp. 159–71 (p. 161).

ways in which their patterns of movement may be embodied. In Evelyn Cobley's account of Theodor Adorno's music theory, she describes Adorno's view of musical serialism as a 'decentred totality' which initially erased hierarchy between notes only to impose a 'totalized and indifferent' twelve-tone system.¹³⁴ Even if the hierarchy consists in the actors deciding who steps first, the danger zone of *Quad* ensures that the system in which the bodies move falls short of constituting a totalised system of movement. Likewise, Beckett's closed spaces cannot be reduced to the totalised systems suggested by the terms 'empty' and 'pure'. Rather, they are 'mongrel'.

Quad marked Beckett's return to writing mime, a return which could be linked to his statement to SDR cameraman Jim Lewis that there were 'no words anymore because all seem as lies. Just movement, sound, music'.¹³⁵ Of the four plays he wrote after *Quad—Catastrophe, Nacht und Träume* (written 1982; published 1984), *What Where* and the unfinished 'Mongrel Mime' (written 1982–83)—two are mimes and one contains a silent central protagonist. But it is not only Beckett's late work which contains silent characters. Horace Egosmith, the character Beckett created in 1931 for Mary Manning's play *Youth's the Season-?*, is mute.¹³⁶ Mime sequences also open many of his major plays. Nor, as is evident in his 1937 letter to Kaun, is it only in his late aesthetic statements in which he expresses a distrust of language.¹³⁷ Beckett's dramatic career is therefore best thought of not as a progression towards the creation of silent work but as the continued and 'mongrel' use of silence, words and movement. Even Beckett's mimes do not dispense with words entirely: *Act Without Words I* contains a carafe labelled 'WATER'; in 'Mongrel Mime', the mute protagonist's movements are controlled by an unseen speaker; and *Nacht und Träume* features the lyrics of the Schubert lied after which it is named (*CDW*, p. 204).

¹³⁴ Evelyn Cobley, 'Decentred Totalities in Doctor Faustus: Thomas Mann and Theodor W. Adorno', *Modernist Cultures*, 1.2 (2005), 181–91 (p. 189).

¹³⁵ Qtd in Martha Fehsenfeld, "'Everything Out but the Faces": Beckett's Reshaping of *What Where* for Television', *Modern Drama*, 29.2 (1986), 229–40 (p. 233). See also Jim Lewis, 'Beckett et la caméra', trans. by Sandra Solov, *Revue d'esthétique*, numéro hors-série (1990), 371–79 (p. 376).

¹³⁶ Anna McMullan, *Performing Embodiment in Samuel Beckett's Drama* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 20.

¹³⁷ 'Avec les mots on ne fait que se raconter. Eux-mêmes les lexicographes se déboutonnent. Et jusque dans le confessionnal [*sic*] on se trahit.' [With words you can only relate yourself. The lexicographers themselves undo themselves. And even in the confessionnal you betray yourself] ('La peinture des van Velde', *Dis*, p. 119).

The patterned movement of *Quad* fits Anna McMullan's characterisation of Beckett's mimes of the 1950s and 60s as 'a series of confining situations'.¹³⁸ The four figures are trapped, repeating a series of movements within a playing area which, in the SDR recording, is never empty: the recording fades up on two figures already pacing out their circuits and ends with all four players onstage, suggesting that this series may repeat indefinitely. For Andrew Gibson, the play calls to mind 'a variety of kinds of institutional space'.¹³⁹ Jim Lewis's statement that 'Beckett thought of a prison, on account of the quadrilateral of a prison' supports such an interpretation.¹⁴⁰ What is more, the hooded gowns are reminiscent of the cloaks worn by the inmates in *Malone Dies*, whose movements also foreshadow those of the later play: 'when chance brought one or more together, near enough for them to realize it had done so, then they hastened to turn back or, without going to such extremes, simply aside, as if ashamed to be seen by their fellows. But sometimes they brushed against one another without seeming to notice it, their heads buried in the ample hood' (*MD*, p. 110). However, the space produced in *Quad* is a far cry from the way in which the asylum is used as a space of social marginalisation in the earlier novel. Instead, the controlled movements in *Quad* result in an image of 'motion in a stasis'.¹⁴¹ Rather than the static physical confinement of *Happy Days*, *Play* or *Not I*, *Quad* is closer to the confinement-in-motion which Beckett first explored on the chessboard of *Murphy*, further experimented with in the abandoned 'J. M. Mime' (written 1963) and repeated in the positional permutations which provide the structure to *Come and Go* (1967).¹⁴²

Conclusion: words in a world

In a discussion of Beckett's late work, initially published as part of the French edition of *Quad*,

¹³⁸ McMullan includes the unfinished 'Mongrel Mime' in this earlier group, dating its composition to 1963 (McMullan, *Performing Embodiment in Samuel Beckett's Drama*, p. 153 n. 12). For my rationale behind a later period of composition (1982–83), see Chapter 9.

¹³⁹ Andrew Gibson, *Beckett and Badiou: The Pathos of Intermittency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 238.

¹⁴⁰ 'Beckett a pensé à une prison, à cause du quadrilatère d'une prison' (Lewis, 'Beckett et la caméra', p. 376).

¹⁴¹ A phrase recalled by Emily Skillen, one of Beckett's students in Trinity College Dublin, as having been used by Beckett while teaching, qtd in Knowlson and Knowlson, p. 55.

¹⁴² For a facsimile of the 'J. M. Mime' manuscript, containing a diagram very similar to that of *Quad*, see 'Appendix C: J. M. Mime', in Gontarski, *Intent of 'Undoing'*, pp. 199–208. For an analysis, see Anna McMullan, 'Samuel Beckett's "J. M. Mime": Generic Mutations of a Dramatic Fragment', *SBT/A*, 16 (2006), 333–45.

Gilles Deleuze describes Beckett's art as consisting of 'pure images' separated from their contexts.

For him, Beckett's late prose succeeds in creating

a pure image, unsullied, that is nothing but image, arriving at the point where it suddenly appears in all its singularity, retaining nothing of the personal, nor of the rational, and ascending into the indefinite as into a celestial state.¹⁴³

This is in line with the account of Beckett's aesthetics offered by J. E. Dearlove, who reads his work as being underscored by a metaphysical 'non-relation' between 'the artist, his art, and an external reality'.¹⁴⁴ Such positions find support in Beckett's own aesthetic statements, as when he praises 'the incoercible absence of relation' between the artist Bram van Velde and the world in which he made his art (*PTD*, p. 125). However, as Dearlove admits, such a strict divorce between a work of art and the world in which it is contained is impossible: 'Beckett's canon, in fact, moves from angry denunciations of relationships to acceptance, if not affirmation, of the impossibility of either disproving their existence or displaying their absence.'¹⁴⁵ The work Beckett created, in other words, does not always fit neatly with the aesthetic statements he made. Discussing Dearlove's book as exemplary of a view that Beckett's art is one of nonrelation, Anthony Uhlmann argues: 'What has not been fully drawn out in these previous studies is how Beckett's aesthetic practice and his understanding of the importance and nature of relations, or connections, develops throughout his career.'¹⁴⁶ I would argue that a broad-based study such as mine demonstrates how the changing aesthetic conditions Beckett worked in led him to new forms of relation, particularly spatial relation, rather than to 'an aesthetic of nonrelation'.¹⁴⁷ When rehearsing *Endspiel* in Berlin, Beckett changed the word 'world' in the text to 'earth' before changing it back to 'world' again. 'We can't

¹⁴³ Deleuze, pp. 8–9.

¹⁴⁴ J. E. Dearlove, *Accommodating the Chaos: Samuel Beckett's Nonrelational Art* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1982), p. 3.

¹⁴⁵ Dearlove, p. 4.

¹⁴⁶ Uhlmann, *Beckett and the Philosophical Image*, p. 36.

¹⁴⁷ Uhlmann, *Beckett and the Philosophical Image*, p. 33.

get rid of the world—in the play’, he is reported as having said.¹⁴⁸ The same is true of plays such as *Happy Days*, *Act Without Words* and *Quad*, in which the relations between the spaces of the work and the world are extremely attenuated, but which never take place in the ‘any-space-whatever’ that Deleuze sees as the territory of Beckett’s television plays.¹⁴⁹ If, as Deleuze memorably argues, Beckett’s dramatic images are analogous to a smile without a face, then our interpretations of these confined images often involve imagining different faces behind that smile, however fleeting they may be.¹⁵⁰

Instead of the ‘pure image’ that Beckett seemed to be aspiring towards when he wrote about Bram van Velde in 1945, what is produced in his drama works because it is ‘mongrel’. As his writing developed beyond *Happy Days*, the confinement of his dramatic images in the darkened frames of the proscenium stage and TV screen provide, as Deleuze and Dearlove recognise, a strong degree of freedom from interpretations tied to one particular context. Yet when an actor is used, the image of a restricted body calls to mind another agent who has confined it. In an argument which has similarities to my view that Beckett’s dramatic work depends as much on the addition of detail, however slight, as it does on undoing and ‘vaguening’, Rónán McDonald has identified Beckett’s stage aesthetic as being ‘based on reanimation rather than deracination’.¹⁵¹ One of the principal vehicles of animation for any writer—of drama, prose or poetry—is the voice. In his theatre notebooks, Beckett marked certain passages of lyrical speech to be played with ‘interiority’.¹⁵² Yet the division in his work between exterior and interior, the latter normally associated with first-person, homodiegetic narration, is not straightforward. In a letter to Aidan Higgins, in which he criticised ‘a kind of straining towards depth and inwardness in certain passages’ of Higgins’s prose,

¹⁴⁸ McMillan and Fehsenfeld, p. 232.

¹⁴⁹ Deleuze, p. 10.

¹⁵⁰ Deleuze, p. 18.

¹⁵¹ Rónán McDonald, ‘Global Beckett’ in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Theatre*, ed. by Nicholas Grene and Chris Morash (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 577–92 (p. 585).

¹⁵² See, for example, Beckett’s instruction regarding Hamm’s recollection of the madman in *Endgame* (*TN II*, p. 60). The lines ‘[I]ook! there! All that rising corn!’ was to be delivered with what Beckett called a ‘life voice’ (*TN II*, p. 58). See also Billie Whitelaw’s working copy of *Happy Days*, in which some passages are marked ‘INTERIOR’ (UoR BW A/4/1, pp. 18, 20, 31).

Beckett stated: ‘There is in any case nothing more difficult and delicate than this discursive Auseinandersetzen [explaining] of a world which is not to be revealed as object of speech, but as source of speech.’ (SB to Higgins, 22 April 1958, *LSB* III, pp. 142–43)¹⁵³ In the following two chapters, I will focus on Beckett’s confrontations with the first-person pronoun and how this results in new spatial relations in his own work.

¹⁵³ Translation in *LSB* III.

6

Learning to Say ‘Not I’:**‘they come’, ‘Serena I’, *The Unnamable***

‘Where now? Who now? When now?’ (*U*, p. 1) *The Unnamable*, a novel which can be seen as a limit case for ‘natural’ narratology, opens by posing some fundamental questions both for narrator and reader, echoing the form of key notes made in the loose pages stored with NB 1 of *Watt*.¹ However, unlike the compositional process of *Watt*, these questions were not the starting point for the writing of *The Unnamable*. A passage beginning with the questions ‘[o]ù maintenant?’ [where now?] and ‘[q]ui maintenant?’ [who now?] was added to the front fly leaf of the first compositional notebook only after Beckett had started a draft of his novel in a similar vein to the opening of *Molloy*, with the narrator questioning how he ended up in the place from which he narrates.² Unable as he is to answer the first question, the narrator has no chance of answering the second. This and the following chapter will use the figure of the voice to analyse the relation between the breakdown of the narrative self and the breaking apart of the space it inhabits.

¹ Beckett revised the order of the opening questions when translating the novel to English from French, in which they appear as: ‘Où maintenant? Quand maintenant? Qui maintenant?’ (Beckett, *L’Innommable*, p. 7; see also Van Hulle and Weller, p. 37) Central to Monika Fludernik’s model of natural narratology is the concept of ‘narrativization’, by which texts are ‘made to conform to real-life parameters’. Though she does not deal with *The Unnamable* specifically, it would, according to her model, be subject to a narrativisation which ‘makes much of Beckett’s work readable as the vagaries of a deranged mind’. As she admits: ‘Narrativization relies on realistic story parameters. Within my model the concept of realism, even if of a decidedly constructivist kind, therefore plays a crucial, if not central, role. Narrativization reaches its limits precisely where realist modes of understanding cease to be applicable.’ (Monika Fludernik, *Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology* (1996; London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 237–38) Emphasis in the original. As my analysis will show, such realist modes are inadequate when interpreting *The Unnamable*.

² ‘Je ne saurais dire comment je j’y suis arrivé. D’ailleurs quelle est cette situation? Se peut-il qu’un jour, en fin de compte, la pratique aidant, la faiblesse, j’y sois simplement resté, au lieu de sortir, selon ma vieille habitude, passer la journée et une grande partie de la nuit aussi loin que possible de chez moi?’ [I would not be able to say how I got here. Moreover, what place is this? Might it be that one day, in the end, out of custom, weakness, I just stayed here, instead of going out, according to my old habit, to spend the day and most of the night as far as possible from my own place?], HRC SB MS 3/10, ff. front fly leaf v.–1r., *BDMP* II [accessed 6 September 2016].

Voices of confinement

Beckett's narratives, as I have shown, often come from spaces in which the narrator or the subject of narration is forcibly confined. Chapters 6 and 7 are concerned with the interrelationships between such spaces and the voices in Beckett's poetry, prose and dramatic work. Specifically, how does Beckett's move to first-person narration affect the function of spaces of confinement in his work? And what happens to first-person narration within these spaces of confinement, be they narrated spaces in a novel or poem or performance spaces in a play? As against Richard Walsh's definition of voice as 'instance', that is, as 'any particular use of any medium for narrative purposes', my own working definition of voice keeps 'the sound and sense of human involvements' to the fore.³ As Walsh points out: 'In all its narratological applications, the term "voice" is figurative to a greater or lesser extent'.⁴ However, this does not mean we should abandon voice as a critical term: as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have shown, metaphors, far from being located beyond the boundaries of ordinary language, are fundamental to our everyday ways of thinking.⁵ Precisely because the term 'voice' is used figuratively as a critical tool, it is important to study the aesthetic conditions, whether they involve the translation of a pronoun on a page or the confinement of an actor onstage, which give rise to specific critical uses of this figure of speech.

Unlike *Watt*, in which the introduction of first-person narration in Part III exercises an important gravitational shift in the narrative dynamic, *The Unnamable* never provides a narrative turn or a trail of intertextual clues from which we can deduce that the narrator is in an asylum or any other definite space. Instead, the novel's speaker tells us that he is in various places, asserts that what he is saying is in fact being spoken by others and undermines his stories as soon as they are told. The present chapter will investigate the pronominal experimentation which is a key part of this

³ Richard Walsh, *The Rhetoric of Fictionality: Narrative Theory and the Idea of Fiction* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007), p. 89; Ralph Cohen, 'Introduction', *New Literary History*, 32.3 (2001), v–vii (p. vii).

⁴ Walsh, p. 87. Gérard Genette derives his metaphorical use of the term 'voice' from the grammatical model of passive and active voices (Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, pp. 31–32). For a lucid analysis of this, see Monika Fludernik, 'New Wine in Old Bottles? Voice, Focalization and New Writing', *New Literary History*, 32.3 (2001), 619–38.

⁵ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, 'Conceptual Metaphor in Everyday Language', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 77.8 (1980), 453–86. See also George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live by* (1980; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

process by comparing Beckett's use of first-person pronouns in *The Unnamable* with that of his poetry. While the first-person narratives of *Molloy* and *Malone Dies* both use claustrophobic rooms as starting-off points, *The Unnamable* consistently questions and undermines the very conditions necessary for first-person narration—such as a place of narration—from its very first word. The recasting of Beckett's narrative style which this assault on the pronoun entails makes for a very different use of confinement in his later writing, notably in the dry narrative register of the closed-space prose.⁶

If the voice is one of the major themes of *The Unnamable*, the voices used in performance were also crucial to Beckett's working process. 'Fin de Partie demands so much from its voices', Beckett wrote (SB to Sebastian Ryan, 11 November 1957, *LSB* III, p. 70). The directions that he gave to his actors while working on the play illustrate this perspective. Beckett demanded that the actor playing Hamm use a variety of voices, spoke of the difficulty of doing Nagg and Nell's parts 'without colour' ('[c]olouration is only for their memories') and demanded of his actors, '[t]one, tone, we have to hit the right tone'.⁷ Such considerations become even more important when the voices of Beckett's dramatic work are confined in the darkness so prevalent in many of his late plays.

David Addyman rightly contests 'the widespread assumption that Beckett's works move towards placelessness or pure displacement in the groundlessness of language'.⁸ In order to understand the relation between the voices of Beckett's work and the frequently confined spaces from which they speak, I will examine his move to first-person narration, including his early experiments with the first-person pronoun in his poetry. The gaps in information regarding narrative location which are so crucial to *Watt*, 'The End' and 'The Expelled' become overwhelmingly large in the first-person narrative of *The Unnamable*. Similar hermeneutic gaps are effected by the stage

⁶ See Chapter 8.

⁷ Beckett qtd in McMillan and Fehsenfeld, pp. 205, 206, 210; Beckett qtd in Knowlson and Knowlson, p. 210. He also wanted the voice used by Nagg in telling the story of the tailor to be 'accroupie' ['crouching'] (Beckett qtd in André Bernold, *L'amitié de Beckett: 1979–1989* (Paris: Hermann, 1992), p. 61; translation in André Bernold, *Beckett's Friendship*, trans. by Max McGuinness (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2015), p. 42).

⁸ David Addyman, 'Phenomenology "Less the Rosy Hue"', p. 113.

darkness which predominates in *Not I*, a play in which a voice, rejecting the first-person pronoun, operates in a theatrical space which is the negative image of that used in realist theatre. Crucially, such stage darkness is not just empty space. My following chapter will analyse the role that the confined voice of *Not I* plays in producing, undoing and redoing the space from which Mouth speaks.

When Lawrence Harvey interviewed Beckett in 1961–62 as part of research for his book *Samuel Beckett: Poet and Critic*, Beckett ‘mentioned the tremendous desire to write “I” and yet the impossibility of doing so’.⁹ Working on the English translation of *How It Is* (*Comment c’est*, 1961), Beckett was having great difficulty constructing a first-person voice in any of his writing at this time. Even his letters of the late 1950s and early 60s to lover Barbara Bray use an ‘increasingly telegraphic style’ in which pronouns are cut, though this was for a straightforward, practical reason: Beckett avoided ‘we’ in order to elide the presence of his wife.¹⁰ Due to their central role in the construction and deconstruction of Beckett’s narrated spaces, it is vital to track his use of pronouns in order to fully understand the function of confinement in his work. Before discussing an early example, in ‘Serena I’, of a pronominal form which plays an important role in *The Unnamable*’s later undoing of the first-person narrative voice, I will focus on a selection of Beckett’s poetry, paying particular attention to the pronominal idiosyncrasies of his translations of Guillaume Apollinaire’s ‘Zone’ (first published 1912; Beckett’s translation 1950) and Beckett’s own poem ‘they come’.

For Harvey, the repeated instances of confinement within Beckett’s poetry are indicative of mental enclosure. Harvey’s reading of Beckett’s poetic oeuvre rests on his repeated identification of a dynamic between microcosm and macrocosm up to and including the postwar ‘Six Poèmes’.¹¹ Harvey is one of many early critics for whom Beckett’s work is underpinned by a consistent strain of Cartesian dualism, a critical position that has been challenged by recent studies of Beckett’s

⁹ Beckett qtd in Knowlson and Knowlson, p. 135.

¹⁰ Dan Gunn, ‘Introduction to Volume III’, *LSB* III, p. lxxxviii.

¹¹ Harvey’s book was published in 1970, prior to the composition of Beckett’s *mirlitonades* and other late poetry.

reading practice and the multiple forms of philosophical material at work in his writing.¹² On Harvey's reading, the early moments of 'inward-turning' in *Echo's Bones and Other Precipitates* foreshadow a pervasive concern with confinement in which 'the microcosms of the museums', as well as other spaces of enclosure, 'represent the little world inside the skull'.¹³ While Harvey is accurate in identifying repeated images of clausturation and enclosure in Beckett's poetry, such instances cannot be tidily packaged under one dualist label. Criticism such as Harvey's tends to read Beckett's work as expressive of a single philosophical stance. In Chapter 1, I argued that Beckett uses such philosophical material as one of many different kinds of intellectual building blocks for his creative work. By focussing on pronouns, a linguistic element which plays an important role in the construction of the voices in Beckett's oeuvre, I will be able to give an analysis of the disintegration of confined space that takes place in *The Unnamable* which takes into consideration the development of Beckett's authorial voice across genres.

'From self estranged': Saying 'I' in Beckett's poems

Beckett's late work 'just ain't in the head', or at least not solely.¹⁴ Rather, in spite of an increased proximity to the narrative perspective of the speaker, it consists of important interrelationships between speaker and environment, even as these relationships are characterised by the severe estrangement of first-person speakers from that environment. As Beckett's use of the image of the 'wombtomb' in his early prose demonstrates, images of confinement are central to the way such interrelationships are figured. In answer to the opening question of 'what would I do without this world[?]' (*que ferais-je sans ce monde*, 1948), the speaker of the poem answers that it would

¹² Especially influential in this regard was Hugh Kenner, 'The Cartesian Centaur', *Perspective*, 9 (1959), 132–41. For a strong counter-argument to Beckett as a Cartesian writer, see Feldman, *Beckett's Books*. For further discussion of Beckett and philosophy, see Peter Fifield, 'Samuel Beckett with, in and around Philosophy', in *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Van Hulle, pp. 145–57 and *Beckett/Philosophy*, ed. by Matthew Feldman and Karim Mamdani (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2015).

¹³ Lawrence E. Harvey, *Samuel Beckett: Poet and Critic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 70, 171, 164.

¹⁴ Hilary Putnam qtd in John R. Searle, *Mind: A Brief Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 127.

do what I did yesterday and the day before
 peering out of my deadlight looking for another
 wandering like me eddying far from all the living
 in a convulsive space
 among the voices voiceless
 that throug my hiddenness (*CPSB*, p. 119)

‘[W]hat would I do’ is one Beckett’s few poems first published on facing pages in both English and French. In the French version, the two closing lines are more explicitly carceral: ‘sans voix parmi les voix | enfermées avec moi’, which Beckett first translated as ‘voiceless among the voices | locked up with me’ (*CPSB*, pp. 119, 403).

Instead of the judas hole of Mr Endon’s asylum cell that Murphy uses to seek a friend, the speaker of ‘what would I do’ has a ‘deadlight’ through which he looks for company (*CPSB*, p. 119). In the French version of the poem, this is a ‘hublot’, a term also found in ‘Le Grenier’, which is part of the unpublished collection known as the ‘Petit Sot’ poems (written 1938–39).¹⁵ This collection is a series of remarkably unusual efforts to say ‘I’.¹⁶ There is one long poem entitled ‘les joues rouges’, which Beckett described as one of two ‘straightforward descriptive poems (in French), of episodes in the life of a child’ (SB to TM, 18 April 1939, *LSB* I, p. 657).¹⁷ While ‘les joues rouges’ describes the hatred of the ‘Petit Sot’ [little fool] from a third-person vantage point, there are also twenty-one shorter poems which are written from this figure’s point of view. Sixteen start with the first-person pronoun and four—very unusually for Beckett’s poetry of any era—open with the phrase ‘I am’ [je suis].¹⁸ These shorter poems are declarative rather than purely descriptive, with the

¹⁵ UoR MS 5479, p. 261.

¹⁶ The authorship of these poems has been contested. They were initially included in an appendix to *CPSB* which the editors were then obliged to omit before the book went to press. The page proofs of this appendix (UoR MS 5479) contain an account of the disagreement as well as copies of the poems themselves. See also UoR JEK A/3/68; John Pilling, “‘Dead before Morning’: How Beckett’s “Petit Sot” Never Got Properly Born’, *JOBS*, 24.2 (2015), 198–209; and Nixon, ‘Beckett’s Unpublished Canon’, pp. 285–86. For the text of ‘Le Petit Sot’, see *LSB* I, p. 653–54 n. 2.

¹⁷ The other long poem has not been located.

¹⁸ The sixteen starting with ‘je/j’ are ‘Le Petit Sot’, ‘Le Coursier’, ‘Le Voyageur’, ‘Le Lion’, ‘La Chanson’, ‘La Lune’, ‘La Toupie’, ‘La Sorcière’, ‘Le Diable’, ‘Papillon de Nuit’, ‘La Nuit’, ‘Le Rêve’, ‘Les Pleurs’, ‘L’Ami’, ‘Le Soleil’ and

figure of the ‘Petit Sot’ a crucial, shifting lens through which the rest of the world is imagined. In ‘Le Grenier’, as well as a ‘hublot’ which foreshadows the confinement of ‘que ferais-je’, the retreat into a space where ‘no one will find me’ [[p]ersonne ne me trouvera] echoes the refuge taken in ‘Serena I’, which is itself, as I argue below, an important staging post in Beckett learning to say ‘not I’.¹⁹

An equally interesting effort to say ‘I’ which dates from the same period as the ‘Petit Sot’ poems is contained in the recently discovered ‘Match Nul ou L’Amour Paisible’ (written 1938). Split between a male speaker in the first person and his female lover, this poem is a rare example of Beckett using typographical indications for direct speech. To escape his lover’s questions, the speaker retreats into a refuge of sensory deprivation, blocking his ears and eyes, which creates the impression that his lover’s voice is coming from afar [‘au loin’]. However, as he falls asleep, she has the last word, pressing her mouth to the speaker’s ear and whispering the enigmatic phrase: ‘la nuit est une lime qui ne fait pas de bruit’ [the night is a lime which doesn’t make a sound].²⁰

As I have shown, Beckett’s experiments with the first-person voice were carried over into his work on the novel *Watt* during the wartime years. However, the effort to say ‘I’ in Beckett’s poetry did not last for long after the war. Following ‘Six Poèmes’, composed, according to their author, between 1947 and 1949, the first-person pronoun disappeared completely from his poetic work.²¹ Crucially, none of his fifty-nine *mirlitonades* (composed between 1976 and 1980; first published 1978) contain ‘I’, ‘je’, ‘me’ or ‘moi’; nor do any of the other poems composed between 1974 and 1989. If the poems of *Echo’s Bones and Other Precipitates* register their self-estrangement in terms of the gap between speaker and environment, the later poetry is ‘from self estranged’ in a more literal sense, lacking as it does the pronouns associated with self-expression

‘Le Roi’. ‘Le Petit Sot’, ‘Le Voyageur’, ‘La Sorcière’ and ‘Le Roi’ all open with ‘je suis’ (UoR MS 5479, pp. 258–63). The only poem authored by Beckett which starts with ‘je suis’ is ‘je suis ce cours de sable qui glisse’ (1948), translated by Beckett as ‘my way is in the sand flowing’ (*CPSB*, p. 118).

¹⁹ UoR MS 5479, p. 261; *CPSB*, p. 119.

²⁰ ‘Match Nul’ is contained in the papers of Belgian Surrealist and editor of the *London Bulletin* E.L.T. Mesens, to whom Beckett sent the poem in the hope of getting it published (E.L.T. Mesens Papers, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, box 15, folder 2). For more, see Nixon, ‘Beckett’s Unpublished Canon’, pp. 284–85.

²¹ ‘Six Poèmes’ were first published together in 1959.

following Beckett's move away from saying 'I'.²²

Pronouns in translation

While Beckett's own late poetry is 'not-I' writing, some of his postwar translations of other poets' works do carry first-person pronouns over into English. His translation of Guillaume Apollinaire's 'Zone' sees him trying to find pronouns which best refer to an alienated self. Apollinaire's 'Zone' consists of a self-reflexive description of the physical and imaginative wanderings of a central male figure. Like Krapp in *Krapp's Last Tape*, he refers to himself with both the first- and third-person pronoun, a disjunction which is central to the self-alienation in the poem.²³ Closely following a rhyming couplet which invokes Apollinaire's time in prison on false charges of stealing the *Mona Lisa* in 1911, there is a line which Beckett translated in *Transition* (1950) as '[y]ou dare not look at your hands tears haunt your eyes.'²⁴ When the poem was republished for a 1972 deluxe edition, the final possessive pronoun was changed so that the line ended with 'my eyes'.²⁵ Apollinaire himself had altered the subject pronoun of the line when revising the poem at draft stage: '[j]e n'ose plus regarder' became '[t]u n'ose plus regarder'.²⁶ In these changes, we can see both poets trying to pin down a set of pronominal forms that will best refer to a self estranged from itself. Beckett included an overt reference to the line '[q]ue lentement passent les heures' from Apollinaire's prison sequence 'À la Santé' in 'les joues rouges'.²⁷ Later on in life, by which time he was living so close to the Santé prison in which the French poet had been incarcerated that he was able to communicate

²² Francisco de Terrazas, 'Sonnet', trans. by Samuel Beckett (1958) (*CPSB*, p. 152). See also SB to TM, 18 October 1956, *LSB* II, p. 663: 'It is not easy to get through the ages from self so estranged and one overdoes the lair.' On 11 October 1956, Beckett had received a letter from the publishers of the *Anthology of Mexican Poetry* (1958), in which Beckett's translation of 'Sonnet' was to be published. In this letter, the publishers requested that Beckett revise his translations for the *Anthology*, which is why this phrase was on his mind at the time. See SB to Edith Greenburg, 20 October 1956, *LSB* II, pp. 665–66.

²³ Apollinaire's speaker uses both 'je' and 'tu', the latter the informal form of second-person address (Guillaume Apollinaire, *Alcools*, ed. by Garnet Rees (1975; London: Athlone Press, 1993), p. 122).

²⁴ Guillaume Apollinaire, 'Zone', trans. by Samuel Beckett, *Transition*, 50.6 (1950), 126–31 (p. 130).

²⁵ Guillaume Apollinaire, *Zone*, trans. by Samuel Beckett (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1972), p. 19.

²⁶ Guillaume Apollinaire, *Œuvres poétiques*, ed. by Marcel Adéma and Michel Décaudin (1956; Paris: Gallimard, 2010), pp. 43, 1042.

²⁷ '[Q]ue les longues heures | vont lentement lui enlever | lentement les blanches heures' (UoR MS 5479, p. 257). For a draft which shows the insertion of the two instances of 'lentement' in place of 'peu à peu', see Atik, p. 10. See also Apollinaire, *Alcools*, p. 112.

with its prisoners from his window, he quoted parts of this sequence in letters and recited it with his friend Anne Atik while walking outside the jail.²⁸ But it was Apollinaire's depiction of the perspectival confines of a poetic voice, not the writer's time in a prison cell, which attracted Beckett's attention as a translator, providing yet another testing ground for his own pronominal experimentation.

Though the epigenesis of translation is not the primary focus of this thesis, it is worth noting the different valences that Beckett's poetic pronouns have in French and in English before analysing the contrast in subjectivity between *L'Innommable* and *The Unnamable*. When the poetic voice refers to a subject which may be identified with that same voice, there is a choice to be made between the familiar 'tu'—the standard choice when speaking to oneself in French—or the formal 'vous'. The compositional history of 'they come' demonstrates the importance of another pronominal decision made in translation. In a description repeated elsewhere of his own writing process as involving the recording of a voice, Beckett said the poem 'dictated itself' to him in January 1938, three days after he had been discharged from hospital in Paris where he was recovering from a near-fatal stabbing (SB to TM, 27 January 1938, *LSB* I, p. 596):²⁹

they come
 different and the same
 with each it is different and the same
 with each the absence of love is different
 with each the absence of love is the same (*CPSB*, p. 91)

The poem is predominantly read in the context of Beckett's 'exceptionally tangled' romantic

²⁸ See SB to Kay Boyle, 7 January 1983 and 1 February 1983, qtd in Van Hulle and Nixon, *Samuel Beckett's Library*, pp. 233–34 n. 78; SB to BB, 11 September 1981, TCD MS 10948/1/665; and Atik, p. 119. For an account of Beckett's communication with the prisoners of the Santé prison, see Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 642.

²⁹ Patrick Bowles reported a similar description by Beckett of his compositional procedure: 'He talks of his books as if they were written by someone else. He said that it was the voice to which he listened, the voice one should listen to' (Knowlson and Knowlson, p. 109).

involvements, which involved three separate women at the time: the American heiress Peggy Guggenheim; a Dublin antique-shop owner Adrienne Bethel; and the French music graduate Suzanne Deschevaux-Dumesnil.³⁰ In light of the long list of visitors in Beckett's letter to MacGreevy of 27 January which contains the earliest known draft of the poem, it would also be perfectly valid to interpret the referent of 'they' as the constant stream of well-wishers who had sprung to Beckett's aid while convalescing. Indeed, these two readings are not mutually exclusive, given that this group included his then lover Peggy and his future wife Suzanne. However, the most important aspect of this poem is the openness of 'they' beyond the confines of such biographical readings. Not only are Beckett's friends and girlfriends of 1938 'different and the same' but, by implication, the absence of love from any relationship is both different (as the context within which one is lacking love from a particular individual changes) and the same (as lack of love itself is not substantive and therefore cannot be contrasted to other similar absences). In the French version, first published in 1968, sameness itself is rendered different, with the adjective 'pareil' appearing in feminine plural ('pareilles'), masculine singular ('pareil') and feminine singular ('pareille') forms:

elles viennent

autres et pareilles

avec chacune c'est autre et c'est pareil

avec chacune l'absence d'amour est autre

avec chacune l'absence d'amour est pareille (*CPSB*, p. 91)

Unlike the 'we' voice of 'Ooftish' (1938), the opening pronoun of 'they come', like the opening '[t]hey' of 'The End', offers a broader range of interpretative options to its readers. 'Ooftish' protests against specific medical, religious and social discourses surrounding acute

³⁰ *CPSB*, p. 375. See also Knowlson, p. 284–86 and Stephen Stacey, "'Different and the Same' / 'autres et pareilles': Reading Samuel Beckett's (European) Poetics in 'Poèmes 37–39'", paper presented at Beckett and Europe, conference held at the University of Reading, 28–29 October 2015. I would like to thank Stephen Stacey for sharing the script of this paper with me.

physical suffering, what its speakers call ‘the whole misery diagnosed undiagnosed misdiagnosed’. Having started with the order ‘offer it up plank it down’, the anonymous group demands: ‘get your friends to do the same we’ll make use of it | we’ll make sense of it we’ll put it in the pot with the rest’, anticipating the virulence of the much less readily identifiable groups of speakers in later works like *The Unnamable* (CPSB, p. 59). ‘Ooftish’ specifically references the tuberculosis that had killed Beckett’s uncle ‘Boss’ Sinclair shortly before the poem was written, whereas ‘they come’ is analogous to the writing Beckett did during and after his time working for the French Resistance: it is composed in the wake of an important life event from which it is unmoored by the hermeneutic and, in this case, grammatical, openness of the work.³¹ Though this is a rather peaceful autographical unmooring compared to that which takes place in *The Unnamable*, it is worth noting as an instance of Beckett’s sharp awareness as a translator of the different weight of pronominal expression between English and French.

Beckett himself was keen to downplay the sexual overtones of ‘they come’ but recognised that this all-too-obvious reading would make it difficult to get the poem published in his prudish and censorious country of birth:

I sent ‘they come’ (translated by Péron as ‘ils viennent’!!) to Ireland To-day, where the great purity of mind & charity of thought will no doubt see orgasms where nothing so innocent or easy is intended, and reject the poem in consequence. (SB to TM, 11 February 1938, *LSB* I, p. 597 n. 11)

Whoever ‘they’ might be, they certainly are not, according to Beckett’s letter, a group containing one or more men, as Alfred Péron’s ‘ils’ would have suggested.³² When Beckett himself came to translate the poem into French in 1946, the first line became ‘[e]lles viennent’, making the group referred to by ‘they’ all female.³³ Whether or not, as has been persuasively suggested, Péron’s

³¹ Pilling, *A Samuel Beckett Chronology*, p. 67.

³² Péron helped Beckett revise the proofs of *Murphy* while he was in hospital and suggested that he translate the novel into French. See Pilling, *A Samuel Beckett Chronology*, p. 73 and SB to TM, 21 January 1938, *LSB* I, p. 589.

³³ First published in *Les Temps modernes*, 2 (November 1946). Reprinted in *Poèmes* (Paris: Minuit, 1968) and *Poèmes*,

translation prompted Beckett to start writing poetry in French himself, ‘they come’ is indicative of the differing linguistic constraints imposed by different languages and the effects that these constraints have on the construction of a poetic voice.³⁴ A playful contributor’s note in *Transition* (1948) has Beckett ‘confess[ing] in a strong or rather weak Dublin accent’ with an ‘original syntactical usage of his adopted tongue’ that he was writing in French ‘[p]our faire remarquer moi’. While, as Sam Slote points out, this note, with its misplaced and misspelled pronoun, draws attention to Beckett himself as a writer, his very particular uses of pronouns in the voices he creates in his poetry draws our attention to the mutable confines of these created selves as well as towards Beckett’s own extreme sensitivity to the role of these pronouns in his writing.³⁵

Saying ‘me’ in ‘Serena I’

As discussed in Chapter 1, sentences in *Dream* such as ‘[s]urely you see what he am?’ foreground the impossibility of narrative harmony in that text (*D*, p. 72). Written the same year as *Dream*, ‘Serena I’ contains another pronominal idiosyncrasy that Beckett would draw on over two decades later when translating *The Unnamable* into English: ‘the substitution of the non-reflexive “me”, as direct object of the verb, for the reflexive “myself”’.³⁶ The first instance of this in ‘Serena I’ can be read as ‘a literal, if disorienting, translation of the French idiom “je me trouve”’, which is then echoed in standard, interrogative form three lines later:³⁷

I find me taking the Crystal Palace
for the Blessed Isles from Primrose Hill
alas I must be that kind of person
hence in Ken Wood who shall find me

suivi de mirlitonades (Paris: Minuit, 1978).

³⁴ Stacey, “Different and the Same” / “autres et pareilles”, pp. 1–14 (pp. 3–4). I follow the pagination on the script.

³⁵ As Slote points out, the correct version is ‘[p]our me faire remarquer’ [to draw attention to myself] (Slote, ‘Bilingual Beckett’, p. 119).

³⁶ Harvey, *Samuel Beckett: Poet and Critic*, p. 91.

³⁷ *CPSB*, p. 286.

my breath held in the midst of thickets

none but the most quarried lovers (*CPSB*, p. 16)

In the penultimate line of the earliest extant version of this stanza, sent with the rest of the poem in a letter to MacGreevy, Beckett makes a direct reference to the ‘quiet breath’ of Keats’s ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ (1819): ‘my quiet breath in the midst of thickets’ (SB to TM, 8 October 1932, *LSB I*, p. 131). Keats’s knight in ‘La Belle Dame sans Merci’ (1820) also uses the non-standard pronominal form. Interestingly, he uses it with the same verb as Beckett: ‘And I awoke and found me here’.³⁸ As in ‘Serena I’, there is a possible Francophone residue to the English used in Keats’s ballad, particularly given the chivalric troubadour tradition’s roots in France. More pragmatically, ‘me’, rather than the standard ‘myself’, keeps Keats’s tetrametric line from slipping over into an ill-fitting pentameter.³⁹

Unlike ‘La Belle Dame’ or ‘Ode to a Nightingale’, ‘Serena I’ is written in free verse, but it does fall into occasional rhythmic regularity, most notably in the six iambic tetrameters of the above stanza, which centres on Hampstead Heath where Keats once lived.⁴⁰ His second residence on the Heath, which is situated between Primrose Hill and Kenwood House, was opened to the public in the decade before Beckett wrote his poem.⁴¹ It is from Primrose Hill that the speaker of ‘Serena I’ has an unclear view of the Crystal Palace on the other side of the city. Beckett studied in the nearby British Museum during the summer of 1932 and spent some time walking in the parks, including part of Hampstead Heath.⁴² It would not be surprising if he visited Keats’s house, especially given

³⁸ John Keats, *The Poetical Works of John Keats*, ed. by William T. Arnold (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1884), p. 304.

³⁹ ‘La Belle Dame sans Merci’ uses stanzas of three iambic tetrameters followed by a dimeter.

⁴⁰ Nicholas Roe, *John Keats: A New Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), pp. 155–56, 283–84. Paul D. Sheats sees the success of ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ as being directly connected to its use of regular form. See Sheats, ‘Keats and the Ode’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Keats*, ed. by Susan J. Wolfson (2001; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 86–101 (p. 90).

⁴¹ The house was opened to the public in 1925. In 1931, a new building was erected beside the house in order to display a collection of books and other material relating to Keats <<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/keats-house/keats-history/Pages/History-of-the-house.aspx>> [accessed 11 May 2016]. This would have made the house an attractive prospect for Beckett to visit the following year.

⁴² Pilling, *A Samuel Beckett Chronology*, p. 38; Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 161. Though there is no record of Beckett having signed the visitor’s book, the records for those years contain very few signatures, suggesting that it is

his professed admiration for the Romantic poet:

I like that crouching brooding quality in Keats—squatting on the moss, crushing a petal, licking his lips & rubbing his hands, ‘counting the last oozings, hours by hours’. I like him the best of them all, because he doesn’t beat his fists on the table. I like that awful sweetness and thick soft damp green [? richness]. And weariness: ‘Take into the air my quiet breath.’ (SB to TM, April/May 1930, TCD MS 10402/6)⁴³

Beckett here shears Keats’s line, lopping off the ‘to’ which subordinates it to preceding events in ‘Ode to a Nightingale’:

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call’d him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath⁴⁴

Beckett does the same prepositional pruning when the line is used at the climax of ‘Dante and the Lobster’, making it appear again as an inwardly focussed injunction to the self rather than a description of terminal poetic production (*MPTK*, p. 14).⁴⁵

It is extremely likely, given the setting of ‘Serena I’ and its explicit reference to ‘Ode’, that Keats’s ‘La Belle Dame’ was a source for both the tetrametric metre of the third stanza and

not a comprehensive record of visits made (Kenneth Page, Interpretation Officer, Keats House, email to the author, 27 January 2017). I would like to thank Kenneth Page for his help in this regard.

⁴³ Keats continued as a presence in Beckett’s work in *Happy Days*, in which Winnie misremembers ‘Borough Green’ as ‘beechen green’, taken from the opening stanza of ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ (Keats, p. 232; *CDW*, p. 161). Beckett’s admiration for Keats reportedly continued on his deathbed, on which he recited lines by the Romantic poet (Pilling, *A Samuel Beckett Chronology*, p. 230). For two readings of the uncertain word marked in the letter, see *LSB I*, p. 21 and Nixon, *Beckett’s German Diaries*, p. 142.

⁴⁴ Keats, p. 233.

⁴⁵ As Christopher Ricks points out, the Keats line was in quotation marks in the first publication of the story (Christopher Ricks, *Beckett’s Dying Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 53 n. 8). See Beckett, ‘Dante and the Lobster’ (1932), p. 236.

Beckett's use of the non-reflexive 'me' as a direct object pronoun. The three subsequent examples—'I surprise me moved by the many a funnel hinged', 'then I hug me below among the canaille' as well as 'and afar off at all speed screw me up Wren's giant bully' occur in a long stanza so metrically diverse that the saved syllables are all but irrelevant (*CPSB*, pp. 16–17). However, in the short penultimate stanza, the focus reverts to the Heath and the iambic pattern with which it has earlier been associated:

but in Ken Wood

who shall find me (*CPSB*, p. 17)⁴⁶

Such metrical constraint must also be taken into account when considering the function of such pronouns in the poem. The text of *The Unnamable*, rhythmic as it is, has no such constraint, making the function of its non-object pronouns quite different. Beckett's extensive pronominal experimentation in his French and English poetry obliges us to give these pronouns the attention they deserve when tracking his use of confinement in this novel.

An assault on the pronouns: Saying 'me' in *The Unnamable*

As is evident from his poetry of the 1930s, Beckett's use of the first-person pronoun is not so much the result of a sudden shift but a gradual apprenticeship. As discussed in Chapter 4, when he started writing prose in French after the war, the toil of this apprenticeship began to bear fruit, resulting in four postwar novellas and four novels, an important portion of which continued the 'vaguening' of institutional confinement seen in *Watt*. The last of these novels, *The Unnamable*, moves sharply away from the type of narrative of institutional confinement which closes its predecessor *Malone Dies*, using instead scattered images of confinement in the narrator's futile attempt to fix his own

⁴⁶ The early MacGreevy draft has the much looser 'but then again as I say | who is likely to run across me in Ken Wood' (SB to TM, 8 October 1932, *LSB I*, p. 131).

location. In the course of this attempt, the narrator tells stories of himself in an enclosed yard at the centre of which is a windowless rotunda (*U*, p. 29), an urn—prefiguring the stage setting of *Play*—(*U*, pp. 39–46; pp. 54–59) and imagines Worm, one of his ‘vice-exister[s]’, confined inside a windowless inspection place with holes through which his tormentors peep, shine lights and grab him—a kind of negative panopticon. (*U*, pp. 26, 70–73) He also imagines that he is ‘in a head’ (*U*, pp. 65, 88), a ‘dungeon’ (*U*, p. 85), a prison (*U*, pp. 109, 128–30) and quotes the opening line of ‘The End’, in which the narrator is ejected from an unnamed institution.⁴⁷ But due to persistent ‘denarration’, in which a section of narrative is immediately cancelled by what follows, the possibility of any of these spaces becoming a consistent narrative locale is undermined.⁴⁸ The enclosure, the inspection place and the prison are all described as ‘vast’ and, in spite of widespread imagery of confinement, there is no certainty that the space from which the narrator speaks is a restricted one: ‘as I have said, the place may well be vast, as it may well measure twelve feet in diameter’ (*U*, pp. 29, 73, 129, 5). The existence of each confined space is undermined by the unreliability of the narrative as a whole and this unreliability is heightened by a first-person narrative style which has left behind the arch omniscience and meticulous topography of third-person narration in *Murphy*. As the narrator puts it, ‘I’m where I always was, wherever that is’ (*U*, p. 102).

As it does for the narrator of ‘The End’, the topographical crisis in *The Unnamable* goes hand-in-hand with an ontological one. It is therefore crucial to understand the relation between the disintegration of the first-person pronoun and Beckett’s decomposition of confined space. Both space and the self are subject to the same ‘unwording’ procedure that links the narrator’s attempts to ‘say I’ to the later play *Not I*.⁴⁹ And space is more than just another metaphor for being, as in

⁴⁷ ‘The master. A few allusions here and there, as to a satrap, with a view to enlisting sympathy. *They clothed me and gave me money*, that kind of thing, the light touch.’ (*U*, p. 23) Emphasis added.

⁴⁸ See Brian Richardson, *Unnatural Voices: Extreme Narration in Modern and Contemporary Fiction* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006), pp. 87–94. Richardson draws on *Molloy* to formulate an example of denarration:

‘Yesterday it was raining. Yesterday it was not raining’ (p. xi).

⁴⁹ For more on Beckett’s ‘unwording’ in the process of translating *The Unnamable*, see Van Hulle and Weller, pp. 190–220.

Harvey's argument that the confined spaces of Beckett's poetry are really just versions of the speaker's mind. Rather, space underpins the possibility of narration itself, as indicated in the narrator's opening question: 'Where now?'⁵⁰ It was therefore important for Beckett, as part of his decomposition of the narrative self, to also decompose the spaces of confinement that are such an important part of his writing prior to *The Unnamable*. Just like in his stage work, Beckett could not deconstruct these spaces without first constructing them, as the examples of confinement in my previous paragraph demonstrate.

As well as fruitlessly trying to determine his own location, the narrator is also obsessed by the pronouns he uses: '[a]ny old pronoun will do', he tells us 'provided one sees through it' (*U*, p. 57) Just prior to this, he declares: 'But enough of this cursed first person, it is really too red a herring, I'll get out of my depth if I'm not careful.' (*U*, p. 56) In an early draft version of this sentence, there is a short list of different grammatical forms of the pronoun he wants to get rid of: 'Et puis assez de moi aussi, assez de moi, de je, de me.'⁵¹ The draft sentence undoes its own undoing of the self, and ends up 'redoing' that narrative self, by adding further versions of the first-person pronoun to a sentence which sets out to repudiate that pronoun, one of the many paradoxical consequences of trying to create a 'literature of the non-word' through language. In order to create such a literature, Beckett recommended the practice of '[w]ord-storming' [Wörterstürmeri] in his 1937 letter to Axel Kaun (SB to Kaun, 9 July 1937, *LSB* I, p. 520).⁵² The original German compound has also been translated as '[a]n assault against words'.⁵³ In the narrative voice of *The Unnamable*, confined to saying 'I' if not to any single carceral space, Beckett's pronouns were the primary targets of this attack. While Beckett eliminated the first-person pronoun from his poems which followed 'Six Poèmes', *The Unnamable* demonstrates the narrative self-division and spatial disintegration that occurs as 'I' is being eliminated.

⁵⁰ See David Addyman, 'Where Now? Beckett, Duthuit and *The Unnamable*', *SBT/A*, 26 (2014), 179–91.

⁵¹ 'But enough of me as well, enough of me, of I, of myself.' (HRC, SB 3/10, f. inside back cover, *BDMP* II [accessed 18 May 2015]).

⁵² Translation in *LSB* I.

⁵³ Translation in *Dis*, p. 173.

There has been no lack of recent scholarship on the form of narration in *The Unnamable*.⁵⁴ However, the way in which Beckett uses pronouns in the English-language version of the text, drawing on the non-reflexivity already used in ‘Serena I’, deserves closer analysis. Even Daniel Katz, who puts *The Unnamable* at the centre of his study into ‘how Beckett disrupts the traditional function of the first-person pronoun as mark of the source of utterance’ does not explore the function of such non-reflexive object pronouns.⁵⁵ Katz’s study is underpinned by Jacques Derrida’s position that speech should not simply be seen as a pre-originary form of writing, but as a form of language which is always already inspired or stolen away from elsewhere, an argument that, in English translation, requires some of its own pronominal gymnastics to make its point: ‘as soon as I hear myself, the I who hears *itself* hears *me*’.⁵⁶ The ‘textual construction of subjectivity’ in *The Unnamable* consists of similar pronominal self-distancing.⁵⁷ Having tried for more than one hundred pages, the narrator is no closer to locating himself as his narrative draws to a finish: ‘first the place, then I’ll find me in it’ (*U*, p. 118). This statement neatly dispenses with the theological and metaphysical baggage of the more standard statement: ‘I find myself’. Just as Beckett considered, but then rejected, the woolly sounding title ‘Beyond Words’ when composing his novel, it is hard to imagine the narrator of *The Unnamable* ever using the verb ‘to find’ to express his own self-fulfilment in this reflexive manner, beloved of self-help gurus.⁵⁸ The novel’s published title points to the narrating subject as the locus of Beckett’s poetics of unwording, which in turn affects its first-person descriptions of confined space. Its assault on the reflexive first-person pronoun is

⁵⁴ See Llewellyn Brown, ‘Voice and Pronouns in Samuel Beckett’s *The Unnamable*’, *JOBS*, 20.2 (2011), 172–96; Katz, pp. 95–124; Angela Moorjani, ‘Deictic Projection of the *I* and Eye in Beckett’s Fiction and Film’, *JOBS*, 17.1–2 (2008), 35–51; Angela Moorjani, ‘Beckett’s Devious Deictics’, in *Rethinking Beckett: A Collection of Critical Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1990), ed. by Lance St John Butler and Robin J. Davis, pp. 20–30; John Paul Riquelme, ‘Beckett’s Companionably Late Modernism’, paper delivered at the Samuel Beckett Society Inaugural Conference, Phoenix, AZ, 19–20 February 2015; Georges Mathieu, ‘La voix qui s’exclame: modalité exclamative et affirmation de soi dans la trilogie de Beckett’, in *La prose de Samuel Beckett: configuration et progression discursives*, ed. by Julien Piat and Philippe Wahl (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 2013), pp. 79–90; Robert Kiely, ‘On Mediumship and Voices in the Trilogy’, *SBT/A*, 26 (2014), 79–90; Mooney, pp. 119–60.

⁵⁵ Katz, p. 8.

⁵⁶ Derrida, p. 223. Emphasis in the original.

⁵⁷ Katz, p. 19.

⁵⁸ HRC SB MS 5/9/2, f. front cover, *BDMP* II [accessed 21 July 2017]. See also Van Hulle and Weller, p. 198.

key to the process involved in this poetics.⁵⁹

The most common use of a non-reflexive direct object pronoun in *The Unnamable* is in conjunction with a verb of self-expression. From very early on, the narrator expresses doubts about his ability to ‘utter me’ (*U*, p. 10). In spite of this, he declares early on his intention to ‘speak of me’ all the same—this phrase is repeated throughout the novel (*U*, p. 14). He also imagines himself ‘referring to me’ and ‘talking to me about me’ before wondering, at the end of his narrative: ‘perhaps they have said me already’ (*U*, pp. 68, 112, 134).

His second declaration of intent to ‘utter me’ occurs in a passage which begins with the denarration of a story just told of his family’s death by poisoning: ‘I was never anywhere but here, no one ever got me out of here’. He laments the fact his voice is imposed on him by an anonymous group of others: ‘what I speak of, what I speak with, all comes from them’ (*U*, p. 36). Self-expression in words which have been given to him by these others might be possible, the narrator contends, through a private language which is for his ears only:

Do they consider me so plastered with their rubbish that I can never extricate myself, never make a gesture but their cast must come to life? But within, motionless, I can live, and utter me, for no ears but my own. (*U*, p. 37)

However, the peculiar grammatical structure of the English version of the text points to a dichotomy involved in this attempt to speak of oneself to oneself. The idea that language is a system of communication which is fundamentally social, or something ‘between people’, is explored in the linguistic philosophy of Fritz Mauthner, whose work Beckett had read intensively prior to writing *The Unnamable*.⁶⁰ The irony of a fictional narrator telling us that what he is narrating is for no one

⁵⁹ As *Watt*’s opening footnote suggests, its narrator is not a huge fan of pronominal reflexivity either: ‘Much valuable space has been saved, in this work, that would otherwise have been lost, by avoidance of the plethoric reflexive pronoun after *say*.’ (*W*, p. 4) Emphasis in the original.

⁶⁰ Gershon Weiler, *Mauthner’s Critique of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 55. Translation in Weiler. See also Van Hulle and Nixon, pp. 158–63.

else to hear—or, presumably, to read—brings into sharp focus the contradiction inherent in his attempt at inward escape. This is important evidence that Beckett’s move to first-person narration ‘involves only superficially a break with questions of power’.⁶¹ The oppression that the first-person narrator of *The Unnamable* suffers is due directly to his being bound up in a discursive system from which he feels alienated. Yet it is clear that he must use this discourse if he is to express his sense of alienation.

As can be seen in Beckett’s drafts, the French ‘me déclarer’, in the first published version of the sentence—‘Mais là-dedans, sans bouger, je pourrai vivre, et me déclarer, seul à m’entendre’—was first translated as the reflexive ‘give utterance to myself’. In the first typescript of the translation, this was changed: ‘But ~~inside my shell~~^{within}, motionless, I can live, and ~~give utterance~~^{utter me, to myself}, for no ears but my own.’⁶² Beckett had, from the very start of his translation process, used non-reflexive object pronouns in his notebooks and typescripts, just as he had done over two decades earlier in ‘Serena I’, so this edit was a grafting of a grammatical feature already employed elsewhere. Moreover, given Beckett’s experience as a translator of poetic pronouns, demonstrated in the shift from ‘your eyes’ to ‘my eyes’ when translating Apollinaire’s ‘Zone’ as well as his pointed correction of Péron’s translation of ‘they come’, it is highly unlikely that this non-standard use of pronominal form was anything other than an attempt to further destabilise the narrating subject of the novel, thus intensifying the uncertainty which governs this narrator’s place of being. Another consequence of the change is to give a different textual construction to the subjectivity of the two narrators of the text: while the Francophone narrator can achieve some form of self-reflexive expression, the Anglophone narrator can only ‘utter me’. Moreover, he can only do so confined ‘motionless’ from ‘within’ a place which cannot be identified.⁶³ Otherwise the process of decomposing space would have to begin all over again.

⁶¹ Connor, *Samuel Beckett: Repetition, Theory and Text*, p. 188.

⁶² HRC SB MS 5/10, f. 42r., *BDMP II* [accessed 12 May 2016].

⁶³ ‘Motionless’ is one of the three ‘most recurrent “-less” words in the published translation’ (Van Hulle and Weller, p. 191).

In spite of this distance between the self that speaks and the self that is spoken in *The Unnamable*, the narrator is never quite able to prise these two selves apart. At certain points, it seems that Worm and Mahood are telling his story; at other stages it appears that a group of ‘delegates’ have taken it over (*U*, p. 7). Suitably enough for a novel which opens with a reference to Pyrrhonian Scepticism, the insistence on the first-person voice as *The Unnamable* approaches its end never quite manages to put back together a speaking self that has been emptied out from the first page of the first draft: ‘Moi qui ~~suis~~ semble souvent le sujet des propositions que voici, je ne le suis jamais. Je n’en suis pas davantage l’objet. J’en suis absent.’⁶⁴ While this early version calls to mind the initial title of *Malone Dies*, ‘L’Absent’, the version of this passage that appears in the published text introduces the first self-negation of the narrative, formed using the title of the later play *Not I*: ‘I seem to speak, it is not I, about me, it is not about me.’⁶⁵ (*U*, p. 1) The ‘pronominal vertigo’ which results from Beckett’s assault on the first-person pronoun means that, in spite of its insistent, repeated return at the end of the text, the narrator never quite manages to reclaim his narrative, and can never identify a space from which his story is being told.⁶⁶

Conclusion

Another unusual use of a verbal form in *The Unnamable* calls to mind the work of Antonin Artaud, specifically his writing on Vincent Van Gogh. In English, the sentence reads: ‘You’ve been sufficiently assassinated, sufficiently suicided, to be able now to stand on your own feet, like a big boy.’ (*U*, p. 46) Whereas the English version is passive, the French contains ‘the paradoxical grammatical construction’ ‘[i]ls t’ont [...] assez suicidé’ [they have suicided you enough].⁶⁷ The idea of an artist’s suicide being effected by social norms, enforced by the discipline of psychiatry, is the central subject of Artaud’s book *Van Gogh le suicidé de la société*, published in response to a

⁶⁴ ‘I, who ~~am~~ seem often to be the subject of these propositions, I am not. I am not the object either. I am absent from them’ (HRC SB MS 3/10, f. 1r., *BDMP* II [accessed 28 June 2016]).

⁶⁵ HRC SB MS 7/4, f. front cover.

⁶⁶ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 246.

⁶⁷ Van Hulle and Weller, p. 142; Beckett, *L’Innommable*, p. 77.

1947 Van Gogh exhibition held in Paris which Beckett had also visited.⁶⁸ The fiercely anti-institutional thrust of Artaud's book, including references to his own time in an asylum at Rodez, was part of a wider wave of postwar writing which challenged the discipline of psychiatry.⁶⁹ Beckett was familiar with Artaud's work. When asked by James Knowlson whether he had read Artaud before writing *Waiting for Godot*, Beckett replied: 'Odds and ends for the sake of the odd blaze.'⁷⁰ Beckett was also aware that Artaud spent time confined in an asylum. When Artaud died on 4 March 1948, Beckett wrote to Thomas MacGreevy, 'Artaud died the other day in Lucia[Joyce]'s home [psychiatric hospital] at Ivry.' (SB to TM, 18 March 1948, *LSB* II, p. 75) Beckett's depictions of asylums in *Murphy* and *Malone Dies* share with Artaud's work a broadly critical perspective on the field of modern mental healthcare, but, due to the undermining of any fixed space in the novel, the single Artaudian echo in *The Unnamable* cannot be held to constitute a similar critique. Rather, it stands alongside the non-standard use of pronouns in the English version of *The Unnamable* as yet another instance of Beckett's worsening of language, while also serving as an example of his continued use of carceral references as forms of oblique protest against the world at large, rather than a targeted attack against any particular institution of confinement.

The Beckett play which comes closest to *The Unnamable*'s assault on its pronouns is *Not I*. While a monologue on a largely dark stage clearly 'privileges speech' to a certain extent, the following chapter will argue that the playing space of *Not I* is not 'a stage subjugated to the power of speech and text'.⁷¹ Rather, there are important spatial dynamics that demand to be taken into account if we want to understand how the play produces meaning. Mouth—as her name suggests—is far from being a 'body without organs', to use Artaud's term from his radio play 'To Have Done with the Judgement of God'.⁷² Rather, she is an organ without a body which needs to be interpreted

⁶⁸ Antonin Artaud, *Van Gogh le suicidé de la société*, Kindle edn (Paris: République des Lettres, 2014).

⁶⁹ Roy Porter, 'Introduction' to *The Confinement of the Insane: International Perspectives, 1800–1965*, ed. by Roy Porter and David Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 1–19 (pp. 2–3).

⁷⁰ 'Samuel Beckett Questionnaire' (1972), UoR JEK 1/2/4, no pagination, question 11. See also SB to Knowlson, 11 April 1972, *LSB* IV, pp. 291–92. Beckett told Rosemary Pountney: 'unaware of any influence from Artaud' (SB to Pountney, January 1978, qtd in Pountney, p. 182).

⁷¹ Derrida, pp. 307, 301.

⁷² Antonin Artaud, *Selected Writings*, ed. by Susan Sontag, trans. by Helen Weaver (New York: Farrar, Straus and

by analysing the particular kind of space she occupies. This stage space has a history of being produced through the confinement of the actor playing Mouth. We must pay attention to the technicalities of the theatre, as well as to those of narrative discourse, if we want to understand how a ‘new notion of space’ was created by Beckett for the stage.⁷³ It is with this in mind that I turn to the relation between the pronominal conflict of *Not I* and the confined space of its staging.

Giroux, 1976), p. 571.

⁷³ Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, trans. by Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1958), p. 124.

7

Confining Mouth:*Not I*

In March 2016, Ireland's National Concert Hall staged versions of Beckett's *Not I* and *Footfalls* as part of an evening of performance which included theatre pieces by Bernard Shaw and Fintan O'Toole, music by Franz Schubert, John Field and Krzysztof Penderecki and a reading of T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land' by Fiona Shaw. Because of this diversity of performance styles and the size of the stage in the Concert Hall—backed by a choir balcony which was closed off for the evening—*Not I* was performed as never before by special permission of the Beckett Estate.¹ Instead of positioning actor Lisa Dwan behind what would have been an unmanageably large blackout screen (which would have been impossible to remove for the other performances) in order to create the play's central image of a mouth suspended 'about 8 feet above stage level', she took her place behind a waist-high horizontal bar, which she gripped while delivering Mouth's rapid-fire monologue in full view of the audience (*CDW*, p. 376). This version of *Not I* was a staging of the physical energy required to play one of Beckett's most demanding roles. Dwan's performed movements challenged the received image of Beckett's late dramatic writing as a theatre of stasis and emphasised her need for physical confinement in other productions of the play, during which she is restrained behind the blackout screen by a head harness.² Lacking its central image, however,

¹ The stage in the main auditorium of the Concert Hall is 14.63m wide and 10.36m deep ('National Concert Hall' <<http://www.irishtheatre.ie/venuepage.aspx?venueid=203>> [accessed 13 July 2016]).

² 'From *Play* onward Beckett's stage images would grow increasingly de-humanized, reified and metonymic, featuring dismembered or incorporeal creatures. It became a theater finally static and undramatic in any traditional sense.' (Gontarski, 'Staging Himself', p. 93) See also Lois Oppenheim, 'Re-Visiting Stasis in the Work of Samuel Beckett', *SBT/A*, 21 (2009), 117–30.

the production in the Concert Hall was not quite *Not I*.



- Dwan rehearsing *Not I* (Eben Shapiro, 'Actress Lisa Dwan Retires a Bruising Beckett Role', *The Wall Street Journal*, 22 March 2016 <<http://www.wsj.com/articles/actress-lisa-dwan-retires-a-bruising-beckett-role-1458651269>> [accessed 14 July 2016]).

Dwan's use of stage equipment in her regular performances of the play follows on explicitly from the working practice of actor Billie Whitelaw, with whom Beckett worked closely. Dwan met Whitelaw in 2006 and went on to rehearse and discuss the play with her in detail.³ Though not every performance of *Not I* has the actor's body constrained in such an extreme way, confinement has had an important role in the development of the play in performance, most notably in the first production Beckett worked on.⁴ This production starred Whitelaw as Mouth with Brian Miller as

³ Lisa Dwan, 'Mouth Almighty: How Billie Whitelaw Helped Me Find Beckett and *Not I*', *American Theatre*, 12 April 2016 <<http://www.americantheatre.org/2016/04/12/mouth-almighty-how-billie-whitelaw-helped-me-find-beckett-and-not-i/>> [accessed 14 July 2016].

⁴ Jessica Tandy used a strap to keep her head in place while rehearsing for the New York premiere of the play, directed by Alan Schneider, but took it off due to discomfort (Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 592). In a 2015 production, actor Bríd Ní Neachtain used a chair with a chin rest and two bars on either side to hold onto (Samuel Beckett, *Not I*, *Rockaby*, *Footfalls*, *Come and Go*, dir. by Sarah Jane Scaife as *The Women Speak* (Dublin: Company SJ, 2015) (Sarah Jane Scaife, email to the author, 22 January 2017).

the Auditor and was staged in London's Royal Court in 1973.⁵ Whitelaw's difficulty in balancing while performing Mouth's monologue in rehearsal led her to change from a standing to a sitting posture, replacing a raised rostrum with a chair, in front of which there was a bar which she gripped in order to release tension.⁶ However, during performances, her head started to shake, moving her mouth out of the small spot of light which made it visible. In order to rectify this, an improvised solution was developed by designer Jocelyn Herbert and stage manager Robbie Hendry by which her head was clamped and she was strapped into the chair.⁷



- Whitelaw in rehearsal for the BBC TV version of *Not I*, 1975 <<http://www.artoronto.ca/?p=28134>> [accessed 13 July 2015].

How did Beckett write a play that led to one of his actors being confined in this way? And what relation does the voice coming out of this confined image have with the other spaces of the play? The answer to the first question lies in *Not I*'s compositional manuscripts; the answer to the second lies somewhere in the darkness used to frame the onstage image of a pair of lips. Both questions require an analysis of Beckett's use of the voice in his dramatic work leading up to *Not I*.

As my analysis of *Happy Days* demonstrated, the weight of vocal nuance became ever more important as Beckett developed further his minimalist stage grammar. This chapter will analyse the function of physical confinement in *Not I*, a play which, like *Happy Days*, involves the physical restriction of its lead actor, arguing that the construction of the voice plays a crucial role in the play's spatial dynamics. I will also examine aspects of the performance history of *Play*, which

⁵ The Royal Court production was reprised in 1975 with Melvyn Hastings as the Auditor. Beckett was assistant to director Anthony Page at the 1973 production.

⁶ Whitelaw had used a similar bar to release tension when performing *Play* in 1964 (Whitelaw, pp. 81–82).

⁷ Whitelaw, pp. 124–25.

shares common features with *Not I* in its use of the voice in a physically restrictive performance space. The figure of the Auditor, downstage left in a black djellaba, gives the theatre audience some form of perspectival relation when trying to fix the image of the mouth in *Not I*. However, the assault on the first-person pronoun, which picks up from that in *The Unnamable*, simultaneously undermines the play's spaces. Stylistically, Mouth's *ad lib* before the curtain rises follows on from where the narrator of *The Unnamable* stated his determination to 'go on' (CDW, p. 376).

Chapter 5 discussed Beckett's visual conceptualisation of his work by examining the theatre spaces he worked in. However, Beckett was a 'multimedia artist' who composed aurally as well as visually.⁸ If the theatre is 'a machine for making place from space', then the voice is an important catalyst in the spatial dynamic of Beckett's late plays, both as sound object and narratological category.⁹ With this in mind, I will examine Beckett's manipulation of the voice in his radio play *Cascando*, which is an important work in Beckett's effort to push the performed voice beyond the limits of intelligibility. This attempt to create a voice which would be 'addressed less to the understanding than to the nerves of the audience' recalls Antonin Artaud's lauding of Balinese theatre's attempt 'to address not only the mind but the senses'.¹⁰ Artaud repeatedly mentioned his desire to emulate this aspect of the voice in performance in *The Theatre and Its Double*, the 1958 English translation of which Beckett owned.¹¹

Producing stage space

For Artaud, the manipulation of space was a vital part of the creative process in the theatre: 'In my view no one has the right to call himself author, that is to say creator, except the person who

⁸ Mark Nixon, 'Samuel Beckett, Video Artist', in *Samuel Beckett: Debts and Legacies: New Critical Essays*, ed. by Peter Fifield and David Addyman (London: Bloomsbury Methuen, 2013), pp. 177–90 (p. 177). For an interesting articulation of the argument that Beckett was a visual thinker, see Peggy Phelan, 'The Changing Profession: Lessons in Blindness from Samuel Beckett', *PMLA*, 119.5 (2004), 1279–88.

⁹ Morash and Richards, p. 75.

¹⁰ SB to AS, 16 October 1972, Harmon, p. 283. See also Beckett's description of the voice, as reported by Jessica Tandy in an interview with Enoch Brater: 'I am not unduly concerned with intelligibility [...]. I hope the piece may work on the nerves of the audience, not its intellect.' (Qtd in Brater, *Beyond Minimalism*, p. 23) Antonin Artaud to Jean Paulhan, 28 May 1933, Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, p. 119.

¹¹ BDL [accessed 5 August 2017].

controls the direct handling of the stage.’¹² As ‘performance is first and foremost a spatial event’, Beckett’s construction of dramatic space in *Not I* has a particularly rich dynamic which, while resulting in a similar kinds of challenges for topographical interpretation, differs from the process of establishing and subsequently denarrating confined locales in *The Unnamable*.¹³ ‘All theatre space’, Anne Ubersfeld writes, ‘is by its nature closed to the extent to which it opposes itself against that which it is not, closed off from the world, from the city.’¹⁴ This concept of theatrical performance as cut off from the world beyond defines the performance space as something which takes place in an inherently enclosed space. In his work on *Play*, Beckett was keen to rigorously enforce the division between stage and audience space, specifying that the spotlight which prompts the actors’ speech ‘belongs to world of characters and cannot emanate from any part of auditorium space’ (SB to Christian Ludvigsen, 22 September 1963, *LSB* III, p. 574).¹⁵

Chapter 5 dealt with Beckett’s ‘overstatement’ of the confinement of the proscenium in *Endgame* and *Act Without Words I*. Beckett’s insistence on the actors observing the rules of the fourth wall in *Fin de partie* is a good example of an attempt to create a confined stage space; so too is his insistence on the positioning of the stage lights in *Play*. By contrast, one of the problems with the Beckett on Film version of *Not I* is that Mouth has legs. This opens up the visible space to a degree that is destructive for the functioning of the play’s central image. Before the monologue starts, we see Julianne Moore walking up to and sitting in what looks like a dentist’s chair, making the whole performance seem like a high-speed visit to the therapist.¹⁶

If ‘theatrical space is characterised by enclosure’, the 1973 Royal Court production of *Not I*

¹² Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, p. 117.

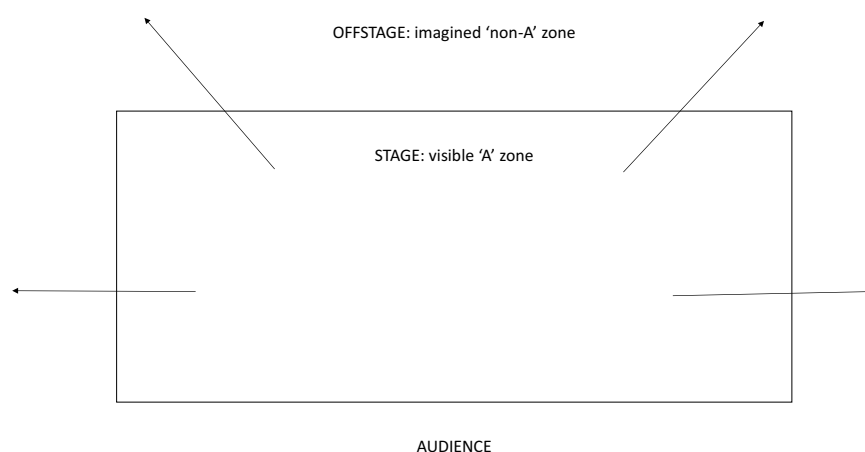
¹³ ‘[L]a représentation est d’abord un événement spatial’ (Ubersfeld, *L’école du spectateur*, rev. edn, p. 19). My use of the term ‘dramatic space’ follows that of Gay McAuley: ‘Dramatic space is made up of both textual and performance signs; it is accessible to the reader of the playtext and, differently manifested, to the spectator experiencing the space as constructed by the given production’ (Gay McAuley, *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre* (1999; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), p. 19).

¹⁴ ‘Tout espace théâtral est clos par nature dans la mesure où il s’oppose à ce qui n’est pas lui, clos par rapport au monde, à la “cité”’ (Ubersfeld, *L’école du spectateur*, rev. edn, p. 81).

¹⁵ See also SB to AS, 26 November 1963, *LSB* III, p. 584: ‘I don’t mind if the spot hits from above, provided it does not involve auditorium space.’

¹⁶ *Not I*, dir. by Neil Jordan (Blue Angel Films; Tyrone Productions, 2000) <<https://vimeo.com/28755467>> [accessed 4 September 2016].

added to this enclosure of the performance space a confinement of the actor's body which was determined by the need to have a small, floating image of a mouth precisely placed in the dark emitting a lightning-fast text.¹⁷ In realist theatre, Ubersfeld's model involves the extension of the onstage world into the offstage space. She calls this the dynamic between 'an A zone and a non-A zone, such that at any moment, non-A is defined by its relation with A'.¹⁸



- Diagram of a proscenium stage based on Ubersfeld, *L'école du spectateur*, rev. edn, p. 57 and Morash and Richards, p. 38.

Not I, as well as rejecting its first-person pronoun, seems to invert this dynamic between onstage reality and offstage imaginary. However, unlike in the realist theatre on which Ubersfeld developed her concept of theatre space, this non-A zone is not one of those easily identifiable 'unenclosed places', such as 'the street or the open mountains'.¹⁹ Rather, it is more like the in-between space described in Beckett's short prose piece 'neither' (1977), in which a lone figure, having moved in vain from figures of self and other described as 'two lit refuges', 'halt[s] for good': 'gently light

¹⁷ 'L'espace théâtral se caractérise par sa clôture' (Ubersfeld, *L'école du spectateur*, rev. edn, p. 52).

¹⁸ Ubersfeld, *Reading Theatre*, p. 115.

¹⁹ 'Sont [...] non-A les lieux non clos' [Non-A are those unenclosed places]; '[le] cadre naturel [du héros B] est la rue ou les libres montagnes'. [The natural surroundings for the hero of B is the street or the open mountains.] (Anne Ubersfeld, *Le roi et le bouffon: étude sur le théâtre de Hugo de 1830 à 1839* (Paris: Librairie José Corti, 1974), pp. 409, 410). In *Le Roi et le bouffon*, Ubersfeld uses 'B' and 'non-A' interchangeably (see p. 408).

unfading on that unheeded neither unspeakable home' (*CSP*, p. 258). While Mouth speaks of an institutional home that takes the place of the family 'home' she never had, the place from which she tells her story lacks the positive qualities of any kind of living space—domestic or institutional (*CDW*, p. 376). Rather, it is describable only in tenuous relation to such narrated locations, a relation made even more fragile by her refusal to identify with the figure she is describing in her story.

In spite of the differences between the construction of the spaces of Beckett's prose and those of his dramatic work, some basic interpretative questions remain, as outlined on the first manuscript page of *Watt* and in the opening of *The Unnamable*: Who is the speaker? Where is she speaking from? 'I know no more where she is or why thus than she does. All I know is in the text. "She" is purely a stage entity, part of a stage image and purveyor of a stage text. The rest is Ibsen.'²⁰ Beckett's reaction to Alan Schneider's efforts to locate Mouth is usually read as a dismissal of the attempt to root the play in a realistic backstory.²¹ However, while trying to naturalise the image of a woman's mouth suspended in the dark on the model of Monika Fludernik's 'natural' narratology would impoverish rather than enrich the interpretative process, it is the very possibility of such a backstory that makes the play function.²² In Beckett's construction of his theatrical image, the bodies onstage, particularly those only partially visible, encourage such hermeneutic endeavour, even while resisting interpretative closure. Beckett himself acknowledges this in a letter to German director Carlheinz Caspari, following his disavowal of the suggestion that *Godot* was 'a symbolist play': 'That at any moment Symbols, Ideas, Forms might show up, this is for me secondary—is there anything they do not show up behind? In any event there is nothing to be gained by giving them clear form.' (SB to Caspari, 25 July 1953, *LSB II*, p. 391) Beckett here

²⁰ SB to AS, 16 October 1972, Harmon, p. 283. Schneider directed 'one of America's premiere stage couples', Jessica Tandy and Hume Cronyn, for a Beckett festival at Lincoln Center comprising *Act Without Words I*, *Krapp's Last Tape*, *Happy Days* and *Not I*. Incredibly, Tandy played *Happy Days* in repertory while rehearsing the equally demanding *Not I* (Bianchini, *Beckett's Theatre in America*, pp. 101–02, 105). Henderson Forsythe played the Auditor in the Lincoln Center premiere of *Not I* (Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 592).

²¹ See Gontarski, 'Samuel Beckett and the "Idea" of a Theatre', p. 138.

²² For more on Beckett and Ibsen, see Enoch Brater, *Ten Ways of Thinking About Samuel Beckett: The Falsetto of Reason* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), pp. 33–47, 131–46.

accepts the inevitability of interpretative frames being imposed on his dramatic work as part of the hermeneutic process but warns against overtly explicative directorial work on his playtexts, foreshadowing the Director's critique of 'explicitation' in *Catastrophe* (see Chapter 9).²³ As Erik Tønning points out, Beckett's letter to Schneider 'will not prevent any audience [...] from reconstructing what they can' of Mouth's story.²⁴

For Ubersfeld, 'the enclosure with regard to the wings [...] [has] as its corollary [...] the opening of the stage space onto an imaginary elsewhere'.²⁵ By putting Mouth eight feet above the stage in darkness and having her create the story world of the play diegetically, Beckett creates onstage an image of that very 'elsewhere', the non-A zone suggested by the onstage world of theatrical realism with which Ibsen is associated. Hence the interpretations of Mouth as a voice from beyond the grave or on the 'precipice of [...] mortality'.²⁶ Yet the stage image that remains means '[t]he offstage gobbling up the stage in its entirety [is] never really actualized'.²⁷ In order to fully understand how the play functions spatially, we must examine the pronominal conflict which structures the text, a narratological conflict initially figured in the compositional manuscripts as an opposition between voices as sound objects.

Undoing 'Kilcool'

Beckett's work on *Not I* started with a manuscript which uses multiple placenames and ended up producing a monologue in the dark shorn of toponymic references, making it a key text in the critical model of Beckett's poetics of undoing.²⁸ As I have argued in previous chapters, this model, helpful as it is in understanding Beckett's working process, needs to be re-evaluated in the light of

²³ 'Qu'à chaque instant des Symboles, des Idées et des Formes se profilent, cela pour moi est secondaire, derrière quoi ne se profilent-ils pas? A les préciser en tout cas on n'a rien à gagner' (*LSB II*, p. 389).

²⁴ Tønning, p. 117.

²⁵ '[L]a clôture par rapport aux coulisses [...] ayant pour corollaire [...] l'ouverture de l'espace scénique sur un ailleurs imaginaire' (Anne Ubersfeld, *L'école du spectateur*, 1st ed. (1977; Paris: Éditions Sociales, 1991), pp. 93–94).

²⁶ 'We're assuming she's in some sort of limbo. Death? After-life? Whatever you want to call it. OK?' (AS to SB, [? 3] September 1972, Harmon, p. 279); Morash and Richards, p. 89.

²⁷ Arka Chattopadhyay, "'I Switch Off': Towards a Beckettian Minority of Theatrical Event", in *Deleuze and Beckett*, ed. by S. E. Wilmer and Audronė Žukauskaitė (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 230–45 (p. 243).

²⁸ See Gontarski, *Intent of 'Undoing'*, pp. 131–49.

closer analysis of the development of his work as well as the instances in which he introduced, not just removed, detail from his texts. Shane Weller has read *Endgame* as a staging of the repetitive process of rehearsal [*répétition*].²⁹ Beckett's process of undoing also involved a significant amount of 'redoing', often carried out during the repetitive performance process through which his work was done, undone and redone.³⁰

Beckett gave various answers when asked about the sources of *Not I*: Enoch Brater was told by actors Jessica Tandy and Hume Cronyn that Beckett picked up the image of the auditor from watching a woman in a djellaba in Tunisia; Beckett told Deirdre Bair 'and others' that Mouth's monologue was that of a derelict old Irish woman; and, as well as pointing to *The Unnamable* as the source of Mouth's monologue, he told James Knowlson that inspiration for the piece came from Caravaggio's *Beheading of St John the Baptist*.³¹ Just like his remark that the wall of the Santé prison in Paris was 'the original wall' of *Film*, such comments tell us a lot about Beckett's view of his own sources but little about how space functions in his work.³² In order to analyse Beckett's use of confinement in *Not I*, we must examine the work of this creative process in the manuscripts and performance history of the play, studying what Beckett did as well as what he said.

On 25 August 1963, Beckett mentioned to Alan Schneider that he had started work on a 'face play' they had previously discussed.³³ The 'Kilcool' manuscript, containing various attempts at getting the composition of such a play underway, consists of 11 pages, verso and recto.³⁴

²⁹ Weller, *A Taste for the Negative*, pp. 135–36.

³⁰ See Finn Fordham, *I Do I Undo I Redo: The Textual Genesis of Modernist Selves in Hopkins, Yeats, Conrad, Forster, Joyce, and Woolf* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). While Fordham is interested in the redoing of the authorial self through writing, my focus here is on the redoing of the text in performance.

³¹ Enoch Brater, 'Dada, Surrealism, and the Genesis of *Not I*', *Modern Drama*, 18.1 (1975), 49–59 (p. 50); James Knowlson in conversation with SB at rehearsals for the 1973 Royal Court production, qtd in Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 590; SB to Knowlson, 29 April 1973, *LSB IV*, p. 332. Bair's account is doubtful as she reports Beckett telling the same story, using exactly the same words, to multiple people: 'Alan Schneider, Billie Whitelaw, A. J. Leventhal and others' (Bair, Deirdre, *Samuel Beckett: A Biography*, rev. edn (London: Vintage, 1990), p. 748 n. 59). For more on Beckett's admiration of Caravaggio's painting in Malta and its influence on *Not I*, see SB to Avigdor Arikha and Anne Atik, 25 October 1971, *LSB IV*, pp. 270–71; SB to Edith Kern, 15 March 1986, *LSB IV*, p. 671.

³² Beckett in conversation with Damian Pettigrew, qtd in David Tucker, 'Reassessing *Film* (1964) and Its Remake(s)', keynote address at Beckett and Europe, conference held at the University of Reading, 3–4 November 2015.

³³ SB to AS, 25 August 1963, Harmon, p. 139.

³⁴ The manuscript is dated [? 24] August and 23 and 29 December 1963 (TCD MS 4664, ff. 10r., 12r., 15r.).

Pountney identifies three separate drafts and, like Gontarski, only studies seven of the pages.³⁵

Gontarski discounts the draft beginning on the eighth page as belonging to a ‘different play, with three or four characters’.³⁶ Certainly, elements in this fourth draft also point to other late dramatic works: the lover who turns up at night both prefigures the situation narrated in ... *but the clouds* ... (1977) and echoes the title of Beckett’s short prose piece ‘Horn Came Always at Night’ (‘Horn venait toujours la nuit’, 1973); the relationship between the main female protagonist described in the monologue and the older Mrs Frost prefigures that between Amy and the old Mrs Winter in the story recounted in *Footfalls*.³⁷ However, features which relate this fourth draft to the preceding three—the interruption of speech by ‘tears’, the presence of a ‘lover’, and mention of ‘age’ and the ‘voice’, all of which are elements listed in an early outline—suggest that it too should be seen as a draft towards *Not I*, even if, as seems most likely, this fourth draft is a compositional dead end.³⁸

The three earlier drafts contain much more direct links with the published play, the most important of which concern the relationship between space and voice. In a list of notes on the first page of the draft material, there are already the elements which will form the basis for *Not I*, such as a single face lit against a dark background (‘Woman’s face alone in constant light [...] Nothing but fixed lit face + speech’) and speech which begins before the houselights are fully up (‘When theatre lights down [? curtain] before curtain up, light on face and speech already.’ [...] ‘Opening: [? 4]–5 lines [faint xxx] muffled [? text] speech’, curtain up, conclusion of this speech’).³⁹ Both the voices of ‘Kilcool’ as well as its spatial features have similarities with Beckett’s other dramatic work of the early 1960s. Three months after starting the first draft, he told director Alan Schneider: ‘The best background [for *Play*] is that which best suggests empty unlit space.’ (SB to AS, 26 November

³⁵ Pountney, p. 92.

³⁶ Gontarski, *Intent of ‘Undoing’*, p. 141. Gontarski counts four ‘version[s]’/‘episodes’ (pp. 135–40). I follow Peter Shillingsburg’s definition of a draft as being ‘a preliminary form of a version’ which is in turn ‘one specific form of the work’, which is ‘conceptually that which is implied by authoritative texts’ (Shillingsburg, *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age*, pp. 45, 44, 1; Peter L. Shillingsburg, ‘Literary Documents, Texts, and Works Represented Digitally’, *Center for Textual Studies and Digital Humanities Publications*, 3 (2013) <http://ecommons.luc.edu/ctsdh_pubs/3> [accessed 5 September 2016]).

³⁷ The date of composition of ‘Horn venait la nuit’ is uncertain. Beckett told John Calder he composed it circa 1960 (Mark Nixon, ‘Preface’ to *TFN*, p. xvii).

³⁸ TCD MS 4664, ff. 18r.–19r., 11v.

³⁹ TCD MS 4664, f. 10r.

1963, *LSB* III, p. 584) This stage darkness, which is a central part of Beckett's late theatrical style, is mentioned in a later version of the stage directions in 'Kilcool': 'Old woman's face, 4 ft. above stage level, slightly off centre, lit by strong steady light. Body not visible. Stage in darkness.

Nothing visible but face.⁴⁰

The early list of notes in the manuscript which contains some of the basic concepts for *Not I* also includes a statement which would eventually give the published play its title and its structure: the unnamed central protagonist, we are told, '[t]alks of herself in 3rd person'.⁴¹ A later note continues this aversion towards the first-person pronoun: "'I" "me" etc. never spoken outside assumed voice'.⁴² This note demonstrates the importance of the status of the voice as sound object in shaping the narratological structure of the play, a structure based on the opposition between an 'assumed' and 'normal' voice of the same speaker. The rule that the first-person pronoun should only be spoken by this 'assumed' voice is broken in a later passage which revisits the images of intrauterine confinement found in Beckett's Psychology notes and early prose:

~~There is~~ Someone in me, trying to get out, saying let me out, let me out, when I think of that, inside me all [xxx] dark, someone there, wanting out, into the light, poor creature, sometimes it seems ... it seems to one, I talk and talk and hear nothing only (assumed voice, low, [? panting] [? speaking]), Let me out! Let me out! (Normal voice) Was I in someone once, and where is she now, if I was in her once, and she let me out.⁴³

As the assumed voice is given to the figure trapped inside the main speaker who needs to 'get out' in order to go on, the lines preceding her appeal, which include both 'me' and 'I', must be attributed to the '[n]ormal voice' of the speaker. By the fourth draft of 'Kilcool', Beckett had cut the explicit conflict between voices, leaving one voice recounting a story on her own and notes such as '[y]ou

⁴⁰ TCD MS 4664, f. 14r. All writing on this folio is erased with a diagonal line.

⁴¹ TCD MS 4664, f. 10r.

⁴² TCD MS 4664, f. 11r.

⁴³ TCD MS 4664, f. 16r.

‘speak what you hear etc’ recalling *How It Is* in which, as the narrator repeatedly puts it, ‘I say it as I hear it’.⁴⁴

In the first and second drafts, Beckett specified that the assumed voice should be ‘low, fast, breathless’.⁴⁵ In other stage directions, the assumed voice is described as ‘panting’.⁴⁶ Such stage directions show direct similarities with the voices of *Play* and *Cascando*, a recording of which Beckett had attended in Paris earlier in 1963. In this recording, the voices were rendered much faster than those of the later BBC version, the recording sessions for which Beckett did not attend. Drafts of *Cascando* have ‘débit rapide, haletant’ [rapid delivery, panting] and, even when this was changed to ‘bas, haletant’ [low, panting] in one of the later drafts, the timings which Beckett jotted in the manuscript margin indicate that he still had a rapid tempo in mind.⁴⁷ As Pim Verhulst points out, in French, ‘débit’ ‘has the connotation of a flow or an outpouring, reminiscent of logorrhea’, a description which also evokes the delivery of Mouth’s monologue in *Not I*.⁴⁸ The stage direction ‘*panting*’, which Beckett uses in his English translation of *Cascando*, is also noteworthy due to the relation it has with *How It Is*, a novel in which the word ‘panting’ appears 72 times (*CDW*, p. 297).⁴⁹ Beckett started his translation of *How It Is* in early 1960, preparing part of its opening for Patrick Magee to read on the BBC.⁵⁰ In a letter to the actor, he described the work as being ‘separated by pauses during which panting cordially invited’ (SB to Magee, 26 February 1960, *LSB* III, p. 306). Clearly, a rapid, panting voice was on Beckett’s mind when composing both prose and dramatic work during the early 1960s.

⁴⁴ TCD MS 4664, f. 18v.; Beckett, *How It Is* (London: Faber, 2009), p. 3.

⁴⁵ TCD MS 4664, ff. 10v., 13r.

⁴⁶ TCD MS 4664, ff. 10v., 13r.

⁴⁷ HL MS Thr 70/1, f. 6r.; HL MS Thr 70/4, f. 1r.; HL MS Thr 70/5, f. 1r. For an analysis, see Pim Verhulst, ‘Beckett’s “Adaphatroce”: Rethinking Theatre through Radio’, paper presented at Staging Beckett and Contemporary Theatre and Performance Cultures, conference held at the University of Reading, 9–11 April 2015, qtd in Luz María Sánchez, *The Technological Epiphanies of Samuel Beckett: Machines of Inscription and Audiovisual Manipulation*, trans. by John Z. Komurki (Mexico City: Futura Textos, 2016), p. 36. Translation by Verhulst. Judging by variations in handwriting, it would appear that the initial stage direction was added as a revision.

⁴⁸ Verhulst, ‘Beckett’s “Adaphatroce”’, qtd in Sánchez, p. 36.

⁴⁹ Beckett, *How It Is*. The French version most often uses the infinitive form of the verb, ‘haleter’ (*Comment c’est* (1961; Paris: Minuit, 2015)).

⁵⁰ Performed by Magee as ‘From an Unabandoned Work’ <https://ubusound.memoryoftheworld.org/beckett/beckett-samuel_how-it-is_patrick-magee.mp3> [accessed 26 August 2016].

Beckett also composed *Play* while translating *How It Is*. This theatre piece, as well as sharing important vocal features with *Cascando*, was a crucial work in developing the spatial setup which would lead to the confined stage image of *Not I*.⁵¹ In winter 1963, during which period he was composing the ‘Kilcool’ drafts, Beckett rushed back from rehearsals of the world premiere of *Spiel [Play]* in Ulm, Germany, in order to attend the *Cascando* recording sessions in the Radiodiffusion-télévision française studios in Paris.⁵² Like the French radio broadcast of *Cascando*, *Play* is delivered with a ‘[r]apid tempo throughout’ (CDW, p. 307). While this tempo caused significant problems during rehearsals for the 1964 London premiere in the Old Vic, during which Beckett worked for the first time with Billie Whitelaw, the playwright was impressed enough by the speed of vocal delivery achieved to bring a tape of the rehearsal back to Paris to demonstrate to the actors playing *Comédie [Play]* just how fast he wanted the piece to be performed.⁵³ As one actor from the Paris production noted, Beckett ‘wanted it spoken with the speed of a machine gun’.⁵⁴ Unlike her co-stars in London, Whitelaw had no problems with this rapid speed of delivery so it is no surprise that Beckett requested that she play Mouth in the 1973 Royal Court production.⁵⁵

In summary, the high vocal tempo that Beckett experimented with in the ‘Kilcool’ drafts, which is key to the distinction between the ‘normal’ and the ‘assumed’ voice in those drafts and which would eventually lead to the restrictive performance conditions of the play, should be seen as part of a broader move on Beckett’s part in the 1960s to speed up the delivery of certain of his texts in performance. ‘All I feel sure of is the text must go very fast’, Beckett wrote to Schneider in 1972.⁵⁶ Then, in a later letter: ‘I hear it breathless, urgent, feverish, rhythmic, panting along’.⁵⁷ In

⁵¹ The spatial arrangement of *Play* is strongly foreshadowed in Beckett’s suggestions for a staged reading of *All That Fall* featuring ‘a stage in darkness with a spot picking out the faces as required’ (SB to Alan Simpson, 28 January 1958, LSB III, p. 102).

⁵² Verhulst, ‘Beckett’s “Adaphatroce”’; see also Pilling, *A Samuel Beckett Chronology*, p. 162 and ‘Chronology 1963’, LSB III, p. 523.

⁵³ Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 517.

⁵⁴ ‘Il voulait qu’on parle à une vitesse de mitrailleuse’ (Michael Lonsdale, qtd and trans. in C. J. Ackerley and S. E. Gontarski, *The Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett: A Reader’s Guide to his Works, Life, and Thought* (New York: Grove, 2004), p. 444).

⁵⁵ Whitelaw, p. 78; Harmon, p. 287 n. 1.

⁵⁶ SB to AS, 25 July 1972, Harmon, p. 273.

⁵⁷ SB to AS, 16 October 1972, Harmon p. 283.

addition, it is also evident from the mention of the speaking mouth being behind a ‘curtain’ in the ‘Kilcool’ drafts that Beckett conceived his play to be performed on a proscenium stage. Having overstated the proscenium in *Act Without Words I*, where better to stage the breakdown of subject and object than in the performance space where the concept of the modern subject was forged through the scenarios of realist drama?

Redoing *Not I*

Judging by current available evidence, Beckett put aside his work on the play that would eventually become *Not I* in 1963, returning to it early the following decade. Ruby Cohn recalls Beckett asking her in 1971: ‘Can you stage a mouth? Just a moving mouth with the rest of the stage in darkness?’⁵⁸ The central image of the play was still with him eight years after starting ‘Kilcool’, during which time he had worked closely on constructing similar images for productions of *Play*, including a 1966 French TV version in which the rapid-fire voices were constructed mechanically in post-production.⁵⁹ The technical challenges of staging voices in the dark were significant and Beckett’s work with the new media of television and radio was important in developing the style of theatrical writing which produced *Not I*, a play in which the body that produces a voice ‘coming out of the dark’ is confined in that darkness.⁶⁰ Such darkness allowed for the presentation of images and voices in Beckett’s dramatic work which both call out for and resist interpretation.

The conflict between voices which is outlined explicitly in the four drafts of ‘Kilcool’ by having two different voices comprise an antiphonal narrative is framed differently in the manuscript of *Not I*, which Beckett started writing on 20 March 1972, as well as the subsequent typescripts.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Cohn, *A Beckett Canon*, p. 315.

⁵⁹ Director Marin Karmitz, working in collaboration with Beckett, used a machine called a *phonogène*, with which one can speed up voices without altering their tone (Sánchez, pp. 37–39). For more on the 1966 production, see *Marin Karmitz / Samuel Beckett / Comédie*, ed. by Caroline Bourgeois (Paris: Regard, 2001). I would like to thank Luz María Sánchez for her help with my research into the 1966 TV production of *Comédie*.

⁶⁰ Beckett described his radio play *All That Fall* as ‘coming out of the dark’ in a letter refusing permission for a staging of it (SB to Barney Rosset, 27 August 1957, *LSB III*, p. 63). For Beckett’s early unawareness of the technology of stage lighting, see his 1958 letter on the then recently written *Krapp’s Last Tape*: ‘the whole thing is played, apart from the two or three retreats backstage, in a small pool of light front centre, the rest of stage being in darkness (I presume this is technically feasible)’ (SB to AS, 30 March 1958, *LSB III*, pp. 120–21).

⁶¹ UoR MS 1227/7/12/1, f. 1r. I number the manuscripts and typescripts of *Not I / Pas moi* according to their listed order

Here, as in the fourth draft of ‘Kilcool’, there is only one voice, which again begins speaking, ‘unintelligible’, prior to the curtain going up. Rather than giving the speaker ‘assumed’ and ‘normal’ voices, Beckett has this voice aggressively attack the first-person pronoun each time it appears: ‘What? ... I? ... no ... no?! ... she ...’.⁶² In TS 2, the ‘I’ is replaced: ‘what? ... Iwho? ... what? ... no ... ~~no~~NO! ... she ...’.⁶³ By TS 4, the first-person pronoun has been erased completely, only for it to appear again, for the first time, in the title of the play.⁶⁴

On 12 November 1981, Beckett told André Bernold of his desire to create ‘a voice that is a shadow. A white voice’.⁶⁵ However, Beckett frequently had very particular kinds of voices in mind for his dramatic work, a particularity which is at odds with William Worthen’s image of the voice in Beckett’s dramatic corpus as being ‘[e]mptied as a sign of the protagonist’s expressive presence’.⁶⁶ In an early note on ‘Kilcool’, Beckett recorded the idea of giving a ‘different voice quality’ to each theme in his draft.⁶⁷ In a typed synopsis drawn up while composing *Not I* almost a decade later, Beckett noted that Mouth recognises her own voice because of its accent.⁶⁸ Additions to typescripts of *Not I* suggest that Beckett considered having the voice which rejects the first-person pronoun come from a particular place. In TS 5, Beckett underlined by hand a word which describes the specific tonal quality of the voice that Mouth describes: ‘certain vowel sounds’. He then inserted ‘vow-ell’ in the left margin.⁶⁹ On the same typescript, Beckett developed a note which seems to indicate that Mouth could have an Irish accent, a note which is further developed on subsequent typescripts and included on Billie Whitelaw’s rehearsal script for the Royal Court production of the play in early 1973:

in Mary Bryden, Julian Garforth and Peter Mills, *Beckett at Reading: Catalogue of the Beckett Manuscript Collection at the University of Reading* (Reading: Whiteknights Press, 1998), pp. 65–68.

⁶² UoR MS 1227/7/12/1, f. 2r.

⁶³ UoR MS 1227/7/12/3, f. 1r.

⁶⁴ UoR MS 1227/7/12/5, f. 1r. For a discussion of this erasure of the first-person pronoun in light of Beckett’s Psychology notes, see Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, pp. 132–35.

⁶⁵ Bernold, *Beckett’s Friendship*, p. 77. ‘[U]ne voix qui soit une ombre. Une voix blanche’ (Bernold, *L’amitié de Beckett*, p. 108).

⁶⁶ William B. Worthen, *Modern Drama and the Rhetoric of Theater* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 137.

⁶⁷ TCD MS 4664, f. 11r.

⁶⁸ JBL SB MS 12/23, f. 1r.

⁶⁹ UoR MS 1227/7/12/6, f. 3r.

‘Any’: pronounce ‘Anny’.

‘Baby’: pronounce ‘Babby’.

‘Either’: pronounce ‘Eether’.

(for example)⁷⁰

In the same letter in which Beckett warned Schneider off trying to give Mouth a backstory in order to quell his actors, Beckett rejects the suggestion that a local context be read into such vocal instructions: ‘Simply an example of the certain vowel sounds’. No Irishness intended.⁷¹ As well as having queries about Mouth’s place of origin, Schneider was also concerned regarding the space that the performer playing Mouth occupied, specifically the fact that it was a thrust stage. He expressed these concerns to Beckett: ‘I have enclosed floor plan of FORUM theatre, probably best small theatre in New York. Although you may be disturbed because it is not proscenium.’ In this production, instead of *ad libbing* behind the curtain before it rose to reveal a blacked-out picture frame, actor Jessica Tandy was ‘roll[ed] on in dark’.⁷²

As noted by Gontarski, Beckett started the ‘Kilcool’ drafts by using Irish indicators of place: the title of the manuscript itself is a misspelled version of the town adjacent to Greystones where Beckett’s mother lived and there is reference made to ‘Redford by the sea’, the part of Greystones where both Beckett’s parents are buried, as well as to the ‘Slow + Easy’ [Dublin and Southeastern] train which served the area.⁷³ It is worth noting that these references only appear in the first draft of the play; none of the other ‘Kilcool’ drafts have any Irish toponyms. Beckett’s undoing of space is thus best represented not by a smooth curve but rather, like his progression towards using French, by a zigzag line.⁷⁴ When Beckett deleted the South County Dublin placename ‘Croker’s Acres’ in

⁷⁰ UoR MS 1227/7/12/6, f. 7r.; UoR MS 1227/7/12/7, f. 6r.; UoR MS 1227/7/12/8, f. 6r.; UoR MS 1227/7/12/9, f. 8r.; UoR BW A/2/1, p. 8.

⁷¹ SB to AS, 16 October 1972, Harmon, p. 283.

⁷² AS to SB, [? 3] September 1972, Harmon, p. 279.

⁷³ Gontarski, *Intent of ‘Undoing’*, p. 136; TCD MS 4664, ff. 10r., 11r. Beckett re-inserted the terminal ‘e’ in ‘Kilcoole’ in different colour ink when revising his first draft (TCD MS 4664, f. 10r.).

⁷⁴ See Slote, ‘Bilingual Beckett’, p. 114.

translating the play from English to French, the translated text lost the last of its topographic markers of Beckett's homeland.⁷⁵ However, the reference to Croker's Acres itself was only added in the fourth *Not I* typescript, going against the received opinion that Beckett made his texts progressively less topographically grounded as he worked.⁷⁶ While 'vaguening' and undoing was a vital part of Beckett's working process, such instances demonstrate that this working process was characterised by a balancing of topographic detail through addition as well as the predominant process of subtraction. By paying closer attention to this compositional process, we can get a better idea of Beckett's poetics and a deeper understanding of how his stage spaces work.

Further complicating the idea of Beckett's creative process being one of simply paring away specifics, Whitelaw uses 'babby' in the BBC television production broadcast in 1976 but slips into her broad, North of England accent to include the piece of dialect.⁷⁷ In the bare, dark, non-A zone of *Not I*, this dialectal inflection in the *après-texte*, which develops Beckett's note in the *avant-texte*, adds specific socio-cultural nuance to Mouth's descriptions of vagrancy. Such tiny shifts become even more important in the absence of the Auditor, which Beckett had suggested cutting prior to the world premiere in New York.⁷⁸ When it came to recording the play for the BBC, Beckett approved the removal of the Auditor, an omission he would retain for the Paris production starring Madelaine Renaud in 1975.⁷⁹ With so little visible onstage, the introduction of the smallest vocal detail opens potential interpretative avenues.

⁷⁵ It gained references in the margins to verses of the Bible, which Beckett matched to Biblical allusions in the draft (*Pas moi* MS 2, UoR MS 1396/4/26, ff. 6r.–7r.).

⁷⁶ Pim Verhulst, 'Spatio-Geographical Abstraction in Samuel Beckett's *Not I / Pas moi*', *English Text Construction*, 1.2 (2008), 267–80 (p. 274).

⁷⁷ Joseph Wright, ed., *The English Dialect Dictionary*, 6 vols (London: Henry Frowde, 1898–1905), I (1898), p. 107 <<https://archive.org/details/englishdialectdi01wriguoft>> [accessed 28 July 2017]. It is too hard to say whether Whitelaw uses 'any' or 'anny'. See *Not I*, dir. by Tristram Powell (BBC: 1976) in 'A Wake for Sam' (BBC: 1990) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4LDwfKxr-M>> [accessed 3 September 2016], 3:27–3:30, 9:59–10:00; *CDW*, pp. 376, 380. Her repetition 'any ... any' uses standard pronunciation (7:20–7:21; *CDW*, p. 378). She uses the RP pronunciation of 'either' (12:56–13:05; *CDW*, p. 382).

⁷⁸ 'The auditor? only answer worth giving: try it without him. The more he disturbs the better' (SB to AS, 5 November 1972, Harmon, p. 287).

⁷⁹ The Auditor was restored for the production Beckett directed in Paris in 1978. 'At the end of this production of the play, Auditor covered his head with his hands in a gesture of increased helplessness and despair, as if unable to bear any longer the torrent of sound.' (James Knowlson and John Pilling, *Frescoes of the Skull: The Later Prose and Drama of Samuel Beckett* (London: Calder, 1979), p. 198) According to Ruby Cohn, the Auditor's gestures in this production 'were still unsatisfactory to Beckett' (Cohn, *Just Play*, p. 267).



- Screenshot from the BBC broadcast of *Not I* <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4LDwfKxr-M>>, first broadcast 22 April 1976 as part of the programme ‘Shades’ [accessed 4 September 2016].

Conclusion

Cutting the Auditor leads to an even greater focus on the actor playing Mouth in performance analysis of *Not I*. At a Beckett conference in 2015, four scholars presented their research on a panel entitled ‘The Performing Body’, which discussed the constraints placed on actors by Beckett’s work, including those placed on Lisa Dwan in her 2014 production of *Not I*.⁸⁰ Hannah Simpson’s paper, subtitled ‘The Actor’s Physical Suffering in the Beckettian Production’, compared the descriptions of suffering by actors performing Beckett’s work to definitions of torture.⁸¹ While the language of torture is often used to describe Beckett productions—Whitelaw speaks of ‘sensory

⁸⁰ Samuel Beckett, *Not I, Footfalls, Rockaby*, dir. by Walter Asmus (London: Royal Court, 2014). For Dwan’s TV version of *Not I*, see <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Llyhy1g3TVI>>, 33:43–43:07 [accessed 5 September 2016].

⁸¹ Hannah Simpson, ‘“Is There Anything You Ever Write for an Actor that Isn’t Physically Painful?”: The Actor’s Physical Suffering in the Beckettian Production’, paper presented at Staging Beckett and Contemporary Theatre and Performance Cultures, conference held at the University of Reading, 9–11 April 2015.

deprivation’; Dwan adds the politically loaded and highly problematic term ‘waterboarding’—and while torture is an important theme in his work, there are clear differences between the experience of an actor and that of, say, a tortured political prisoner.⁸² Because of the heightened speed at which the play is performed, the actor playing Mouth must be willing to put herself through a rigorous training process of learning and reciting the lines. It is precisely the self-willed confrontation with the difficulty of the playtext which precludes us from viewing the performer as a victim of the play’s author or director. As Simpson put it, ‘you can’t bully someone into doing *Not I*’.⁸³

The compositional process and performance history of *Not I* is an excellent example of the work Beckett did to balance indicators of place in his work, creating a piece which is open to multiple interpretations by performers, spectators, viewers and readers. Given that Beckett suppressed details which would have allowed his work to speak on behalf of inmates of institutions of confinement (see Chapter 9), we should be wary of statements which use the language of torture to describe the performance process of a play such as *Not I*, especially given the privileged position the actor holds as being ‘no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text’ who can easily create interpretative frames for the work itself.⁸⁴ Just as a reader or viewer interprets a work of art, so too does an actor make crucial interpretative decisions in their rehearsal and performance of a dramatic role. Whitelaw’s marked-up working copy of *Not I* testifies to such active, productive reading in rehearsal and performance.⁸⁵

In an essay on the state censorship of prison writing in apartheid South Africa, J. M. Coetzee writes of the problem of representing the experience of a prisoner from without: ‘Since the time of Flaubert, the novel of realism has been vulnerable to criticism of the motives behind its

⁸² James Knowlson, ‘Practical Aspects of Theatre, Radio and Television: Extracts from an Unscripted Interview with Billie Whitelaw’, *JOBS*, 3 (1978), no pagination
<<http://www.english.fsu.edu/jobs/num03/Num3Practicalaspectsoftheatre.htm>>; Elizabeth Nonemake, ‘Lisa Dwan: The “Privilege” and “Trauma” of Performing Works by Samuel Beckett’, *The Frame*, 28 March 2016
<<http://www.scpr.org/programs/the-frame/2016/03/28/47582/lisa-dwan-the-privilege-and-trauma-of-performing-w/>> [both accessed 17 August 2016].

⁸³ Simpson, ‘The Actor’s Physical Suffering’. See also Hannah Simpson, ‘“Now Keep Out of the Way, Whitelaw”: Self-Expression, Agency, and Directorial Control in W. B. Yeats’s and Samuel Beckett’s Theatre’, *Comparative Drama*, 49.4 (2015), 399–418.

⁸⁴ Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. by Richard Miller (1974; New York: Hill and Wang, 1987), p. 4.

⁸⁵ Samuel Beckett, *Not I* (London: Faber, 1973), UoR BW A/2/4.

preoccupation with the mean, the low, the ugly. If the novelist finds in squalor the occasion for his most soaring poetic eloquence, might he not be guilty of seeking out his squalid subject matter for perversely literary reasons?'⁸⁶ By drawing so heavily on imagery of torture in interviews, performers likewise risk appropriating an experience of dereliction and undermining an important aspect of the politics of Beckett's work. While most spectators will not confuse the description of a difficult rehearsal process with an interpretation of the work, such statements do risk filling in important gaps in the play, gaps which are crucial to the way in which *Not I* functions.

The darkness which surrounds Mouth, whether it be onscreen or onstage, creates a visual equivalent to the gaps in her narrative. In Beckett's early experiments with first-person narration such as *Watt*, narrative gaps appear as the result of the insertion of an unreliable narrator; likewise, in 'The End' and 'The Expelled', we cannot identify the building the narrator has been kicked out of because of the use of first-person narrators who will not, or cannot, tell us where they are. For Iser, gaps provide 'the opportunity [...] to bring into play our own faculty for establishing connections—for filling in the gaps left by the text itself'.⁸⁷ In works such as *The Unnamable* and *Not I*, such gaps become so prominent that they engulf the work, creating narratives which are structured around an attack on first-person narrative perspective. Through the improvised solution of restricting an actor's body in order to ensure both a high-speed vocal delivery and a stable image, confinement became a practical measure of ensuring the hermeneutic openness of the play.⁸⁸ This openness is in stark contrast with the athletics of Dwan's performance in the Concert Hall in 2016, in which her visible movement disrupted the balance achieved by the confined stage image.

One way of staging a face in the dark is to place the head on a pillow, giving the audience a perspective of looking down on the speaker from above. Beckett considered this option while writing *Not I*'s dramatic 'brother' *That Time* before removing the pillow in a later draft.⁸⁹ Such a

⁸⁶ J. M. Coetzee, 'Into the Dark Chamber: The Novelist and South Africa', *The New York Times*, 12 January 1986, 'Book Review' section, pp. 13, 35 (p. 35).

⁸⁷ Iser, p. 280.

⁸⁸ Alan Schneider told Beckett that lighting the face of the Protagonist in *Catastrophe* was 'more difficult than in the urns [of *Play*] or in NOT I, where the actor is held rigid or confined' (AS to SB, 24 June 1983, Harmon, p. 450).

⁸⁹ SB to James Knowlson, 24 September 1974, qtd in Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 600; UoR MS 1477/1, ff. 1r., 12r;

detail would have created an intertextual link with earlier narratives of institutional confinement such as the one which concludes *Malone Dies*. As the next chapter will show, the bare rooms Beckett created in his prose writing of the 1960s and 70s invoke other texts as well as other spaces.

UoR 1477/6, f. 2r. The protagonist in the first two drafts of 'Kilcool' also speaks of a figure with her head resting on a pillow (TCD MS 4664, ff. 10v., 13r.).

8

Confined Bodies in Closed Spaces:***Imagination Dead Imagine, All Strange Away***

In the compositional notebook initially named ‘Fancy ~~Dead~~ Dying’, which gave rise to four short prose pieces collectively entitled *Faux départs* as well as two longer pieces, *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *All Strange Away*, Beckett copied Theseus’s statement on poetic imagination from Act V, Scene I of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*:

and as imagination bodies forth
 The forms of things unknown, the poet’s pen
 Turns them to shapes + gives to airy nothing
 A local habitation + a name. (‘FD’, f. 11v.)

Nothing would seem to be further from the received idea of Beckett’s own creative practice as one which shuns the specific by undoing location, particularly in the closed-space prose pieces of the 1960s and 70s, than Theseus’s evocation of poetic creation as giving particular names to abstract forms. This chapter will pay close attention to the development of the specifics of some of Beckett’s confined habitations in order to better understand how such spaces produce meaning in his work and to further advance my claim that, in Beckett’s writing, there is no such thing as empty space. My main focus will be on *All Strange Away* and *Imagination Dead Imagine*. The former describes a lone figure—initially a man named Emmo, later described as a woman called Emma—in a closed space which eventually becomes a rotunda; the latter portrays an unnamed female figure with her

unnamed male ‘partner’, also in a closed rotunda (*TFN*, p. 89).

Naming places in closed spaces

While, as I have shown in previous chapters, confinement is a persistent concern throughout Beckett’s oeuvre, it receives intense focus in his closed-space prose pieces, which are generally seen as comprising *Imagination Dead Imagine*, ‘Closed Place’, ‘Ping’ (*Bing*, 1966), *Lessness* (*Sans*, 1969), *The Lost Ones* and *All Strange Away*.¹ John Pilling wrote in 1979, soon after the story had been published: ‘It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of *All Strange Away*; it contains in embryo almost all the elements from which Beckett was to construct the strange and yet compelling world of his recent prose.’² While the various worlds in Beckett’s late prose deserve individual attention, many of them do share the corporeal confinement of *Imagination Dead Imagine*, *All Strange Away* and the four *Faux départs*. The attempt central to these texts to narrate a body in a bare, enclosed space recurs in different forms across Beckett’s late prose, as in the ‘confinement’ in a single-windowed room of the figure described in *Stirrings Still* (*CSP*, p. 262). Given that the prose pieces which came out of it were the first to focus so strongly on the bare rooms which would become a central feature of his late writing, Beckett’s ‘Fancy ~~Dead~~ Dying’ notebook can be seen as the starting point for a new spatial approach—‘staying in’—to the aesthetic problem of ‘going on’, a problem which is outlined most forcefully in the spasmodic structure of the *Texts for Nothing*, which he wrote in 1950–51, soon after composing *L’Innommable*.³

The dates of composition on the ‘Fancy ~~Dead~~ Dying’ notebook range from 17 August 1964 to 19 March 1965 (‘FD’, f. 1r.). Material which would be edited to appear as the four *Faux départs* in the 1965 inaugural issue of the German literary magazine *Kursbuch* is found between ff. 1v. and

¹ For various groupings, see Van Hulle, ‘Figures of Script’, pp. 255–58; Cohn, *A Beckett Canon*, p. 289; Nixon, ‘Preface’ to *TFN*, pp. xii–xvii. I also consider the unfinished ‘Long Observation of the Ray’ to be part of this group (see below). *Bing* receives italics because, unlike its English translation ‘Ping’, it gave its title to an edition in which it was published (see *CSP*, pp. 179).

² Knowlson and Pilling, p. 144. In the ‘Acknowledgements’, it is indicated that Pilling deals with the prose; Knowlson with the drama (p. ix).

³ ‘[T]here seems to be no “going on”, for me, from the *Innommable*’ (SB to Mary Hutchinson, 6 February 1959, qtd in Nixon, ‘Preface’ to *TFN*, p. i).

20r.⁴ The published *Faux départs* themselves, besides standing as individual works in their own right, serve as initial attempts towards *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *All Strange Away*, sharing lines, as well as significant spatial features, with both the longer works. Most of the rest of the ‘Fancy ~~Dead~~ Dying’ notebook is in English, but it switches back to French between ff. 42r. and 46r., which are the last pages used and the only ones in the notebook not crossed out with a large ‘X’. This final effort condenses material from the preceding pages and is closer to *Imagination Dead Imagine* than any of the other draft material.⁵ While *Imagination Dead Imagine* was published soon after having been finished in 1965, first in French, then later the same year in English, it was 1976 before *All Strange Away* appeared in publication. It did so in a deluxe edition published by Gotham Book Mart and illustrated by Edward Gorey to raise money for Gloria MacGowran, the widow of one of Beckett’s favourite actors Jack MacGowran.⁶ To compose this work, Beckett went back and reworked the earlier English material and, as I will argue, put important aspects of his textual production of space on display for the reading public, continuing a process which the publication of the fragmentary *Faux départs* in *Kursbuch* had started.

In ‘Local Habitations: Hamlet at Helsingør, Juliet at Verona’, Balz Engler studies the peculiar phenomenon of the creation of tourist sites around Hamlet’s castle in Elsinore—including two sites (both wrongly) marking his grave—as well as ‘what has been declared Juliet’s House, conveniently located near the centre of the city’ of Verona.⁷ Though Beckett has not quite gained the status by which aficionados would set up a shrine to the Unnamable’s jar on the rue Brancion in

⁴ Drafts of the first, second and third of the *Faux départs* are found on ff. 2r., 4r. and 5r.–6r. respectively. A near-to-final draft of the fourth of the *Faux départs* is found on f. 20r., with a forward slash marking the final line of the published text.

⁵ There are also a number of typescripts made at various stages during the compositional process held in the John J. Burns Library in Boston College (JBL SB MS 11/13–14; JBL SB MS 12/9; JBL SB MS 18/1).

⁶ ‘All I can find to offer is the unfinished text herewith. It was written 1964 on the rocky road to *Imagination morte imaginez* and then laid aside. It has never appeared anywhere in whole or in part. Apart from a few cuts and corrections of detail I have made no effort to improve it. The title remains to be found. All proceeds from your edition and from eventual foreign editions and subsidiary rights would go to the MacGowran fund’ (SB to Andreas Brown, 27 June 1973, qtd in Mark Nixon, ‘Faux départs: The Textual Genesis of Beckett’s *All Strange Away* and *Imagination Dead Imagine*’, paper presented at MLA Convention, Seattle, January 2012, pp. 1–7 (p. 7)). See also *LSB IV*, p. 336. I would like to thank Mark Nixon for sharing his script for this presentation with me. I follow the pagination on the script.

⁷ Balz Engler, ‘Local Habitations: Hamlet at Helsingør, Juliet at Verona’, in *Shakespeare and Space: Theatrical Explorations of the Spatial Paradigm*, ed. by Ina Habermann and Michelle L. Witen (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 257–67 (pp. 260–61, 262).

Paris, he has in recent years begun to acquire a similar kind of cultural capital as Shakespeare, giving his name to theatres (the Samuel Beckett Theatres in New York and Dublin), architectural structures (the Samuel Beckett Bridge, Dublin), public buildings (the Samuel Beckett Civic Campus, Dublin) and even naval vessels (the LÉ Samuel Beckett) (*U*, p. 57). In Ireland, significant scholarly work has gone into mapping ‘the Beckett country’, led by Eoin O’Brien’s book of the same name, and a monument has been erected on a pier in Dublin to the ‘vision’ described in *Krapp’s Last Tape* (*CDW*, p. 220).⁸



- *Krapp* plaque on Dun Laoghaire pier. Photo by Joe King <https://www.flickr.com/photos/joe_king/4414001527/> [accessed 2 March 2017]

Due to the nature of the spaces in which they take place, it is very difficult to imagine anyone ever erecting a similar monument to commemorate one of the figures of the closed-space texts, and it is equally hard to imagine a tourist shrine to Beckett ever springing up at the only geographical location named in the published text of *All Strange Away*—‘the Pantheon at Rome’, to which the rotunda is compared (*TFN*, p. 79). While the theatres in which Beckett’s work is performed can be thought of as ‘heterotopias’—a heterotopia being ‘a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted’—the prose spaces created in *Imagination*

⁸ Beckett reported his own version of this ‘vision’ as having taken place in his mother’s room in Foxrock (Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 352).

Dead Imagine and *All Strange Away* are too ‘short of world’ to fit this definition.⁹ In Foucault’s definition of heterotopias, he stresses the importance of them being ‘real places—places that do exist’, as opposed to the imagined space of utopia.¹⁰ In a reading of Beckett’s postwar oeuvre as one that both develops and breaks from the utopian genre, H. Porter Abbott contends that the relation between the world we live in and the storyworld—found, for instance, in the very title of Orwell’s *1984*—is rendered ‘terminally indeterminate’ by Beckett.¹¹ Indeterminate, certainly, but like the imagination in Beckett’s prose piece, interpretation is not dead. In the same way as ‘the fundamentally unreal spaces’ of utopia, the imagined spaces of Beckett’s late prose also retain critical relations to the world in which they were created, however indeterminate these relations may be.¹² Studying Beckett’s closed spaces is crucial to understanding these relations, which are actualised in acts of interpretation.

The move from Krapp’s description of spaces in his ‘closet’ to those suggested by the ‘kind of closet or cupboard’ described in the ‘Fancy Dead Dying’ notebook is not simply a shift from the ‘topographical’ (denoting features which can be mapped) to the ‘topological’ (which maps spatial relations rather than specific locations) in the development of Beckett’s spatial aesthetic (‘FN’, f. 10r.).¹³ Certainly, spatial relations are given a new emphasis when the situation of bodies is described using algebraic symbols to denote geometric points, as they are in *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *All Strange Away*, rather than in relation to recognisable place names, such as Krapp’s memory of being ‘on Croghan’ (the name of two mountains in County Wicklow), ‘the Baltic’ or the

⁹ Michel Foucault, ‘Of Other Spaces’, trans. by Jay Miskowicz, *Diacritics*, 16.1 (1986), 22–27 (p. 24). ‘The idea of deploying theatre as a space of others is, in any case, as old as the theatre itself. Tellingly, the oldest surviving play from ancient Greece relates the naval battle of Salamis from the viewpoint of the foreigners, namely the defeated Persians.’ (Benjamin Wihstutz, ‘Other Space or Space of Others? Reflections on Contemporary Political Theatre’, trans. by Michael Breslin and Saskya Iris Jain, in *Performance and the Politics of Space: Theatre and Topology*, ed. by Fischer-Lichte and Wihstutz, pp. 182–97 (p. 189)) Beckett compares Bram van Velde’s work favourably to art which is ‘short of the world, short of the self’, as van Velde’s is ‘without those esteemed commodities’, in the *Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit* (PTD, p. 122). See the discussion of Beckett’s use of this concept in Steven Connor, *Beckett, Modernism and the Material Imagination* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 180.

¹⁰ Foucault, ‘Of Other Spaces’, p. 24.

¹¹ Abbott, *Beckett Writing Beckett*, p. 135.

¹² Foucault, ‘Of Other Spaces’, p. 24.

¹³ Beckett told the set and lighting designer of the San Quentin Drama Workshop that Krapp’s den was a ‘closet, not room, K has only the one room’ (SB to Richard Riddell, 16 August 1977, *LSB IV*, p. 468). He also uses ‘closet’ in the TV play ... *but the clouds* ... (*CDW*, p. 418).

fictional ‘Kedar Street’ (*CDW*, pp. 223, 222, 218).¹⁴ However, it is important to delineate ‘*how and through what process* those relations are repetitively reproduced, and yet continually changed’.¹⁵ In other words, what kind of spatial relations does Beckett create in these two pieces? And how does he go about doing so? If ‘[n]aming is one of the ways space can be given meaning’, the withholding of names from the ‘local habitations’ of *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *All Strange Away* has its own impact on the politics of spatial interpretation, which is closely bound up with the specifics of Beckett’s confined locales.¹⁶

‘In here’

As I have shown, studying Beckett’s compositional manuscripts provides an important means of understanding the development of his closed spaces. Karine Germoni uses the drafts of *The Lost Ones* to make the case that this prose piece ‘has to be regarded as theatre’.¹⁷ She extends this analysis to the other closed-space texts, arguing that generic boundaries become blurred in Beckett’s later work, with the ‘scenic writing’ of his prose coming to resemble the detached objectivity one would normally associate with stage directions.¹⁸ Myriam Jeantroux, in her manuscript study of Beckett’s theatre, argues along the same lines that the border between prose and theatre ‘tends to disappear’ in the late prose work.¹⁹ Precisely because it is sometimes the case that ‘Beckett’s late texts defy traditional generic labelling’, and due to the fact that these prose texts mimic the spatialised language of the theatre, it is all the more interesting that they should have been referred to by their author as prose before being published and marketed as such by his publishers.²⁰ Beckett’s increased involvement in theatre productions in the mid-1960s undoubtedly

¹⁴ The two mountains are named Croghan Kinsella and Croghan Brigit. I would like to thank Nicholas Grene for these pieces of information.

¹⁵ Lauren Martin and Anna J. Secor, ‘Towards a Post-Mathematical Topology’, *Progress in Human Geography*, 38.3 (2014), 420–38 (p. 435). Emphasis in the original.

¹⁶ Cresswell, p. 9.

¹⁷ Karine Germoni, ‘The Theatre of *Le Dépeupleur*’, *SBT/A*, 18 (2007), 297–311 (p. 298).

¹⁸ The works she mentions are ‘Ping’, *Lessness*, *All Strange Away* and the fourth of the *Faux départs* (Germoni, p. 304).

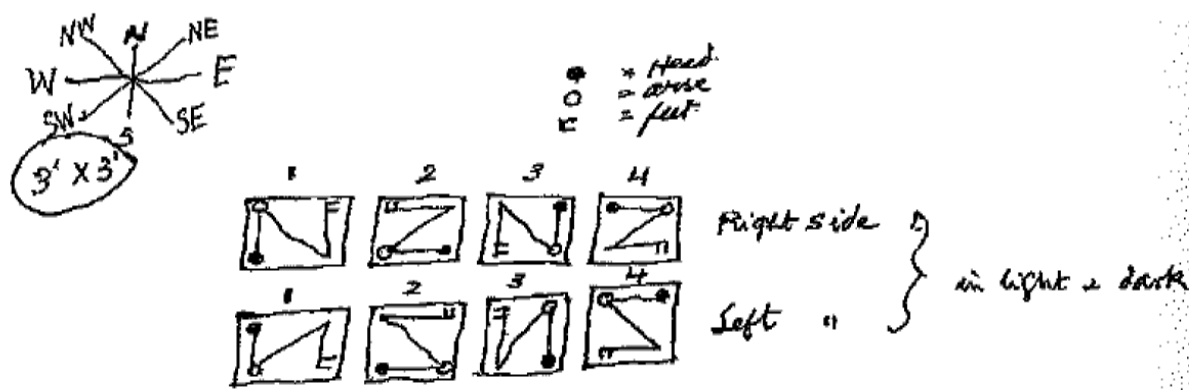
¹⁹ Jeantroux, p. 308. ‘[D]es dernières œuvres beckettiennes, où la frontière entre roman et théâtre tend à s’effacer’.

[Beckett’s last works, where the border between novel and theatre tends to disappear.] Jeantroux uses ‘novel’ [roman] though none Beckett’s fiction after *How It Is* has the dimensions usually associated with a novel.

²⁰ Dirk Van Hulle, ‘Preface’ to Samuel Beckett, *Company / Ill Seen Ill Said / Worstward Ho / Stirrings Still*,

had a bearing on the development of a highly spatialised approach to prose writing, evident in the diagrams in the ‘Fancy ~~Dead~~ Dying’ notebook, which recall those used in his theatre notebooks.²¹

However, Beckett had definite ideas about the generic status of his work in the ‘Fancy ~~Dead~~ Dying’ notebook, referring to it as ‘horrible new prose’.²²



- The body positions of *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *All Strange Away*, sketched on the back of a letter (SB to BB, 22 September 1964, *LSB* III, p. 628). Though the editors of Beckett’s *Letters* speculate that these sketches may be related to the composition of *Le Dépeupleur*, such sketches are found throughout the ‘Fancy ~~Dead~~ Dying’ notebook, particularly in places where Beckett is working out how to describe the spatial configuration of the bodies in the narrative (*LSB* III, p. 629 n. 7; see ‘FD’, ff. 17v., 29v., 38v., 45v.).

The early versions of the ‘confining space’ of *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *All Strange Away* are described using a multitude of terms in the ‘Fancy ~~Dead~~ Dying’ notebook.²³ The narrator describes it variously as ‘[m]on cabinet’ [my cabinet/office] (f. 2r.), ‘[une] stalle’ [a stall] (f. 4r.), ‘l’asile’ [the refuge/madhouse] (f. 7r.), ‘[un] refuge’ [a refuge] (ff. 7r., 8r.), ‘un réduit’ [a cubbyhole/box room] (f. 9r.), a ‘wall cupboard’ (f. 9r.), a ‘kind of closet or cupboard’ (f. 10r.), an

ed. by Dirk Van Hulle (London: Faber, 2009), pp. vii–xviii (p. xvi). For an account of a 1984 theatrical adaptation of *All Strange Away*, see Kalb, pp. 126–32.

²¹ At a point in the draft at which the space changes from a cube to a rotunda, there are a number of sketches and a series of calculations with which Beckett tries to work out the new spatial arrangement (‘FD’, ff. 28v., f. 29v.). A couple of pages later, Beckett encircles the word ‘diagram’ (‘FD’, f. 31r.). There follow instructions in the text to ‘consult diagram’ and ‘[?] see diagram’ (ff. 32r., 36r.). In the typescripts, the proofs for the Gotham Book Mart edition and the galleys of the Grove Press edition, the word ‘diagram’ is set page centre, suggesting that it is a verbal description of an image rather than a heading of a new section of the story. (JBL SB MS 11/14, f. 6r.; JBL SB MS 18/1, f. 6r; HRC SB MS 1/2 (Gotham Book Mart proofs), f. 8r; HRC SB MS 1/2 (Gotham Book Mart marked-up TS), f. 6r; JBL SB MS 23/6 (Grove Press galleys for *Rockaby and Other Shorter Pieces* (1981), p. 18. I follow the pagination on the galleys.)

²² SB to Richard Seaver, 18 October 1964, qtd in Nixon, ‘The Textual Genesis of Beckett’s *All Strange Away* and *Imagination Dead Imagine*’, p. 6.

²³ Graham Fraser, ‘The Pornographic Imagination in *All Strange Away*’, *Modern Fiction Studies*, 41.3 (1995), 515–30 (p. 518).

‘apertureless space’ (f. 12r.), a ‘place’ which is ‘round’ (f. 28v.) and, finally, a ‘rotunda’ (f. 29r. and elsewhere) which is compared to ‘the Pantheon at Rome [~~xx~~] and certain beehive tombs’ (f. 29r.).²⁴ Aside from revisiting the narrative difficulty of *Murphy*, *Watt*, ‘The End’ and *Malone Dies* in finding the right term to describe places of confinement, this list also testifies to the problem of describing a physical constraint which echoes the political dynamics of institutional confinement without naming a particular kind of institution. When a term associated with institutional confinement did make an appearance, Beckett was quick to get rid of it. ‘Asile’, linked etymologically to the English word ‘asylum’, is an archaic French term for a psychiatric hospital, which was quickly struck out and replaced when used in the notebook: ‘Depuis quand [~~est-il xxxx~~ asile] [xx] retour à l’asile au refuge?’ (‘FD’, f. 9r.)

There can be no inside without some implied outside. While Beckett did not write *Imagination Dead Imagine* or *All Strange Away* as performance texts, Ubersfeld’s concepts of performance space can help us better understand the spatial dynamics of these works. If the non-A space of *Not I* is established in relation to the A zone evoked in Mouth’s monologue, the equally strange settings of these prose pieces open up spatial alternatives beyond their four walls through their confinement in an enclosed space of some of the remainders of everyday life, both animate and inanimate. Like Ubersfeld, Lefebvre sees two sides to every physical limit: ‘walls, enclosures and façades serve to define both a *scene* (where something takes place) and an *obscene* area to which everything that cannot or may not happen on the scene is relegated’.²⁵ Irit Degani-Raz references Sam’s attraction in *Watt* to what she terms ‘transparent’ rather than ‘opaque’ physical limits. Quoting from *Watt*, she includes in the former category ‘wire fences, [...] the ditch, the dyke, the barred window, the bog, the quicksand, the paling’ and in the latter ‘walls’, ‘palisades’ [*sic*] and ‘opacious hedges’ (see *W*, p. 135). Degani-Raz argues that the imperative phrase ‘imagination dead imagine’ suggests an opaque limit of thought by compelling us to imagine what

²⁴ The narrator also compares the size of the space in which his protagonist is found to that of a ‘placard’ [closet/cupboard] (‘FD’, f. 7r.).

²⁵ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 36.

is by definition unimaginable—namely, the death of the imagination.²⁶ It is these very spatial limits, transparent or opaque, which compel the reader to imagine spaces other than and beyond the ones presented in Beckett's closed-space texts. At the end of *Imagination Dead Imagine*, the possibility of such alternative spaces is suggested before being undermined: 'Leave them there, sweating and icy, there is better elsewhere. No, life ends and no, there is nothing elsewhere' (*TFN*, p. 89).

For Edward Casey, the paradox associated with the Pythagorean philosopher Archytas that '[w]e cannot imagine any limit anywhere without at the same time imagining that there is space beyond it' is central to the history of Western philosophy of space.²⁷ The earliest surviving record we have of the argument comes from Simplicius's sixth century AD account of Eudemus's version of Archytas's conundrum.²⁸ Carl Huffman, pointing out that Simplicius's text is part of a commentary on Aristotle, argues that this account of Archytas's argument, which seems to have largely focused on the question of absolute space, is here heavily influenced by the separate Aristotelean concern as to whether or not an unlimited body exists. Huffman also argues that Aristotle used Archytas's argument as a basis for his position in the *Physics* that 'the imagination can always conceive a beyond'.²⁹ Though Beckett noted Archytas's name in his notes on Pythagoreanism, there is no evidence of him having read about this particular argument.³⁰ Nevertheless, the closed-space texts are deeply engaged with the problem of the imagination always being able to imagine a space beyond.

If the title 'Imagination Dead Imagine' has implications for the way in which the space of that text is interpreted, so too does the title of its longer successor *All Strange Away*. In Hippolyta's lines which frame Theseus's speech in *Midsummer Night's Dream* quoted above, she twice

²⁶ Irit Degani-Raz, 'Cartesian Fingerprints in Beckett's *Imagination Dead Imagine*', *JOBS*, 21.2 (2012), 223–43 (pp. 226–27).

²⁷ This wording of Archytas's argument is from an essay by Isaac Newton, 'De Gravitatione et aequipondio fluidorum', qtd in Casey, p. 149.

²⁸ See Carl A. Huffman, *Archytas of Tarentum: Pythagorean, Philosopher and Mathematician King* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 540–50.

²⁹ Huffman, p. 545.

³⁰ TCD MS 19067, f. 1r.; 'ARCHYTAS, famous as savant + statesman' (f. 19r.) (see Windelband, p. 31). See also TCD MS 19067, f. 22v.

emphasises the unusual nature of the story she and her husband have heard from the lovers in the forest:

'Tis strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

[Theseus's speech]

But all the story of the night told over,
 And all their minds transfigur'd so together,
 More witnesseth than fancy's images,
 And grows to something of great constancy;
 But howsoever, strange and admirable. (V. 1. 1, 23–27)

Hippolyta here uses 'strange' to signify that the stories are fantastic. But there is another sense in which the term operates in Shakespeare's play. When Hermia says that her elopement with Lysander means that they will 'seek new friends, and stranger companies', she evokes the etymological root of the word in the Latin '*extraneus*', which means 'external'. In this context, 'stranger' is an adjective denoting people who are foreign. Theseus's ownership of 'the palace wood' is recognised by the other characters, yet one of the reasons the forest can serve as a playground for fantastical events, clandestine meetings and amorous misadventures is its position outside the political stronghold marked by Athens's gates.³¹ By contrast, the unusualness of the rotunda in *All Strange Away* comes from the narrator's attempt to only '[i]magine what needed', and to exclude unnecessary external elements from the space (*TFN*, p. 73).

Like the cat in Beckett's *Film*, however, such elements keep sneaking back in. Indeed, as the

³¹ While, as Jeffrey Theis argues, no character has full authority over the sylvan space and 'Shakespeare's reciprocal construction of the forest as green plot and the stage as forest blurs the pastoral opposition of country and city', Theseus still legally owns the forest, as Peter Quince indicates by calling it 'the palace wood' (I. 2. 95) (Jeffrey S. Theis, *Writing the Forest in Early Modern England: A Sylvan Pastoral Nation* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2009), p. 119). Indeed, the blurring of oppositions depends on the two zones' initial spatial disjunction.

‘cobweb’ on the wall in *All Strange Away* must have at some stage been produced by a spider, the space cannot be fully closed, nor is it a dead space (*TFN*, p. 73). In his first sustained attempt at a draft in English, Beckett tried out a narrative which included an outside space that would explain the provenance of strange images:

On my return, scrupulous as always, I looked to satisfy my mind that all was as I had left it. Where I had been, ~~and what I had done then~~^{and to what [xxxx xxxx] purpose}, and for how long, and for what if any purpose I would have been hard put to say. There was in me for a time what could not have got in here, friendly faces, one particularly, strips of burning sky. (‘FD’, f. 4r.)

Those inanimate objects which do make it into the published text of *All Strange Away* have no such back story. One is a ‘small grey punctured rubber ball or small grey ordinary rubber bulb’ which recalls the ‘small, old, black, hard, solid rubber ball’ in *Krapp* and the ‘kind of ball’ belonging to Dan Rooney in *All That Fall* (*TFN*, p. 81; *CDW*, pp. 220, 198). Having described this ball/bulb being squeezed by Emma, the narrator voices what could serve as a minimalist manifesto: ‘so little by little all strange away’. Whereas ‘on earth’, we are told, an object such as this would be ‘attached to bottle of scent or suchlike’, here it is ‘alone’, separated from its context. (*TFN*, p. 81) It is denarrated in the closing lines: ‘gone now and never were sprayer bulb or punctured rubber ball and nothing ever in that hand’ (*TFN*, p. 84). Another pair of objects treated in the same way are the ‘tattered syntaxes’ of ‘Jolly and Draeger’, also mentioned in three of the four *Faux départs* (*TFN*, pp. 73, 69–70).³² Later we read, ‘Jolly and Draeger gone, never were.’ (*TFN*, p. 77) In cases such as these ones, ‘definition is through negative proposition, through reference to what no longer exists’, the space being continually constructed in the narrative through the subtraction of its physical objects.³³ The existence of objects such as a book describing the grammatical rules of Latin in the

³² In the second of the *Faux départs*, they are also called ‘[l]exiques’ [lexicons] (*TFN*, p. 69). Ackerley and Gontarski identify the Draeger work as *Historische Syntax der lateinischen Sprache* by Dr A. Draeger, 2 vols (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner 1874–78) (Ackerley and Gontarski, p. 149).

³³ Dearlove, p. 113.

rotunda of *All Strange Away* points to a corresponding linguistic and social structure; this remains true even if we do not know what the precise relation is between the confined body and the body politic beyond.

‘Not here’

While confinement in the bare rotunda automatically invokes spaces beyond it, another way of creating alternative spaces in Beckett’s closed-space texts is through their relations to the works of other writers. There are various levels of intertextuality in *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *All Strange Away*, which together create what Gérard Genette terms a ‘palimpsest of reading’ through which ‘one text can become superimposed upon another, which it does not quite conceal but allows to show through’. Genette uses the metaphor of the palimpsest to describe the way in which a reader of an abridged, censored version of Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* cannot help but read the work through an earlier unabridged version.³⁴ Though Genette focuses on structural relations between whole texts rather than the quotations and allusions that will be my focus, the concept of the palimpsest is also useful when analysing how intertexts inform our interpretations of the spaces of Beckett’s published work.³⁵ These intertexts suggest a politics of indirect relation with the world in which Beckett wrote his prose.

Intertextuality is given a physical form in the shape of the syntaxes of Jolly and Draeger which litter the confined space of *All Strange Away*, these being the only objects mentioned in the first two *Faux départs*. These syntaxes provide physical evidence of textual production beyond and their ‘tattered’ state suggests sustained use (*TFN*, pp. 70, 73).³⁶ Other references are autotextual,

³⁴ Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. by Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), p. 373–74.

³⁵ Genette defines intertextuality one form of ‘transtextuality’. His primary focus is on what he calls (in a book first published before the advent of the internet) ‘hypertextuality’, denoting ‘the total field of relevant relationships’ between texts. He divides this field into transtextual relations of ‘transformation’, in which the focus is on the relation with the first text (parody, travesty, transposition) and ‘imitation’, in which the focus is on the relation with the style of a previous text (pastiche, caricature and forgery) (Genette, *Palimpsests*, pp. 2–5, 28).

³⁶ In one of the typescripts, Beckett added a phrase that mentions the possibility of the syntaxes coming from outside: ‘Brought them with him or found them there.’ (JBL SB MS 11/13, ff. 1r., 2r.) However, this sentence does not appear in the published text.

referring to Beckett's own work. The Theseus quotation discussed above faces a passage in the 'Fancy ~~Dead~~ Dying' notebook which evokes the staple scenario of Beckett's postwar novellas and *Molloy*: 'Out of the door and down the road in the old hat + coat like after the war, no, not that again.' ('FD', f. 12r.) Another self-reference is to an unpublished piece of writing—the Philosophy notes Beckett took in the 1930s—with Emma uttering the names of 'ancient Greek philosophers ejaculated with place of origin when possible suggesting pursuit of knowledge at some period' (*TFN*, p. 78). When she does utter the name of a philosopher, the place of origin is frequently inaudible, 'leaving sometimes in some doubt such things as which Diogenes' (*TFN*, p. 79).³⁷ Elsewhere she mentions a figure in an unnamed place: 'In a hammock in the sun and here the name of some bewitching site she lies sleeping' (*TFN*, p. 78). In such cases, not only is the figure in the rotunda, to use the protagonist's own words, 'not here', the place against which 'here' is defined is deliberately withheld.³⁸

The intertextuality of *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *All Strange Away* is signalled in the play between the title of the former and, in the latter, the repeated references to the protagonists in the rotunda murmuring that 'fancy is' 'his' or 'her' 'only hope' (*TFN*, pp. 74, 76). Beckett would have come across a well-known distinction between fancy and imagination while reading Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* 'without much pleasure' in 1962, two years before starting work on the 'Fancy ~~Dead~~ Dying' notebook.³⁹ While recent scholarship has focussed on the connection between Beckettian and Coleridgean aesthetics, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* contributes a key layer to the intertextual palimpsest of *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *All Strange Away* through which we can better understand their spatial dynamic.⁴⁰

Beckett would have known Shakespeare's play from his days as a student in Trinity College,

³⁷ Beckett took notes on both Diogenes of Apollonia and Diogenes of Sinope in his Philosophy notes (TCD MS 10967, ff. 50r., 68r.).

³⁸ 'He's not here' and 'She's not here' are two of the other common phrases spoken by the confined figure. They vary depending on whether the protagonist is described as being male or female (*TFN*, pp. 74–78, 83).

³⁹ SB to Mary Hutchinson, 11 June 1962, qtd in Van Hulle and Nixon, *Samuel Beckett's Library*, p. 35.

⁴⁰ See Michael Angelo Rodriguez, 'Romantic Agony: Fancy and Imagination in Samuel Beckett's *All Strange Away*', *SBT/A*, 18 (2007), 131–42 and Paul Lawley, 'Failure and Tradition: Coleridge/Beckett', *SBT/A*, 18 (2007), 31–46.

where he studied it as an undergraduate in 1923–24.⁴¹ While Coleridge sees fancy and imagination as distinct faculties, Hippolyta's response to Theseus's speech in *Midsummer Night's Dream*—that the stories they have heard from the lovers in the forest '[m]ore witnesseth than fancy's images'—posits fancy as synonymous with imagination, both words describing the creative faculty that Theseus believes unduly sways the reason of lovers, madmen and poets.⁴² Pilling argues: 'Beckett [...] resuscitates the category of Fancy which the great Romantic poets considered decidedly inferior to Imagination, reminding us implicitly that he is a good deal less interested in the Sublime than they were.'⁴³ However, there is a clear hierarchy in how the two terms are used in *All Strange Away*. While 'imagine' serves as the narrative impetus, prompting the reader to call up images, fancy is referred to either as something which is dying or dead, or to set off explicit descriptions of sex: 'Fancy her being all kissed, licked, sucked, fucked and so on' (*TFN*, p. 76). Moreover, apart from the change of title in the 'Fancy ~~Dead~~ Dying' notebook, Beckett never replaces one term with the other in composition, which supports the hypothesis that they should be read as distinct concepts.

While Beckett never outlines Coleridge's tripartite differentiation between primary and secondary imagination and fancy, the hierarchy between imagination and fancy in *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *All Strange Away* is a departure from the early modern equivalence between the

⁴¹ Pilling, *A Samuel Beckett Chronology*, p. 7. If he still read editorial footnotes with the same scholarly zeal in 1962 as he had done when reading Windelband and Boswell in the 1930s, Beckett would have come across a version of Theseus's statement in John Shawcross's editorial notes to Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, which are included in the 1907 edition of the book. Beckett's library at the time of his death contained a reprint of this edition. Shawcross cites Henry Crabb Robinson's diary, in which Robinson recalls Wordsworth reciting two lines from his poem 'To the Cuckoo', '[s]hall I call thee bird | [o]r but a wandering voice?', as an example of the imagination 'giving local habitation to an abstraction' (qtd in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. by John Shawcross, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), I, p. 228). This reference suggests the possibility that the *Biographia* was an intertextual gateway which led Beckett back to Shakespeare's play. Given that Beckett's punctuation in the 'Fancy ~~Dead~~ Dying' notebook varies from that in standard editions of Shakespeare's plays, it seems more likely that he wrote the Theseus quotation from memory than that he transcribed it from either his 1957 reprint of the 1954 OUP edition of Shakespeare or his undated 'Universal' edition, published by Frederick Warne. See *The Works of William Shakspeare [sic]* (London: Frederick Warne, 1896), p. 184 <<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015082510374;view=1up;seq=200>> [accessed 13 April 2017] and *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, ed. by W. J. Craig (London: Oxford University Press, n.d.), p. 214. See also *BDL* [accessed 31 July 2017].

⁴² Such equivocal definitions of fancy and imagination were more common in the early modern than in the Romantic period. See James Engell, 'Imagination', in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 4th edn, ed. by Roland Greene and others (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 666–74 (pp. 668–73).

⁴³ Knowlson and Pilling, p. 138.

two terms.⁴⁴ This downplaying of fancy is also found in other short prose pieces: the sounds that the central figure of ‘He Is Barehead’ (‘Il est tête nue’, 1972) hears are described as having been so muted ‘that it was perhaps his fancy’ and in ‘Still 3’, the sound of a bell is dismissed as ‘perhaps mere fancy’ (*TFN*, pp. 138, 173). In the ‘Fancy ~~Dead~~ Dying’ notebook, the Theseus quotation with which I opened this chapter stands out both as the longest quoted intertextual fragment in the drafts and because it faces the first draft to open with the phrase ‘[i]magine a place and someone in it’, containing the imperative which is so important to the opening of *Company*, and to its narrative development: ‘A voice comes to one in the dark. Imagine.’ (‘FD’, f. 12r.; *NHO*, p. 5)⁴⁵ *Imagination Dead Imagine* is not simply a ‘minimal, stark dramatization’ of the quotation from *Midsummer Night’s Dream*; rather, it challenges the spatial aesthetic expounded in Shakespeare’s play.⁴⁶ Whereas Theseus sees poetry as dangerous because it gives a name to forms with no real existence, *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *All Strange Away* generate their spatial dynamic by both suggesting and withholding a name from their confined habitations.

For Coleridge, the function of the imagination is to unify. The spatial unity brought about by confinement in Beckett’s work breaks the fictional world apart by suggesting other spaces beyond. The *avant-texte* of another closed-space piece also contains strong suggestions of a space outside the enclosure described. The published version of ‘Closed Place’ opens: ‘Closed place. All needed to be known for say is known.’ (*TFN*, p. 147) This echoes the determination of the narrator of *All Strange Away* to only ‘[i]magine what needed’. However, the first draft of ‘Closed Place’ had a suggestion of there being somewhere beyond: ‘autre endroit possible’ [other space possible].⁴⁷ In

⁴⁴ For Coleridge, the primary imagination underpins all perception by repeating ‘in the finite mind [...] the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM’ and the secondary imagination ‘struggles to idealize and to unify’ impressions given to the mind. Fancy is a lower creative faculty which arranges ‘fixities and definites’ according to their associative qualities (Coleridge, I, p. 202).

⁴⁵ While Beckett had already written drafts of ‘The Voice’, which will form part of the genetic dossier in the forthcoming BDMP module on *Company*, he started work on drafts of *Company* twenty-three days after receiving his limited edition copy of *All Strange Away*, which suggests a link between his use of imagination in the two works (Pilling, *A Samuel Beckett Chronology*, p. 203). I would like to thank Georgina Nugent-Folan for the information regarding the BDMP module on *Company*, which she is editing. ‘Fancy’ appears only once in *Company* and nowhere in *Ill Seen Ill Said* (*Mal vu mal dit*, 1981), *Worstward Ho* or *Stirrings Still* (*NHO*, p. 44).

⁴⁶ Van Hulle and Nixon, *Samuel Beckett’s Library*, p. 26.

⁴⁷ UoR MS 2928, f. 11r.

the published text, all we are left with are the dry leaves falling on the arena as ‘[a] reminder of beldam nature’, a ‘strikingly out-of-place phrase [which] includes, as in *Imagination Dead Imagine*, the world which the text attempts to exclude’ (*TFN*, p. 147).⁴⁸ One of the opening lines of *Imagination Dead Imagine* does away with those natural elements that might have constituted a classic Romantic encounter with the sublime: ‘Islands, waters, azure, verdure, one glimpse and vanished, endlessly, omit.’ (*TFN*, p. 87) The denarration of these elements removes the possibility of an A zone against which the non-A zone of the rotunda could be defined, but leaves behind a trace of that ‘autre endroit’ [other place] in doing so.

If Beckett’s spatial aesthetic can be read in dialogue with that of Shakespeare’s character Theseus, the politics of *All Strange Away* are discernible through an inversion of a phrase from William Henley’s ‘Invictus’ (1888), which was included in W. B. Yeats’s *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* (1936), a copy of which Beckett owned.⁴⁹ Yeats famously excluded poems written by World War I combatants from his collection because, according to him, ‘passive suffering is not a theme for poetry’.⁵⁰ In ‘Invictus’, Henley’s speaker expresses a stoic attitude to suffering:

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.⁵¹

Beckett’s inversion of the phrase in *All Strange Away* gives a purposefully undramatic description of the beaten-down situation of his protagonist: ‘back of head touching the ceiling, gaze on ground,

⁴⁸ Addyman, ‘Beckett and Place: The Lie of the Land’ (2008), p. 217.

⁴⁹ *BDL* [accessed 20 March 2017]. As was the case with *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, it is unlikely that Beckett would have needed to consult the Yeats edition in order use Henley’s phrase. As it still is now, ‘Invictus’ was extremely popular in the middle part of the 20th century. For instance, Churchill used it in one of his wartime speeches to the House of Commons on 9 September 1941 (*Churchill Speaks: Winston S. Churchill in Peace and War, Collected Speeches, 1897–1963*, ed. by Robert Rhodes Jones (Leicester: Windward, 1981), p. 769).

⁵⁰ W. B. Yeats, ‘Introduction’ to *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse: 1892–1935* (1936; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p. xxxiv.

⁵¹ Yeats, p. 25. Yeats mentions Henley’s own physical suffering in his ‘Introduction’, p. vi.

lifetime of unbloody bowed unseeing glaring' (*TFN*, p. 75). While the 'bowed' heads of the Protagonist in *Catastrophe* and the interrogated figures in *What Where* signal their oppression by a dominant antagonist, that in *All Strange Away*, brought about by 'a lifetime of walking bowed and full height when brought to a stand', has more in common with the crouched figures of 'He Is Barehead' and 'Mongrel Mime', who are 'bowed' because of the restricted space in which they move (*CDW*, pp. 457, 470; *CSP*, p. 224).⁵² This attempt at movement stymied by the spatial restriction of an imagined location is not quite as passive as the crouched indolence of Dante's Belacqua, itself referenced in the supine postures described in both *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *All Strange Away*.⁵³ On the other hand, we are nowhere near the protest of the Protagonist raising his bowed head at the end in *Catastrophe*. If, for Tuan, '[t]he standing posture is assertive, solemn, and aloof' and '[t]he prone position is submissive' the crouched, standing posture of the figure in *All Strange Away* is set between passivity and protest.⁵⁴

Whereas Yeats did not see it as a fit subject for poetry, the passive suffering of its protagonists most certainly is a theme of *All Strange Away*. While the first reference in the text is to the physical suffering caused by the extremes of heat inside the rotunda which leaves the male protagonist 'cringing away from walls, burning soles', later references focus on the mental distress of the female figure (*TFN*, p. 75). She normally utters to herself the phrases '[f]ancy is her only hope, or, She's not here'; however, there may be times when she says '[f]ancy dead, suggesting moments of discouragement' or '[f]ancy dead, for instance if spirits low' (*TFN*, p. 77–78). At notebook stage, this last phrase was more explicitly linked to a clinical term: 'Fancy dead, for example if depressed.' ('FD', f. 26r.) Further on in *All Strange Away*, the words spoken by the female figure are described more forcefully as 'a mere torrent of hope and unhope mingled and submission amounting to nothing' (*TFN*, p. 78). In spite of this picture of mental pain, Beckett's

⁵² 'Mongrel Mime for one^{old} small (M)' TS, HRC CL MS 17/7, f. 1r.

⁵³ 'And even sit, knees drawn up, trunk best bowed, head between knees, arms round knees to hold all together.' (*TFN*, p. 75) Across Beckett's oeuvre, this crouched posture is repeatedly linked to Dante's Belacqua, explicitly so in *The Lost Ones*: 'those who do not search or non-searchers sitting for the most part against the wall in the attitude which wrung from Dante one of his rare wan smiles' (*TFN*, p. 103). See Caselli, p. 190.

⁵⁴ Tuan, p. 37.

suffering figures remain still. Such passivity is also a feature of *Imagination Dead Imagine*: ‘Between their absolute stillness and the convulsive light the contrast is striking, in the beginning, for one who still remembers having been struck by the contrary.’ (*TFN*, p. 89) ‘[T]he contrary’ recalls *Murphy*, when the patient suffering from hypomania in the M.M.M. ‘bounce[s] off the walls’ of his cell ‘like a bluebottle in a jar’ in response to Mr Endon’s persistent flicking on and off of his light switch (*Mu*, p. 154). In *Murphy*’s attraction to Mr Endon, as in the later closed-space texts, the emphasis in Beckett’s work is on figures who do not respond overtly to the suffering caused by physical confinement.

In a poem which formed one of the two textual precursors to ‘Invictus’, Henley declares himself impervious to fear of the vast unknown: ‘I front unfeared the threat of Space’.⁵⁵ For Beckett’s closed-space protagonists, the prospect of open, expansive space is something which is generally beyond reach. In *The Lost Ones*, the possibility of a space beyond confinement is created intertextually, through the ‘words of the poet’. Regarding this outside space, we are told, there are two prevailing opinions: one group of inhabitants believes that there is a secret passage which would take one out of the cylinder to ‘nature’s sanctuaries’; another thinks that there is a trapdoor in the ceiling, beyond which ‘the sun and other stars would still be shining’ (*TFN*, p. 105). As Daniela Caselli points out, the latter phrase is a translation of the last lines of Dante’s *Paradiso*.⁵⁶ The former is less straightforward: some scholars attribute the phrase ‘nature’s sanctuaries’ [asiles de la nature] to Alphonse de Lamartine’s poem ‘Le Vallon’ [‘The Valley’], in which the speaker asks a valley known since childhood for ‘[u]n asile d’un jour pour attendre la mort’ [[a] day’s asylum to wait for death].⁵⁷ It seems more likely that the phrase is an allusion to Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s 3rd letter to his supporter Chrétien-Guillaume de Lamoignon de Malesherbes. Having told Malesherbes in an earlier letter that his retreat to Montmorency outside Paris was caused by an innate love of

⁵⁵ ‘A Thanksgiving’, reprinted in Edward H. Cohen, ‘Two Anticipations of Henley’s “Invictus”’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 37.2 (1974), 191–96 (p. 194).

⁵⁶ Caselli, p. 195; Dante, *Paradiso*, canto XXXIII, line 145 <<http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/pdp/>> [accessed 31 March 2017].

⁵⁷ Caselli follows Sebastien Neumeister in doing so (Caselli, p. 197 n. 7); de Lamartine, *Poetical Meditations / Méditations poétiques*, pp. 50–51.

solitude, Rousseau writes about going to an ‘asile’ [sanctuary/refuge] in the heart of a nearby forest, whose beautiful flora is devoid of any evidence of human contact.⁵⁸ It is here that his imagination starts to go to work in a process similar to the narrative acts of creation in *Imagination Dead*

Imagine and All Strange Away:

My imagination did not leave the earth, adorned this way, deserted for very long. I soon peopled it with beings in accordance with my heart, and driving opinion, prejudices, all factitious passions very far away, into these refuges of nature [asiles de la nature] I transported men worthy of inhabiting them.⁵⁹

‘The words of the poet[s]’ are key to the possibility of a space outside the cylinder of *The Lost Ones*. Rousseau’s contemporary James Boswell is also part of this palimpsest, albeit only in the prepublication drafts. The description of the cavities in the upper part of the wall in an early French draft as ‘galeries’ recalls Boswell’s description of Bethlem Asylum in his *Life of Johnson*.⁶⁰ As shown in Chapters 1 and 2, Boswell’s *Life* is a key text in the creation of institutional space in *Murphy*, while Lamartine and Rousseau are referenced before the trip to Portrane Asylum in ‘Fingal’, where they serve as indices for Belacqua’s bloated intelligence. In these two earlier works, sanctuary is an important concept, denoting both the safety of a sought-out mental refuge (Murphy being ‘obliged [...] to call sanctuary what the psychiatrists called exile’) and the confinement of enforced enclosure (in Belacqua’s labelling the carceral landscape of Portrane ‘a land of sanctuary’) (*Mu*, p. 111–12). The presence of the word ‘galeries’ in the *avant-texte* of *The Lost Ones* and the development of one instance of this term into ‘alvéoles’ in the published text—the latter term also

⁵⁸ Beckett called Rousseau ‘a champion of the right to be alone’ (SB to TM, 16 September 1934, *LSB* I, p. 228).

⁵⁹ ‘Mon imagination ne laissait pas long-temps déserte la terre ainsi parée. Je la peuplais bientôt d’êtres selon mon cœur, et, chassant bien loin l’opinion, les préjuges, toutes les passions factices, je transportais dans les asiles de la nature des hommes dignes de les habiter’ (Rousseau to Malessherbes, 26 January 1762, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Œuvres complètes*, 25 vols, ed. by V. D. Musset-Pathay (Paris: Dupont, 1823–26), xvi (1824), p. 248 <<https://archive.org/details/uvrescompltesd16rous>> [accessed 29 July 2017]; trans. by Christopher Kelly in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On Philosophy, Morality, and Religion*, ed. by Christopher Kelly (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2007), p. 155).

⁶⁰ UoR MS 1536/3, f. 3r.

used to describe the rooms of the nondescript institution in the French version of ‘L’Expulsé’—calls to mind the earlier, more overtly institutional spaces in Beckett’s prose, marking the road not taken in the genesis of the cylinder’s space.⁶¹ Such intertexts not only create a poetic *auctoritas* which lends weight to Beckett’s own authorial voice, they also use that authority to form the possible spaces beyond that of the enclosed cylinder in which *The Lost Ones* is set. In cases such as this one, what Beckett called being ‘on the lookout for an elsewhere’ in his own reading helped him find the vocabulary to create his characters’ search for an elsewhere in his writing (SB to Hans Naumann, 17 February 1954, *LSB* II, p. 465).⁶²

In the bare space of *The Lost Ones*, Dante and Rousseau function as potential guarantors of the interpretative limits marked by an imagined A zone beyond the non-A zone of the cylinder. But when it comes to setting such interpretative limits, ‘who is to decide?’⁶³ For Umberto Eco, ‘it is not true that everything goes’.⁶⁴ In 1990, he critiqued ‘many modern theories’ (i.e., those associated with deconstruction), which ‘are unable to recognize that symbols are paradigmatically open to infinite meanings but syntagmatically, that is, textually, open only to the indefinite, but by no means infinite, interpretations allowed by the context’.⁶⁵ Jonathan Culler disagreed:

I believe that Eco has been misled by his concern with limits or boundaries. He wants to say that texts give a great deal of scope to readers but that there are limits. Deconstruction, on the contrary, stresses that meaning is context bound—a function of relations within or between texts—but that context itself is boundless.⁶⁶

In spite of their polemics, Eco and Culler share a certain amount of common ground, with Eco

⁶¹ Samuel Beckett, *Le Dépeupleur* (1970; Paris: Minuit, 2013), p. 10.

⁶² ‘[À] l’affût d’un ailleurs’ (*LSB* II, p. 462).

⁶³ Genette, *Palimpsests*, p. 374.

⁶⁴ Umberto Eco, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. by Stefan Collini (1992; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 144.

⁶⁵ Umberto Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation* (1990; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 21.

⁶⁶ Jonathan Culler, ‘In Defence of Overinterpretation’, in Umberto Eco, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. by Stefan Collini (1992; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 109–23 (p. 120).

agreeing that ‘contextual pressure’ forms an important part of meaning making.⁶⁷ However, their debate as to whether such contexts are infinite or indefinite may well just be as unsolvable as Archytas’s conundrum about the limits of space itself. The criteria for a relevant interpretative context also remain undefined.

One may think that evidence from Beckett’s library would fix a limit to textual interpretation, but this is not the case; as I have demonstrated with the cases of Coleridge, Shakespeare and Henley, it only adds to interpretative complexity. All three writers are present in Beckett’s personal library, and we know that he read Coleridge two years before starting work in the ‘Fancy ~~Dead~~ Dying’ notebook, but it is entirely plausible that Beckett would not have needed to consult the editions he owned containing Shakespeare’s play and Henley’s poem when composing *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *All Strange Away*. While the full story of the integration of these two sources seems likely to remain unknown, the appearance of Theseus’s speech in Beckett’s compositional notebook and the way in which it and Henley’s poem help us better understand the function of space in *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *All Strange Away* make them important intertexts. The spatial confinement of the pieces, by limiting the set of elements immediately available for interpretation, is a crucial part of a hermeneutic structure in which references to such intertexts take on a magnified importance for the reader while also suggesting a vast range of possible interpretative contexts beyond the closed space.

In Yeats’s ‘Introduction’ to *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, he discusses the futile effort of modern poets to cast off the weight of poetic ancestry, sometimes by using charnel-house imagery:

Since Poincaré said ‘space is the creation of our ancestors’, we have found it more and more difficult to separate ourselves from the dead when we commit them to the grave; the bones are not dead but

⁶⁷ Eco, *Limits of Interpretation*, p. 21.

accursed, accursed because unchanging.⁶⁸

In his 1907 essay ‘The Relativity of Space’, French philosopher and mathematician Henri Poincaré does mention inheriting space from our ancestors, but focusses rather on the inheritance of Euclidean notions of geometry, and the challenge of escaping such conceptual frames in modern thinking.⁶⁹ Yeats, for his part, repurposes Poincaré’s words to comment on the use of striking, seemingly alien imagery in modern poetry as a means of breaking with the past, an attempt which ultimately ends up being haunted by that past. Yeats is interested in how poetic imagery creates space in modern poetry. From a different disciplinary perspective, Poincaré is also interested in the ‘genesis’ [genèse] of space, noting that mathematicians, like artists, need spatial models drawn from the outside world in order for their theories to have conceptual purchase.⁷⁰ Beckett’s closed spaces are indisputably modern. They mirror the austere set designs of his later plays, which, as I have argued, redefined the space of the proscenium-frame stage. But Beckett needed the works of his literary predecessors to create these contemporary spaces. In the closing lines of *Imagination Dead Imagine*, the order of words used to describe the ‘storm and stress’ [sturm und drang] of human existence portrayed in German Romanticism is reversed: ‘no question now of ever finding again that white speck lost in whiteness, to see if they still lie still in the stress of that storm, or of a worse storm’ (*TFN*, p. 89). In a similar manner, Beckett’s use of Henley’s lines constitutes a kind of

⁶⁸ Yeats, ‘Introduction’ to *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, p. xx.

⁶⁹ Poincaré, ‘La relativité de l’espace’, p. 17. Chris Morash argues that Yeats would most likely have come across Poincaré’s essay in English translation in *The Monist*, 23.2 (April, 1913), 161–80, a journal that was commonly read in the clubs Yeats frequented. In *The Monist*, the relevant passages read:

How far could one of us, transported from birth to an entirely different world, where were dominant, for instance, bodies moving in conformity to the laws of motion of non-Euclidean solids, renounce his ancestral space to build a space completely new? [...] [I]s it not to the unconscious experience of the individual we owe the infinitely precise space of the geometer? This is a question not easy to solve. Yet we cite a fact showing that the space our ancestors have bequeathed us still retains a certain plasticity. (p. 180, qtd in Chris Morash, “‘Study That House’: Ireland in Ruins”: a keynote address at “‘Dashed All to Pieces’: Tempests and Other Natural Disasters in the Literary Imagination”, CETAPS, University of Porto, 1–3 December 2011, pp. 1–12 (pp. 9–10))

I would like to thank Chris Morash for sharing the script of this paper with me. I follow the pagination on the script.

⁷⁰ Henri Poincaré, *La valeur de la science* (Paris: Flammarion, 1905), pp. 90, 147–48. Beckett took notes from this book in his ‘Whoroscope’ notebook (UoR MS 3000, ff. 42r.–44v.), which are mainly concerned with space at a subatomic and astral level. I would like to thank John Pilling for sharing with me his transcription of these notes.

intertextual judo in which the weight of the text, derived from the reputation of the author who wrote it, is thrown against itself, creating spaces which are never quite ‘free of the hold of tradition and place’.⁷¹

‘Say a body’

Just as Beckett needed the spaces of his literary predecessors to create the modern spaces of *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *All Strange Away*, so too is there a need, as I noted in my ‘Introduction’, to ‘[s]ay a body’ in order to create these spaces of confinement. There has been a great deal of focus on the body in recent Beckett criticism, mainly stemming from a phenomenological perspective.⁷² With specific reference to *All Strange Away*, Steven Connor argues: ‘Beckett pays precise attention to posture, gesture, gait and modes of locomotion, not because this reduces the body to an object of calculation or contemplation, but because it places the body in a field of action and reaction.’⁷³ While contesting the assumption that phenomenological analysis can give us access to a ‘prereflective physicality’ in Beckett’s work, my analysis of his confined bodies takes as a basic premise that if ‘[s]ocial relations are always spatial’, the opposite is also true.⁷⁴ That is, one cannot study closed space without an awareness of the ways in which it acts upon, and is produced through, the bodies which inhabit it. John Cage described his form of minimalism as a ‘new music [in which] nothing takes place but sounds’.⁷⁵ But it would be a mistake to say that nothing takes place but unembodied space in Beckett’s late prose. In the closed-space texts, the primary evidence of a world outside the closed space is the existence of a human body, as when the ‘scars’ born by the figure confined in the 1 yard x 2 yards x 1 yard white room of ‘Ping’

⁷¹ Julie Bates, *Beckett’s Art of Salvage: Writing and Material Imagination, 1932–1987* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 65.

⁷² See Maude, *Beckett, Technology and the Body*; McMullan, *Performing Embodiment in Samuel Beckett’s Drama*; McTighe, *The Haptic Aesthetic in Samuel Beckett’s Drama*; Andrew Gibson, ‘Beckett, Vichy, Maurras, and the Body: Premier amour and Nouvelles’, *Irish University Review*, 45.2 (2015), 281–301; Ulrika Maude, ‘Beckett, Body and Mind’, in *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Van Hulle, pp. 170–84.

⁷³ Connor, *Beckett, Modernism and the Material Imagination*, p. 20.

⁷⁴ Maude, *Beckett, Technology and the Body*, p. 4; Harvey, *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference*, p. 112.

⁷⁵ Cage, p. 7.

suggest acts of violence originating beyond.⁷⁶

For Tuan, '[e]nclosed and humanized space is place'.⁷⁷ While the rotundas of Beckett's two prose pieces are certainly enclosed, the extent to which they are humanised is open to question. In imagining the bodies as being alive, the narrator of *Imagination Dead Imagine* also raises the possibility that they might be something other than human:

Sweat and mirror notwithstanding they might well pass for inanimate but for the left eyes which at incalculable intervals suddenly open wide and gaze in unblinking exposure long beyond what is humanly possible. (*TFN*, p. 89)

In his analysis of the body's production of space in modern society, Lefebvre argues that we see ourselves 'almost [as] objects. Not completely, however'.⁷⁸ Like the bodies in *Quad*, the figures in *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *All Strange Away* occupy what seem to be dehumanised spaces. The narrator of *All Strange Away* even suggests that the rotunda may be in an extraterrestrial location, comparing the passage of time there to 'years of time on earth', a 'minute on earth', 'hours of time on earth', 'thirty seconds on earth' and 'five seconds on earth' (*TFN*, pp. 74, 76, 77, 82).

In a thought experiment regarding the possibility of human thought living on beyond a solar apocalypse, Jean-François Lyotard asks: '[c]an [t]hought go on without a [b]ody?'⁷⁹ Adapting Lyotard's question to Beckett's texts, we might ask if his fictional spaces can go on being produced without a body. That the one extant closed-space piece which does not contain a body, 'Long Observation of the Ray' (written 1975–76), was never completed would suggest that they cannot.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ In the French version, *Bing*, the figure has a little more room: the dimensions are 1 metre x 2 metres x 1 metre (Beckett, *Têtes-mortes*, p. 61).

⁷⁷ Tuan, p. 54.

⁷⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, trans. by Stuart Elden and Gerald Moore (2004; London: Continuum, 2007), p. 10.

⁷⁹ Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, trans. by Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), pp. 8–23.

⁸⁰ For an analysis of this unfinished piece, see Steven Connor, 'Between Theatre and Theory: "Long Observation of the Ray"', in *The Ideal Core of the Onion: Reading Beckett Archives*, ed. by John Pilling and Mary Bryden (Reading: Beckett International Foundation, 1992), pp. 79–98.

For Tuan, the ‘fundamental principles of spatial organization’ can be found ‘in two kinds of facts: the posture and structure of the human body, and the relations (whether close or distant) between human beings’.⁸¹ In concluding this chapter, I will argue that the human body is likewise crucial to the production of Beckett’s confined, inhabited spaces and that Beckett thematises the process of spatial production through the publication of *All Strange Away*.

‘Speak of the “human”’

In two pieces written at the end of the World War II, at a time when such issues had been thrown into doubt by the barbarism of war, Beckett explicitly addresses the question of what it means to define something as ‘human’. Beckett starts ‘La peinture des van Velde’ by suggesting ‘parlons d’autre chose’ [let’s speak of something else] and going on to satirise contemporary systems of aesthetic evaluation for works of fine art, as apprehended and evaluated by ‘bipèdes sans plumes’ [non-feathered bipeds] (*Dis*, p. 118, 119).⁸² Having then discussed the painting of the van Veldes, he begins his conclusion by repeating his opening: ‘parlons d’autre chose’. The categorisation of the non-feathered bipeds who view the paintings is then linked to the evaluation of the paintings themselves, as Beckett immediately turns his attention to ‘the “human”’: ‘parlons de l’“humain”’, warning of the danger of the term (*Dis*, p. 131):

Here is a word, no doubt a concept too, that has to be reserved for times of huge slaughters.

One needs the pestilence, Lisbon and a major religious butchery for people to think of loving one another, of leaving the neighboring gardener in peace, of being radically simple. This is a word that is being bandied around today with an unrivalled fury. Just like dum-dum bullets.⁸³

⁸¹ Tuan, p. 34.

⁸² For more on the composition of ‘La peinture des van Velde’, see Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 772 n. 4.

⁸³ ‘C’est là un vocable, et sans doute un concept aussi, qu’on réserve pour les temps des grands massacres. Il faut la pestilence, Lisbonne et une boucherie religieuse majeure, pour que les êtres songent à s’aimer, à foutre la paix au jardinier d’à côté, à être simplissimes. C’est un mot qu’on se renvoie aujourd’hui avec une fureur jamais égalée. On dirait des dum-dum.’ (*Dis*, p. 131) Translation in Jean-Michel Rabaté, *Think, Pig! Beckett at the Limit of the Human* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), p. 19.

What is under attack here is not the concept of the human as such, but rather its being used only at times of crisis: the fact that we would need a religious war to remind us to love our neighbour should make us suspicious about the integrity of such love. Beckett then excoriates those who would judge a work of art by attributing to it a certain level of humanity, before going on to claim that real humanity is in the ‘peinture solitaire’ [solitary painting] of the van Velde brothers:

This painting’s least particle contains more true humanity than all a procession toward their happiness of sacred sheep. I suppose it will be stoned.⁸⁴

In ‘The Capital of the Ruins’ (written 1946; published 1986), a radio piece written for the Irish national broadcaster Radio Éireann on his time as ‘interpreter–storekeeper’ for the Irish Red Cross in the bombed-out French town of Saint-Lô, Beckett returns to the category of the human (SB to Gwynedd Reavey, 21 June 1945, *LSB* II, p. 15).⁸⁵ He writes of ‘a time-honoured conception of humanity in ruins’ which, he said, those working in the Red Cross Irish Hospital picked up during their experience in France, ‘and perhaps even an inkling of the terms in which our condition is to be thought again’ (*CSP*, p. 278).⁸⁶ ‘[T]ime-honoured’ suggests continuity with a tradition of thought in which the human is a central figure, while it is then made clear that this system of thought must be rethought in what Beckett calls this ‘universe become provisional’ (*CSP*, p. 278). At key rhetorical points in these pieces, when the conditions for any form of shared humanity seem to have been thoroughly undermined—in ‘La peinture des van Velde’ through the misuse of the term ‘human’ in the wake of World War II; in ‘The Capital of the Ruins’ through the levelling of urban society which gives the piece its backdrop—Beckett reclaims ‘the human’ as a valid, if substantially

⁸⁴ ‘Cette peinture dont la moindre parcelle contient plus d’humanité vraie que toutes leurs processions vers un bonheur de mouton sacré. Je suppose qu’elle sera lapidée.’ (*Dis*, p. 132) First sentence of translation in Rabaté, *Think, Pig!*, p. 20.

⁸⁵ For more on the genesis of ‘The Capital of the Ruins’, see *CSP*, pp. 285–86.

⁸⁶ Earlier in the piece, he mentions ‘the human conditions as little to be extinguished by bombs as to be broadened by the elixirs of Bourroughes and Welcome’ (*CSP*, p. 277). Beckett takes the phrase ‘humanity in ruins’ and the title of his piece, ‘The Capital of the Ruins’, from the local name for the town ‘la Capitale des Ruines’ (SB to TM, 19 August 1945, *LSB* II, p. 18). For an account of the Irish Hospital in Saint-Lô, including the part Beckett played there, see Phyllis Gaffney, *Healing amid the Ruins: The ‘hôpital irlandais’, Saint-Lô (1945–46)* (Dublin: A. & A. Farmar, 1999).

altered, concept. This is a refashioning of ‘the human’ with ‘humanity at the limit’.⁸⁷

In a chapter of *The Inhuman* entitled ‘God and the Puppet’, Lyotard discusses death and aesthetic experience, two occasions on which, according to him, one can step out of the repetition and difference governed by time.⁸⁸ It is in this context that he mentions the puppets described in Heinrich von Kleist’s essay ‘On the Marionette Theatre’, which recounts a conversation with a dancer who persuades Kleist of the grace of the dancing, inanimate figures, seemingly given life through their connection with a puppeteer. For Lyotard, these figures are able to approach the ‘infinite divine grace’ of a god who stands outside of time.⁸⁹ Beckett too was deeply interested in Kleist’s essay, and his single annotation on his copy noted the ‘göttliche Anmut’ [divine grace] of the marionettes.⁹⁰ As James Knowlson reports, images from Kleist’s essay—particularly that of the unselfconscious bear who effortlessly parries a master fencer’s blows—would go on to be important models for Beckett when he was directing his TV play *Ghost Trio* (1976).⁹¹ For Knowlson, the ‘severe restraint and economy of movement’ in Beckett’s late work brings him close to automatised movement described by Kleist.⁹² When Kleist’s interlocutor describes a puppet dance which ‘could pass entirely over into the world of the mechanical’, one is reminded of *Quad*, in which the actors—for whom ‘[s]ome ballet training [is] desirable’—pace out a pattern which could easily be programmed into a machine (*CDW*, p. 453).⁹³ However, as I have earlier argued, the point at which the four figures of *Quad* meet constitutes a space of interaction rather than automation. *Quad* played with robots produces a very different kind of tension to the version of the play using humans.⁹⁴ If

⁸⁷ Rabaté, *Think Pig!*, p. 195. Rabaté’s statement that ‘one cannot simply enlist Beckett in the camp of the posthuman’ is similar to my own position that Beckett’s critique of humanism depends upon the validity of the concept of the human (p. 44). See also Kevin Brazil, ‘Beckett, Painting and the Question of “the Human”’, *Journal of Modern Literature*, 36.3 (2013), 81–99.

⁸⁸ ‘[I]f, among these “things”, there is one which does not tolerate repetition, it is death, it is matter’ (Lyotard, p. 157).
⁸⁹ Lyotard, p. 163.

⁹⁰ *BDL* [accessed 7 June 2017].

⁹¹ Knowlson and Pilling, p. 279. Beckett also described *What Where* to Nicholas Zurbrugg as a ‘puppet play’ (qtd in Graley Herren, ‘Facing the Darkness: Interrogations across Genre in Samuel Beckett’s *What Where*’, *The Midwest Quarterly*, 43.3 (2002), 322–36 (p. 327)).

⁹² Knowlson and Pilling, p. 282.

⁹³ Heinrich von Kleist, ‘On the Marionette Theatre’, trans. by Thomas G. Neumiller, *The Drama Review*, 16.3 (1972), 22–26 (p. 23).

⁹⁴ For a version of *Quad* with robots, see <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jn1cD5p35FI>> [accessed 8 June 2017].

the gap between subject and object was important for the development of Beckett's aesthetics in the 1930s, the distinction between human and non-human which is discussed in Kleist's work and the asymptotic tendency toward the latter in Beckett's late prose and drama is crucial to the production of closed space in these works. While Lyotard presents the possibility of thought continuing after the apocalypse, he notes also that a '[d]ehumanized' world, destroyed by nuclear war, 'still implies human'.⁹⁵ Similarly, Beckett cannot dehumanise his spaces without humans, however inhuman they and the spaces they inhabit may appear.

Producing the body; producing space

In order to understand Beckett's production of particular spaces, it is important to examine the kinds of bodies being produced in them as well as the forces to which they are subject. In *Rhythmanalysis*, Lefebvre uses the term 'dressage', to describe the ways in which bodies are 'broken-in' to a culture through 'bend[ing] oneself (to be bent) to its ways'.⁹⁶ If the human figures of *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *All Strange Away* are confined, who is confining them? In the first of the *Faux départs*, the confinement of the first-person narrator in his 'cabinet' [small room/cabinet] is self-imposed: 'le soir même m'enfermai sous les huées et m'y mis' [the same night I'll shut myself off under the boos and put myself there] and the first-person narrator of the second of the *Faux départs*, in his '[s]talle' [stall] speaks of 'mon coin de terre' [my patch of turf], suggesting that this also is a choice, akin to Rousseau's retreat to Montmorency, rather than an enforced imprisonment (*TFN*, p. 69). However, the narrative tone grows more paranoid in the drafts as the narrative perspective changes from first- to third-person and in *All Strange Away*, there is 'no way in, none out' (*TFN*, p. 73).⁹⁷ The extremes of temperature and light in both *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *All Strange Away*

⁹⁵ Lyotard, p. 10.

⁹⁶ Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis*, p. 39.

⁹⁷ As first-person gives way to third-person narration, the situation of the male protagonist becomes more carceral—'[i]l est vu. Entendu.' [He is seen. Heard.] (f. 7r.)—and the rationale for restricting the space around him is described in a paranoid manner: 'Le raisonnement est le suivant, Plus je remplis l'espace, moins je risque d'avoir de la compagnie à mon insu' il y a de place pour l'ennemi [The reasoning is as follows, The more I fill the space, the less I risk having company unbeknownst to me room there is for the enemy] ('FD', f. 8r.).

make it extremely difficult to believe this is the kind of voluntary enclosure described in the *Faux départs*. Moreover, the description of Emmo as suffering ‘a lifetime of walking bowed’, ‘crawling lifelong habit to a corner’, ‘[a] lifetime of unseeing glaring’ and ‘a lifetime of standing bowed’ (when the narrator tightens the space around him), makes it clear that he has been stuck here all his life; there is no mention in the published text, as there is in the drafts, of this being a ‘refuge’ (*TFN*, pp. 73–74; ‘FD’, ff. 8r.–9r.).

The published text of *All Strange Away* produces what has, on the model of Roland Barthes’s ‘reality effect’ been termed a ‘manuscript effect’, in which ‘the text increasingly presents itself as a draft’.⁹⁸ This effect is created through the changing dimensions of the room in the published text, from a 5' x 5' x 6' to a 3' x 3' x 5' to a 3' x 3' x 3' cube, to a rotunda ‘three foot [in] diameter and eighteen inches high’, then ‘three foot from ground to vertex’ and finally ‘two foot diameter and two from ground to vertex’ (*TFN*, pp. 73, 74, 76, 79, 80). The effect is further evident in the denarration of the postwar prose scenario which appears in the published texts of both *All Strange Away* and the third of the *Faux départs*: ‘Out of the door and down the road in the old hat and coat like after the war, no, not that again.’ (*TFN*, pp. 70, 73)⁹⁹ The metafictional process of imaginative creation takes an important twist when the pronouns used to describe the single body confined in the rotunda change from male to female: ‘No, no image, no fly here, no life or dying here but his, a speck of dirt. Or hers since sex not seen so far’ (*TFN*, p. 76). When reading *Worstward Ho*, we have to take the narrator’s word when we are told regarding the back of a body being described: ‘Nothing to show a woman’s and yet a woman’s’ (*NHO*, p. 120). In *All Strange Away*, the production of sexual difference, like the production of space, becomes part of the narration itself.

This shift of gender mid-composition, and, crucially, the choice to make this shift visible by

⁹⁸ Van Hulle and Weller, p. 162.

⁹⁹ The ‘manuscript effect’ is more evident in *All Strange Away*, where the narrator first tries out a male body, then a female body in half the space of the rotunda. In *Imagination Dead Imagine*, a male and female body occupy the same space.

publishing *All Strange Away* over a decade after *Imagination Dead Imagine*, puts the manuscript production of both body and space on display for Beckett's reader. At the stage of composition when the cube changed to a rotunda, there are four verso pages filled with sketches and calculations in which Beckett tried to work out the measurements of the space and that of the body within it.¹⁰⁰ At the end of this series of sketches and calculations, there is an (inaccurate) calculation of the size of Emma's body:

Emma knees to ft. 1"6
 arse to knees 1"6
 crown to arse 2"6
5 ft ('FD', f. 29v.)

The mention of the '[w]aste [of] height' and 'waste [of] space' as well as the earlier phrase '[t]ighten it round him' in both manuscript and published text indicate a desire on the part of the narrator to keep Emma and Emmo in as confined a space as possible ('FD', ff. 22r., 25r., 26r.; *TFN*, pp. 77, 74). This relation between the body and the space it occupies is noted early on in the published text: 'He says, no sound, The longer he lives and so the further goes the smaller they grow, the reasoning being the fuller he fills the space and so on, and the emptier, same reasoning.' (*TFN*, p. 73)¹⁰¹ In both the notebook drafts and the published *All Strange Away*, Beckett produces the confined space of the rotunda by having his narrator fit it around the body in that space. In doing so, however, he designs a space unfit for humans to inhabit.

As Graham Fraser points out, 'the place holds *more* obsessive interest than the "someone in it"' in *All Strange Away*.¹⁰² Exemplifying the productive relation between body and space, when the

¹⁰⁰ See 'FD', ff. 24v., 25v., 28v., 29v.

¹⁰¹ I read this as an allusion to Hamm's lines on suffering in *Endgame*: 'the bigger a man is the fuller he is. [*Pause. Gloomily.*] And the emptier' (*CDW*, p. 93), i.e., in *All Strange Away*, the further Emmo develops and grows, the smaller (relatively speaking) the space he occupies becomes.

¹⁰² Fraser, p. 517. Emphasis in the original.

narrator of *All Strange Away* does attempt to describe Emmo's figure, it is the space that ends up being described instead: 'Physique, flesh and fell, nail him to that while still tender, nothing clear, place again.' (*TFN*, p. 74) Here, the description of the body itself calls up a carceral space through its reference to imprisonment in *King Lear*. As Lear is being marched off to prison with Cordelia, he comforts his daughter not to lose hope, that their jailers will die before this ever happens: 'The good years shall devour them, flesh and fell, | Ere they shall make us weep!' (V. 3. 24–25) In *Imagination Dead Imagine*, Beckett frames the impossibility of physical death, which parallels the unkillable imagination, by echoing Lear's raving later in the same scene as he carries his daughter's dead body.¹⁰³ The test of life—'[h]old a mirror to their lips, it mists'—is passed by the protagonists in the rotunda, whereas the signs of life on Cordelia's lips are the product of her father's grieving imagination: 'Lend me a looking-glass; | If that her breath will mist or stain the stone, | Why then, she lives.' (V. 3. 259–61) Beckett's own stage work does not give us scenes of life ebbing from the body, opting instead for the hidden death of Nell in *Endgame*, mediated through the report of Clov, and the ambivalent disappearance of May at the end of *Footfalls*.¹⁰⁴ Referring to the other end of the human lifecycle, the 'vagitus' of *Breath* (1969), Beckett's only theatre piece not to include at least part of a live body onstage, fits an entire life into thirty-five seconds of inaction and sound (*CDW*, p. 371). Even *Rockaby* avoids becoming a straightforward description of onstage death through W's repetition of a few lines of her recorded voice, suggesting that this, like the action of many of Beckett's late plays, may be taking place in the imagination of its characters. In *Imagination Dead Imagine*, the characters, like fancy, might be dying, but they are never quite dead. Hence, at the very end of the story, having stated 'life ends', the narrator can again wonder in his closing phrase about 'what they are doing' (*TFN*, p. 89).

While there is a tendency towards death in Beckett's work, his characters nevertheless

¹⁰³ As the stage directions do not mention Cordelia dying onstage, we can presume she is dead on arrival.

¹⁰⁴ When actor Gudrun Genest asked Beckett, 'Nell, doesn't she die, after all?' he told her 'so it seems, but no one knows' (McMillan and Fehsenfeld, p. 212, qtd in Gontarski, 'Greying the Canon', p. 155).

‘refuse to play dead’ completely.¹⁰⁵ Rather, having ‘never properly been born’, they are only (in the words of the Keats line Beckett liked to quote) ‘half in love with easeful death’.¹⁰⁶ In *All Strange Away*, it is precisely the inability of the narrator to turn the bodies in the rotunda, stubbornly animate and gendered, into hermeneutically dead objects that makes Beckett’s bodies particularly rich loci of spatial relations in his confined spaces. The ways in which such bodies are shaped and confined onstage determine the political dynamics of Beckett’s late drama.

¹⁰⁵ David Addyman, ‘Inane Space and Lively Place in Beckett’s Forties Fiction’, in *Beckett and Death*, ed. by Steven Barfield, Philip Tew and Matthew Feldman (London: Continuum, 2009), pp. 89–105 (p. 89).

¹⁰⁶ Emphasis added. Beckett attended a lecture in London’s Tavistock Clinic on 2 October 1935 at which Carl Gustav Jung spoke of girl who had ‘never been born entirely’. Beckett used altered forms of this phrase throughout his work. See Davyd Melnyk, ‘Never Been Properly Jung’, *SBT/A*, 15 (2005), 355–62.

9

The Politics of Confinement:**‘Mongrel Mime’, *Catastrophe*, *What Where***

Responding on 29 October 1973 to Charles Juliet’s suggestion ‘that the artistic enterprise is inconceivable without rigorous ethical standards urgently held’, Beckett considered the difficulty of making definitive moral judgements about art:

What you say is correct. But moral values are not accessible and not open to definition. To define them, you would have to make value judgements, and you can’t do that. That’s why I have never agreed with the idea of the theatre of the absurd. Because that implies making value judgements.¹

On 11 November 1977, Beckett returned to the same topic, addressing again the category of ‘the absurd’ with which his work has been often been associated: ‘Negation is not possible. Nor affirmation. It is absurd to say that something is absurd. That’s still a value judgement. It is impossible to protest, and equally impossible to assent.’² The possibility of protest necessitates some kind of agency, however limited (such as the agency required for Beckett to protest against

¹ Juliet, pp. 148–49.

² Juliet, p. 165. See Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd*, 3rd edn (New York: Vintage, 2001).

the idea of making value judgements). The question of how free one needs to be in order to protest is central to the composition, staging and interpretation of three pieces of Beckett's late dramatic writing: 'Mongrel Mime', *Catastrophe* and *What Where*. While freedom of movement is restricted in all three pieces, freedom of interpretation is an important aspect of the two Beckett chose to publish.

Beckett's statements to Juliet on morality closely resemble those made by Theodor Adorno when discussing the need for a dialectical definition of the will: 'There is no moral certainty. Its mere assumption would be immoral, would falsely relieve the individual of anything that might be called morality.'³ Both Adorno and Beckett question the possibility of an ethical system against which we can simply check off our actions, be they artistic or otherwise. In tactics recalling Beckett's critique of 'the human', there is a suggestion on the part of both writers that it is the rigorous questioning of ethical standards, rather than 'rigorous standards urgently held', which should be at the heart of any ethical project.

Positions such as those stated by Adorno and Beckett frequently give rise to accusations of an abandonment of politics. In some of his earliest reading on the topic of ethics, Beckett reported a particular interest in Arnold Geulincx's 'fourth cardinal virtue, Humility', whose central procedures are an 'inspection of oneself' and 'disregard of oneself'.⁴ This might lead one to believe, as Beckett recorded in his early notes on Geulincx, taken from Windelband, that '[m]an has nothing to do in outer world'.⁵ However, his later notes on the *Ethics* itself include transcriptions of Geulincx's work that deal with the worldly obligations incumbent on the self leading an ethical life. These include the obligations not to commit suicide and to maintain a livelihood in order to submit to God's command to go on living. Since, for Geulincx, ethical decisions involve an interaction with human institutions, they also inform a politics, which Geulincx sees as being a subset of ethics:

³ Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. by E. B. Ashton (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 242–43.

⁴ Geulincx, pp. 183, 217. See also SB to Arland Ussher, 25 March 1936, *LSB I*, p. 329.

⁵ TCD MS 10967, f. 189v., qtd in Tucker, 'Tracing "A Literary Fantasia"', p. 26.

There are two divisions of Ethics, Monarchics and Politics. In Monarchics we are concerned with, and it teaches us, how a man, considered in the abstract and apart from other men, should conduct himself [...]. Politics teaches us how a man should conduct himself in the company of other men.⁶

Geulincx's recommended turning away from the world is a form of quietist protest against that world, a protest also evident in Murphy's failed attempt to 'surrender to the thongs of self'.⁷ While Murphy aims for 'an absolute withdrawal from the object world, which includes not just the human body, but the social, the historical, and the political', his interactions with Mr Endon cannot be abstracted from the social relations of the hospital, however anti-social these interactions might be.⁸

Shane Weller reads Beckett's work as being 'anethical', which he describes in terms of 'a kind of indecision that is not indifference', which 'is an occasion for invention, not of a new art or a new ethics, but rather of ways in which the experience of the disintegration of both art and ethics might be rendered visible—or audible—on a page or a stage'.⁹ This chapter will investigate the spatial modalities of such disintegration in the theatre. Beckett's writing both satirises the valorisation of identity (in the hyper-conformist figure of Moran in *Molloy*) and critiques the fetishisation of difference (in Murphy's hero-worship of the inmate Mr Endon). This engagement with the ethical lends Beckett's works to similarly complex political interpretations, particularly given that so many of his ethical critiques involve relations of institutional power. As my analysis of the function of the psychiatric hospitals in *Murphy* and *Malone Dies* made clear, such critiques cannot be fully understood without an analysis of the spaces he uses. In his work after *Malone Dies*, the decisions made not to represent institutions of confinement allow for a political body of work which nonetheless avoids testifying on behalf of particular individuals.

⁶ Geulincx, p. 264.

⁷ SB, diary entry, 18 January 1937, Nixon, *Beckett's German Diaries*, p. 73.

⁸ Weller, *A Taste for the Negative*, p. 79.

⁹ Shane Weller, *Beckett, Literature, and the Ethics of Alterity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 194. Elsewhere, Weller describes anethics as a field 'in which neither negation nor affirmation can be accomplished, and in which it is no longer possible to determine any action—or indeed any inaction—as either ethical or unethical' (Shane Weller, 'Beckett and Ethics', in *A Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. by S. E. Gontarski (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 118–29 (p. 128)). For Weller, the prefix 'an' encompasses both the Greek 'an', indicating 'privation', and the Latin 'an', meaning 'by way of' (*Ethics of Alterity*, p. 56).

The politics of Beckett's writing is contested in the interpretations brought to bear on it. One such interpretative strategy involves a valorisation of difference through an over-emphasis on the importance of indeterminacy. This is the position outlined by Adorno in his essay on *Endgame*: 'Understanding it can mean nothing other than understanding its incomprehensibility, or concretely reconstructing its meaning structure—that it has none.'¹⁰ Such a statement risks glorifying indeterminacy itself, rather than investigating the particularity of the work in question.¹¹ As Adorno himself notes in the 'Paralipomena' included by the editors in his posthumously published *Aesthetic Theory*: 'The formal analysis of an artwork, and what can properly be called form in an artwork, only has meaning in relation to the work's concrete material.'¹² The specificities of socio-political oppression are made 'concrete and particular' in the material connection between Pozzo and Lucky in *Waiting for Godot*.¹³ The first stage entrance in Beckett's revised versions of his debut play is made by Lucky, tied by a rope around his neck to his master Pozzo, who drives him on with a whip, on his way to sell him at market (*TN I*, p. 21).¹⁴ Following Alain Badiou's celebration of what he sees as the affirmation at the heart of Beckett's project of negation, we might be tempted to see Lucky's continued progress in the face of oppression as part of a Beckettian imperative to 'keep going' [continuer].¹⁵ It is more accurate, I would argue, to see such restrained physical movement as reflective of the conflict expressed in the last three phrases of *The Unnamable*: 'you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on'. When describing *Murphy* to Thomas MacGreevy in 1936, Beckett explained that he now saw that the book 'is break down [*sic*] between his [Geulincx's] ubi nihil vales ibi nihil velis (positive) & [André] Malraux's Il est difficile à celui qui vit hors du monde de

¹⁰ Adorno, 'Trying to Understand Endgame', p. 120.

¹¹ Discussing Adorno's dialectic between seriousness and playfulness in the freedom of art, Natalie Leeder notes that Adorno's theory 'loses precision [...] in its concrete discussion of literary texts' (Natalie Leeder, *Freedom and Negativity in Beckett and Adorno: Something or Nothing*, e-book (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), no pagination).

¹² Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. by Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. by Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: Continuum, 2002), p. 291.

¹³ McMullan, *Performing Embodiment in Samuel Beckett's Drama*, p. 121.

¹⁴ In the original version of the play, Beckett had Estragon sitting onstage alone, with Vladimir joining him from offstage, but he changed this when directing the 1975 production in Berlin, putting both main characters onstage together from the start. See *TN I*, p. xiii.

¹⁵ For an extended discussion of this maxim, see Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. by Peter Hallward (2001; London: Verso, 2012).

ne pas rechercher les siens [it is difficult for one who lives outside the world not to seek out his own] (negation)' (SB to TM, 16 January 1936, *LSB* I, p. 299). The terminology here recalls the 'breakdown' between subject and object described in 'Recent Irish Poetry', while placing *Murphy* between two intellectual figures who mark out in contrasting terms the 'space that intervenes' between the world as representation and the will. By seeing the ethics of Beckett's work in the same terms, *between* affirmation and negation, we can better understand this work's political dynamics. This will allow for a challenging of affirmative critical statements that 'every sentence of his [Beckett's] writing keeps faith with powerlessness' as well as the valorisation of the works' structural meaninglessness.¹⁶ From Mr Endon's asylum cell to Emmo and Emma's rotunda, I have shown how Beckett's closed spaces lend themselves to acts of interpretation which will neither close off meaning nor ignore the socio-political specificities through which they are produced. It is this politics of interpretation that I will here examine in the use of confined space in Beckett's late dramatic work, arguing that freedom of interpretation as well as freedom of movement are crucial to the shaping of his performance texts in composition and direction.

When travelling through Nazi Germany before World War II, Beckett stated that he wished to record '[n]o social or political criticism whatever apart from what the fact as stated implies'.¹⁷ While such aversion towards direct political commentary is also an important feature of Beckett's use of confined space, what is implied by the spatial 'fact[s]' of his oeuvre is far from being unimportant.

Beckett's bird's eye diagrams for his 1975 production of *Warten auf Godot*, which look like broken down attempts at *Quad*, indicate a series of highly patterned, seemingly abstract stage movements. However, in spite of such geometric rigour, the Beckettian stage is never an 'empty abstraction'.¹⁸ Rather, in Beckett's theatrical work, 'it is always here', even if, as in *Not I*, the stage

¹⁶ Terry Eagleton, 'Introduction' to Pascale Casanova, *Samuel Beckett: Anatomy of a Literary Revolution*, trans. by Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2006), pp. 1–9 (p. 2).

¹⁷ SB, diary entry, 28 December 1936, Nixon, *Beckett's German Diaries*, p. 122.

¹⁸ See Chapter 5.

space is antithetical to what we might imagine ‘here’ to be.¹⁹ Moreover, this ‘here’, contrary to the opinion of the narrator of the sixth of the *Texts for Nothing* regarding his own location, is not ‘infinite’ but multiple and particular.²⁰ When Estragon gave Vladimir directions to the toilet during *Godot*’s debut run, he guided him to the bathroom of the Théâtre de Babylone. In Beckett’s own 1975 production in Berlin, the line was modified and Vladimir was directed to the Schiller Theater backstage toilets.²¹ Even when not reacting to a specific performance space, spatial particularity also has the potential to inform the political dynamics of a production. In his preliminary notebook for the 1975 production of *Godot*, there is evidence of Beckett’s idea to project the image of a ‘[f]aint shadow of bars on stage floor’. In the same notebook, he wrote: ‘gen[eral] effect of moves, esp[ecially] V’s [Vladimir’s] though apparently motivated that of those in a cage’.²² He crossed the earlier phrase out and put an ‘X’ beside it, and the image of the cell bars did not appear in the production. But the structural concept of confinement carried over into his production notebook as a means of giving ‘form to the confusion’ of the play.²³ Having detailed the stage business of the opening sequence, Beckett outlined Vladimir and Estragon’s tightly controlled movements using the same metaphor: ‘Thus establish at outset 2 caged dynamics, E sluggish, V restless. + perpetual separation and reunion of V/E.’²⁴ The striped trousers and jacket, reminiscent of prison uniform, that the two characters swapped during the interval of this production are typical of the residues of confinement in Beckett’s work as playwright and director: they gesture towards—but refuse to provide—a fixed institutional context for the play.²⁵

¹⁹ Marvin Carlson, ‘The Theatre *ici*’, in *Performance and the Politics of Space: Theatre and Topology*, ed. by Fischer-Lichte and Wihstutz, pp. 15–30 (p. 16). This is a paraphrase of Thornton Wilder’s statement on stage time: ‘On the stage it is always now’ (qtd in Carlson, ‘The Theatre *ici*’, p. 16).

²⁰ See Chapter 4. The sixth of the *Texts for Nothing* was first published in French along with two other ‘Textes pour rien’ in *Les Lettres Nouvelles*, 1.3 (1953).

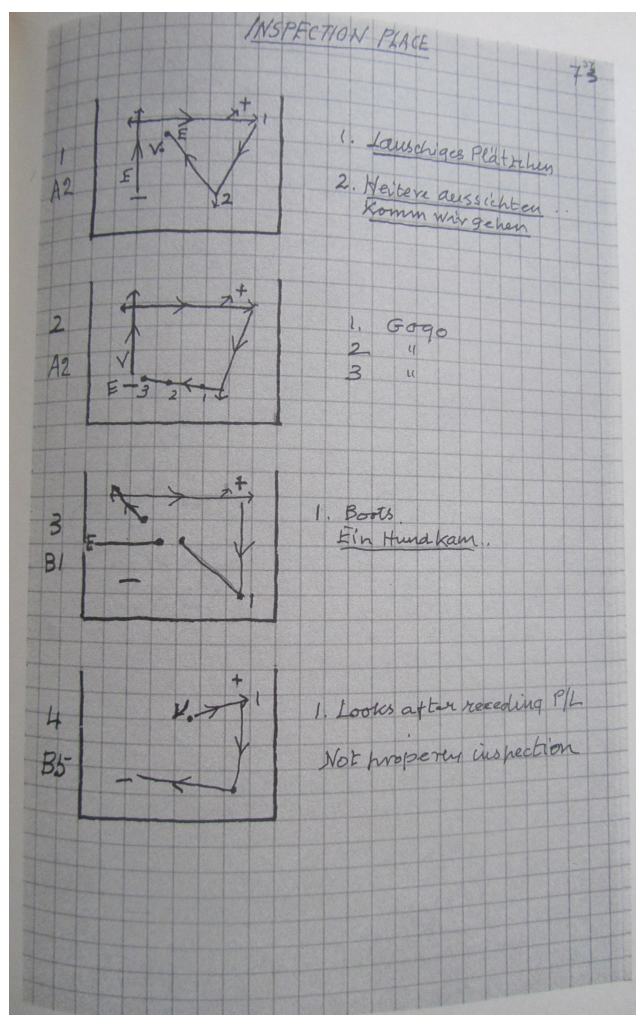
²¹ *TN I*, pp. 124, 438; Cohn, *Just Play*, p. 257.

²² *Godot* production notebook, UoR MS 1396/4/3, facing page 1, qtd in James Knowlson, ‘Introduction’ to *TN I*, p. xxii.

²³ ‘Der Konfusion Gestalt geben.’ (Beckett, preliminary notebook, qtd and trans. in McMillan and Fehsenfeld, p. 88)

²⁴ Transcribed in *TN I*, p. 187.

²⁵ See Walter D. Asmus, ‘Beckett Directs *Godot*’, *Theatre Quarterly*, 5.19 (1975), 19–26 (p. 21) and Cohn, *Just Play*, pp. 260–61.



- Beckett's stage diagrams for the 1975 Berlin production of *Warten auf Godot* (TN I, p. 321).

Carceral space

One of Beckett's production assistants at the 1975 production of *Godot* in Berlin was actor, playwright and founder of the San Quentin Drama Workshop Rick Cluchey. As well as going on to assist the former prisoner at the Workshop's productions of his plays, Beckett, in the year leading up to his death, read and gave feedback to drafts of Cluchey's memoirs, expressing admiration for his '[h]eroic struggle with conditions & self in Q. [San Quentin Prison]'.²⁶ In May 1981, following a request that Beckett write something for Cluchey to perform at the 1982 Goodman festival in Chicago, Beckett tried to write a 'digestive—or appetizer' for Cluchey's production of *Krapp's Last*

²⁶ SB to RC, 6 July 1989, HRC CL MS 17/17. I wish to thank Mark Nixon for sharing with me with his transcriptions of these letters.

Tape, in place of what he called an ‘impossible combination with *Endgame*’.²⁷ On holidays in Tangier in autumn 1981, he put his hand to a ‘[s]enile tandem’ entitled ‘Epilogue’.²⁸ The manuscript begins with a crossed-out passage of prose, containing a stage direction which indicates that the prose is being read aloud onstage: ‘Raises head from book. Remembers ^[? Stares] Gazes into space. Long pause. Resumes reading.’²⁹ Following this passage, two characters, A and B, play out various hapless attempts at communication, hampered by their bad hearing.³⁰ Beckett linked ‘Epilogue’ clearly to the promise made to Cluchey in a series of letters to Barbara Bray.³¹ In one letter, he even included the two figures from the piece:

A. What’s on after us?

B. Krapp

A. Good God.³²

In another letter to Bray, written early on during his stay in Tangier, Beckett followed his account of the struggle he was having writing something for Cluchey with a reference to another once incarcerated artist: ‘Have stopped trying for Rick. Haven’t looked at text begun at Ussy. Tried to remember Apollinaire’s Comment lentement passe l’heure. Can’t get it right. Marvellous poem.’³³ By the end of his holiday, Beckett claimed to have ‘stopped trying’ to complete the Cluchey piece.³⁴ He wrote to Billie Whitelaw when he was back in Paris: ‘I have been trying to write a short piece

²⁷ SB to RC, 17 May 1981, UoR JEK A/2/57; SB to AS, 20 November 1981, Harmon, p. 416.

²⁸ SB to BB, 1 October 1981, TCD MS 10948/1/666, f. 1r.

²⁹ TCD MS 11286, f. 1r.

³⁰ For an account of ‘Epilogue’, see Jane Maxwell, ‘Waiting for an Archivist: The Samuel Beckett Collection’, in *The Old Library, Trinity College Dublin: 1712–2012*, ed. by W. E. Vaughan (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013), pp. 370–76 (pp. 372–76).

³¹ SB to BB, TCD MSS 10948/1/665–70. See also SB to Billie Whitelaw, 14 November 1981: ‘I have been trying to write a short piece for him [Rick] to eke out Krapp, without success so far.’

³² SB to BB, 1 October 1981, TCD MS 10948/1/666, f. 1r.

³³ SB to BB, 11 September 1981, TCD MS 10948/1/665.

³⁴ SB to BB, [24/27] October 1981 [postmarked 28 October 1981], TCD MS 10948/1/670.

for him [Rick] to eke out Krapp, without success so far.³⁵ He was still struggling to create something almost a year after giving up on ‘Epilogue’, telling Cluchey in September 1982: ‘My attempts to write a piece for you continue fruitless. Barren times from which I hope to emerge, but not surprising if I can’t. I’ll be in touch with you again about this before the end of the year.’³⁶ A backup plan was to give Cluchey *Rough for Theatre I* to fill out his show.³⁷ Beckett also suggested to director Alan Schneider that ‘the part of the Protagonist in *Catastrophe* is what he needs, his strong point being massive presence, his weak point speech’.³⁸ In May 1983, Beckett told Cluchey how difficult it was proving to create something for him: ‘hope we’ll meet again before the curtain rattles down. And that, despite encircling gloom, I’ll manage a piece for you before then, if only a piece of monologue, duly carceral’.³⁹ That same year, Beckett was working on what would have been his most explicitly carceral work for theatre, ‘Mongrel Mime’.⁴⁰ It seems this was initially intended for performance at the Graz Theatre Festival but that this plan was scrapped.⁴¹ The play constitutes another instance of Beckett’s attempt to represent the ‘bleeding meat’ of humanity within spaces of confinement on stage.⁴² The above evidence suggests that the piece was written with Cluchey in mind.

‘Mongrel Mime’ is key to understanding the power dynamics at work in Beckett’s use of stage space. In spite of this, it has received only cursory attention from scholars.⁴³ Ruby Cohn

³⁵ SB to Billie Whitelaw, 14 November 1981, UoR BW 1/16, ff. 1r.–1v.

³⁶ SB to RC, 17 September 1982, UoR JEK A/2/57.

³⁷ SB to AS, 6 February 1982, Harmon, p. 422.

³⁸ SB to AS, 19 September 1982, Harmon, p. 435. James Knowlson has confirmed this opinion of Beckett’s, recalling the difficulty Beckett had in getting Cluchey to use a specific type of intonation for Hamm’s lines ‘Flora! Pomona! [...] Ceres!’ during rehearsals for a San Quentin Drama Workshop production of *Endgame* (conversation with James Knowlson, University of Reading, October 2015; *CDW*, p. 111).

³⁹ SB to RC, 31 May 1983, UoR JEK A/2/57. ‘[C]arceral’ is mistranscribed as ‘careeral’ on the UoR typed transcription of this letter.

⁴⁰ ‘Mongrel Mime for one ^{old} small (M)’ TS, HRC CL MS 17/7, f. 1r.

⁴¹ ‘I have not looked at WH [*Worstward Ho*], nor [? thought] at NP [‘Nightpiece’, early title for *Nacht und Träume*] nor struggled further with the chambers. I realize now that the last is out of the question for Graz. Perhaps some day in Paris with me around to finnick.’ (SB to BB, 4 August 1982, TCD MS 10948/1/672) Given the spatial setup of the play, I read ‘the chambers’ as a reference to ‘Mongrel Mime’.

⁴² RC, email correspondence with the author, 11 April 2014. See also Rick Cluchey, ‘My Years With Beckett’, in *Krapp’s Last Tape: A Theatre Workbook*, ed. by James Knowlson (London: Brutus Books, 1980), pp. 120–23 (p. 121). I wish to thank Nora Masterson and the late Rick Cluchey for their assistance with my research into ‘Mongrel Mime’.

⁴³ Brief descriptions of ‘Mongrel Mime’ can be found in Nixon, ‘Beckett’s Unpublished Canon’, p. 299; Cohn, *A*

suggests that the word ‘mongrel’ in the title probably refers ‘to the inclusion of a voice’ in the mime and the earlier, variant forms of the title, ‘bastard mime’ and ‘quasi mime’, confirm this.⁴⁴ The draft material for the play—marked ‘aborted’ but comprising enough material to construct a full performance—comprises three manuscript pages and one typescript page. The first manuscript page contains two separate drafts which outline the stage space and a lone central figure (M). Both attempts are struck out by a large ‘X’. The second manuscript page is a full-page draft of the same scenario; the typescript is an edited copy of this material.⁴⁵ The third manuscript page, which may have been composed either before or after the typescript, starts with a short, crossed out paragraph describing M’s onstage movements. The rest of the page details the injunctions of the Voice (V). Though the Voice and its imperative function are present from the earliest draft on the very first page, only the third manuscript page gives both the content of each injunction and M’s reaction to them. V tells him to ‘shut’, ‘lock’ and ‘bolt’ the door behind him after entering each room, deposit the ‘key’ through the lattice—so there is no way of returning—‘rest’ for a moment before going ‘on’ and ‘out’ of each room.⁴⁶ In all drafts, the progressively waning volume of V corresponds with an increased gap between each injunction and its corresponding response, as well as a decrease in light and a darkening of colour as M progresses from room to room. The rooms also shrink in size as he moves cross-stage, making the section of stage space he occupies more and more enclosed. When he gets to the final room, there is no way ‘out’ or ‘on’.

The aspect of the play with which Beckett seems to have had most difficulty is the relation between M’s movements and the stage space. While, in a key essay for the development of modern spatial theory, Immanuel Kant used the ‘incongruent counterparts’ of left and right hands in his account of the relation between the human body and absolute space, Beckett’s vacillation between

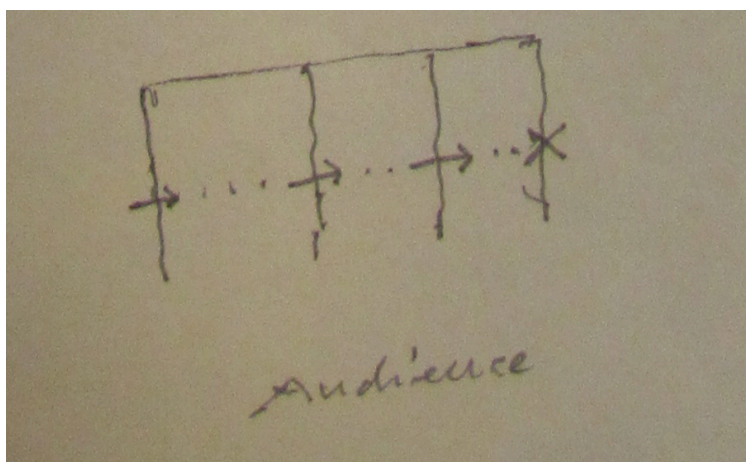
Beckett Canon, p. 277; McMullan, *Performing Embodiment in Samuel Beckett’s Drama*, p. 64 and Ulrika Maude, “‘Material of a Strictly Peculiar Order’: Beckett, Merleau-Ponty and Perception”, in *Beckett and Phenomenology*, ed. by Ulrika Maude and Matthew Feldman (London: Continuum, 2009), pp. 77–94 (p. 90).

⁴⁴ Cohn, *A Beckett Canon*, p. 277; ‘Mongrel Mime’ MS, f. 1r.

⁴⁵ There are minor changes made between MS, f. 2r. and the typed content of TS, f. 1r. Beckett then made more extensive changes by hand on the typescript.

⁴⁶ ‘Mongrel Mime’, MS, f. 3r.

M's use of his left and right hands for actions such as opening each door, dealing with the keys and holding a bag was part of his attempt to orient his protagonist within the specific, theatrical space he was trying to create.⁴⁷ Such vacillation, which recalls the multiple postural permutations in the sketches of the 'Fancy ~~Dead~~ Dying' notebook, is most evident on the third page of manuscript, at the end of which there is a diagram of the stage and auditorium, containing the audience who would orient M's movements according to the layout of a proscenium stage.



- Beckett's sketch of the stage ('Mongrel Mime', MS, f. 3r.).

In all the handwritten drafts, M enters audience left, as shown in the sketch, and makes his way across the stage. But Beckett was tinkering with the spatial configuration of 'Mongrel Mime' on the very first page of manuscript, changing the 'anti-clockwise' motion of the doors to 'clockwise'.⁴⁸ On the typescript, he reversed the motion of the doors from 'clockwise' back to 'anti-clockwise' and changed the orientation of the piece so that M enters audience right.⁴⁹ The effect of these changes is to have M hidden by each opening door, which instead displays its carceral features—key, bolt, and prison-like lattice—to the audience. These features are emphasised throughout—the key, bolt and lock are 'large', 'massive', with the key described as 'prominent'—

⁴⁷ Immanuel Kant, 'Concerning the Ultimate Ground of the Differentiation of Directions in Space', in Immanuel Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy, 1755–1770*, ed. and trans. by David Walford and Ralf Meerbote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 361–72 (p. 370). For an account of the importance of Kant's essay for spatial theory, see Casey, pp. 188–89, 205–10.

⁴⁸ 'Mongrel Mime', MS, f. 1r.

⁴⁹ 'Mongrel Mime', TS, f. 1r.

and in the typescript, the door is white, giving the prospective audience a clear view of these black metallic objects.⁵⁰

The fact that V's commands both prompt and respond to M's movements strongly suggests the existence of a world outside that of the confined subject. At one stage Beckett considered making this spatial division explicit and making the two spaces recognisably institutional. In a different pen to the main list of V's sequence of commands, written in the margin of the manuscript, Beckett added the words 'peephole' and 'click'.⁵¹ As outlined in Chapter 2, the 'shuttered judas' in *Murphy*, which contains the first in a series of male Beckett protagonists whose names start with the letter 'm', breaks the monadic structure of the asylum cell and allows the warder to mount an assault on the 'little world' of the psychiatric patient. But Beckett kept such obviously carceral references out of his writing for the stage. The click of a peephole would have made 'Mongrel Mime' Beckett's first play set inside an institution of confinement, making the audience complicit in the hierarchy of seeing and unseeing which the architecture of the M.M.M. is designed to enforce between nurse and patient in *Murphy*. However, the detail never made its way into the main body of text. This is in line with Beckett's decision not to include the image of cell bars on the stage of *Godot*. It is also in line with the liminal status of similarly carceral objects in *Company*. While drafting his late prose piece, Beckett changed the line '[h]ands crossed on remains of genitals possibly manacled' to '[h]ands invisibly manacled crossed on pubis', and it is this later version that appears in the published text.⁵² While the published version of *Company* contains such objects of restraint only as imagined elements, features of carceral confinement are evident in the playing area of the unpublished 'Mongrel Mime'.

The extremely confined playing area of 'Mongrel Mime' would make it challenging to realise the play onstage. In the draft on the second page of manuscript, and on the typescript draft,

⁵⁰ 'Mongrel Mime', MS, ff. 1r., 2r.; TS, f. 1r.

⁵¹ 'Mongrel Mime', MS, f. 3r.

⁵² Beckett, *Company / Compagnie and A Piece of Monologue / Solo: A Bilingual Variorum Edition*, p. 104; *NHO*, pp. 16–17.

the ceiling is 5' 6" high, with the actor '[i]deally about 5' 9" tall and thus obliged to stoop to avoid contact' with it.⁵³ These measurements support my hypothesis that Beckett wrote 'Mongrel Mime' to be performed by Rick Cluchey, who measured 5' 8".⁵⁴ However, the spatial arrangement described would be very hard to present in a standard, raked auditorium without the ceiling of the rooms blocking the view of those seated at the back. In spite of having used multiple configurations of confinement across his theatrical oeuvre, this attempted combination of the movement of M's cross-stage journey within the closed spaces of the low-roofed rooms is one which would be difficult to present on any extant proscenium stage. In writing 'Mongrel Mime', Beckett reached a dead end in his effort to outline a particular form of confinement within the spatial reality of the theatre. Based on the decisions Beckett made to suppress carceral detail as a writer and director, I contend that it was the explicitly carceral nature of the performance space, along with these spatial difficulties, that led to the abandonment of the play.

Between a protest and *Catastrophe*

If 'Mongrel Mime' was abandoned due to its explicitly carceral nature, *Catastrophe*, Beckett's only play dedicated to a political prisoner, avoids direct political commentary by using the most explicitly realist stage scenario of Beckett's canon.⁵⁵ This portrayal of a male Director and his female Assistant manipulating a Protagonist on an 18-inch block is an anomaly for Beckett, and not just because of its unusual dedicatee.⁵⁶ As in other Beckett plays, one of the main figures is an authoritarian male bully, but he lacks the pathos, or indeed the eloquence, of Hamm or Pozzo and cannot as easily be played for laughs as the overblown Animator of *Rough for Radio II* (*Pochade radiophonique*, 1975). The atmosphere of oppression is also familiar, but instead of being set in the

⁵³ 'Mongrel Mime', TS, f. 1r.

⁵⁴ Nora Masterson, email to the author, 17 January 2017.

⁵⁵ *Catastrophe* was first published in French in *Solo suivi de Catastrophe* (Paris: Minuit, 1982). The English translation was published in *The New Yorker*, 10 January 1983, pp. 26–27; Ruby Cohn has it first published in *Hiroshima* (Quisberg, 1982). See Cohn, *A Beckett Canon*, pp. 372–73 n.

⁵⁶ The block is 40 cm high in the published French text (Samuel Beckett, *Catastrophe et autres dramatiques: Cette fois, Solo, Berceuse, Impromptu d'Ohio, Quoi où* (Paris: Minuit, 1986), p. 72).

amorphous mud of *How It Is* or the dim light of *What Where*, the action takes place in an easily recognisable rehearsal space.

Catastrophe, like many other of Beckett's late works for theatre, was written on request, this time for AIDA (Association Internationale de Défense des Artistes), who were organising a night of solidarity for the Czech dissident playwright Václav Havel at the Avignon Theatre Festival. The imprisoned playwright, who was serving a sentence for 'subversive activities' against the Czechoslovak Socialist State, had been closely associated with Beckett's drama in Czechoslovakia.⁵⁷ He had worked as unofficial dramaturge on the 1964 national premiere of *Godot* and cited Beckett in one of his prison letters as one of the playwrights, alongside Eugène Ionesco, 'who stimulated me to try to communicate everything I wanted to say through drama'.⁵⁸ Beckett's positive response was therefore both artistically and personally important to the future Czechoslovak president, as is evident in the letter Havel sent to Beckett soon after having been released:

Dear Samuel Beckett, During the dark fifties when I was 16 or 18 of age, in a country where there were virtually no cultural or other contacts with the outside world, luckily I had the opportunity to read 'Waiting for Godot'. [...] It may be a foolish expression, but I am looking for a better one in vain: from the first you have been for me a deity in the heavens of spirit. I have been immensely influenced by you as a human being, and in a way as a writer, too. There can never disappear the memory of the adventurous search for, and finding of, spiritual values in the void around me. [...] I mention all this to make clearer to you the shock I experienced during my time in prison when on the occasion of one of her one-hour visits allowed four times a year, my wife told me in the presence of an obtuse warder that at Avignon there took place a night of solidarity with me, and that you took the opportunity to write, and to make public for the first time, your play 'Catastrophe'. For a long time

⁵⁷ Prefatory note to Václav Havel, *Mistake*, in *Index on Censorship*, 13.1 (1984), 13.

⁵⁸ Ondřej Pilný, 'Irish Drama in the Czech Lands, c. 1900–2013', in *Ireland and the Czech Lands: Contacts and Comparisons in History and Culture*, ed. by Gerald Power and Ondřej Pilný (Bern: Peter Lang, 2014), pp. 201–21 (p. 214); Havel to Olga Havlová, 14 November 1981, in *Letters to Olga: June 1979–September 1982*, trans. by Paul Wilson (London: Faber, 1988), p. 248.

afterwards there accompanied me in the prison a great joy and emotion and helped to live on amidst all the dirt and baseness.⁵⁹

The persistent concern with oppression in Beckett's postwar work has led to analysis of *Catastrophe* in terms of a power dynamics which 'extend[s] far beyond any specific political context' and constitutes a critique of the 'tyranny' inherent in representation itself.⁶⁰ But there have also been attempts to historicise Beckett's work in order to tease out the precise relations between his writing and such contexts, as well as a call for a political reading of Beckett's aesthetics.⁶¹ It is my position that studying both the oppressive power dynamics of *Catastrophe* as well as the political context in which the play was written will provide a better understanding of how the politics of Beckett's late work is related to the hermeneutic indeterminacy which governs his final 'stages of confinement'. Alain Badiou sees Beckett as engaging in a fundamentally ethical project of stripping down detail until the functions of humanity are revealed in their most essential forms. Rather than being subject to a one-directional paring down of particulars in order to arrive at what Badiou terms 'generic humanity', however, Beckett's minimalist texts are unresolved sequences which suggest multiple possible resolutions.⁶² As composer Luciano Berio puts it, 'Beckett's writing [...] constantly prompts interpretation but, at the same time, it refuses to provide any meaningful or useful instrument' with which to do so.⁶³

'Explicitation'

Responding to a suggestion made by his Assistant towards the end of *Catastrophe*, the Director

⁵⁹ Havel to SB, 17 April 1983, VHL ID 5852, f. 1r. See also folder entitled 'Havel, Vaclav', UoR JEK A/2/123 and James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, pp. 680–81.

⁶⁰ Anna McMullan, *Theatre on Trial: Samuel Beckett's Later Drama* (1993; London: Routledge, 2005), p. 26; H. Porter Abbott, 'Tyranny and Theatricality: The Example of Samuel Beckett', *Theatre Journal*, 40.1 (1988), 77–87. See also Abbott, *Beckett Writing Beckett*, pp. 127–48.

⁶¹ See Peter Boxall, 'Samuel Beckett: Towards a Political Reading', *Irish Studies Review*, 10.2 (2002), 159–70.

⁶² Badiou, *On Beckett*, p. 3.

⁶³ Mary Bryden, 'Beckett and Music: An Interview with Luciano Berio', in *Samuel Beckett and Music*, ed. by Bryden, pp. 189–90 (p. 189).

emphasises his desire to keep his own play ambiguous:

A: [*Timidly.*] What about a little . . . a little . . . gag?

D: For God's sake! This craze for explicitation! Every i dotted to death! Little gag! For God's sake!

A: Sure he won't utter?

D: Not a squeak. (*CDW*, p. 459)

'[E]xplicitation,' which also appears in the corresponding passage in the original French text, is a word which is standard in that language and which Beckett would have found in his *Larousse universel* dictionary, but not in his *OED*.⁶⁴ In English, the word is a technical term used in translation studies to describe 'the process of rendering information which is only implicit in the source text explicit in the target text'.⁶⁵ A good example of this is the addition of 'Londres' to the opening of the French translation of *Murphy*, contextual information which is left implicit in the English version.⁶⁶ Steven Connor understands explicitation more broadly as a characteristic feature of modernism, by which one 'make[s] articulate principles of functioning that had previously been taken for granted'.⁶⁷ In a July 1982 letter to American director Alan Schneider, Beckett underlined his own resistance to the explicitation brought about through theatrical over-emphasis in his complaints about the effect of an additional stage prop at the Avignon premiere of *Catastrophe*: 'Saw a few depressing extracts on TV including a brief flash of the Protagonist all trussed up with screaming white bonds to facilitate comprehension.'⁶⁸ An even more explicative interpretation of

⁶⁴ Beckett, *Catastrophe et autres dramatiques*, p. 77; 'explicitation', *Larousse universel*, 2 vols (Paris: Larousse, 1922) I. This edition of the dictionary was in Beckett's library when he died (*BDL* [accessed 5 August 2017]).

⁶⁵ Ana Frankenberg-Garcia, 'Are Translations Longer than Source Texts? A Corpus-based Study of Explicitation', paper presented at the Third International CULT (Corpus Use and Learning to Translate) Conference, Barcelona, 22–24 January 2004, pp. 1–8 (p. 1) <<http://hdl.handle.net/10400.26/253>> [accessed 7 January 2016]. See also Jean Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet, *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais: méthode de traduction*, rev. edn (1977; Paris: Didier, 2007), pp. 9, 117.

⁶⁶ Beckett, *Murphy*, p. 9. In the English version, London is not mentioned by name until Chapter 3 (*Mu*, p. 19).

⁶⁷ Connor, *Beckett, Modernism and the Material Imagination*, p. 9. See also Peter Sloterdijk, 'War on Latency: On Some Relations Between Surrealism and Terror', *Radical Philosophy*, 137 (2006), 14–19.

⁶⁸ SB to AS, 23 July 1982, Harmon, p. 432. A short extract of the performance can be viewed on the website of the French National Audiovisual Institute: 'Midi 2, Spécial Avignon: nuit Václav Havel' <<http://www.ina.fr/video/CAB8201131701/special-avignon-nuit-vaclav-havel-video.html>>, 12:39–13:10, first broadcast 22 July 1982 [accessed 10 June 2015].

Beckett's play was staged in New York a few months after his death, ending with the Czechoslovak national anthem ringing out triumphantly while the Protagonist raised his arms in victory.⁶⁹ Like the supplementary flag and anthem, the addition of white restraints in Avignon runs counter to what Beckett calls his 'process of elimination' in the production notebooks for *Was Wo*, the 1985 German TV adaptation of *What Where* (first broadcast 1986).⁷⁰ Analysing Beckett's minimalist working process will help to illuminate the relation between *Catastrophe* and contemporary political events.



- The Protagonist in Avignon. Screenshot from 'Midi 2, Spécial Avignon: nuit Václav Havel'.

'Where do you think we are?'

Dirk Van Hulle has made the point that '[t]o understand his [Beckett's] method of "stripping away", it is important to be aware of the particulars, without which there would be nothing to strip away in

⁶⁹ Keir Elam, 'Catastrophic Mistakes: Beckett, Havel, The End', *SBT/A*, 3 (1994), 1–28 (p. 26 n. 20).

⁷⁰ UoR MS 3097/2, f. 2r, reproduced and transcribed in *TN IV*, pp. 429, 431.

the first place'.⁷¹ The political and cultural details surrounding *Catastrophe*'s composition constitute such a rejected context, which must be taken into account when analysing the politics of Beckett's writing. The most immediately relevant contextual factor is that, unlike most of Beckett's late drama, the play was composed in French, due to the fact that it was written for performance in Avignon. In the drafts, the overall trend is towards greater specificity: the definite article 'le' [the] preceding 'piédouche' [pedestal] and 'chapeau' [hat] becomes the demonstrative pronoun 'ce' [this/that]; the Director's reason for hurrying things along, 'j'ai à faire', [I have things to do] becomes the more specific 'j'ai un cocktail' (before appearing in the published text as the more official 'j'ai un comité' [I have a meeting]); and, late on in the revision process, the '[m]anteau' [coat] worn by the Protagonist became a '[r]obe de chambre' [dressing gown], which accords with the pyjamas he is wearing underneath.⁷² However, while these changes signal a move in the direction of greater definition, none of them go so far as to clarify context. Indeed, there are even counterexamples to this general trend: Beckett first added the adverb 'hier' [yesterday] to the Assistant's reply to her superior's command that she show him the Protagonist's hands—'[t]u les [?] as] vues' [you've seen them]—but then crossed this out and replaced it with 'tantôt' [earlier], which was then itself erased.⁷³ Whether tracking addition, subtraction or alteration, the *avant-texte* can help us understand Beckett's shaping of stage context in greater depth.

Beckett's translation of the play supports this general resistance to explicitation. Although he does give the Director's impending appointment an additional political edge by translating it as 'caucus', there is nothing to indicate the political system in which he operates (*CDW*, p. 458). The linguistic setup within the play is also unclear. The Assistant's repeated answer to the Director's demands, 'I make a note', sounds like the error of a non-native English speaker and, indeed, she acts as an interpreter between the Director and the lighting technician Luke, transmitting her boss's

⁷¹ Van Hulle, 'Introduction', to *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Van Hulle, p. xix.

⁷² UoR MS 2456/3, f. 2r.; UoR MS 2456/2, f. 2r.; Beckett, *Catastrophe et autres dramatiques*, p. 75; author's proofs for *Catastrophe et autres dramatiques*, UoR MS 3628, p. 38. I follow Beckett's revised, handwritten pagination on the proofs. For a description of the *Catastrophe* manuscripts and typescripts, see Bryden, Garforth and Mills, pp. 18–21.

⁷³ UoR MS 2456/2, f. 2r.; Beckett, *Catastrophe et autres dramatiques*, p. 74.

commands using physical gestures in order to bridge the communication gap between the two men.⁷⁴ This indicates that what we are getting onstage, as in Brian Friel's *Translations* (1981), is the monolingual version of a bilingual scene.⁷⁵

Translation was central to Beckett's relationship with Havel, as is clear from his response to Havel's letter of 29 May 1983, which he sent with a copy of *Catastrophe et autres dramaticules* dedicated 'in friendship' to the Czech writer:

Dear Vaclav Havel[,] Thank you for your most moving letter. To have helped you, however little, and saluted you and all you stand for, was a moment in my writing life that I cherish. It is I who stand in your debt. I have read and admired your plays in French translation. I send you my heartfelt wishes for better days.⁷⁶

Beckett's contact in the Czechoslovak underground opposition and his means of corresponding with Havel was physicist František Janouch, chairman of the Charter 77 Foundation, a fundraising body for dissidents named after the open letter of protest to the Czechoslovak government which had led to Havel's imprisonment. When Janouch, who was living in exile at the time in Sweden, visited Paris in April 1984, he arranged to meet Beckett for coffee and filled him in on political events in Czechoslovakia and theatrical ones in Stockholm, where *Catastrophe* had been staged the previous November as part of a double bill with Havel's dramatic response to Beckett's play, *Mistake* (*Chyba*, 1983). Regarding the situation in Czechoslovakia, Janouch noted that though Beckett 'knew very little, his interest was genuinely great'. When asked what prompted him to dedicate

⁷⁴ In an early draft, when the Assistant asks the lighting technician, '[t]u entends [?] [can you hear?/do you understand?], he answers, '[r]ien' [nothing] (UoR MS 2457/2, f. 5r.). The lighting technician, originally called Tim, was not in the original list of characters but does appear in the later in the same draft (UoR MS 2457/1, ff. 1r., 4r.).

⁷⁵ Brian Friel, *Translations* (London: Faber, 2012).

⁷⁶ SB to Havel, 29 May 1983; title page of *Catastrophe et autres dramaticules: Cette fois, Solo, Berceuse, Impromptu d'Ohio* (Paris: Minuit, 1982) (VHL ID 21963). Beckett owned a French-language edition of three Havel plays: Václav Havel, *Audience, vernissage, pétition*, trans. by Marcel Aymonin and Stephan Meldegg (Paris: Gallimard NRF, 1980) (*BDL* [accessed 5 August 2017]). It is highly likely that he is referring to these works in this letter. Meldegg was director of the production of *Catastrophe* at Avignon (see below).

Catastrophe to Havel, Beckett ‘became visibly embarrassed—his long fingers moved faster over the marble table top. “I have read his plays, I wanted to express my support for him, my sympathy, my solidarity”’.⁷⁷ Clear throughout his contact with Janouch is Beckett’s practical support for the cause, including a 100-pound sterling donation to Charter 77 and permission to publish his correspondence with Havel in the programme notes for the Stockholm performance.⁷⁸

While his status living as a foreigner in France curtailed the kinds of political gestures he could make, Beckett’s work put him at the centre of a network of intercultural communication which involved him placing an embargo on productions of his plays in front of segregated audiences in South Africa, his signature of an appeal against the declaration of martial law in Poland and assistance for individuals living behind the Iron Curtain.⁷⁹ In 1969, Beckett wrote to Theodor Adorno about the student protests then causing upheaval on the streets of Paris and putting professional pressure on Adorno in Berlin: ‘Was ever such rightness joined to such foolishness?’⁸⁰ Beckett’s statement suggests support for the general aims of the protestors but an aversion to their tactics, the latter emphasised by his labelling the supporters of Herbert Marcuse, one of the figureheads of the protests, the ‘Marcusejugend’ (SB to Adorno, 15 February 1969, *LSB* IV, p. 151). While Beckett’s final decades were to see an increase in his public political activity due to his heightened profile, his work forms its protest in terms of what ‘the fact as stated implies’ rather than through explicit political statements.

One individual who Beckett personally helped out was Polish translator Antoni Libera.⁸¹ Libera recalls receiving the typescript of *Catastrophe* prior to its publication and sending on his

⁷⁷ František Janouch, ‘How I Jumped over a Wall and Met Samuel Beckett’, trans. by Slávka Svěráková, *Herald of Europe*, 7 (2010), 115–20 (pp. 119, 120) <<http://www.heraldofeurope.co.uk/upload/iblock/229/229a659d466912c4f84e1d7ee46187ed.pdf>> [accessed 18 May 2015].

⁷⁸ Beckett’s 100-pound cheque to Charter 77, dated 24 August 1985, is reproduced in Václav Havel and František Janouch, *Korespondence 1978–2001*, ed. by Květa Jechová (Prague: Akropolis, 2007), p. 491. See also Janouch, p. 117.

⁷⁹ On the embargo, see SB to Freda Troup, 13 May 1963, *LSB* III, pp. 543–44. On the signature, see Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 640.

⁸⁰ For an account of this period in Adorno’s life, see Stefan Müller-Dooch, *Adorno: A Biography*, trans. by Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), pp. 448–80.

⁸¹ See Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, pp. 639–40, 678.

Polish translation for Havel to read.⁸² Such textual dissemination worked in both directions. At their meeting, Janouch gave Beckett the manuscript of the French translation of Havel's adaptation of *The Beggar's Opera* (*Žebrácká opera*, 1977) because he thought Beckett would be able to spread the word about the play.⁸³ Beckett's gestures of support towards victims of political oppression are crucial elements in a full picture of the politics of his writing. Even more important are the decisions he made to keep such gestures at arm's length from his work. So, for instance, he stated his support for Havel's cause in the paratextual framing material of *Catastrophe*, rather than following his fellow dramatists who responded to AIDA's request for a play for the night at Avignon by including either Havel or his best-known dramatic character Vaněk in the main text of their plays.⁸⁴

'La fin'

In a 1957 letter to A. J. Leventhal, Beckett complained about the 'horrible job' of translating *Fin de partie* into English. 'Close of Play is not quite right for the title nor the American "The Game is Up". If I can use Endgame in the text phrase at the end, I shall use it for the title.' (SB to A. J. Leventhal, 28 April 1957, *LSB* III, p. 45) Beckett's work is marked by its own finitude, from the image of the vulture which opens his first published collection of poetry to the draft title of his late prose work *Stirrings Still*, 'End'.⁸⁵ There is a sense in much of Beckett's writing that it is finished before it even gets started and this restriction, immanent in many of his texts, somehow propels his narratives stumbling forward. Adorno argues convincingly that the structural components of

⁸² See Lech Kurpiewski, 'Beckett, Havel, Michnik: After the "Catastrophe"', *Warsaw Voice*, 22 April 1990, p. 7, UoR JEK A/2/123. It is unclear exactly when Havel received Libera's translation (Antoni Libera, email correspondence with the author, 8 May 2015). I wish to thank Antoni Libera for his help with my research into this translation.

⁸³ Janouch, p. 120. Havel's adaptation of *The Beggar's Opera* was written in 1972. It was first staged in a semi-legal amateur production in 1975 in Horní Počernice; the first professional production occurred in the Teatro Stabile, Trieste in 1976. See Michael Žantovský, *Havel: A Life* (London: Atlantic Books, 2014) pp. 147–49, 154–58. The play was first published in Czech by Sixty-Eight Publishers in Toronto in 1977.

⁸⁴ Elie Wiesel, Victor Haïm, Arthur Miller, Andrée Chedid, Claude Confortes, Renata Scani and Fernand Garnier, and Jean-Claude Bourbault all wrote plays for the night at Avignon featuring Havel and/or Vaněk. See 'Midi 2, Spécial Avignon: nuit Václav Havel' [accessed 5 August 2017].

⁸⁵ 'The Vulture' (1935), opening poem of *Echo's Bones and Other Precipitates*, in *CPSB*, p. 5; UoR MS 2935/3/2, f. 1r., *BDMP* I [accessed 1 July 2015].

classical drama, which include the mechanics of a satisfactory ending, are ‘toppled’ in *Endgame*.⁸⁶ The play opens with the words ‘[f]inished, it’s finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished’ yet the final tableau, with Clov dressed to leave but holding himself back from doing so, presents us with a picture of what Beckett called the ‘impossibility of catastrophe’ in his play: ‘Ended at its inception, and at every subsequent instant, it continues, ergo can never end.’ (*CDW*, p. 93; SB to AS, 21 November 1957, *LSB* III, p. 73) This is ‘[c]atastrophe [...] in the ancient sense’, the downward turn in the narrative arc which precipitates the ending of Greek tragedy, a sense emphasised by Beckett in his correspondence with Alan Schneider about the play dedicated to Havel: ‘Title *Catastrophe* (in the sense of *dénouement*).’⁸⁷ Beckett’s gloss draws attention to the potential double interpretation of the title—such indeterminacy, I will argue, is key to the play’s own ending.

It has been argued that one of the reasons conclusions of classical tragedies have received much more attention than their beginnings is ‘the sense that it is the end that confirms or enables interpretation of the drama as a whole’.⁸⁸ The idea that endings carry with them a kind of interpretative imprimatur is something Beckett was well aware of, evident in the fact that he marked the manuscript of his last published work ‘what is the word’, written while his health was failing, ‘[k]eep! for end’.⁸⁹ Beckett’s own Dupuytren’s contracture, referenced by name in the French version of *Catastrophe*, was the source for the ‘[f]ibrous degeneration’ of the Protagonist’s hands and he gave prominence to this sense of physical decay when explaining one of the Director’s commands to Janouch: ‘Blanchir – whiten, the suggestion being (if you like) that the flesh is not sufficiently corpselike.’⁹⁰ This moribund white flesh recalls the almost inanimate bodies of

⁸⁶ Adorno, ‘Trying to Understand Endgame’, p. 136.

⁸⁷ *MD*, p. 83. ‘Catastrophe [...] dans le sens antique’ (Beckett, *Malone meurt*, p. 130). SB to AS, 22 May 1982, Harmon, p. 429. Beckett also insisted to André Bernold that the title of *Catastrophe* should be understood in its technical sense (Bernold, *L’amitié de Beckett*, p. 106).

⁸⁸ Deborah H. Roberts, ‘Beginnings and Endings’, in *A Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. by Justina Gregory (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 136–48 (p. 142).

⁸⁹ UoR MS 3316/1, f. 2r., *BDMP* I [accessed 1 July 2015].

⁹⁰ Beckett, *Catastrophe et autres dramatiques*, p. 74; *CDW*, p. 458; SB to Janouch, 29 October 1983, reproduced in Havel and Janouch, p. 489. A reference to Dupuytren’s contracture is also found in a draft of *Ohio Impromptu*, which was written in 1980 (Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 679; Pilling, *A Samuel Beckett Chronology*, pp. 211–12).

Imagination Dead Imagine. Like them, the Protagonist retains a bare minimum of agency, just enough to be able to make his protest.

The very title of *Catastrophe* draws attention to its own ending, which is the interpretative crux of the whole piece. Though the bulk of the play was written quickly—indeed, the main scenario is fully established in the earliest surviving manuscript—the ending and title were not added until typescript stage. In the first of four surviving typescripts, the Director's satisfied words as he looks upon his Protagonist '[o]n tient la fin' [there's our ending], becomes '[o]n tient notre catastrophe' [there's our catastrophe]. In this same draft, Beckett added the title of the play.⁹¹ Though the search for a title recalls his translation of *Fin de partie*, the shaping of *Catastrophe* is different to that of the earlier play, which in the draft labelled 'Avant *Fin de partie*' was set clearly in post-World War I France.⁹² In the published text of *Endgame*, references to the wartime period and the region of Picardy are absent, resulting in a starkly minimalist one-acter set in a refuge of no definite location. As my analysis of the manuscripts of *Catastrophe* demonstrates, in this case, Beckett did not so much strip cultural particulars away in an act of 'vaguening' as deny them entrance to the main body of text in the first place. The playing area may be recognisable as a rehearsal space, the casting of the Director as male and his Assistant as female does add to the play's power relations a specifically gendered dynamic, the fur coat and toque that the Director wears indicates a cold outdoor climate, but none of this is specific enough to locate the play in a particular political context.

The prison drama Havel wrote on Janouch's request upon his release from jail provides a useful stylistic contrast to Beckett's play.⁹³ As *Mistake* opens, a mute newcomer to the prison

⁹¹ UoR MS 2456/1, ff. 4r., 1r.

⁹² F sketches his and X's location: 'Nous sommes dans la Picardie [...] plus précisément dans le Boulonnais [...]. Je dirais même aux alentours de Wissant.' [We are in Picardy [...] specifically in Boulonnais [...]. I would even say somewhere around Wissant.] He then describes where they live: 'Détruite progressivement dans l'automne de 1914, le printemps de 1918 et l'automne suivant, dans des circonstances mystérieuses' [Destroyed gradually in the autumn of 1914, the spring of 1918 and the following autumn, in mysterious circumstances] (UoR MS 1227/7/16/7, f. 14r., transcribed in Jeantroux, p. 93).

⁹³ Janouch, p. 117.

environment, Xiboy, is being accused by ringleader King and his cronies of a breach of prison code—it emerges that he has lit a cigarette between slop-out and breakfast. As is the case in *Catastrophe*, this mute central protagonist becomes a focal point of oppression. Tension builds as King's repeated threats and commands—that Xiboy make his bed according to cell regulations; that he clean the cell thoroughly—fall on uncomprehending ears. As the play ends, it becomes clear that this muteness is about to provoke physical violence:

THIRD PRISONER: (*softly*) 'ere, lads ...

(*Silence—they all gaze at XIBOY*)

KING: (*without turning to THIRD PRISONER*) What?

(*Silence—they all gaze at XIBOY*)

THIRD PRISONER: (*softly*) Know what? He's some kind of a bloody foreigner ...

(*All three look questioningly at KING. Tense silence*)

KING: (*after a pause, softly*) Well, that's his bloody funeral ...

(*KING starts out menacingly towards XIBOY, followed by FIRST, SECOND and THIRD*

PRISONER. *They slowly edge closer to him. Curtain falls*)⁹⁴

On a recording played to introduce the 1983 double bill of *Mistake* and *Catastrophe* in Stockholm, Havel was keen to point out that his play 'was not intended simply as a kind of snapshot of prison life'.⁹⁵ However, while both Havel's and Beckett's plays deal with the oppression of an individual, they do so in very different ways. Like Havel's later mime *Perpetuum Mobile*, written while in prison in 1989 and structured around seven days in the life of a solitary prisoner, *Mistake*

⁹⁴ Václav Havel, *Mistake*, trans. by George Theiner, *Index on Censorship*, 13.1 (1984), 13–14 (p. 14).

⁹⁵ Václav Havel, 'Many Thanks to our Swedish Friends', *Index on Censorship*, 13.1 (1984), 15.

works from the inside out.⁹⁶ It brings a representation of identifiable prison brutality onto the stage and makes a wider point about the internalisation of oppression. By contrast, only the paratextual dedication to *Catastrophe* denotes its carceral origin. If not for this dedication, *Catastrophe* would read as a much more straightforward satire on the tyranny of theatre directors.⁹⁷ Crucially, in spite of Beckett's propensity for 'vaguening', it is *Catastrophe*'s ultra-realistic setting which provides a hermeneutic counterweight to the overtly political dedication. Had the characters been presented in the darkness common to Beckett's late theatre, it would have been all too easy to read the action back into an institutional context. With the stage set up as a stage, interpretation is far less straightforward.

James Knowlson recounts Beckett's approval of a gesture they discussed which had been added to Schneider's production of his play in which the Assistant 'blew away the smoke from the tyrannical Director's cigar. [...] "She isn't only blowing away the smoke you know!"' said Beckett.⁹⁸ Given that elsewhere in the play she wipes clean the chair on which the Director has been sitting before collapsing on it herself, this additional gesture further stressed the Assistant's aversion towards her superior. As the Director's reaction to her final suggestion shows, the lack of fellow feeling is mutual:

A: [*Timidly.*] What if he were to ... were to ... raise his head ... an instant ... show his face ... just an instant.

D: For God's sake! What next? Raise his head? Where do you think we are? In Patagonia? Raise his head? For God's sake! (*CDW*, p. 460)

⁹⁶ *Perpetuum Mobile* was published posthumously in *Taneční zóna*, 4 (2014), 66–73. A production can be viewed at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuItJKYwKMk>> [accessed 16 June 2015]. I wish to thank Ondřej Pilný for bringing this play to my attention and Galina Kiryushina for alerting me to the video.

⁹⁷ Octavian Saiu, 'Samuel Beckett behind the Iron Curtain: The Reception in Eastern Europe', in *The International Reception of Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Matthew Feldman and Mark Nixon (London: Continuum, 2009), pp. 251–71 (p. 257).

⁹⁸ James Knowlson, 'Blowing Away the Smoke', typescript, UoR JEK A/2/123, f. 5r. Published (in a Polish translation) in *PULS*, 44 (1989/1990), 104–08.

Patagonia, the only placename mentioned in the play, seems to serve here as a marker of utter difference rather than as a reference to features of a particular place. Something similar is at work in the original Czech text of *Mistake*, in which Xiboy is called a ‘Maďar’ [Hungarian] instead of a ‘foreigner’, as he is in the English translation.⁹⁹ As Hungarian comes from a different linguistic family to the languages of any of its Slavic neighbours, this term could be seen to function as a means of signalling Xiboy’s complete estrangement from the rest of the group and thus, in a reversal of the bilingual power dynamics between Beckett’s Director and the lighting technician Luke, provide a reason for his incomprehension of the threats from his cellmates. Antoni Libera reads the Director’s reference to Patagonia in somewhat similar terms as a pointer to ‘the back of beyond, somewhere impossibly remote and unspeakably provincial’.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, Beckett’s choice of word could equally be seen as an ironic allusion to the actions of military dictatorships in contemporary Argentina and Chile which, like the acts of political repression in Czechoslovakia, were world news at the time. The way in which the play is structured means that interpretative options are balanced between generality and particularity.

The space of the theatre in which the Director’s play is being rehearsed can vary in size, depending on where his closing offstage lines are delivered from. If the Director is placed behind the live audience, as he was in Alan Schneider’s 1983 production, his theatre is expanded, enclosing the one in which the real audience is seated like a large Russian doll.¹⁰¹ From here, ‘in the front row of the stalls’, he orders the lights to be brought down everywhere except on the body of the Protagonist (*CDW*, p. 459). This sets up the play’s climax, which ends in an early manuscript as follows:

⁹⁹ Václav Havel, *Chyba*, VHL ID 801, no pagination. Published in Václav Havel, *Spisy II: Hry* (Prague: Torst, 1999), pp. 675–84. I am grateful to Ondřej Pilný for pointing out this detail in the Czech text.

¹⁰⁰ Antoni Libera and Janusz Pyda, *Jesteście na Ziemi, na to rady nie ma! Dialogi o teatrze Samuela Becketta* (Kraków: Fundacja ‘Dominikańskie Studium Filozofii i Teologii’, 2015), p. 345. Translation by Agnieszka Kolakowska.

¹⁰¹ See AS to SB, 24 June 1983, Harmon, pp. 450–51.

Formidable! Il va faire un malheur. (Un temps.) Je les entends d'ici

Un temps. Lointain tonnerre d'acclamations: Silence. [L]a tête s'éteint[.] Rideau.¹⁰²

[Terrific! He'll have them on their feet. (Pause.) I can hear it from here. Pause. Distant storm of applause: Silence. Fade-out on head. Curtain.]

This would have been a depressing way for a play dedicated to a political prisoner to end. On the same typescript on which Beckett first wrote the title, he added these closing stage directions in pen:

P [? ~~se redresse~~] relève la tête, fixe ~~le vide~~ la salle. Les a.[cclamations] faiblissent, [? s'arrêtent].

Silence. Rideau.

5 seconds. Noir.

Un temps long

Noir¹⁰³

[P raises his head, fixes the audience. The applause falters, dies. [...] Long pause. Blackout.]¹⁰⁴

Instead of an unquestioned victory for the Director, the published playtext contains this crucial gesture of resistance from the Protagonist (see *CDW*, p. 461). Beckett, in response to one reviewer's interpretation of the play's 'grand finale' as 'ambiguous', responded: 'There's no ambiguity there at all [...]. He's saying: you bastards, you haven't finished me yet!'¹⁰⁵ However, while the gesture itself may not be ambiguous, its target—the 'bastards' to whom Beckett refers—is, like the title of

¹⁰² UoR MS 2457/2, f. 5r.

¹⁰³ UoR MS 2456/1, f. 4r.

¹⁰⁴ Translation of stage directions based on *CDW*, p. 461.

¹⁰⁵ Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 680.

the play itself, indeterminate. Peter Fifield believes that they are ‘not the other characters of the play, nor the canned audience but the audience proper, whose response he *does not* silence with his look’.¹⁰⁶ But in this ‘unpolemic polemic’, it is not clear whom the Protagonist is confronting.¹⁰⁷ While the closing gesture would seem to offer a more conclusive ending than the cliffhangers of earlier plays like *All that Fall* and *Happy Days*, the question of whom exactly the Protagonist is fixing with his look, of whom his protest is directed against, remains open.

‘Say it’

Following what he saw as the disastrous production of *Catastrophe* at Avignon, and having received ‘3 pages of self-satisfied self-justification from Meldegg (Avignon Havel director)’, Beckett turned his attention to writing something ‘director-proof’ for the Graz Autumn Theatre Festival.¹⁰⁸ For the title of his final published play, Beckett returned to two of the question words which open the NB 1 of *Watt*. Whereas *Watt* was a critical work in Beckett’s process of learning to say ‘I’, *What Where* is an exploration of the power dynamics involved in characters forcing one another to ‘say it’, a command which is also given by *Catastrophe*’s Director and which echoes the search undertaken by many of Beckett’s late narrators for ‘[l]e mot fin’ [[t]he key to close].¹⁰⁹ The process of torturing another character until he speaks is a common feature of Beckett’s late work and forms an important part of the scenarios of *How It Is*, *Rough for Radio II*, ‘As the Story Was Told’ (1973) and the unpublished short story ‘On le tortura bien’ (written 1952).¹¹⁰ Beckett’s remark to André Bernold that the ‘where’ in *What Where* was part of his ‘concern with, and search for, a way out’, suggests that the hermeneutic process, which promises, but fails to deliver, an

¹⁰⁶ Peter Fifield, *Late Modernist Style in Samuel Beckett and Emmanuel Levinas* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 45. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁰⁷ Bert O. States, ‘*Catastrophe*: Beckett’s Laboratory/Theatre’, *Modern Drama*, 30.1 (1987), 14–22 (p. 20).

¹⁰⁸ SB to BB, 28 August 1982, TCD MS 10948/1/675; SB to BB, 4 August 1982, TCD MS 10948/1/672.

¹⁰⁹ Derval Tubridy, ‘Power, Politics and Polis in Beckett’s *What Where*’, in *Beckett Re-Membered: After the Centenary*, ed. by James Carney and others (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), pp. 162–75 (pp. 162–63); Samuel Beckett, *Mal vu mal dit / Ill Seen Ill Said: A Bilingual, Evolutionary, and Synoptic Variorum Edition*, ed. by Charles Krance (London: Garland, 1996), pp. 18–19.

¹¹⁰ ‘On le tortura bien’ TS, UoR MS 1656/3.

escape from the pattern of violence which structures the play, is intimately connected to how place is evoked.¹¹¹ The final part of this chapter is concerned with the way in which Beckett's 'process of elimination' affects the political dynamics of such evocation.

As is the case with much of Beckett's work, the texts of *What Where* are 'in a terrible mess', due in no small part to the play's complex generic and linguistic history.¹¹² Written in French as *Quoi où* in early 1983 for the Graz Festival, *What Where* premiered in New York in English later that year, special permission having been granted by the organisers in Graz for this to happen.¹¹³ As a result of a request from the Süddeutsche Rundfunk TV station (SDR), in whose studios Beckett had directed *Quad*, the play was translated and adapted for German television as *Was Wo* and then re-staged in Paris and San Francisco in 1986, having undergone significant changes as a result of the TV adaptation.¹¹⁴ In light of these changes, Beckett prepared a revised French text for the Paris production and a revised English text for the San Francisco production.¹¹⁵ These revised texts form the basis of S. E. Gontarski's amalgamated revised text in the fourth volume of Beckett's *Theatrical Notebooks*.¹¹⁶ However, earlier, unrevised versions are still more widely read: the 1986 text published by Les Éditions de Minuit does not contain Beckett's revisions; neither does the version in the 2006 reprint of Faber's *Complete Dramatic Works*.¹¹⁷

In these early versions of the play, Bam's disembodied voice (V), which controls the scene, is emitted by a megaphone, a stage prop which was cut in the 1986 productions.¹¹⁸ In all versions,

¹¹¹ 'C'est une vieille histoire que je ne comprends pas. Je me suis demandé ce que signifie où. Peut-être: où est l'issue? La vieille histoire de l'issue.' [It's an old story that I don't understand. I wondered what *Where* means. Maybe: where's the way out? The old story of the way out.] Bernold, *L'amitié de Beckett*, p. 35. Emphasis in the original; translation in Bernold, *Beckett's Friendship*, p. 20.

¹¹² Beckett qtd in James Knowlson, 'My Texts Are in a Terrible Mess', in *Beckett and Beyond*, ed. by Bruce Stewart (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1999), pp. 176–86 (p. 176). See also Dirk Van Hulle and Mark Nixon, 'Editorial: The State of Beckett's Texts', *JOBS* 24.1 (2015), v–xii.

¹¹³ See SB to AS, 20 May 1983, Harmon, p. 445.

¹¹⁴ *TN* IV, p. 471.

¹¹⁵ For a recording of the San Francisco production, dir. by S. E. Gontarski, see *Peephole Art: Beckett for Television*, dir. by John L. Reilly (Global Village: 1992).

¹¹⁶ *TN* IV, pp. 407–19.

¹¹⁷ *Quoi où*, in Beckett, *Catastrophe et autres dramaticules*, pp. 83–98.

¹¹⁸ Beckett credited SDR cameraman Jim Lewis for finding a way to represent the Voice in the TV version: 'Le problème principal, c'était la représentation de *Voice, Stimme*. Jim a trouvé la solution d'une image très particulière, celle de Bam réfléchi dans un miroir.' (Bernold, *L'amitié de Beckett*, p. 36) Emphasis in the original. ['The main problem was the representation of *Voice, Stimme*. Jim came up with the solution of using a most particular image, that of Bam reflected in a mirror.'] Translation in Bernold, *Beckett's Friendship*, p. 20–21.

Bam questions Bom, Bim and Bem in turn about their offstage interrogation of each other (and, presumably, an additional unnamed figure); they in turn report to Bam a repeated failure to force their victim to divulge certain information and are led away to be tortured themselves. The opening quizzing of Bom sets the pattern for what is to come:

BAM: Well?

BOM: [*Head bowed throughout.*] Nothing.

BAM: He didn't say anything?

BOM: No.

BAM: You gave him the works?

BOM: Yes.

BAM: And he didn't say anything?

BOM: No.

BAM: He wept?

BOM: Yes.

BAM: Screamed?

BOM: Yes.

BAM: Begged for mercy?

BOM: Yes

BAM: But didn't say anything?

BOM: No.

V: Not good.

I start again.

BAM: Well?

BOM: Nothing.

BAM: He didn't say it?

V: Good.

BOM: No.

BAM: You gave him the works? (*CDW*, p. 472)

V's correction in this early version of the play is crucial to its power dynamics. Bam's interrogation as to whether or not the tortured victim said 'it' is much more pointed than simply asking whether he said 'anything'. He subsequently accuses Bom: 'It's a lie. [*Pause.*] He said it to you.' (*CDW*, p. 473)¹¹⁹ It is this pointed specificity, generated by the use of the third-person singular pronoun, that gives the cycle of violence the impetus to continue. When revising the play, Beckett cut this opening exchange so that Bam got straight down to asking about 'it'.¹²⁰

Both the 1986 performances in Paris and San Francisco followed the German TV production by opening with V speaking a version of the line 'Ich bin Bam' [I am Bam/This is Bam], followed by the original opening line, '[w]e are the last five'.¹²¹ According to SDR cameraman Jim Lewis, this change was made in order to help the viewer: 'He's remembering ... at the beginning, he says, "I am Bam." That was a change. We had to do that; otherwise, it wouldn't have been evident that the image of the Voice and the younger Bam were the same.'¹²² Nor was Beckett averse to directly associating *What Where* with other texts. When adapting the piece for German TV, Beckett, in his production notebook, described the playing area as being illuminated by the melancholy memories of the 'light of other days', a quotation from Thomas Moore's poem 'Oft in the Stilly Night'.¹²³ However, even though the play is structured around descriptions of acts of torture, he chose not to make the context politically explicit. This resistance to explicitation is evident in his choice of costume for the four actors.

In naming his figures, Beckett recycled characters from previous works, including the psychiatric nurses of *Murphy*, Thomas ('Bim') and Timothy ('Bom') Clinch.¹²⁴ Unlike *Murphy*, however, *What Where* is not involved in direct institutional critique. In the original stage version,

¹¹⁹ 'Tu mens. (*Un temps.*) Il te l'a dit' (Beckett, *Catastrophe et autres dramatiques*, p. 91).

¹²⁰ *TN IV*, pp. 410, 416.

¹²¹ The original opening line is still the version used in *CDW*, p. 470.

¹²² Lewis qtd in Fehsenfeld, p. 237.

¹²³ UoR MS 3097/2, f. 6r. Reproduced and transcribed in *TN IV*, pp. 445, 447.

¹²⁴ For more on Beckett's re-use of these names, see Chapter 5. The names Bim, Bom and Bem also appear in *How It Is*.

the four gowned stage figures enter and exit the small, lit, rectangular playing area, surrounded by darkness. In the television version, inspired by the multicoloured typeface of Rimbaud's 'Les voyelles', Beckett considered using differently coloured headdresses to identify the four faces staring straight out from the darkness of the screen. An early list in his production notebook lists eight possibilities: 'Toque, fez, tarboosh, Kappe [cap or hood], Mönchkappe [monk's hood], turban, cowl, hood'.¹²⁵ When considering the use of 'a fez or a tarboosh or something like that', Beckett suggested to Walter Asmus that he 'think of the political situation in Turkey', which at the time was still dealing with the aftereffects of the 1980 military coup.¹²⁶ According to cameraman Jim Lewis, '[h]e didn't know about the headdress. First he wanted a fezlike, taboosh [*sic*] sort of hat, but then he said: "Well, it doesn't have to be that—that may be too realistic, too specific. It's going to be something fantastic."' ¹²⁷ In the end, Beckett took '[e]verything out but the faces', leaving the acts of torture contextually cast adrift.¹²⁸ Like the withheld image of prison bars on the stage of the 1975 production of *Godot*, Beckett's reference to Turkish headdress and the specific political context it evokes functions at the level of a genetic trace, buried in the darkness. While the deleted reference sheds fascinating light on the way in which *Was Wo* was constructed, the fact that Beckett chose not to include such an image is symptomatic of the way in which he organised his highly oppressive dramatic scenarios according to a minimalist aesthetic practice.

Following the 1983 premiere of *What Where* on a triple bill in New York, Alan Schneider wrote to Beckett: 'most people keep wanting to interpret [the play] on the literal political level—I think it may suffer from coming after CATASTROPHE'.¹²⁹ *What Where* has been interpreted as an ontological image in which politics is 'coextensive with the nature of violence'.¹³⁰ However, if this is a picture of being, it is a partial one, constructed, like the other two plays discussed in this

¹²⁵ UoR MS 3097/2, f. 1r., qtd in Beckett, *TN IV*, p. 427. Translations in *TN IV*.

¹²⁶ Walter Asmus interviewed in *The Remaking of Samuel Beckett's 'What Where'*, dir. by Ben Denham (University of Western Sydney Writing and Society Research Centre, 2013).

¹²⁷ Lewis qtd in Fehsenfeld, p. 236.

¹²⁸ Beckett qtd in Fehsenfeld, p. 233.

¹²⁹ AS to SB, 19 June 1983, Harmon, p. 449.

¹³⁰ Uhlmann, *Beckett and the Philosophical Image*, pp. 129.

chapter, using images of confinement to stage oppressive relationships. Some of these images structure an entire work, such as the carceral setting of ‘Mongrel Mime’, some appear only at a paratextual level, such as the dedication of *Catastrophe* to Havel, and some remain at the level of a genetic trace, such as the headdress of *Was Wo*. By tracing these images through three late dramatic pieces, I have shown how, in different compositional contexts, Beckett’s minimalist aesthetic produced political aesthetic objects which can be placed within multiple interpretative contexts. While *What Where* seems to fit J. M. Coetzee’s description of artistic work in which one portrays torture and violence ‘on one’s own terms’, and while Beckett certainly fits Coetzee’s model of a writer who ‘establish[es] [his] own authority’, mainly through the construction of an oeuvre that turns in upon itself and acts as an echo chamber for autotextual references, the terms with which Beckett’s imagined worlds are constructed are always, by definition, ‘others’ words’, just as his confined spaces evoke other places (*U*, p. 104).¹³¹ *What Where* necessarily draws on fragmented, recognisable images of violence in order to construct its scenario of torture. The further paring away of details in *Was Wo* do not constitute, as one critic has argued, an erasure of political signification.¹³² The fact that such scenarios draw repeatedly on images of confinement in Beckett’s canon demonstrates the importance of closed space in his portrayals of oppression; his decision not to use a politically charged piece of costume in *Was Wo*, his protest against the Protagonist’s ‘screaming white bonds’ in the Avignon production of *Catastrophe* and his rejection of the image of cell bars from the stage of *Godot* are all concrete instances in which Beckett’s resistance to explicitation bears upon political interpretation of his work.

¹³¹ Coetzee, p. 13.

¹³² Jeantroux, p. 138.

Conclusion:

Decomposing Space in 14 Henrietta Street

In 1961, during the period when he was writing the spatially ‘strange’ *Happy Days*, Beckett told a group of Swiss students that he wanted to create drama which ‘makes a new start in a new room-space’.¹ Confinement was not only important to the production of new kinds of spaces in Beckett’s dramatic work, such as the scenario of Winnie in her mound, it was crucial across his career: from the images of confinement which helped him outline key aesthetic problems, to his use of institutional confinement for narrative settings through which he developed important aspects of his poetics, to the denarration of confined locales by which he crafted a new kind of narrative subject, to the closed spaces of his short prose which form productive intertextual relations with the spaces and spatial aesthetics of other writers.

In his article ‘History or Genesis?’, Louis Hay discusses ‘the growth of a work that continues to evolve after its publication, keeping step with the life of its author’.² In the preceding chapters, I have used the temporal span of Beckett’s writing career as a framework to investigate the function of confinement in his work, demonstrating that in order to analyse the production of closed space, we must pay close attention to the *après-texte* as well as to the *avant-texte*. Chapters 5, 7 and 9 showed the extent to which Beckett’s work as a dramatist, which frequently involved post-publication changes to his own texts, was bound up with his relationships with other theatre practitioners. After an author’s death, their works’ evolution often continues in others’ hands.³ With

¹ Qtd and trans. in Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, p. 477.

² Louis Hay, ‘History or Genesis?’, trans. by Ingrid Wassenaar, *Yale French Studies*, 89 (1996), 191–207 (p. 201).

³ For three examples, see Jacques Neefs, ‘With a Live Hand: Three Versions of Textual Transmission (Chateaubriand, Montaigne, Stendhal)’, trans. by Jed Deppman, in *Genetic Criticism: Texts and Avant-textes*, ed. by Jed Deppman,

an increasing rate of publication of material from his ‘grey canon’, Beckett’s posthumous output has increased in recent years and the ongoing publication of his compositional manuscripts as part of the Beckett Digital Manuscript Project is expanding the textual boundaries of his canon. A different form of genetic evolution is evident in performances of Beckett’s texts. To conclude, I will study one such performance, Company SJ’s 2014 adaptation of three of Beckett’s *Fizzles*, and use this as a thumbnail map of territory for future research on the relation between the Beckett’s work and the world in which it is created.

This thesis has shown that the visual arts were key to Beckett’s conception and manipulation of closed space. According to Guido Ferrarini, the spatio-visual aspect of stage plays was emphasised by Beckett himself in 1984 when asked why he had started writing for the theatre:

Above all, I wanted to deal with a visual space, lights, movements, to see in my mind, unlike what happens in the literary world. I wanted to ‘see’ my characters, not only describe them, as in novels, so in 1947 I wrote *Eleutheria*, which has never been performed. [...] My writing for theatre starts with visuality, so, above all, seeing the position of actors on the stage, their movements, and only later writing the text. When I write for theatre, the visual aspect is mainly in my head. In a novel, instead, the problem of visuality is secondary, while obviously that of language is stronger.⁴

As demonstrated in Chapters 1 and 2, Beckett’s interest in the relation between space and vision long precedes his work as a playwright or director. Further evidence for this is found in a pair of letters to Thomas MacGreevy on the spatial arrangement of paintings in the National Gallery of Ireland:

Was in the Gallery yesterday. Another new work, vaguely Austrian primitive, a panel painted both

Daniel Ferrer and Michael Groden (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 96–115.

⁴ SB in conversation with Ferrarini, 21 December 1984, in Guido Ferrarini and Tiziano Tommesani, ‘Conversazione Con Samuel Beckett’, in *Il teatro di Beckett*, theatre programme (Bologna: Mecenati, 1986), pp. 1–3 (p. 1). Translation by Antonio Gambacorta. I wish to thank Antonio Gambacorta for alerting me to this passage.

sides, on one Veronica's Sudarium, on the other the 12 in a strange scene. The magnificent glass case in which it is exposed in centre of floor of Brouwer's room, cost £50. Good old Furlong. He hopes to take all the Dutch pictures down to the print room, & extend the Italians into the Dutch rooms, in single line hanging. (26 July 1936, SB to TM, *LSB I*, p. 361)

In 1935, MacGreevy had failed in his bid to become Director of the Gallery, the position instead going to George Furlong.⁵ In 1937, Beckett complained vociferously about the changes introduced by MacGreevy's rival:

I was really shocked to see what he [Furlong] had done with the Gallery. [...] The print room is done up a cold dark scientific laboratory or public lavatory green. [...] No matter how one addresses oneself to a picture one has the light in one's eyes. And they are all hung on about a level with the pubic bone. (SB to TM, 14 May 1937, *LSB I*, p. 496)

Referring to Furlong's 'mania for single line hanging' and the prospect of 'artificial lighting and evening opening' hours, Beckett concludes his diatribe: 'It is time someone put him in mind of the purpose of a picture gallery, to provide pictures worth looking at and the possibility of seeing them.' (*LSB I*, pp. 496–97)

To be able to see a painting in a gallery, one generally has to be in front of it, preferably without the light in one's eyes. David Addyman has argued that *The Unnamable* outlines a philosophy of space which is heavily indebted to that of painter André Masson, who conceived space as something the artist was 'part of', rather than 'in front of', and therefore separated from.⁶ The key statement for this argument comes in a letter from Beckett to Duthuit regarding the art of Bram van Velde, in which Beckett rejects the concept of an artist as 'he-who-is-always-*in-front-of*'

⁵ Fionnuala Croke, 'Introduction' to *A Passion for Paintings*, ed. by Fionnuala Croke (Dublin: National Gallery of Ireland, 2006), pp. 10–21 (p. 15).

⁶ Masson qtd in Addyman, 'Where Now?', p. 182.

(SB to Duthuit, 9 March 1939, *LSB* II, p. 139).⁷ While Addyman is right that many of the spaces described in *The Unnamable* are ‘fluid and slippery’, the perspectival framing of space is by no means absent from Beckett’s postwar work.⁸ As I have shown, Beckett typically wrote for a theatre space which depends on the relation between what is confined within the “window frame” that conventionally opened onto the unified and rendered space of perspective painting’ and that which remains unseen outside this frame.⁹ When Beckett introduced shifts of perspective onstage which resulted in the destabilisation of this spatial framework, he did so—as in *Not I*—through the pronominal conflict common to his prose and poetry, while maintaining the relation between a fixed spectator position in front of a framed image. Company SJ’s adaptation of Beckett’s *Fizzles* shows that the picture-frame aesthetic of Beckett’s theatre work need not be mutually exclusive of a more fluid conception of space.

Though distinct from the writing in Beckett’s own hand which I have used as the basis for my study of his closed spaces, Company SJ’s adaptation is nonetheless one of the many performances which ‘go on’ under Beckett’s name. While Beckett’s own writing depended on figures such as Dante to establish his name as an author, this *auctoritas* continues to function long after his death, particularly when associated with authorised performances of his texts. The contestation of such authority can be seen in the ongoing debates surrounding non-standard productions of Beckett’s plays.¹⁰ Half a century after the publication of Barthes’s ‘The Death of the Author’, and almost three decades after Beckett’s own death, the figure of the author has not gone away.¹¹ Soon after the publication of Barthes’s essay, Michel Foucault coined the term ‘author-function’ to describe the ‘classificatory function’ which authors’ names have with regard to their

⁷ ‘[C]elui qui ne cesse d’être devant’ (*LSB* II, p. 136), qtd in Addyman, ‘Where Now?’, p. 183.

⁸ Addyman, ‘Where Now?’, p. 187.

⁹ Pannill Camp, ‘Theatre Optics: Enlightenment Theatre Architecture in France and the Architectonics of Husserl’s Phenomenology’, *Theatre Journal*, 59.4 (2007), 615–33 (p. 631).

¹⁰ A particularly heated discussion on the Beckett Estate’s oversight of Beckett’s work took place during the Q+A session at the ‘Beckett, Politics, and the Political’ roundtable, chaired by Matthew Feldman, at the 2016 Samuel Beckett Summer School, Trinity College Dublin.

¹¹ Roland Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author’, in *Image Music Text*, ed. and trans. by Stephen Heath (New York: Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 142–48, first published in *Aspen*, 5–6 (1967).

work.¹² Research from the recent Staging Beckett project has shown how Beckett's own status as an authorial figure in Ireland and the UK has been constructed through the performance of his texts, with his status as an author also shaping those productions.¹³ Foucault uses a line from the third of Beckett's *Texts for Nothing*—'[w]hat matter who's speaking, someone said what matter who's speaking'—to argue that it is a matter of 'indifference' 'who is speaking' in any given text (*CSP*, p. 109).¹⁴ Even in Foucault's model of a discursive field organised around the textually produced figure of the author-function, it does matter who is speaking, whether it be the intertextual figure of Belacqua in Beckett's early prose, imbricated in a relation with the Dantean work from which his name is taken, or the actors of Beckett's performed texts, coming from various performance backgrounds, who may alter the text onstage. When making decisions on how to stage Beckett's texts, it also matters where such voices speak from.

Fizzles

'A staging of any text', states Nicholas Johnson, 'results in the act of interpretation'.¹⁵ The double meaning of 'interpretation' calls to mind not only the reception of a work in performance, but also the interpretation which is necessary for its production. Central to any adaptation of Beckett's prose is the question of what kinds of places his fictional figures might be situated in and the kinds of effects such places have on audience interpretation. Rather than seeing such prose adaptations as 'collid[ing] the "empty space" of theatre with the profound void staged in his novels and short fiction', I view these texts as being in productive relation with the spaces they inhabit.¹⁶

For David Wiles, the 'characterful found space' of previously used sites is an antidote to the

¹² Michel Foucault, 'What Is an Author?', in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-structuralist Criticism*, ed. by Josué V. Harari (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp. 141–60 (pp. 160, 147).

¹³ *Staging Beckett in Great Britain*, ed. by David Tucker and Trish McTighe (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2016); *Staging Beckett in Ireland and Northern Ireland*, ed. by Trish McTighe and David Tucker (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2016).

¹⁴ Foucault, 'What Is an Author?', p. 160. This English translation of Foucault's essay has: "'What does it matter who is speaking", someone said, "what does it matter who is speaking"' (p. 141).

¹⁵ Nicholas E. Johnson, 'On Going On: The Ethic of Impossibility in the Performance of Samuel Beckett's Prose' (unpublished PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2009), p. 124.

¹⁶ Johnson, p. 318.

modern attempt to create an ‘empty space’ in a black-box theatre.¹⁷ Company SJ’s adaptations of ‘He is Barehead’, ‘Afar a Bird’ (*Au loin un oiseau*, 1973) and *Still* (1974) were exemplary of this approach to ‘found’ performance space, staging the three prose pieces as part of a single show in three rooms of 14 Henrietta Street, a now abandoned former Dublin townhouse which became a tenement towards the end of the 19th century. The production was part of Company SJ’s Beckett in the City series, which has seen Beckett’s stage plays transposed to urban car parks, laneways and a former school.¹⁸ Such productions emphasise the productive tension between Beckett’s minimalist aesthetic and the rich associations that these urban settings evoke, even when the performance area is stripped to the bone. Another theatre company with a similar commitment to site-responsive performance, but a contrasting approach to the history and politics of space, is ANU Productions, who produced a play about Dublin’s trade union lockout of 1913 in the same rooms of 14 Henrietta Street in 2013.¹⁹ While ANU used tenement objects such as a Marian statue, found in the building during rehearsal, to root their historical drama in the minutiae of local place, Company SJ removed these same items from their set, placing them instead in a small anteroom where the audience waited for the show to begin. If such an approach is in line with Beckett’s own ‘process of elimination’, it by no means reduces the former tenement to an empty space. Like Beckett’s reference to Turkish headdress when adapting *What Where* for television, the statue in the anteroom suggested possible interpretative avenues (such as reading the three *Fizzles* as responses to modern Irish history) without imposing them on the text.

The first *Fizzle* in Company SJ’s production, ‘He is Barehead’, posed a problem of spatial representation similar to that of the unpublished theatre piece ‘Mongrel Mime’: how does one visually present a figure moving within a tightly confined space? In ‘He is Barehead’, a protagonist wanders between ‘walls that hem his path’, a scenario which, as with the low ceiling of ‘Mongrel

¹⁷ Wiles, pp. 262, 254.

¹⁸ Sarah Jane Scaife, ‘Practice in Focus: Beckett in the City’, in *Staging Beckett in Ireland and Northern Ireland*, ed. by Trish McTighe and David Tucker (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2016), pp. 153–67. The production in the school—Samuel Beckett, *Not I*, *Rockaby*, *Footfalls*, *Come and Go*, dir. by Sarah Jane Scaife as *The Women Speak* (Dublin: Company SJ, 2015)—is the only one not covered in the above essay.

¹⁹ *Dublin Tenement Experience: Living the Lockout* (ANU Productions: Dublin, 2013).

Mime', is very difficult to present to an audience (*CSP*, p. 224). To maintain visibility, actor Raymond Keane used just one of the walls as a barrier against which he set his body while inching across the room. Above was projected a video of Keane in the derelict ESB Power Station in Dublin's Ringsend. This, combined with the recorded narrator's repeated line 'little by little his history takes shape' suggested that there may well have been other places and other times prior to the one described in the text (*CSP*, pp. 227, 228). Like *Quin*, the five-person version of *Quad*, this is less a solution to a textual problem than a highlighting of a specific spatial dynamic in Beckett's work through a particular interpretation of the text.

As well as comparing the protagonist of 'He is Barehead' to Murphy (*CSP*, p. 225), the narrator also describes him in a state of dereliction which resembles that of the Protagonist in *Catastrophe*: 'He is barehead, barefoot, clothed in a singlet and tight trousers too short for him, his hands have told him so, again and again, and his feet, feeling each other and rubbing against the legs, up and down calves and shins.' In the next sentence, a possible context for this state of dereliction is first proposed, then refuted, before being re-introduced in the closing adverbial phrase as being at least a possible context for self-interpretation: 'To this vaguely prison garb none of his memories answer, so far' (*CSP*, p. 224).²⁰ If, for Anna McMullan, *Catastrophe* 'reveals the preoccupation with power in its relationship to representation which characterizes much of Beckett's work', I would argue that it is the simultaneous suggestion and withholding of detail that is characteristic of the decomposition of the closed spaces of institutional confinement across Beckett's oeuvre.²¹ As I have shown, a similar dialectic underpins the politics of Beckett's work, and this remains pertinent to contemporary productions from Dublin to New Orleans.²² An important part of the reason why Beckett's writing 'seems to hit a nerve at this moment in time' is

²⁰ 'À cette tenue vaguement pénitentiaire aucun de ses souvenirs ne répond encore' (Samuel Beckett, *Pour finir encore et autres foirades* (1976; Paris: Minuit, 2014), p. 27).

²¹ McMullan, *Theatre on Trial*, p. 25.

²² For accounts of overtly political productions of *Waiting for Godot*, see Lance Duerfahrd, *The Work of Poverty: Samuel Beckett's Vagabonds and the Theater of Crisis* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2013), pp. 12–111, 178–89 and Julie Bates, 'Waiting for Godot in Sarajevo and New Orleans', *Modest Proposals*, no pagination <<http://wp.me/p3vtyH-8n>> [accessed 15 July 2015].

the balance in his plays between, on the one hand, a lack of contextual baggage, and, on the other, their ability to appear relevant to various audiences in situations of crisis.²³

The choices made when adapting Beckett's prose texts for performance bring into focus the importance of specificity when staging Beckettian subtraction. Sarah Jane Scaife, artistic director of Company SJ, sets her productions against the view that the bodies of Beckett's work are 'not [...] tied to a specific time, place or culture'. For her, rather, 'there can be no representation of a body onstage, or anywhere else, that is not intimately embodied in and tied to such specifics'.²⁴ The adaptation of 'Afar a Bird' contained an example of how material specificity can sometimes unbalance the interpretative process. This piece contains the kind of aggressive opposition between first and third person that is so important to *The Unnamable* and *Not I*: 'he will never say I, because of me, he won't speak to anyone, no one will speak to him' (*CSP*, p. 233). Having attempted many different approaches to accommodate both figures, Company SJ finally decided to use two objects mentioned in the text: a disembodied 'old coat [...] hunched over his stick', which was framed in the doorway behind Keane's final mime (*CSP*, p. 232–33).²⁵ Julie Bates reads the many greatcoats in Beckett's oeuvre as 'paternal heirloom[s]' which she connects to his relationship with his father.²⁶ In performance, the physical presence of an actual greatcoat calls out even more strongly than its prose counterpart for an interpretation of its history of ownership, putting it at odds with the minimalist approach of removing other objects from the set.

If the physical presence of the greatcoat was an attempt to meet the challenge, also encountered when staging *Not I*, of presenting a speaking subject split between the first and the third person, the adaptation of *Still*, by using a projected image, emphasised the pronominal ambiguity of a text which contains neither the word 'I' nor 'he'.

²³ Van Hulle, 'Introduction', to *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Van Hulle, p. xvii.

²⁴ Scaife, 'Practice in Focus: Beckett in the City', p. 153.

²⁵ Author's interview with Sarah Jane Scaife, Dublin, 22 January 2015.

²⁶ Bates, *Beckett's Art of Salvage*, p. 11.



- Raymond Keane in Samuel Beckett, *Fizzles* (Dublin: Company SJ, 2014).

Recalling the poetic image of Celia in *Murphy*, *Still* is structured around the description of an act of ‘unseeing’ vision out three windows in dying daylight (*CSP*, p. 240). In a manuscript draft, the protagonist is described ‘facing south over the valley’, before being imagined at the ‘western’ and ‘eastern’ windows, a trajectory also described in the published version of the piece (*CSP*, p. 240–41).²⁷ Because of the layout of 14 Henrietta Street, two of its huge southwesterly windows stood in for the southern, western and eastern windows described in the text. These Georgian sash windows have a particular architectural genealogy which calls to mind a specific scenographic tradition, which Beckett knew well from attending plays in Dublin’s Abbey Theatre as a student, namely the tenement plays of Sean O’Casey.²⁸ Though staging her production in a Dublin tenement which could easily have featured in O’Casey’s realist dramas, Scaife stated that she was keen to avoid the O’Casey stage aesthetic in her adaptation of Beckett’s work.²⁹ Marvin Carlson has drawn attention to the balance in a ‘found’ space of performance ‘between the semiotics it already possesses [...]

²⁷ UoR MS 1396/4/28/1r., /3r., reproduced in Samuel Beckett, *Still*, illustrated by William Hayter (Milan: M’Arte Edizioni, 1974) no pagination. I follow the numbering on the holograph.

²⁸ In the 1920s, Beckett attended productions of O’Casey’s Dublin trilogy, *The Shadow of a Gunman*, *Juno and the Paycock* and *The Plough and the Stars*—the latter two twice—including the fourth night of *The Plough and the Stars* at which riots famously broke out (Pilling, *A Samuel Beckett Chronology*, pp. 7, 8, 12).

²⁹ Author’s interview with Sarah Jane Scaife, Dublin, 22 January 2015. By contrast, the dialect used in ANU’s *Living the Lockout* is firmly indebted to O’Casey’s theatrical Dublin slang: one character speaks of being ‘flustrated’ and ‘feelin’ desolated’ at the strain the Lockout is taking on her family, while the description of a mixed religious neighbourhood and the story one of the characters tells of her neighbour Mrs Reilly’s pride in her expensive hat bear strong resemblance to the setting and stories in the tenements of O’Casey’s *The Plough and the Stars*.

and those that might be imposed upon it' in any given production.³⁰ It is this balance between specificity and subtraction that the adaptation of the *Fizzles* explored, in a space that was 'stripped bare and yet full of stimuli'.³¹ While the architectural specifics of the windows were suppressed in rehearsal, they continue to subsist as a trace at the level of the production's own genesis.³²

The dialogue created between Beckett's texts and the settings in which they are staged can put into productive dialogue seemingly competing aspects of his own use of space. The double framing of the still image of Raymond Keane that results from his position in front of one of the stripped back Georgian window frames as well as the video image projected between them, for instance, created a 'visual space' which the audience simultaneously stood apart from and inhabited, giving us a framed image which we were 'in front of' as well as a performance space which we were 'in'. The *Fizzles* in 14 Henrietta Street thus demonstrates how such productions can serve as laboratories in which we can take a new look at key concepts underpinning how Beckett's work means as well as leading us to reconsider what these works mean.

Beckett was deeply interested in authors who made the incompleteness of their texts part of their poetics, such as Proust, whose 'deathbed was his "writing desk"' for *À la recherche du temps perdu* and Joyce, who commissioned Beckett to write an essay on 'Work in Progress' ten years before it was published as *Finnegans Wake*.³³ According to Israel Shenker, Beckett drew an opposition in interview between his own work and that of Joyce's, in which 'words do the absolute maximum of work'.³⁴ In spite of Beckett's interest in the '[m]erest minimum', in terms of the size of his canon and the number of works it contains, he was actually quite a maximalist.³⁵ Because of this wide-ranging career, spanning poetic, prose and critical writing and work for the stage,

³⁰ Marvin Carlson, *Places of Performance: The Semiotics of Theatre Architecture* (1989; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 207.

³¹ Wiles, p. 264.

³² Author's interview with Sarah Jane Scaife, Dublin, 22 January 2015.

³³ Dirk Van Hulle, *Textual Awareness: A Genetic Study of Late Manuscripts by Joyce, Proust, and Mann* (2004; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), p. 57.

³⁴ Israel Shenker, 'Moody Man of Letters: A Portrait of Samuel Beckett, Author of the Puzzling "Waiting for Godot"', *New York Times*, 6 May 1956, 'Section 2', pp. 1, 3 (p. 3).

³⁵ *Worstward Ho*, in *NHO*, p. 103.

screen and radio, much of which was further multiplied through self-translation and adaptation during Beckett's lifetime, an equally diverse range of approaches is needed if we want to gain a fuller understanding of Beckett's work. It is with this in mind that, alongside a historicist approach to performance and institutional space, I have drawn together the methodologies of spatial theory and genetic criticism in order to analyse his closed spaces. It is my hope that such scholarship can provide a model for ever closer collaboration between two highly productive areas of Beckett studies, genetic criticism and the study of his work in performance.³⁶ For in performance, Beckett's 'new room-space[s]' continue to be given 'new start[s]', and new ends, in a wide variety of spatial contexts which can expand the limits of our interpretation of his work.

³⁶ The productivity of these two areas of study is evidenced by the online publications of two recent projects: *Staging Beckett (2012–15)* <<https://www.reading.ac.uk/staging-beckett/>> and the *Beckett Digital Manuscript Project* (ongoing) <www.beckettarchive.org/>.

Bibliography

- Abbott, H. Porter, *Beckett Writing Beckett: The Author in the Autograph* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996)
- , ‘Narrative’, in Lois Oppenheim, ed., *Palgrave Advances in Samuel Beckett Studies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 7–29
- , ‘Tyranny and Theatricality: The Example of Samuel Beckett’, *Theatre Journal*, 40.1 (1988), 77–87
- ‘Account of the Author’, in Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (Philadelphia: E. Claxton and Company, 1883), pp. v–x <<http://archive.org/details/anatomyofmelanch00burt>> [accessed 7 November 2014]
- Ackerley, C. J., *Demented Particulars: The Annotated ‘Murphy’* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010)
- , ‘I think I am’, *JOBS*, 17.1–2 (2008), 199–210
- , ‘“The Last Ditch”: Shades of Swift in Samuel Beckett’s “Fingal”’, *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 32.2 (2008), 60–67
- , *Obscure Locks, Simple Keys: The Annotated ‘Watt’* (Florida: Journal of Beckett Studies Books, 2005)
- Ackerley, C. J., and S. E. Gontarski, *The Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett: A Reader’s Guide to his Works, Life, and Thought* (New York: Grove, 2004)
- Addyman, David, ‘Beckett and Place: The Lie of the Land’ (unpublished PhD thesis, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2008)
- , ‘Beckett and Place: The Lie of the Land’, in Daniela Guardamagna and Rossana M. Sebellin, eds, *The Tragic Comedy of Samuel Beckett: ‘Beckett in Rome’, 17–19 April 2008* (Rome: Università degli Studi di Roma, 2009), pp. 210–22 <<http://laterza.fastweb.it/up/9788842090700.pdf#page=228>> [accessed 1 July 2015]
- , ‘Inane Space and Lively Place in Beckett’s Forties Fiction’, in Steven Barfield, Philip Tew and Matthew Feldman, eds, *Beckett and Death* (London: Continuum, 2009), pp. 89–105
- , ‘Phenomenology “Less the Rosy Hue”: Beckett and the Philosophy of Place’, *Journal of Modern Literature*, 33.4 (2010), 112–28
- , ‘Rest of Stage in Darkness: Beckett, his Directors and Place’, *SBT/A*, 22 (2010), 301–14
- , ‘Where Now? Beckett, Duthuit and *The Unnamable*’, *SBT/A*, 26 (2014), 179–91
- Addyman, David, and Matthew Feldman, ‘Samuel Beckett, Wilhelm Windelband, and the Interwar “Philosophy Notes”’, *Modernism/modernity*, 18.4 (2011), 755–70
- Admussen, Richard L., *The Samuel Beckett Manuscripts: A Study* (London: G. Prior, 1979)

- Adorno, Theodor W., *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. by Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. by Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: Continuum, 2002)
- , *Negative Dialectics*, trans. by E. B. Ashton (London: Routledge, 2004)
- , ‘Notes on Beckett’, trans. by Dirk Van Hulle and Shane Weller, *JOBS*, 19.2 (2010), 157–78
- , ‘Trying to Understand Endgame’, trans. by Michael T. Jones, *New German Critique*, 26 (1982), 119–50
- Alexander, Archibald, *A Short History of Philosophy*, 3rd edn (Glasgow: Maclehose, Jackson and Co., 1922) <<https://archive.org/stream/ashorthistoryofp00alexuoft#page/94/mode/2up>> [accessed 17 December 2014]
- Andrews, Jonathan, Asa Briggs, Roy Porter, Penny Tucker and Keir Waddington, *The History of Bethlem* (London: Routledge, 1997)
- Apollinaire, Guillaume, *Alcools*, ed. by Garnet Rees (London: Athlone Press, 1975)
- , *Œuvres poétiques*, ed. by Marcel Adéma and Michel Décaudin (1956; Paris: Gallimard, 2010)
- , *Zone*, trans. by Samuel Beckett (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1972)
- , ‘Zone’, trans. by Samuel Beckett, *Transition*, 50.6 (1950), 126–31
- Artaud, Antonin, *Selected Writings*, ed. by Susan Sontag, trans. by Helen Weaver (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976)
- , *The Theatre and Its Double*, trans. by Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1958)
- , *Van Gogh le suicidé de la société*, Kindle edn (Paris: République des Lettres, 2014)
- Asmus, Walter D., ‘Beckett Directs *Godot*’, *Theatre Quarterly*, 5.19 (1975), 19–26
- Atik, Anne, *How It Was: A Memoir of Samuel Beckett* (London: Faber, 2001)
- Augé, Marc, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. by John Howe (1995; London: Verso, 2000)
- Bachelard, Gaston, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by Maria Jolas (1969; Boston: Beacon Press, 1994)
- Badiou, Alain, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. by Peter Hallward (2001; London: Verso, 2012)
- , *On Beckett*, ed. and trans. by Alberto Toscano and Nina Power (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2003)
- Bailey, Iain, ‘Samuel Beckett, Intertextuality, and the Bible’ (PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2010)
- Bair, Deirdre, *Samuel Beckett: A Biography*, rev. edn (London: Vintage, 1990)

- Baker, Phil, *Beckett and the Mythology of Psychoanalysis* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997)
- Barry, Elizabeth, 'All in my Head: Beckett, Schizophrenia and the Self', *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 37.2 (2016), 183–92
- Barthes, Roland, 'The Death of the Author', in Stephen Heath, ed. and trans., *Image Music Text* (New York: Fontana, 1977), pp. 142–48
- , 'From Work to Text', in Josué V. Harari, ed., *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp. 73–81
- , *S/Z*, trans. by Richard Miller (1974; New York: Hill and Wang, 1987)
- Bates, Julie, *Beckett's Art of Salvage: Writing and Material Imagination, 1932–1987* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017)
- , 'Waiting for Godot in Sarajevo and New Orleans', *Modest Proposals*, no pagination <<http://wp.me/p3vtyH-8n>> [accessed 15 July 2015]
- Beckett, Samuel, 'Assumption', *transition*, 16–17 (1929), 268–71
- , *Beckett's 'Dream' Notebook*, ed. by John Pilling (Reading: Beckett International Foundation, 1999)
- , *Catastrophe et autres dramatiques: Cette fois, Solo, Berceuse, Impromptu d'Ohio, Quoi où* (Paris: Minuit, 1986)
- , *The Collected Poems of Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Seán Lawlor and John Pilling (London: Faber, 2012)
- , *Comédie et actes divers: Va-et-vient, Cascando, Paroles et musique, Dis Joe, Actes sans paroles I et II, Film, Souffle* (1972; Paris: Minuit, 2014)
- , *Comment c'est* (1961; Paris: Minuit, 2015)
- , *Company / Compagnie and A Piece of Monologue / Solo: A Bilingual Variorum Edition*, ed. by Charles Krance (London: Garland, 1993)
- , *The Complete Dramatic Works* (1986; London: Faber, 2006)
- , *The Complete Short Prose, 1929–1989*, ed. by S. E. Gontarski (New York: Grove, 1995)
- , 'Dante and the Lobster', *This Quarter*, 5.2 (1932), 222–36
- , *Le Dépeupleur* (1970; Paris: Minuit, 2013)
- , *Disjecta*, ed. by Ruby Cohn (1983; London: Calder, 2001)
- , *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, ed. by Eoin O'Brien and Edith Fournier (Dublin: Black Cat, 1992)
- , *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, ed. by Eoin O'Brien and Edith Fournier (New York: Arcade, 1992)

- , *Echo's Bones*, ed. by Mark Nixon (London: Faber, 2014)
- , *En attendant Godot* (1952; Paris: Minuit, 1997)
- , 'The End', trans. by Richard Seaver in collaboration with the author, *Merlin*, 3.2 (1954), 144–59
- , *Eleutheria* (Paris: Minuit, 1995)
- , *Eleutheria*, trans. by Barbara Wright (London: Faber, 1996)
- , *Fin de partie* (1957; Paris: Minuit, 2013)
- , *For to End Yet Again and Other Fizzles* (London: Calder, 1976)
- , *Happy Days: The Production Notebook of Samuel Beckett*, ed. by James Knowlson (London: Faber, 1985)
- , *How It Is*, ed. by Magessa O'Reilly (London: Faber, 2009)
- , *L'Innommable* (1953; Paris: Minuit, 1987)
- , *L'Innommable / The Unnamable*, digital genetic edn (The Beckett Digital Manuscript Project, module 2), ed. by Dirk Van Hulle, Shane Weller and Vincent Neyt (Brussels: University Press Antwerp, 2013) <<http://www.beckettarchive.org>>
- , *Krapp's Last Tape / La Dernière Bande*, digital genetic edn (The Beckett Digital Manuscript Project, module 3), ed. by Dirk Van Hulle and Vincent Neyt (Brussels: University Press Antwerp, 2015) <<http://www.beckettarchive.org>>
- , *The Letters of Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Lois More Overbeck, George Craig, Dan Gunn and Martha Fehsenfeld, 4 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009–16)
 I, 1929–1940 (2009)
 II, 1941–1956 (2011)
 III, 1957–1965 (2014)
 IV, 1966–1989 (2016)
- , *Malone Dies*, ed. by Peter Boxall (London: Faber, 2010)
- , *Malone meurt* (1951; Paris: Minuit, 2012)
- , *Mal vu mal dit / Ill Seen Ill Said: A Bilingual, Evolutionary, and Synoptic Variorum Edition*, ed. by Charles Krance (London: Garland, 1996)
- , *Mercier and Camier*, ed. by Seán Kennedy (London: Faber, 2010)
- , *Mercier et Camier* (1970; Paris: Minuit, 2013)
- , *Molloy*, ed. by Shane Weller (London: Faber, 2009)
- , *Molloy*, digital genetic edn (The Beckett Digital Manuscript Project, module 4), ed. by Magessa O'Reilly, Dirk Van Hulle, Pim Verhulst and Vincent Neyt (Brussels: University Press Antwerp, 2016) <<http://www.beckettarchive.org>>

- , *More Pricks than Kicks*, ed. by Cassandra Nelson (London: Faber, 2010)
- , *Murphy* (1953; Paris: Minuit, 2013)
- , *Murphy*, ed. by J. C. C. Mays (London: Faber, 2009)
- , ‘The New Object’, *Modernism/modernity*, 18.4 (2011), 878–80
- , *Nohow On* (London: Calder, 1989)
- , *Nouvelles et Textes pour rien* (1955; Paris: Minuit, 2014)
- , *Pour finir encore et autres foirades* (1976; Minuit, 2014)
- , *Proust and Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit* (1965; London: Calder, 1976)
- , *Still*, illustrated by William Hayter (Milan: M’Arte Edizioni, 1974)
- , *Stirrings Still / Soubresauts and Comment dire / what is the word*, digital genetic edn (The Beckett Digital Manuscript Project, module 1), ed. by Dirk Van Hulle and Vincent Neyt (Brussels: University Press Antwerp, 2011) <<http://www.beckettarchive.org>>
- , *Stories and Texts for Nothing* (New York: Grove, 1967)
- , *Têtes-mortes* (1967; Paris: Minuit, 2013)
- , *Texts for Nothing and Other Shorter Prose, 1950–1976*, ed. by Mark Nixon (London: Faber, 2010)
- , *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett*, gen. ed. James Knowlson, 4 vols (London: Faber, 1992–1999)
- I, *Waiting for Godot*, ed. by Dougald McMillan and James Knowlson (1993)
- II, *Endgame*, ed. by S. E. Gontarski (1992)
- IV, *The Shorter Plays*, ed. by S. E. Gontarski (1999)
- , *The Unnamable*, ed. by Steven Connor (London: Faber, 2010)
- , *Watt*, ed. by C. J. Ackerley (London: Faber, 2009)
- , *Watt*, trans. by Samuel Beckett, Agnès Janvier and Ludovic Janvier (1968; Paris: Minuit, 1969)
- Beer, Ann, ‘The Use of Two Languages in Samuel Beckett’s Art’ (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 1987)
- , ‘Watt, Knott and Beckett’s Bilingualism’, *JOBS*, 10 (1983), no pagination
<<http://www.english.fsu.edu/jobs/num10/Num10Beer.htm>> [accessed 22 November 2013]
- Berge, Claude, ‘For a Potential Analysis of Combinatory Literature’, in Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort, eds, *The New Media Reader* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), pp. 177–81
- Bernold, André, *L’amitié de Beckett: 1979–1989* (Paris: Hermann, 1992)

- , *Beckett's Friendship*, trans. by Max McGuinness (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2015)
- Bianchini, Natka, 'Bare Interiors, Chicken Wire Cages and Subway Stations—Re-thinking Beckett's Response to the ART *Endgame* in Light of Earlier Productions', in Mark S. Byron, ed., *Samuel Beckett's 'Endgame'* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 121–43
- , *Samuel Beckett's Theatre in America: The Legacy of Alan Schneider as Beckett's American Director* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)
- Bolin, John, *Beckett and the Modern Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)
- Boswell, James, *Boswell's Life of Johnson: Including their Tour to the Hebrides*, ed. by John Wilson Croker, rev. edn (London: John Murray, 1848)
- Bourgeois, Caroline, ed., *Marin Karmitz / Samuel Beckett / Comédie* (Paris: Regard, 2001)
- Boxall, Peter, 'Samuel Beckett: Towards a Political Reading', *Irish Studies Review*, 10.2 (2002), 159–70
- Brater, Enoch, *Beyond Minimalism: Beckett's Late Style in the Theater* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987)
- , 'Dada, Surrealism, and the Genesis of *Not I*', *Modern Drama*, 18.1 (1975), 49–59
- , *Ten Ways of Thinking About Samuel Beckett: The Falsetto of Reason* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011)
- Brazil, Kevin, 'Beckett, Painting and the Question of "the Human"', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 36.3 (2013), 81–99
- Brook, Peter, *The Empty Space* (New York: Touchstone, 1996)
- Brown, Llewellyn, 'Voice and Pronouns in Samuel Beckett's *The Unnamable*', *JOBS*, 20.2 (2011), 172–96
- Bryden, Mary, 'Beckett and Music: An Interview with Luciano Berio', in Bryden, ed., *Samuel Beckett and Music*, pp. 189–90
- , ed., *Samuel Beckett and Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998)
- Bryden, Mary, Julian Garforth and Peter Mills, *Beckett at Reading: Catalogue of the Beckett Manuscript Collection at the University of Reading* (Reading: Whiteknights Press, 1998)
- Burton, Robert, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. by A. R. Shilleto, 3 vols (London: George Bell, 1912–13)
- Byron, Mark, Abstract for "'Change All the Names": Revision and Narrative Structure in Samuel Beckett's *Watt*', paper presented at Storytelling in Literature, Language and Culture conference, AULLA 36, University of Auckland, 2011
<<http://msbyron27.wordpress.com/2011/09/30/'change-all-the-names'-revision-and-narrative-structure-in-samuel-beckett's-watt'-storytelling-in-literature-language-and-culture-aulla-36-university-of-a/>> [accessed 3 June 2014]

- , 'Digital Scholarly Editions of Modernist Texts: Navigating the Text in Samuel Beckett's *Watt* Manuscripts', *Sydney Studies in English*, 36 (2010), 150–69
- Cage, John, 'Experimental Music', in John Cage, *Silence*, 50th anniversary edn (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2011), pp. 7–12
- Camp, Pannill, 'Theatre Optics: Enlightenment Theatre Architecture in France and the Architectonics of Husserl's Phenomenology', *Theatre Journal*, 59.4 (2007), 615–33
- Camus, Albert, *L'Étranger*, ed. by Ray Davison (1988; London: Routledge, 2005)
- Carlson, Marvin, *Places of Performance: The Semiotics of Theatre Architecture* (1989; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992)
- , 'The Theatre *ici*', in Fischer-Lichte and Wihstutz, eds, *Performance and the Politics of Space: Theatre and Topology*, pp. 15–30
- , *Theatre Is More Beautiful than War: German Stage Directing in the Late Twentieth Century* (Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 2009)
- , *Theatre Semiotics: Signs of Life* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990)
- Caselli, Daniela, *Beckett's Dantes: Intertextuality in the Fiction and Criticism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005)
- Casey, Edward S., *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (1997; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998)
- Chattopadhyay, Arka, "'I Switch Off': Towards a Beckettian Minority of Theatrical Event', in S. E. Wilmer and Audronė Žukauskaitė, eds, *Deleuze and Beckett* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 230–45
- Chawla, Nishi, *Samuel Beckett: Reading the Body in his Writings* (New Delhi: Prestige, 1999)
- Churchill, Winston, *Churchill Speaks: Winston S. Churchill in Peace and War, Collected Speeches, 1897–1963*, ed. by Robert Rhodes Jones (Leicester: Windward, 1981)
- Cluchey, Rick, 'My Years With Beckett', in James Knowlson, ed., *'Krapp's Last Tape': A Theatre Workbook* (London: Brutus Books, 1980), pp. 120–23
- Cobley, Evelyn, 'Decentred Totalities in Doctor Faustus: Thomas Mann and Theodor W. Adorno', *Modernist Cultures*, 1.2 (2005), 181–91
- Coetzee, J. M., 'Into the Dark Chamber: The Novelist and South Africa', *The New York Times*, 12 January 1986, 'Book Review' section, pp. 13, 35
- Cohen, Edward H., 'Two Anticipations of Henley's "Invictus"', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 37.2 (1974), 191–96
- Cohen, Ralph, 'Introduction', *New Literary History*, 32.3 (2001), v–vii
- Cohn, Ruby, *A Beckett Canon* (2001; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008)

- , ‘Beckett’s German *Godot*’, *JOBS*, 1 (1976), no pagination
<<http://www.english.fsu.edu/jobs/num01/Num1Cohn.htm>> [accessed 11 July 2017]
- , *Just Play: Beckett’s Theater* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980)
- , ‘Watt in the Light of *The Castle*’, *Comparative Literature*, 13.2 (1961), 154–66
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. by John Shawcross, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907)
- Connor, Steven, *Beckett, Modernism and the Material Imagination* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014)
- , ‘Between Theatre and Theory: “Long Observation of the Ray”’, in *The Ideal Core of the Onion: Reading Beckett Archives*, ed. by John Pilling and Mary Bryden (Reading: Beckett International Foundation, 1992), pp. 79–98
- , *Samuel Beckett: Repetition, Theory and Text*, rev. edn (Aurora, CO: The Davies Group, 2007)
- Cresswell, Tim, *Place: A Short Introduction* (2004; Oxford: Blackwell, 2008)
- Croke, Fionnuala, ‘Introduction’, in Fionnuala Croke, ed., *A Passion for Paintings* (Dublin: National Gallery of Ireland, 2006), pp. 10–21
- Cuddon, J. A., *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 4th edn, rev. by C. E. Preston (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998)
- Culler, Jonathan, ‘In Defence of Overinterpretation’, in Umberto Eco, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. by Stefan Collini (1992; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 109–23
- , *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*, rev. edn (2002; London: Routledge, 2004)
- Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, bilingual edn, ed. by Robert Hollander, trans. by Robert Hollander and Jean Hollander <<http://etweb.princeton.edu/dante/pdp/>>
- ‘Data Sheet for the Loeb Drama Center’
<<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~loebinfo/loebinfo/loebdata.html>> [accessed 5 December 2015]
- Davies, Ioan, *Writers in Prison* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990)
- Dearlove, J. E., *Accommodating the Chaos: Samuel Beckett’s Nonrelational Art* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1982)
- De Biasi, Pierre-Marc, ‘Pour une approche génétique de l’architecture’, *Genesis*, 14 (2000), 13–65
- , ‘Toward a Science of Literature: Manuscript Analysis and the Genesis of the Work’, trans. by Jed Deppman, in Jed Deppman, Daniel Ferrer and Michael Groden, eds, *Genetic Criticism: Texts and Avant-textes* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 36–68

- , ‘What Is a Literary Draft? Toward a Functional Typology of Genetic Documentation’, trans. by Ingrid Wassenaar, *Yale French Studies*, 89 (1996), 26–58
- Debray-Genette, Raymonde, ‘Génétique et poétique: le cas Flaubert’, in Louis Hay, ed., *Essais de critique génétique* (Paris: Flammarion, 1979), pp. 21–67
- Degani-Raz, Irit, ‘Cartesian Fingerprints in Beckett’s *Imagination Dead Imagine*’, *JOBS*, 21.2 (2012), 223–43
- De Lamartine, Alphonse, *Poetical Meditations / Méditations poétiques*, trans. by Gervase Hittle (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1993)
- Deleuze, Gilles, ‘The Exhausted’, trans. by Anthony Uhlmann, *SubStance*, 24.3 (1995), 3–28
- Derrida, Jacques, *Writing and Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (2001; London: Routledge, 2005)
- Driver, Tom, interview with Samuel Beckett, in Lawrence Graver and Raymond Federman, eds, *Samuel Beckett, The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 217–23
- Duerfahrd, Lance, *The Work of Poverty: Samuel Beckett’s Vagabonds and the Theater of Crisis* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2013)
- Dwan, Lisa, ‘Mouth Almighty: How Billie Whitelaw Helped Me Find Beckett and *Not I*’, *American Theatre*, 12 April 2016 <<http://www.americantheatre.org/2016/04/12/mouth-almighty-how-billie-whitelaw-helped-me-find-beckett-and-not-i/>> [accessed 14 July 2016]
- Eagleton, Terry, ‘Introduction’ to Pascale Casanova, *Samuel Beckett: Anatomy of a Literary Revolution*, trans. by Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2006), pp. 1–9
- Eco, Umberto, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. by Stefan Collini (1992; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)
- , *The Limits of Interpretation* (1990; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994)
- Elam, Keir, ‘Catastrophic Mistakes: Beckett, Havel, The End’, *SBT/A*, 3 (1994), 1–28
- , *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, 2nd edn (2002; London: Routledge, 2005)
- Engelberts, Matthijs, Everett Frost and Jane Maxwell, ‘TCD MS 10967: History of Western Philosophy’, *SBT/A*, 16 (2006), 67–89
- Engell, James, ‘Imagination’, in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. by Roland Greene, Stephen Cushman, Clare Cavanagh, Jahan Ramazani and Paul Rouzer, 4th edn (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 666–74
- Engler, Balz, ‘Local Habitations: Hamlet at Helsingør, Juliet at Verona’, in Ina Habermann and Michelle L. Witen, eds, *Shakespeare and Space: Theatrical Explorations of the Spatial Paradigm* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 257–67
- Esslin, Martin, *The Theatre of the Absurd*, 3rd edn (New York: Vintage, 2001)
- Fehsenfeld, Martha, ‘“Everything Out but the Faces”: Beckett’s Reshaping of *What Where* for Television’, *Modern Drama*, 29.2 (1986), 229–40

- Feldman, Matthew, *Beckett's Books: A Cultural History of Samuel Beckett's 'Interwar Notes'* (London: Continuum, 2006)
- Feldman, Matthew, and Karim Mamdani, eds, *Beckett/Philosophy* (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2015)
- Ferrarini, Guido, and Tiziano Tommesani, 'Conversazione con Samuel Beckett', in *Il teatro di Beckett*, theatre programme (Bologna: Mecenati, 1986), pp. 1–3
- Ferrer, Daniel, 'La toque de Clementis: rétroaction et rémanence dans les processus génétiques', *Genesis*, 6 (1994), 93–106
- Ferrer, Daniel, and Michael Groden, 'Introduction: A Genesis of French Genetic Criticism', in Jed Deppman, Daniel Ferrer and Michael Groden, eds, *Genetic Criticism: Texts and Avant-textes* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 1–16
- Fifield, Peter, 'Introduction to Samuel Beckett, "The New Object"', *Modernism/modernity*, 18.4 (2011), 873–77
- , *Late Modernist Style in Samuel Beckett and Emmanuel Levinas* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)
- , 'Samuel Beckett with, in and around Philosophy', in Van Hulle, ed., *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, pp. 145–57
- Fischer-Lichte, Erika, and Benjamin Wihstutz, eds, *Performance and the Politics of Space: Theatre and Topology* (New York: Routledge, 2013)
- Fludernik, Monika, 'New Wine in Old Bottles? Voice, Focalization and New Writing', *New Literary History*, 32.3 (2001), 619–38
- , *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* (1996; London: Routledge, 2005)
- Fordham, Finn, *I Do I Undo I Redo: The Textual Genesis of Modernist Selves in Hopkins, Yeats, Conrad, Forster, Joyce, and Woolf* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)
- Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (1977; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991)
- , *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. by Richard Howard (2001; London: Routledge, 2005)
- , 'Of Other Spaces', trans. by Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics*, 16.1 (1986), 22–27
- , 'What Is an Author?', in Josué V. Harari, ed., *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-structuralist Criticism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp. 141–60
- Frankenberg-Garcia, Ana, 'Are Translations Longer than Source Texts? A Corpus-Based Study of Explicitation', paper presented at the Third International CULT (Corpus Use and Learning to Translate) Conference, Barcelona, 22–24 January 2004, pp. 1–8
<<http://hdl.handle.net/10400.26/253>> [accessed 7 January 2016]

- Fraser, Graham, 'The Pornographic Imagination in *All Strange Away*', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 41.3–4 (1995), 515–30
- Friel, Brian, *Translations* (London: Faber, 2012)
- Gaffney, Phyllis, *Healing amid the Ruins: The 'hôpital irlandais', Saint-Lô (1945–46)* (Dublin: A. & A. Farmar, 1999)
- Genette, Gérard, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (1980; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984)
- , *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. by Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997)
- Germoni, Karine, 'The Theatre of *Le Dépeupleur*', *SBT/A*, 18 (2007), 297–311
- Geulincx, Arnold, *Ethics*, with Samuel Beckett's notes, ed. by Han van Ruler, Anthony Uhlmann and Martin Wilson, trans. by Martin Wilson (Leiden: Brill, 2006)
- Gibson, Andrew, *Beckett and Badiou: The Pathos of Intermittency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)
- , 'Beckett, Vichy, Maurras, and the Body: *Premier amour* and *Nouvelles*', *Irish University Review*, 45.2 (2015), 281–301
- Gontarski, S. E., *Beckett's 'Happy Days': A Manuscript Study* (Columbus: Ohio State University Libraries, Publications Committee, 1977)
- , 'Editing Beckett', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 41.2 (1995), 190–207
- , 'Greying the Canon: Beckett in Performance', in S. E. Gontarski and Anthony Uhlmann, eds, *Beckett after Beckett* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006), pp. 141–57
- , *The Intent of 'Undoing' in Samuel Beckett's Dramatic Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985)
- , 'Samuel Beckett and the "Idea" of a Theatre: Performance through Artaud and Deleuze', in Van Hulle, ed., *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, pp. 126–41
- , 'Staging Himself, or Beckett's Late Style in the Theatre', *SBT/A*, 6 (1997), 87–97
- , 'Still at Issue after All These Years: The Beckettian Text, Printed and Performed', *JOBS*, 24.1 (2015), 104–15
- Grene, Nicholas, *Home on the Stage: Domestic Spaces in Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)
- Grésillon, Almuth, *Éléments de critique génétique: lire les manuscrits modernes* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1994)
- Harmon, Maurice, ed., *No Author Better Served: The Correspondence of Samuel Beckett and Alan Schneider* (1998; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999)
- Harvey, David, *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996)

- Harvey, Lawrence E., *Samuel Beckett: Poet and Critic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970)
- Hattori, Natsu, “‘The Pleasure of your Bedlam’: The Theatre of Madness in the Renaissance’, *History of Psychiatry*, 6.23 (1995), 283–308
- Havel, Václav, *Letters to Olga: June 1979–September 1982*, trans. by Paul Wilson (London: Faber, 1988)
- , ‘Many Thanks to our Swedish Friends’, *Index on Censorship*, 13.1 (1984), 15
- , *Mistake*, trans. by George Theiner, *Index on Censorship*, 13.1 (1984), 13–14
- Havel, Václav, and František Janouch, *Korespondence 1978–2001*, ed. by Květa Jechová (Prague: Akropolis, 2007)
- Hay, Louis, ‘History or Genesis?’, trans. by Ingrid Wassenaar, *Yale French Studies*, 89 (1996), 191–207
- Heron, Jonathan, Nicholas Johnson, Burç İdem Dinçel, Gavin Quinn, Sarah Jane Scaife and Áine Josephine Tyrrell, ‘The Samuel Beckett Laboratory 2013’, *JOBS*, 23.1 (2014), 73–94
- Herren, Graley, ‘Facing the Darkness: Interrogations across Genre in Samuel Beckett’s *What Where*’, *The Midwest Quarterly*, 43.3 (2002), 322–36
- Huffman, Carl A., *Archytas of Tarentum: Pythagorean, Philosopher and Mathematician King* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)
- Iser, Wolfgang, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (1974; Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978)
- ‘Jean Balue (French Cardinal)’, *Britannica Online Encyclopedia*
 <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/51084/Jean-Balue>> [accessed 25 August 2014]
- Jeantroux, Myriam, ‘La structure du huis clos dans le théâtre de Samuel Beckett: un “art d’incarcération”’ (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Franche-Comté, 2004)
- Johnson, Nicholas E., ‘On Going On: The Ethic of Impossibility in the Performance of Samuel Beckett’s Prose’ (unpublished PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2009)
- Juliet, Charles, *Conversations with Samuel Beckett and Bram van Velde*, trans. by Janey Tucker (Leiden: Academic Press Leiden, 1995)
- Kalb, Jonathan, *Beckett in Performance* (1989; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)
- Kant, Immanuel, ‘Concerning the Ultimate Ground of the Differentiation of Directions in Space’, in Immanuel Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy, 1755–1770*, ed. and trans. by David Walford and Ralf Meerbote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 361–72
- Katz, Daniel, *Saying I No More: Subjectivity and Consciousness in the Prose of Samuel Beckett* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1999)

- Keatinge, Benjamin, 'Beckett and Language Pathology', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 31.4 (2008), 86–101
- Keats, John, *The Poetical Works of John Keats*, ed. by William T. Arnold (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1884)
- Kennedy, Seán, "'Humanity in Ruins": Beckett and History', in Van Hulle, ed., *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, pp. 185–99
- , 'Introduction to "Historicising Beckett"', *SBT/A*, 15 (2005), 21–27
- Kenner, Hugh, 'The Cartesian Centaur', *Perspective*, 9 (1959), 132–41
- Kiely, Robert, 'On Mediumship and Voices in the Trilogy', *SBT/A*, 26 (2014), 79–90
- Knowlson, James, 'Beckett's "Bits of Pipe"', in Morris Beja, S. E. Gontarski and Pierre Astier, eds, *Samuel Beckett: Humanistic Perspectives* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1983), pp. 16–25
- , *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (1996; London: Bloomsbury, 1997)
- , 'My Texts Are in a Terrible Mess', in Bruce Stewart, ed., *Beckett and Beyond* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1999), pp. 176–86
- , 'Practical Aspects of Theatre, Radio and Television: Extracts from an Unscripted Interview with Billie Whitelaw', *JOBS*, 3 (1978), no pagination
<<http://www.english.fsu.edu/jobs/num03/Num3Practicalaspectsoftheatre.htm>> [accessed 17 August 2016]
- , 'Preface' to Samuel Beckett, *Happy Days: A Play in Two Acts*, ed. by James Knowlson (London: Faber, 2009), pp. vii–xvii
- Knowlson, James, and Elizabeth Knowlson, eds, *Beckett Remembering, Remembering Beckett: Uncollected Interviews with Samuel Beckett and Memories of Those Who Knew Him* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006)
- Knowlson, James, and John Pilling, *Frescoes of the Skull: The Later Prose and Drama of Samuel Beckett* (London: Calder, 1979)
- Kroll, Jeri L., 'The Surd as Inadmissible Evidence: The Case of Attorney-General v. Henry McCabe', *JOBS*, 2 (1977), no pagination
<<http://www.english.fsu.edu/jobs/num02/Num2JeriKroll.htm>> [accessed 25 July 2012]
- Lake, Carlton, ed., *No Symbols Where None Intended: A Catalogue of Books, Manuscripts, and Other Material Relating to Samuel Beckett in the Collections of the Humanities Research Center* (Austin: Humanities Research Center, University of Texas, 1984)
- Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson, 'Conceptual Metaphor in Everyday Language', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 77.8 (1980), 453–86
- , *Metaphors We Live by* (1980; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003)
- Larousse universel*, 2 vols (Paris: Larousse, 1922) I

- Lawley, Paul, 'Failure and Tradition: Coleridge/Beckett', *SBT/A*, 18 (2007), 31–46
- Leeder, Natalie, *Freedom and Negativity in Beckett and Adorno: Something or Nothing*, e-book (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017)
- Lefebvre, Henri, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991)
- , *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, trans. by Stuart Elden and Gerald Moore (2004; London: Continuum, 2007)
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, *Monadologie*, in *Œuvres de Leibniz*, ed. by M. A. Jacques, rev. edn, 2 vols (Paris: Charpentier, 1842–46), II, pp. 391–404
- , *The Monadology and Other Philosophical Writings*, trans. by Robert Latta (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898) <<http://archive.org/details/monadologyandot01lattgoog>> [accessed 21 April 2014]
- Lewis, Jim, 'Beckett et la caméra', trans. by Sandra Solov, *Revue d'esthétique*, numéro hors-série (1990), 371–79
- Libera, Antoni, and Janusz Pyda, *Jesteście na Ziemi, na to rady nie ma! Dialogi o teatrze Samuela Becketta* (Kraków: Fundacja 'Dominikańskie Studium Filozofii i Teologii', 2015)
- Lloyd, David, 'Beckett's Thing: Bram Van Velde and the Gaze', *Modernist Cultures*, 6.2 (2011), 269–95
- Love, Damian, 'Doing Him into the Eye: Samuel Beckett's Rimbaud', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 66.4 (2005), 477–503
- Lyotard, Jean-François, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, trans. by Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991)
- Martin, Lauren, and Anna J. Secor, 'Towards a Post-Mathematical Topology', *Progress in Human Geography*, 38.3 (2014), 420–38
- Mathieu, Georges, 'La voix qui s'exclame: modalité exclamative et affirmation de soi dans la trilogie de Beckett', in Julien Piat and Philippe Wahl, eds, *La prose de Samuel Beckett: configuration et progression discursives* (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 2013), pp. 79–90
- Maude, Ulrika, 'Beckett, Body and Mind', in Van Hulle, ed., *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, pp. 170–84
- , *Beckett, Technology and the Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)
- , "'Material of a Strictly Peculiar Order": Beckett, Merleau-Ponty and Perception', in Ulrika Maude and Matthew Feldman, eds, *Beckett and Phenomenology* (London: Continuum, 2009), pp. 77–94
- Maxwell, Jane, 'Waiting for an Archivist: The Samuel Beckett Collection', in W. E. Vaughan, ed., *The Old Library, Trinity College Dublin: 1712–2012* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013), pp. 370–76

- McAuley, Gay, 'Not Magic but Work: Rehearsal and the Production of Meaning', *Theatre Research International*, 33.3 (2008), 276–88
- , *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre* (1999; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010)
- McDonald, Rónán, 'Global Beckett' in Nicholas Grene and Chris Morash, eds, *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 577–92
- McMillan, Dougald, and Martha Fehsenfeld, *Beckett in the Theatre: The Author as Practical Playwright and Director, From 'Waiting for Godot' to 'Krapp's Last Tape'* (London: Calder, 1988)
- McMullan, Anna, *Performing Embodiment in Samuel Beckett's Drama* (New York: Routledge, 2010)
- , 'Performing Vision(s): Perspectives on Spectatorship in Beckett's Theatre', in Jennifer M. Jeffers, ed., *Samuel Beckett: A Casebook* (London: Garland, 1998), pp. 133–58
- , 'Samuel Beckett's "J. M. Mime": Generic Mutations of a Dramatic Fragment', *SBT/A*, 16 (2006), 333–45
- , *Theatre on Trial: Samuel Beckett's Later Drama* (1993; London: Routledge, 2005)
- McTighe, Trish, *The Haptic Aesthetic in Samuel Beckett's Drama* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)
- McTighe, Trish, and David Tucker, eds, *Staging Beckett in Ireland and Northern Ireland* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2016)
- Melnyk, Davyd, 'Never Been Properly Jung', *SBT/A*, 15 (2005), 355–62
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, 'Eye and Mind', in Galen A. Johnson and Michael B. Smith, eds, *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993), pp. 121–49
- Montini, Chiara, *'La bataille du soliloque': genèse de la poétique bilingue de Samuel Beckett (1929–1946)* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007)
- Mooney, Sinéad, *A Tongue Not Mine: Beckett and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)
- Moorjani, Angela, 'Beckett's Devious Deictics', in Lance St John Butler and Robin J. Davis, eds, *Rethinking Beckett: A Collection of Critical Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 20–30
- , 'Deictic Projection of the *I* and Eye in Beckett's Fiction and *Film*', *JOBS*, 17.1–2 (2008), 35–51
- Morash, Chris, and Shaun Richards, *Mapping Irish Theatre: Theories of Space and Place* (2013; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016)
- Mori, Naoya, 'Beckett's Windows and the Windowless Self', *SBT/A*, 14 (2004), 357–70

- Müller-Doohm, Stefan, *Adorno: A Biography*, trans. by Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: Polity, 2005)
- ‘National Concert Hall’ <<http://www.irishtheatre.ie/venuepage.aspx?venueid=203>> [accessed 13 July 2016]
- Neefs, Jacques, ‘With a Live Hand: Three Versions of Textual Transmission (Chateaubriand, Montaigne, Stendhal)’, trans. by Jed Deppman, in Jed Deppman, Daniel Ferrer and Michael Groden, eds, *Genetic Criticism: Texts and Avant-textes* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 96–115
- Nixon, Mark, ‘Beckett’s Unpublished Canon’, in S. E. Gontarski, ed., *The Edinburgh Companion to Samuel Beckett and the Arts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), pp. 282–305
- , *Samuel Beckett’s German Diaries 1936–1937* (London: Continuum, 2011)
- , ‘Samuel Beckett, Video Artist’, in Peter Fifield and David Addyman, eds, *Samuel Beckett: Debts and Legacies: New Critical Essays* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen, 2013), pp. 177–90
- Nonemake, Elizabeth, ‘Lisa Dwan: The “Privilege” and “Trauma” of Performing Works by Samuel Beckett’, *The Frame*, 28 March 2016 <<http://www.scpr.org/programs/the-frame/2016/03/28/47582/lisa-dwan-the-privilege-and-trauma-of-performing-w/>> [accessed 17 August 2016]
- O’Brien, Eoin, *The Beckett Country: Samuel Beckett’s Ireland* (Monkstown: Black Cat, 1986)
- O’Casey, Sean, *The Plough and the Stars*, in Sean O’Casey, *Three Dublin Plays* (London: Faber, 1998), pp. 149–247
- Oppenheim, Lois, *Directing Beckett* (1994; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000)
- , ‘Re-Visiting Stasis in the Work of Samuel Beckett’, *SBT/A*, 21 (2009), 117–30
- Pavis, Patrice, *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis*, trans. by Christine Shantz (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998)
- Perloff, Marjorie, *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage* (1983; Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1999)
- Le Petit Robert*, iPad application, version 3.1 (Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert / Sejer, 2016)
- Phelan, Peggy, ‘Lessons in Blindness from Samuel Beckett’, *PMLA*, 119.5 (2004), 1279–88
- Pilling, John, *Beckett before Godot* (1997; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)
- , ‘“Dead before Morning”: How Beckett’s “Petit Sot” Never Got Properly Born’, *JOBS*, 24.2 (2015), 198–209
- , ‘Proust and Schopenhauer: Music and Shadows’, in Bryden, ed., *Samuel Beckett and Music*, pp. 173–78
- , *A Samuel Beckett Chronology* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)

- , *Samuel Beckett's 'More Pricks than Kicks': in a Strait of Two Wills* (London: Continuum, 2011)
- Pilný, Ondřej, 'Irish Drama in the Czech Lands, c. 1900–2013', in Gerald Power and Ondřej Pilný, eds, *Ireland and the Czech Lands: Contacts and Comparisons in History and Culture* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2014), pp. 201–21
- Poincaré, Henri, 'La relativité de l'espace', *L'année psychologique*, 13 (1906), 1–17
- , *La valeur de la science* (Paris: Flammarion, 1905)
- Porter, Roy, 'Introduction' to Roy Porter and David Wright, eds, *The Confinement of the Insane: International Perspectives, 1800–1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 1–19
- Pothast, Ulrich, *The Metaphysical Vision: Arthur Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Art and Life and Samuel Beckett's Own Way to Make Use of It* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008)
- Pountney, Rosemary, *Theatre of Shadows: Samuel Beckett's Drama, 1956–76, from 'All That Fall' to 'Footfalls', with Commentaries on the Latest Plays* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1988)
- Proust, Marcel, *In Search of Lost Time*, trans. by C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, revised by D. J. Enright, 6 vols (New York: Modern Library, 2003)
- Puchner, Martin, *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-Theatricality, and Drama* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002)
- Rabaté, Jean-Michel, 'Philosophizing with Beckett: Adorno and Badiou', in S. E. Gontarski, ed., *A Companion to Beckett* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 97–117
- , *Think, Pig! Beckett at the Limit of the Human* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016)
- Revely-Calder, Cal, 'Racine Lighting Beckett', *JOBS*, 25.2 (2016), 225–42
- Richardson, Brian, *Unnatural Voices: Extreme Narration in Modern and Contemporary Fiction* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006)
- Ricks, Christopher, *Beckett's Dying Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993)
- Rimbaud, Arthur, *Œuvres*, ed. by Suzanne Bernard and André Guyaux, rev. edn (Paris: Bordas, 1991)
- Rivière, Jean-Loup, 'La matière noire. Génétique et théâtralité', *Genesis*, 26 (2005), 11–17
- Roberts, Deborah H., 'Beginnings and Endings', in Justina Gregory, ed., *A Companion to Greek Tragedy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 136–48
- Rodriguez, Michael Angelo, 'Romantic Agony: Fancy and Imagination in Samuel Beckett's *All Strange Away*', *SBT/A*, 18 (2007), 131–42
- Roe, Nicholas, *John Keats: A New Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012)

- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Œuvres complètes*, 25 vols, ed. by V. D. Musset-Pathay (Paris: Dupont, 1823–26), xvi (1824)
<<https://archive.org/details/uvrescomptesd16rous>> [accessed 29 July 2017]
- , *On Philosophy, Morality, and Religion*, ed. by Christopher Kelly (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2007)
- Saiu, Octavian, ‘Samuel Beckett behind the Iron Curtain: The Reception in Eastern Europe’, in Matthew Feldman and Mark Nixon, ed., *The International Reception of Samuel Beckett* (London: Continuum, 2009), pp. 251–71
- Sánchez, Luz María, *The Technological Epiphanies of Samuel Beckett: Machines of Inscription and Audiovisual Manipulation*, trans. by John Z. Komurki (Mexico City: Futura Textos, 2016)
- Sartre, Jean-Paul, *Huis clos suivi de Les mouches* (1947; Paris: Gallimard, 1998)
- Scaife, Sarah Jane, ‘Practice in Focus: Beckett in the City’, in Trish McTighe and David Tucker, eds, *Staging Beckett in Ireland and Northern Ireland* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2016), pp. 153–67
- Schopenhauer, Arthur, *The World as Will and Representation*, ed. and trans. by Judith Norman, Alistair Welchman and Christopher Janaway, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010–), 1
- Searle, John R., *Mind: A Brief Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)
- Serpieri, Alessandro, Keir Elam, Paola Gulli Publiatti, Tomaso Kemeny and Romana Rutelli, ‘Toward a Segmentation of the Dramatic Text’, *Poetics Today*, 2.3 (1981), 163–200
- Shakespeare, William, *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, ed. by Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson and David Scott Kastan, rev. edn (1998; London: Arden Shakespeare, 2001)
- , *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, ed. by W. J. Craig (London: Oxford University Press, n.d.)
- , *The Works of William Shakspeare [sic]* (London: Frederick Warne, 1896)
<<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015082510374;view=1up;seq=200>> [accessed 13 April 2017]
- Shapiro, Eben, ‘Actress Lisa Dwan Retires a Bruising Beckett Role’, *The Wall Street Journal*, 22 March 2016 <<http://www.wsj.com/articles/actress-lisa-dwan-retires-a-bruising-beckett-role-1458651269>> [accessed 14 July 2016]
- Sheats, Paul D., ‘Keats and the Ode’, in Susan J. Wolfson, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Keats* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 86–101
- Shenker, Israel, ‘Moody Man of Letters: A Portrait of Samuel Beckett, Author of the Puzzling “Waiting for Godot”’, *New York Times*, 6 May 1956, ‘Section 2’, pp. 1, 3
- Shillingsburg, Peter L., ‘Literary Documents, Texts, and Works Represented Digitally’, *Center for Textual Studies and Digital Humanities Publications*, 3 (2013)
<http://ecommons.luc.edu/ctsdh_pubs/3> [accessed 5 September 2016]

- , *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age: Theory and Practice*, 3rd edn (1996; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999)
- Simpson, Hannah, “‘Now Keep Out of the Way, Whitelaw’’: Self-Expression, Agency, and Directorial Control in W. B. Yeats’s and Samuel Beckett’s Theatre’, *Comparative Drama*, 49.4 (2015), 399–418
- Slote, Sam, ‘Bilingual Beckett: Beyond the Linguistic Turn’, in Van Hulle, ed., *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, pp. 114–25
- , ‘Continuing the End: Variation between Beckett’s French and English Prose Works’, in Mark Nixon, ed., *Publishing Samuel Beckett* (London: British Library, 2011), pp. 205–18
- , ‘Stuck in Translation: Beckett and Borges on Dante’, *JOBS*, 19.1 (2010), 15–28
- Sloterdijk, Peter, ‘War on Latency: On Some Relations Between Surrealism and Terror’, *Radical Philosophy*, 137 (2006), 14–19
- Smith, Frederik N., *Beckett’s Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002)
- States, Bert O., ‘Catastrophe: Beckett’s Laboratory/Theatre’, *Modern Drama*, 30.1 (1987), 14–22
- , *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theater* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985)
- ‘Surrealism and Madness’, *This Quarter*, 5.1 (1932), 101–20
- Swift, Jonathan, *A Tale of a Tub* (London: Penguin, 2004)
- ‘Technical Specifications’ for the Théâtre de l’Odéon <<http://www.theatre-odeon.eu/en/professionnels/technical-specifications>> [accessed 5 December 2015]
- Theis, Jeffrey S., *Writing the Forest in Early Modern England: A Sylvan Pastoral Nation* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2009)
- Tonning, Erik, *Samuel Beckett’s Abstract Drama: Works for Stage and Screen, 1962–1985* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007)
- Tuan, Yi-fu, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001)
- Tubridy, Derval, ‘Power, Politics and Polis in Beckett’s *What Where*’, in James Carney, Leonard Madden, Michael O’Sullivan and Karl White, eds, *Beckett Re-Membered: After the Centenary* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), pp. 162–75
- Tucker, David, *A Dream and Its Legacies: The Samuel Beckett Theatre Project, Oxford, c. 1967–76* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 2013)
- , ‘Tracing “A Literary Fantasia”: Arnold Geulincx in the Works of Samuel Beckett’ (PhD thesis, University of Sussex, 2010)
- Tucker, David, and Trish McTighe, eds, *Staging Beckett in Great Britain* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2016)

- Ubersfeld, Anne, *L'école du spectateur*, 1st edn (1977; Paris: Éditions Sociales, 1991)
- , *L'école du spectateur*, rev. edn (Paris: Belin, 1996)
- , *Reading Theatre*, ed. by Paul Perron and Patrick Debbèche, trans. by Frank Collins (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999)
- , *Le roi et le bouffon: étude sur le théâtre de Hugo de 1830 à 1839* (Paris: Librairie José Corti, 1974)
- Uhlmann, Anthony, *Beckett and Poststructuralism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
- , 'Beckett's Intertexts', in Van Hulle, ed., *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, pp. 103–13
- , *Samuel Beckett and the Philosophical Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)
- , 'Staging Plays', in Anthony Uhlmann, ed., *Samuel Beckett in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 173–82
- Van Hulle, Dirk, 'Beckett and Shakespeare on Nothing, or, Whatever Lurks behind the Veil', *Limit(e) Beckett*, 1 (2010), 123–36 <<http://www.limitebeckett.paris-sorbonne.fr/one/vanhulle.pdf>> [accessed 5 June 2014]
- , 'Figures of Script: The Development of Beckett's Short Prose and the "Aesthetic of Inaudibilities"', in S. E. Gontarski, ed., *A Companion to Samuel Beckett* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 244–62
- , 'Introduction: A Beckett Continuum', in Van Hulle, ed., *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, pp. xvii–xxvi
- , *The Making of Samuel Beckett's 'Krapp's Last Tape' / 'La Dernière Bande'* (Brussels: University Press Antwerp, 2015)
- , *The Making of Samuel Beckett's 'Stirrings Still' / 'Soubresauts' and 'Comment Dire' / 'what is the word'* (Brussels: University Press Antwerp, 2011)
- , *Manuscript Genetics, Joyce's Know-How, Beckett's Nohow* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008)
- , *Modern Manuscripts: The Extended Mind and Creative Undoing from Darwin to Beckett and Beyond* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013)
- , ed., *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)
- , 'Preface' to Samuel Beckett, *Company / Ill Seen Ill Said / Worstward Ho / Stirrings Still*, ed. by Dirk Van Hulle (London: Faber, 2009) pp. vii–xviii
- , 'Publishing "The End": Beckett and *Les Temps modernes*', in Mark Nixon, ed., *Publishing Samuel Beckett* (London: British Library, 2011), pp. 73–82

- , *Textual Awareness: A Genetic Study of Late Manuscripts by Joyce, Proust, and Mann* (2004; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007)
- , 'Textual Scars: Beckett, Genetic Criticism and Textual Scholarship', in S. E. Gontarski, ed., *The Edinburgh Companion to Samuel Beckett and the Arts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), pp. 306–19
- Van Hulle, Dirk, and Mark Nixon, 'Editorial: The State of Beckett's Texts', *JOBS* 24.1 (2015), v–xii
- , 'Performance and Beckett's "Bare Room"', *JOBS*, 23.1 (2014), v–xi
- , *Samuel Beckett's Library* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)
- Van Hulle, Dirk, and Shane Weller, *The Making of Samuel Beckett's 'L'Innommable' / 'The Unnamable'* (Brussels: University Press Antwerp, 2014)
- Verhulst, Pim, 'Spatio-Geographical Abstraction in Samuel Beckett's *Not I / Pas moi*', *English Text Construction*, 1.2 (2008), 267–80
- , "'There Are Differences": Variants and Errors in the Texts of Beckett's Radio Plays', *JOBS*, 24.1 (2015), 57–74
- Vinay, Jean Paul, and Jean Darbelnet, *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais: méthode de traduction*, rev. edn (1977; Paris: Didier, 2007)
- Von Kleist, Heinrich, 'On the Marionette Theatre', trans. by Thomas G. Neumiller, *The Drama Review*, 16.3 (1972), 22–26
- Walsh, Richard, *The Rhetoric of Fictionality: Narrative Theory and the Idea of Fiction* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007)
- Watson, David, *Paradox and Desire in Samuel Beckett's Fiction* (London: Macmillan, 1991)
- Weiler, Gershon, *Mauthner's Critique of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970)
- Weller, Shane, 'Beckett and Ethics', in S. E. Gontarski, ed., *A Companion to Samuel Beckett* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 118–29
- , 'Beckett and Late Modernism', in Van Hulle, ed., *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, pp. 89–102
- , *Beckett, Literature, and the Ethics of Alterity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)
- , *A Taste for the Negative: Beckett and Nihilism* (London: Legenda, 2005)
- White, Harry, *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- , "'Something Is Taking its Course": Dramatic Exactitude and the Paradigm of Serialism in Samuel Beckett', in Bryden, ed., *Samuel Beckett and Music*, pp. 159–71
- Whitelaw, Billie, *Who He? An Autobiography* (1995; London: Sceptre, 1996)

- Wihstutz, Benjamin, 'Introduction' to Fischer-Lichte and Wihstutz, eds, *Performance and the Politics of Space: Theatre and Topology*, pp. 1–12
- , 'Other Space or Space of Others? Reflections on Contemporary Political Theatre', trans. by Michael Breslin and Saskya Iris Jain, in Fischer-Lichte and Wihstutz, eds, *Performance and the Politics of Space: Theatre and Topology*, pp. 182–97
- Wiles, David, *A Short History of Western Performance Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)
- Windelband, Wilhelm, *A History Of Philosophy*, trans. by James H. Tufts (New York: Macmillan, 1907) <<https://archive.org/details/historyofphiloso00winduoft>> [accessed 26 November 2014]
- Worthen, William B., *Modern Drama and the Rhetoric of Theater* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992)
- Wright, Joseph, *The English Dialect Dictionary*, 6 vols (London: Henry Frowde, 1898–1905), 1 (1898) <<https://archive.org/details/englishdialectdi01wriguoft>> [accessed 28 July 2017]
- Yeats, W. B., *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse: 1892–1935* (1936; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966)
- Žantovský, Michael, *Havel: A Life* (London: Atlantic Books, 2014)
- Zilliacus, Clas, 'Act Without Words I as Cartoon and Codicil', *SBT/A*, 2 (1993), 295–304