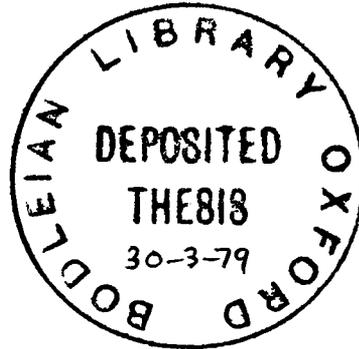


A STUDY OF SAMUEL BECKETT'S PLAYS IN ENGLISH
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THEIR DEVELOPMENT
THROUGH DRAFTS AND TO STRUCTURAL PATTERNING

by

Rosemary Pountney



Thesis submitted to the University of Oxford
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

St. Cross College

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is a study of Beckett's later plays (those written in English as a first language) beginning with All That Fall.

There are three main areas of investigation. Part One considers the importance of structure in Beckett's writing and the extreme precision with which his plays are patterned. The circular movement found in most of the plays is seen to reflect Beckett's constant theme of the human life cycle, in a precise fusion of content with form.

Part Two, the bulk of the study, considers the evolution of the plays through their various drafts. The exploration of a large body of draft material affords some insight into Beckett's characteristic approach to his writing, his working method and the craftsmanship with which the plays are shaped, both structurally and linguistically. A tendency for ambiguity to develop and increase as the drafts progress is discovered in the plays.

Part Three considers the plays in performance and discusses the various aspects of Beckett's dramatic technique in the writing, acting and direction of the plays. The innovatory quality of Beckett's dramatic ideas is observed in his work for the different media of stage, radio, cinema and television.

The discussion thus seeks to increase our understanding of Beckett's plays in English by studying not only the structures ultimately arrived at, but the process of gestation also and finally by observing their efficacy in production.

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"Well, thought Belacqua. it's a quick death, God help us all.
It is not."

These last three words of Beckett's early short story Dante And the Lobster¹ sum up his view of human existence in the plays up to Happy Days. From birth to grave may be, as Pozzo says, but "an instant" in terms of eternity, but for the human being the interval between the two appears endless. There is "nothing to be done" but pass the time as pleasantly as possible, whether by telling stories, as in Hamm's "chronicle," or investigating the contents of a handbag as in Happy Days. "That wasn't such a bad little canter" says Estragon in Waiting for Godot,² when the dialogue has not flagged into silence for the space of a page. "Yes", replies Vladimir, "but now we'll have to find something else."

It is in Godot too that we are given a foretaste of the world of the later plays:

Estragon: All the dead voices.
Vladimir: They make a noise like wings.
Estragon: Like leaves.
Vladimir: Like sand.
Estragon: Like leaves.

Silence.

Vladimir: They all speak together.
Estragon: Each one to itself.

Silence

Vladimir: Rather they whisper.
Estragon: They rustle.
Vladimir: They murmur.
Estragon: They rustle.

Silence

Vladimir: What do they say?
Estragon: They talk about their lives.

1 More Pricks than Kicks, London, 1934; reprinted 1970.

2 London, 1956. Revised and unexpurgated translation London, 1965, reprinted 1970, p.65. Hereafter Godot.

Vladimir: To have lived is not enough for them.
 Estragon: They have to talk about it.
 Vladimir: To be dead is not enough for them.
 Estragon: It is not sufficient.¹

The beauty of this passage is frequently admired, but it is not generally remarked that it may be read as an introduction to (or even stage directions for) Play and the posthumous world of Beckett's subsequent drama. Beyond the grave his protagonists are still waiting, not for death, but for the silence of annihilation.

It is with Beckett's later plays that I propose to deal in this thesis. My original intention was to write only on structural patterning in the plays, having become interested in this on seeing Beckett's extraordinary "key" to the composition of Sans.² But, having made a close analysis of the structure of Play, there appeared to be a danger of creating patterns rather than genuinely finding them, so that the work would have become an exercise in virtuosity rather than a voyage of discovery.

This is not to deny the key role of patterning in Beckett's work. It is of the first importance to study his dramatic structures and these are largely revealed through pattern. Indeed, as I will attempt to show in Part I, form and content are so linked in Beckett that the best means of beginning to gain an understanding of a play is to explore its structure. For this reason the discussion of structure is placed first in my thesis.

It was evident, however, that a more rounded view of the plays could be presented if revealing structures were part of the study rather than its entirety. Such an approach would remove the danger of distorting the material by forcing it into an arbitrary or artificial mould. As Beckett himself pointed out:

The danger is in the neatness of identifications... Must we wring the neck of a certain system in order to stuff it into a contemporary pigeon-hole, or modify the dimensions of that pigeon-hole for the satisfaction of the analogymongers? Literary criticism is not book-keeping.³

1 Godot pp.62-3.

2 See Appendix II.

3 "Dante...Bruno. Vico..Joyce" in Our Exagmination round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress, Paris, 1929, pp.13-22, Second Impression, London 1961, pp.3-4.

While considering what form this study should take, I became interested in the preliminary drafts of Come and Go in the Samuel Beckett Archive at Reading University.¹ The early material for Come and Go was startlingly explicit where the published text is vague. The possibility therefore presented itself that all Beckett's plays might be found to develop ambiguities as the drafts progressed.

The next stage was to locate the preliminary drafts. The main body of draft material for Beckett's plays proved to be in University libraries in America, Canada and Dublin. The American libraries were, moreover, prepared to send photocopies of complete drafts rather than isolated pages. With the exception of Embers it was possible to trace so much material for the later plays that it seemed appropriate to concentrate upon these, taking All That Fall and Beckett's return to writing in English as a first language as a convenient starting point. Not that the early plays in French have been ignored. Both En attendant Godot and Fin de Partie are referred to in the discussions of patterning in Part 1 and of dramatic technique in Part 3. Only an investigation of the French draft material has been omitted from this study. Part 2 is, however, prefaced by reference to existing studies of the genesis of the French plays, in order that similarities in Beckett's working method may be observed.

It may be noted also that the early plays have been the object of much critical study, whereas the plays in English have never been considered as a body. Thus, since the extent of draft material available made it imperative to give my subject boundaries, it seemed more appropriate to attempt a study of the later plays than to add to the discussion of the early ones.

¹ MSS 1227/7/16/4 and 5. Reading University Library (hereafter R.U.L.)

Two further factors were decisive in making All That Fall the starting point for an investigation of Beckett's draft material: the MS. of En attendant Godot remains in Beckett's possession and is not accessible. Colin Duckworth, when preparing his edition of the play, was allowed a brief look at it,¹ but as yet no detailed study has been possible. Furthermore, on receiving the drafts of Fin de Partie from Ohio,² it proved, with the additional difficulty of the faintness of a photocopy, virtually impossible to decipher Beckett's handwriting in French.

Beckett has two main hands: a fast (very nearly illegible) and a neat careful hand. The former is most usual in the early manuscript stages of a work, when composition is in full flow. It was evident that only a comparative linguist (and preferably one with access to the original MSS. rather than copies) could do justice to the French drafts of Fin de Partie and that the best way of treating the extensive material would be by preparing a critical edition, whereas my purpose was to consider trends in the development through drafts of a body of plays.

As far as the English drafts are concerned, it proved possible to master Beckett's fast hand, and although occasional queries arise, I do not think that seeing photocopies rather than originals has made any difference to my readings. It has meant, however, that it is not always possible to distinguish between different inks in revisions in the photocopies, and this problem will be noted, where relevant, in Part 2. Thus, influenced by the foregoing considerations of pattern and the accessibility of drafts, this study has taken shape as follows: Part 1 is an investigation of Beckett's scrupulous attention to form and structure in the plays. Part 2, the bulk of the study, considers the genesis of the plays. Since this is the first time that much of the MS. has been investigated, it seemed

1 Colin Duckworth, Angels of Darkness, New York 1972, p.19.

2 The Ohio State University, Special Collections.

necessary to state the nature of the preliminary material for each play and the main changes that occur from draft to draft.

When studying the drafts, nonetheless, I had two particular objects in view: first the possibility that a development towards ambiguity might be apparent in the genesis of each play, thus making a deliberate "vaguening"¹ of the final text an integral part of Beckett's dramatic vision. Secondly, having the unique opportunity of studying the growth of the whole body of Beckett's plays in English, to establish any common factors in working method from play to play. Thus a consideration of Beckett's dramatic craftsmanship forms Part 2(b) of this study. Part 3, the final section, considers Beckett's plays as dramatic artefacts. His grasp of different genres and the elements of his unusual stagecraft are discussed here. The study therefore covers Beckett's plays in English from their conception and dramatic construction to their realisation onstage.

In order to place the later plays in context, it is necessary to give some account of Beckett's early work and of his development as a writer. It is my intention to make such remarks extremely brief. There are numerous studies of Beckett that approach his work through a detailed discussion of literary and philosophical "background" and influences. John Pilling's recent study, in particular, deals cogently with such matters.²

My concern, as I have indicated, is specifically with the later plays. To attempt to encompass in an introduction what would require to be said were this a general study of Beckett's work, would be to destroy the balance of this thesis and its specific orientation. Thus only those of Beckett's literary predecessors to whom subsequent reference is to be made will be mentioned in the ensuing remarks. I shall not attempt to deal exhaustively with each, but simply to indicate Beckett's interest in another writer

1 Beckett uses the word "vaguening" as an aide-mémoire in a draft of Happy Days (Typescript 2, p1).

2 Samuel Beckett, London 1976.

where appropriate. Connections or parallels between Beckett's plays and the work of such other writers will be discussed subsequently, as each point arises in the text.

Beckett's writing career is now well known enough not to be retold in detail. In this brief outline I shall state merely the main changes of direction, which (with the hindsight of almost half a century since that career began)¹ can be seen to form a distinct pattern, leading him, in middle life, to the theatre.

Beckett's brilliant First in Modern Languages at Trinity College Dublin gained him, in 1928, the coveted post of exchange Lecteur at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris. The effects of this period on Beckett's subsequent career were far reaching. Not only did he meet James Joyce, among many artists and writers in Paris, but, on his return to Ireland in 1930, he found himself unable to settle to a teaching post at Trinity College.² Thus, early in 1932 he abandoned a promising academic career and decided to become a writer.

Before making so dramatic a decision, Beckett had already experimented in the five literary genres that have occupied his subsequent career (criticism, poetry, translation, fiction and drama), though at this period he probably considered himself as primarily a poet. He had published some difficult, Joycean-influenced, poetry, including (in 1930) the prize-winning poem "Whoroscope",³ loosely based on the life of Descartes, on whom he had been working while in Paris.

1 "Dante... Bruno. Vico.. Joyce", 1929.

2 Hereafter T.C.D.

3 Whoroscope, Paris 1930; collected in Poems in English, London, 1961, pp.9-14.

Appropriately enough for the young intellectual, Beckett had also published critical studies of Joyce (1929)¹ and Proust (1931)² and had collaborated in a translation of the "Anna Livia Plurabelle" episode of Joyce's Finnegans Wake.³ There were dramatic attempts too, while at T.C.D. The dialogues Che Sciagura and The Possessed both appeared in the College newspaper⁴ and are full of undergraduate humour and academic deflation. The former (written by one alas "d'essere senza coglioni!")⁵ transforms the Irish contraception problem into a matter of linguistics. The latter is a Joycean reply to the reviewer of his play Le Kid (a parody of Corneille's Le Cid) written with Georges Pelorson for a T.C.D. Modern Language Society production in 1931.⁶ Beckett also acted in this production.

Clearly such works were written for amusement only and it was to fiction that Beckett turned on giving up his job at T.C.D. A short story, Assumption, had already been published in transition.⁷ Beckett now tried his hand at a full-length novel, Dream of Fair to Middling Women.⁸ A few isolated passages from the novel were published in little magazines in

1 "Dante... Bruno. Vico.. Joyce".

2 Proust, London, 1931.

3 "Anna Livia Plurabelle" in Nouvelle Revue Francaise, Vol 19, 1931, pp.633-46.

4 T.C.D.: A College Miscellany 14 November 1929, Vol 36, p.42 and 12 March 1931, vol 37, p.138.

5 Voltaire, Candide, chapter 11 "O che sciagura d'essere senza coglioni!"

6 Text apparently lost.

7 transition, nos.16 and 17, Paris, 1929, pp.268-71.

8 Unpublished; hereafter Dream. A typescript draft with author's MS corrections is at R.U.L., MS 1227/7/16/8.

1932¹ and the volume of short stories, More Pricks Than Kicks, was abstracted from it two years later. The hero of this early fiction, Belacqua, is named after the slothful figure in Dante's Purgatorio, with whom Beckett evidently identified himself at this time. He had steeped himself in Dante while an undergraduate, and an apparently issueless purgatory is the locale of many of the later plays.

Dream proved to be the exorcism of the Joycean influence in Beckett and by the time he wrote his next novel, Murphy (1935)² he had found his own voice as a writer. Murphy was written during the period of rootlessness and uncertainty that followed two major decisions for Beckett; first to abandon an academic career and secondly to make a life for himself outside Ireland. This period only came to an end when he decided, in the Autumn of 1936, to settle permanently in Paris.

Compared with the unpublished Dream, both More Pricks Than Kicks and Murphy are fairly conventional in style. It was not until Watt, written during the war (1942-4)³ that Beckett began his really experimental fiction. After the war, as is well known, a period of astonishing creativity began for Beckett. It was released, apparently, both by the freedom to write and by his decision to make French his first language. As Belacqua suspected in Dream: "Perhaps only the French can do it. Perhaps only the French language can give you the thing you want."⁴ Beckett's first discarded attempts at a novel in French culminated in the trilogy of novels,⁵ his most sustained and ambitious work in fiction.

It was while writing the trilogy that he turned to the theatre "as a relaxation" from the draining effect the novels were having on him.⁶ Thus

1 transition, no.21, The Hague, 1932, pp.13-20; New Review, no.2, Paris, 1932, p.57.

2 London, 1938.

3 Paris, 1953.

4 Dream, p.42.

5 Molloy, Paris, 1951; Malone Meurt, Paris, 1951; L'Innommable, Paris, 1953.

6 En attendant Godot, edited by Colin Duckworth, London, 1966, p.xlv.

Eleuthéria was written in 1947, the same year as Molloy and Godot in 1948, the year of Malone Meurt. The idea of writing plays as relaxation was clearly an extension of the lighthearted T.C.D. parodies. Beckett did not at this stage see himself as a dramatist, but a novelist, encumbered with the artist's "obligation to express" though with no power to say anything and nothing to say. Such is the dilemma described in "Tal Coat", the first of Beckett's three dialogues with the editor of transition, Georges Duthuit, published in 1949,¹ the year of L'Innommable.

The enormous effort of the trilogy had exhausted Beckett's fictional voice, or rather, having deliberately destroyed conventional form, he appeared to have left himself nowhere further to go. In an interview with Israel Shenker seven years later, he was still struggling with the problem:

In the last book - L'Innommable - there's complete disintegration. No "I", no "have", no "being". No nominative, no accusative, no verb. There's no way to go on. The very last thing I wrote - Textes pour Rien - was an attempt to get out of the attitude of disintegration but it failed.²

The interview with Shenker took place in May 1956, just before the completion of Fin de Partie. On 21 June 1956 he wrote to Alan Schneider, the American director, "Have at last written another..."³ Beckett had in fact already found his new direction, but still regarded himself as a novelist in a cul de sac. He had not yet fully realised the potentialities that the theatre offered him, nor anticipated how far it would take him and the new roads that would open out for him from the main dramatic highway, occupying his major attention for the next twenty years.

1 transition Forty-Nine, No.5, Paris, 1949, pp.97-103; reprinted in Proust and Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit, London, 1965.

2 "Moody Man of Letters", New York Times 6 May 1956, Section 2(x) pp.1, 3.

3 "Beckett's Letters on Endgame" in The Village Voice Reader, New York 1962, pp.182-186, p.183. Reprinted from The Village Voice, 19 March 1958, pp.8, 15.

Beckett had of course visited the theatre a good deal when, as a young man in Dublin, the Irish Dramatic Movement was full of vigour. He had been impressed by the later plays of Yeats and plays by Synge and O'Casey at the Abbey Theatre. "I wouldn't suggest that G.B.S. is not a great play-wright, whatever that is when it's at home" Beckett replied when asked to contribute an appreciation of Shaw to the Shaw Centenary Celebrations at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin:

What I would do is give the whole unupsettable apple-cart for a sup of the Hawk's Well, or the Saints', or a whiff of Juno, to go no further.
Sorry. ¹

It was not only in Ireland that Beckett had had first-hand experience of attempts to find new directions in the theatre. The revolutionary Théâtre Alfred Jarry had been founded in Paris by Antonin Artaud and Roger Vitrac in 1927, only a year before Beckett arrived at the École Normale Supérieure. Moreover Roger Blin, the director to whom Beckett sent his first two plays, had worked closely with Artaud in his Théâtre de la Cruauté in the mid-thirties.

Beckett chose Blin after greatly admiring his production of Strindberg's Ghost Sonata in 1949, and sent Eleuthéria and Godot to him late the same year. Blin accepted both plays, but Godot was chosen finally because its five characters and minimal set were a much cheaper proposition than Eleuthéria's seventeen characters and divided set. Financial problems, even so, prevented Godot from reaching the stage until January 1953.

Apart from the T.C.D. juvenilia and an abandoned attempt to dramatize Dr. Johnson's relations with Mrs. Thrale,² Beckett did not direct his

¹ Quoted by A.J. Leventhal in his Foreword to the Reading University Catalogue Samuel Beckett: an exhibition, edited by James Knowlson, London 1971, p.14. (Hereafter R.U.L. Catalogue.)

² Ruby Cohn, Back to Beckett, Princeton 1973, pp.123-4. (MS in private hands.)

attention towards the theatre until he was middle-aged and a mature novelist. Since he did so then for light relief, one would expect to find evidence of this in his first real play, the still unpublished Eleuthéria.¹ The play does not lack verbal humour. Mme Piouk, for example, newly arrived at the home of her sister Mme Krap, remarks on the disabilities of its inhabitants:

Mme Piouk: "Henri ne pisse plus, Victor il ne faut pas en parler, et vous vous avez le bas-ventre qui tombe."
"Et toi" responds her sister smartly, "tu t'es mariée."²

But, perhaps surprisingly for a devotee of the action-packed silent cinema, there is little dramatic action in Eleuthéria. Moreover the stage picture suffers from the unconventional device of a divided set. The stage is divided into two separate scenes, the Krap family household and the bedsitting room of the son of the house, Victor Krap. There is no dividing wall. The two sets exist separately and yet are connected, emphasizing the family web from which Victor, in leaving home, has not escaped.

Beckett describes in the opening stage directions how "l'action principale et l'action marginale" exist simultaneously in the first two acts.³ In Act I the principal action takes place in the family home, but Victor, present at his own absence, is seen in his room throughout. In Act 2 the situation is reversed, Victor's room becoming the main focus of attention. In the last act the latter takes over the entire stage, since "le côté Krap étant tombé dans la fosse à la suite du virement de la scène"⁴

The idea is unusual but cumbersome. Commenting on the dramatic deficiencies of the divided set, John Fletcher and John Spurling make the interesting observation that in Beckett's subsequent plays the divisions

1 Several typescript copies exist, e.g. R.U.L. MS, 1227/7/4/1.

2 Eleuthéria, p.11.

3 Ibid, pp.1-3.

4 " p.2.

between the various pairs of characters"are built into the whole theatrical effect and express the barrier between the two sealed off views of the world far more clearly than a mere splitting of the stage area."¹ We shall discover in Part 2 a similar progression from concrete to indirect statement in the drafting of Beckett's plays.

The plot of Eleuthéria has been summarized in several studies² and does not need to be retold here. The dramatic technique reveals a clumsiness not found in Beckett's subsequent drama. Much is gained in his next play, Godot, for instance, by the loss of an act. Eleuthéria has three acts and the problem with the play is that Beckett relies too heavily on words (the tools of the novelist) and gives too little scope to what may be presented directly to the eye by the stage picture.

Nonetheless Victor's fruitless quest for freedom has dramatic potential and provides Beckett with the opportunity of raising several of the topics that are his concern in subsequent plays. M. Krap, for example, on the day of his death, ruminates:

Je suis la vache qui, devant la grille de l'abbatoir, comprend toute l'absurdité des pâturages. Elle aurait mieux fait d'y penser plus tôt, la-bas, dans l'herbe haute et tendre. Tant pis. Il lui reste toujours la cour à traverser. Ca personne ne pourra le lui ravir. ³

Beckett rings many changes on this theme in later plays. Hamm, for example, confronts his situation as squarely as M. Krap, Vladimir and Estragon fail to understand theirs and Winnie keeps any realisation of absurdity carefully (even desperately) at bay.

Victor's final act is to turn his back on humanity, achieving a kind of freedom in the deliberate action of opting out. It is an action Beckett had noted with appreciation (though in a very different context)

1 Beckett, a study of his plays, London 1972, p.49.

2 e.g. Fletcher and Spurling, *ibid*, pp.[77]-54; Cohn, Back to Beckett, pp.124-127.

3 Eleuthéria, p.13.

in the early dialogue Che Sciagura: "Can you not understand that the most extreme and passionate form of any act whatsoever, more so than actual participation, is an energetic, vehement, and self-conscious abstention?"¹

If Eleuthéria is seen as Beckett's initiation into the problems of writing for the theatre, Godot, which followed a mere year later, is an extraordinarily accomplished example of dramatic craftsmanship. Beckett has managed to capture in Godot "the stratum of movement which underlies the written word."² The play fuses language with action, the aural with the visual in a beautifully controlled and balanced structure, as will be seen in Part I. By Fin de Partie, he has become more daring. The play begins in a fusion of contrarities in the manner of Godot, but the intensity is gradually increased and no respite, no relief of contrast is allowed.

For the past twenty-one years Beckett has been writing his plays in English as a first language. Some rejected short plays of the sixties were written first in French, as the Minuit Revue Périodique has revealed in recent years.³ But his main dramatic output has been written consistently in English,⁴ since he was approached by the B.B.C. in June 1956, asking whether he would write a piece for the Third Programme. All That Fall was written within three months of this suggestion and the radio experience not only encouraged Beckett to write further works for broadcasting, but also influenced his next stage play, Krapp's Last Tape (1958). Further involvement with different media came with Film in 1963, followed, in 1965, by the Television play Eh Joe. Beckett's most recent plays, Ghost Trio and ... but the clouds ... (1976) were also written for Television.

1 T.C.D.: A College Miscellany, 14 November 1929, Vol.36, p.42.

2 Charles Marowitz "Paris Log" in Encore, The Voice of Vital Theatre, March/April 1962, No. Thirty-six, Vol.9, No.2, pp.37-46, p.44.

3 Esquisse Radiophonique, Minuit 5, Septembre 1973; Fragment de Théâtre, Minuit 8, Mars 1974; Pochade Radiophonique, Minuit 16, Novembre 1975.

4 Except Cascando, 1961, which grew out of Esquisse Radiophonique, *ibid.*

The plays after Happy Days form a group in which, as the text becomes more brief, the dramatic images become bolder, and, as will be seen in Part 1, the extraordinarily precise nature of Beckett's patterning is starkly evident. In Godot and Happy Days, repetition of language and action is carefully balanced between the two acts of each play. By the time Beckett writes Come and Go, however, he has dispensed with all text but the bones of the play, so that (like one of Giacometti's small skeletal figures) it is all pattern and has the effect of an enacted ritual.

The theatre has then, in its various forms, dominated Beckett's writing since the completion of L'Innommable in 1949. One more novel, Comment c'est, appeared in 1961, since when his prose has become ever more spare, paralleling the shrinking size of his works for the stage. Beckett has kept to French as the first language for this dwindling fictional output. The influence of radio that, as we have seen, caused Beckett to return to writing in English, seems to have encouraged him also to return to the stream of consciousness form of his novels. Since All That Fall, the plays, with few exceptions, have been monologues of various kinds, voices in the head.

Rather than adopt a strictly chronological approach to the later plays, I have concentrated, as outlined earlier, on the three areas that seemed most fruitful for investigation, pattern, drafts and technique. Some plays will be seen to be best approached through pattern, though careful patterning is common to all. Our understanding of others is deepened by a study of their evolution through drafts, while yet further plays are most usefully explored by considering their technical virtuosity. There are, however, certain "key" plays (such as Play, Come and Go and Not I) where all three aspects of the study yield interesting results.

The investigation of draft material for the plays in English has been limited to those drafts available at the time of writing, that is, to all draft material available from All That Fall up to and including Not I. Interesting material for subsequent plays has since arrived at Reading University. But this study must, in any event, be regarded as open-ended. Not only have two new Television plays appeared in 1977,¹ but Beckett is currently working on further plays. This investigation is a beginning in what is likely to be a series of studies of Beckett's draft material. Indeed, following this attempt to look at the preliminary stages of the plays in English as a whole, it may be desirable for subsequent studies to include critical editions of the several plays.

When dealing with the draft material of each play it will be briefly stated where it is and of what it consists. There is also a chart of all the drafts under discussion at Appendix I. It has been my practice throughout to indicate Beckett's revisions by crossing out with an unbroken line and using *script* for alterations. For convenience, however, instead of writing the altered word above the line, it has been placed, wherever possible, immediately beside the word or words crossed out. An example from the holograph of Eh Joe illustrates:

~~Leave-the-rest-to-your-imagination~~ *Now imagine...*

Additions to the text are also made in *script*. Where a word is illegible, it is indicated thus: xxx. If a reading has been attempted but is uncertain, it is underlined (as here) by a broken line. Omission from a continuing quotation is marked by square brackets, thus: [].

1 Ends and Odds, London, 1977. It has not been possible to include discussion of Ghost Trio and ... but the clouds ... or of the theatre pieces in Ends and Odds. See Appendix I (p.255) and Bibliography for MS. information on these plays.

P A R T O N E

PATTERN

Introduction

"It is the shape that matters" Beckett once said, enthusing over the proportion of a sentence of St. Augustine's: "'Do not despair; one of the thieves was saved. Do not presume; one of the thieves was damned.'" That sentence has a wonderful shape".¹

Vladimir in Waiting for Godot bears the sentence in mind: "One of the thieves was saved. (Pause.) It's a reasonable percentage".²

Shape is of enormous importance throughout the Beckett canon. As Molloy says "I always had a mania for symmetry".³ But it must not be considered in isolation. Beckett uses the shape of his work as part of his meaning, as he noted when discussing the work of James Joyce: "His writing is not about something; it is that something itself".⁴

The purpose of Part 1 of this thesis is to explore the shaping of Beckett's plays in English from three angles: Section A introduces a work for which Beckett has provided us with a structural key. In Section B various plays are approached through structure, revealing its essential role in establishing meaning, and taking the text itself as the starting point, rather than an external authorial key. The final section considers patterning throughout Beckett's plays and whether any particular shape or motif recurs in his work.

Beckett as a director is well known for the meticulous care with which he shapes his productions. This is revealed in all his production notebooks, many of which have been prepared for the Schiller Theater Berlin, where Beckett has most often directed his work. A notebook for the 1971 Schiller

1 Harold Hobson "Samuel Beckett, Dramatist of the Year", International Theatre Annual, No.1, London 1956 (pp.153-155) p.153.

2 Godot, p.11.

3 Molloy Malone Dies The Unnamable, John Calder, 1959, p.84. (Hereafter Trilogy)

4 "Dante...Bruno.Vico..Joyce", p.14.

production of Glückliche Tage,¹ for example, divides the text into sections for rehearsal purposes. Act I has eight sections and Act II, four.

Exhaustive lists of the repetition, variation and interruption of both text and action also occur in the notebook. Beckett notes, for example, "31 smiles" (p.75)² and 17"turns to bag" (p.85). These turns are, moreover, subdivided thus:

3 kinds of turn

1 Unbroken 8

2 Head and on 3

3 Head and back 6 (p.84)

Correspondences in language and action between the two acts are also noted, showing that Beckett was making such parallels deliberately:

Happy Expressions

I 4 after glücklichlicher Tag 104 111 127 134

II 1 " " " 148 (no smile with 2 other GT) (p.75)

The correspondence is made here in order to increase the intensity of the second act by the omission of the accompanying smile on the last two occasions that the phrase is repeated.

The list of properties in the notebook (minutely itemized under the heading "BAG") contains not only those we see on the mound, but two (the comb and hairbrush) that are never shown, merely understood to be present by Winnie's reference to brushing her hair. The heading reads "Known contents in order of appearance" (p.3). Item 12 ("Miscellaneous, Not Shown") refers presumably to other odds and ends that could be present in the handbag but are not produced for inspection.

Perhaps the most startling note as to detail occurs after Willie's actions in Act I have been listed, thus:

WILLIE Bref

1 sleeping behind mound

2 Waked. Struck by bottle. Sits up. Reads paper.

1 R.U.L. MS. 1396/4/10.

2 Each page in the notebook has double numeration a) in ink b) in pencil. All references given in the text are to the inked numbers.

- 3 Stops reading. Fans face with paper. Inspects card. Blows nose.
 4 Collapses. Crawls into hole.
 5 In hole.
 6 " " . Raises 5 fingers.
 7 " " . Sings. Picks nose. Eats pickings.
 8 Leaves hole. Sits up. Reads paper. Stops reading.

In all 17 sentences 45 words

(p.11)

The list of actions might have been made by another director, but the final comment is peculiarly Beckettian.

Such extreme care in breaking down a text for production implies at least equal care in creating it. John Pilling has revealed the precision with which the novels are structured,¹ however diffuse and uncontrolled a work like The Unnamable, for example, may seem. In the drama, two unpublished fragments (one in the possession of Trinity College, Dublin and one still owned by the author) show Beckett's planning of a work in the very early stages and reveal once again extraordinary exactitude.

The Trinity College fragment is headed "J M Mime"² and was clearly planned for Beckett's friend the actor Jack Macgowran. It is intended as a mime for two players (son and father or mother) who are described as naked under their coats. The stage is plotted out in a square, the four corners of which (lettered A-D) are to be marked either by two boots and two hats or by four boots.³ The centre point is also marked and lettered O.

There follow instructions for the action of the mime, revealing Beckett's unusual preoccupation with detail. I reproduce half a page, but the manuscript itself runs into three pages of calculation, recto and verso.⁴ "Solutions"

1 John Pilling, "The Conduct of the Narrative in Samuel Beckett's Prose Fiction" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of London, 1971).

2 T.C.D. MS.4664, pp.1-3.

3 Compare boots and hat found onstage in Godot.

4 Small MS. fragments are given the MS. reference for the notebook in which they appear; page references are not made.

a variation of the Tantalus myth.¹ The routes to the centre (above) may well represent a further metaphor for living, though the fact that "solutions" are possible is surprising in a Beckett universe.

The second fragment is an unfinished play written in 1967-68, a page of which is reproduced in the R.U.L. catalogue (Item 376). The reproduction shows Beckett to have jotted down the structure of the play, with the number of minutes each section is to take. There are four sections. The first (consisting of arrivals and dialogue) is to last ten minutes, the second, central section (a female solo) twenty minutes. The third section (a male solo) and fourth (in which both characters leave the stage) are to take five and ten minutes respectively.

It is not unknown for Beckett to time his plays. The drafts of Cascando, for example, reveal timings which make it clear he has a particularly swift delivery in mind. But to time sections before they are written and to a precise forty-five minutes, is another matter and involves a writing to order not unlike nineteenth century novel writing for serialisation.² That Beckett was preparing the play in this manner is evident from subsequent jottings, where the 1-4 numbering is repeated, with hesitations as to how each section should be rendered, thus:

1. quel dialogue?
3. que fait l'homme seul? .
4. quel dialogue? Et pourquoi décision l'en finir?
2. Essentiellement explication de méthode, xxx calculs,
maniement des seringues et bouches.

James Knowlson points out that "a considerable part of the woman's monologue (Section 2) is already written in the manuscript."³

1 Beckett draws attention to the Tantalus myth in Proust and 3 Dialogues..., p.13.

2 Beckett does not accept commissions, but it seems likely that he had a radio or television production in mind for this play.

3 R.U.L. Catalogue, p.118.

Such a page of structural jottings could be seen as standard authorial practice. But the careful timing and list of "possible thèmes" also noted both seem more akin to musical composition. It may be observed here that Beckett comes of a musical family. Not only is he a competent pianist himself and married to a pianist, but his closest living relatives (his brother's son, Edward Beckett, and his first cousin John Beckett) are both professional musicians. The relation between Beckett's plays and musical structure will be discussed in Part 3, where we shall also consider, as part of his dramatic technique, the unusual handling of vocal sound.

SECTION A

Having established Beckett's extraordinary capacity for structural precision in the early notes for plays as well as in his production planning, let us now turn to the work for which we have the most revealing evidence of the importance of structure in the initial act of creation. What might be called the prototype for Beckett's method is not a play at all, but a piece of late prose, written first in French and translated into English as Lessness.¹

The work is unique, since nowhere else has Beckett provided a key to demonstrate exactly how it was shaped. Lessness, together with its key, is thus important evidence in a study of structure in Beckett's creative process and is included as such in this thesis.² Moreover the mathematical precision of structure revealed by the key prefaces analyses of four plays in Section B, in which such precision is established as Beckett's typical method of procedure when shaping a text. Lessness thus becomes an integral part of this discussion of Beckett's patterning. The work has also received radio performance, and may therefore be seen in conjunction with the plays for radio subsequently to be discussed.

Lessness is composed of sixty sentences, divided into six sections of ten sentences each. These are lettered by Beckett A 1-10, B 1-10, C 1-10, D 1-10, E 1-10 and F 1-10, but they do not appear in the text in this order. Indeed the sentences are shuffled into a completely different order and formed into twelve paragraphs, each containing varying numbers of sentences. The entire process is then repeated. Each sentence appears once more in a different order and paragraph sequence, thus forming the second half of the text. There is no noticeable break in continuity between the first and second halves of the text and the complete work thus consists of 120 sentences divided into 24

1 Sans, Paris, 1969; Lessness, London, 1970.

2 The draft material and key to Sans/Lessness are in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

paragraphs. Beckett's scheme for the arrangement of sentences may be seen in Appendix II.

Ruby Cohn relates that Beckett described to her how the final arrangement of sentences was achieved:

Beckett wrote each of these sixty sentences on a separate piece of paper, mixed them all in a container, and then drew them out in random order twice. This became the order of the hundred twenty sentences in Sans. Beckett then wrote the number 3 on four separate pieces of paper, the number 4 on six pieces of paper, the number 5 on four pieces, the number 6 on six pieces, and the number 7 on four pieces of paper. Again drawing randomly, he ordered the sentences into paragraphs according to the number drawn, finally totalling one hundred twenty.

Beckett described this process as 'the only honest thing to do' ..¹

The "process", aleatory technique,² has been used by composers to establish the order in which numbered bars of music should be placed.³ That Beckett placed his highly formal carefully patterned work at hazard in this way aptly illustrates his view of the human condition. Cohn comments:

Beckett's work through the 1960's does seem to culminate in a piece in which the elements are all known but the organising principle remains mysterious. The human being is adrift in a world that he did not make, that is indifferent to his suffering, and that leaves him vulnerable to the calm of non being.⁴

Beyond the man-made or imposed order, Beckett seems to be saying, lies an arbitrary and capricious world of chance. The same kind of statement occurs at the beginning of Murphy, where Beckett spends some time enumerating the knots tying Murphy to his chair. But the unpredictable happens and the result of his calculations is wrong.⁵ Although Beckett may well be enjoying

1 Back to Beckett, p.265.

2 Aleatory: "Dependent on the throw of a dice" (O.E.D.)

3 e.g. Musikalisches Würfelspiel, attributed to Mozart (K.Anh.C.30.01) in which an unlimited number of Waltzes, Rondos, Hornpipes and Reels could be composed according to the throw of a dice. A similar principle governs John Cage's Music of Changes for piano, 1951.

4 Back to Beckett, p.266.

5 Murphy, p.5.

a joke here at the expense of Descartes, who placed his faith in mathematical truth,¹ he is also demonstrating the fallibility of supposed certainties. In case Murphy is assumed to have no head for figures, it may be noted that Mr. Rooney, who is devoted to mathematics ("one of the few satisfactions in life!") encounters the same difficulty in All That Fall. He attempts to count the station steps, but can never arrive at a fixed number: "Sometimes I wonder if they do not change them in the night."²

Behind the world of apparently logical relations Beckett shows us a state of things so arbitrary that man's continued strivings towards order are no more than a mockery, yet he cannot stop: "you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on."³ It is his blinkered presence in a fool's paradise, his steadfast refusal to confront the facts of his condition squarely (as with Winnie in Happy Days) that marks the peculiar irony of his existence.

Although Beckett's key is necessary in order to establish any progression of thought in Sans/Lessness,⁴ the shuffled arrangement of sentences makes its own points by intruding the element of chance into formal patterning, and, by emphasizing the cyclic nature of the piece, giving it its particular quality of endlessness. Instead of a prose statement in which certain themes evolve

- 1 René Descartes, Meditationes de prima Philosophia..., Paris, 1641. Meditation III: "But when I considered any matter in arithmetic and geometry, that was very simple and easy, as, for example, that two and three added together make five, and things of this sort, did I not view them with at least sufficient clearness to warrant me in affirming their truth?" (translated by John Veitch in A Discourse on Method, London 1912, p.96.
- 2 All That Fall, London, 1957, Second Edition 1965, p.29. (Hereafter cited as A.T.F.)
- 3 Trilogy, p.418.
- 4 There are three parts to the key: Beckett writes out each sentence of the piece, labelling it with a particular letter and number from A 1 - F 10. A separate sheet shows these sentences twice arranged in paragraph order (see Appendix II.) Beckett finally includes an explanation (headed "Key") of the elements common to each group of sentences.

and some kind of progression from A 1 - F 10 may be deduced, the themes become linked in paragraphs that lead nowhere. Each paragraph of interleaved statements forms its own small circle of thought and is thus held static. These circles in turn revolve round each other, within the circle formed by linked phrases in the first and last paragraphs, thus forming a tight, verse-like structure.

When read consecutively from A 1 - F 10, Lessness may be seen to be concerned with recurring time cycles. Beckett's choice of a cyclic mode of expression to state a circular idea thus seems to be an example of the union of form and content that we have noted him approving in the work of Joyce and to which we will return in more detail in Section B.

In Lessness, the fact that the circles of words have been described as coming about fortuitously, comments upon the nature of time itself. Time is endless (hence the circles) but structured human time is arbitrary (hence the accidental arrangement of these circles.) Cohn sums it up as follows:

Though the text is almost bare of figures, it compels calculation, and the resultant numbers serve to call attention to human time.¹ The number of sentences per paragraph stops at seven, the number of days in a week. The number of paragraphs reaches twenty-four, the number of hours in a day. The number of different sentences is sixty, the number of seconds in a minute, of minutes in an hour. But the repetition of the sixty sentences in a different order suggests the capricious arrangement of passing time.²

Given that the arrangement of sentences is arbitrary, they seem almost uncannily well-dispersed. Not only do the sentences appear deftly interwoven, but each paragraph seems complete in itself, and aptly to fit into the pattern of the whole. The statement in each paragraph can either stand alone, or be seen as part of a pattern of recurring statements. This dual quality is

1 See T.C.D., MS.4664, pp.11-12 verso, where Beckett calculates the number of pauses required "to make total silence of 24 hours."

2 Back to Beckett, p.263.

partly due to the structure of each sentence, for there is no syntax apart from full stops. Each phrase, unpinned by commas, has the capacity to be part of the whole or to stand alone. As in Ping, from which, Beckett states in the key, Lessness "proceeds", there are no verbs. Thus phrases may be linked in the reader's mind by, for example, the present tense, as:

B 1 (It is) Ash grey (on) all sides earth sky (are)
as one (on) all sides (there is) endlessness.

Such an exercise loses the poetic quality of the prose. It was precisely Beckett's intention to free the language from the weight of tense and make all the sentences multi-dimensional, thus:

A 8 (There were
(There are Scattered ruins ash grey all sides true refuge long last
(There will be issueless.

Repetition permeates Lessness; not only repetition of phrases that, because of the shuffled arrangement, reverberate through the text, but onomatopoeic repetition, as in words echoing the title (endlessness, changelessness) or words approximating towards the title (timeless, issueless). The sounds "less" and "ness" thus become distinctly recognised notes as the text unfolds. Alliterative repetition of this kind is also an integral part of the original French text. "Sans" is echoed, for example, in "sanctuaire", "temps", "en", "blanc", "passant", "encore" and "silence".

Despite the element of chance in its construction, Lessness appears precisely balanced. There is, for example, exact polarisation in the language, in phrases such as old love/ new love, other nights/ better days, light white/ blacked out. Colour values themselves are balanced. Light and darkness is a recurring theme in Beckett's work, as James Knowlson, for example, has pointed out.¹ In Lessness the predominant colour is grey, a combination of white and black that reflects the sameness and uniformity of the repetitive language and the blank world it describes:

1 Light and Darkness in the Theatre of Samuel Beckett, London, 1972.

A 9 Scattered ruins same grey as the sand ash grey true refuge.

B 6 No sound not a breath same grey all sides earth sky body ruins.

When, in this grey world, the colour blue appears, the surprise effect parallels that of the "little body heart beating" that stands out the more sharply for its background of blank planes.

The effectiveness of Lessness rests on keeping a balance between similarity (repetition, alliteration) and the difference inherent in the particular theme that distinguishes each family of sentences. As Beckett reveals in the key, the ten sentences of each section are "'signed' by certain elements common to them all." The signature of Section A, for example, is "true refuge". This phrase appears in each sentence, though its position is not fixed. It is found once at the beginning of a sentence, once at the end, and at different points in between in the remaining sentences. Were all ten sentences to be read consecutively, however, the effect would be less harmonious than balancing the phrase against some quite different image in another group of sentences such as the "little body" in Section C. The shuffling of sentences, in other words, though arbitrary, has the definite function of balancing a text which, when read consecutively, is over-repetitious. If all the like sentences come together, the balance is lost.

Certain phrases do recur from section to section. "No sound", for example, appears at A 4 A 5 A 6, B 4 B 6 B 8 B 9, E 6 and E 9. When shuffled, there is an exceptional concentration of the phrase at the beginning of the piece, in both Part I and Part II. It occurs in paragraphs 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 in Part I and paragraphs 13 14 and 15 (i.e. 1, 2 and 3) of the repeat. Effects of this nature make it hard to believe that Beckett did not have his tongue in his cheek when describing his method of structuring the piece to Ruby Cohn. On the other hand each sentence has, as we have noted, the ability to stand alone, and a further arbitrary rearrangement of the text, though resulting in a different combination of sentences, would still produce

basically the same effect of thought circles. And precisely because each sentence can stand alone, the new form would appear as inevitable as the present arrangement.

To test this hypothesis, I followed the directions quoted earlier and produced a new version of Lessness, which can be seen in Appendix III. In ordering the sentences into paragraphs, I discovered that the figures given by Cohn have to be halved.¹ If the paragraph draw is held with the totals indicated by Cohn, the chances are that the figures drawn will not add up to sixty. Two draws must be held, as with the ordering and reordering of the sixty sentences. For an accurate paragraph draw to take place, therefore, the numbering should be as follows: the numbers 3, 5 and 7 should each be written on two pieces of paper and the numbers 4 and 6 on three pieces of paper each. If two draws are then held, the totals agree with Cohn's figures.

Provided with Beckett's key, it is possible to discern a progression of thought in Lessness, a more ample version of the statement made in Breath (written apparently at much the same time)² that of a continuing human life-cycle. Each section contains certain key themes and emphasises particular words or phrases. "True refuge", as has been noted, is the recurring phrase in Section A, although others (such as "four walls over backwards" and "scattered ruins") are repeated several times. Ruins dominate the imagery in this section. It is reminiscent of the ruined world seen from the window in Endgame, where all is "grey" or at least "Light black. From pole to pole."³ In Lessness (A 2) physical structure is described as "Blacked out fallen open

1 See p.23; (Back to Beckett, p.265): "Beckett then wrote the number 3 on four separate pieces of paper, the number 4 on six pieces of paper, the number 5 on four pieces, the number 6 on six pieces, and the number 7 on four pieces of paper."

2 First publication; Sans, Paris, 1969; Breath, New York, 1969.

3 Endgame, London, 1958, second edition 1964, p.26.

four walls over backwards" while later in the section repetition reinforces the impression of devastation:

A 7 ...scattered ruins same grey as the sand.

A 8 Scattered ruins ash grey all sides ...

A 9 Scattered ruins same grey as the sand ash grey ...

While not wishing to restrict Beckett to a single interpretation, it may be observed that references to "ash" and "smouldering" close the first section of an earlier work, Play. They occur immediately before the three heads describe their changed state of being, inhabiting the urns to which they make no reference.¹ With Play as a starting point, it is a short step from the "blackened out fallen open four walls" of A 2 to the "scattered ruins ash grey all sides" of A 8 - from the coffin to the crematorium, perhaps. "Dust to dust" could well be seen as the theme of A 9:

Scattered ruins same grey as the sand ash grey true refuge.

Beckett notes in his key that the common theme of Section A is the "collapse of refuge". Whatever refuge was represented by the "four walls" has "split asunder" and "fallen open", leaving only "scattered ruins"; yet the recurring phrase or signature for the section "true refuge" has positive implications.

Section B describes some kind of limbo world in which images of earth and sky are indistinguishable from each other ("earth sky as one") and infinity is deliberately called to mind in six repetitions of the words "endless" or "endlessness". Once more there is "no sound" (four times repeated) and a new concept "no stir" also occurs four times. Beckett notes in the key that the "outer world" represented by "earth ... sky juxtaposed or apart" is the common factor in all ten sentences of this section.

The most startling image in Section B is, however, that of the "little body only upright" that suddenly appears in an otherwise horizontal world in B 3:

1 Play (and two short pieces for radio) London 1964, revised edition 1968, pp.14-15.

"Flatness endless little body only upright same grey all sides earth sky
body ruins

The image recurs in B 7:

... all sides endlessness little body only upright.

It seems impossible for life to exist in this void. Life, in this ash grey universe, might be seen in terms of "in my end is my beginning" as in Eliot's East Coker. But Eliot's was a spiritual progression, paralleling the natural cycle, whereas Beckett's thought seems to tend towards physical regeneration, in the manner of the phoenix. Compare The Unnamable:

It will be the same silence, the same as ever, murmurous with muted lamentation, panting and exhaling of impossible sorrow, like distant laughter, and brief spells of hush, as of one buried before his time. Long or short, the same silence. Then I resurrect and begin again. ¹

Section C, according to Beckett, represents "body exposed", identified by the repetition of "little body" in all ten sentences. The little body "heart beating" (a new image) seems to be locked inescapably into a cyclic progression, its "face to endlessness". This section is full of shock imagery. The "heart beating" calls to mind the end of Yeats's play The Resurrection, where "The heart of a phantom is beating!"² The effect is also similar to George Herbert's poem "Easter", where an apparently simple account of gathering an Easter posy suddenly presents us with a lurid glimpse of the risen Christ, scented as for the grave, in his embalming oils and spices:

I got me flowers to straw thy way;
I got me boughs off many a tree: •
But thou wast up by break of day,
And brought'st thy sweets along with thee. ³

In Lessness, although the little body is "locked rigid" (C 1) its heart is beating. In C 2 the imagery suggests a corpse: "Legs a single block arms

1 Trilogy, p.397.

2 W.B.Yeats, Collected Plays (London 1934, second edition 1952, reprinted 1969) p.593.

3 The Works of George Herbert, edited by F.E.Hutchinson, Oxford, 1941, p.42.

fast to sides little body face to endlessness". But C 3 reminds us that the body is not horizontal: "Heart beating little body only upright..." Yeats again comes to mind with his poem "The Black Tower":

There in the tomb stand the dead upright,¹

C 3 continues:

... grey face features overrun two pale blue.

The new and striking colour image combined with the "overrun" features has a real shock effect, as though live eyes are staring from a rotting face.

In C 6 the body is further described as having a:

... grey face features slit and little holes two pale blue.

The separate references to "holes" and "two pale blue" are disturbing images, as though the eyes in this body have somehow become divorced from their sockets.

In C 8 we learn:

... genitals overrun arse a single block grey crack overrun.

Decomposition, it appears, may have set in. But, horrifyingly, C 9 reveals the heart still beating and in C 10 the body is still upright, though almost skeleton-like:

... Only upright little body grey smooth no relief a few holes.

References to ash are noticeably absent from Section C. Dust to dust imagery has been replaced by that of the little body "legs a single block arms fast to sides". But, if the undertones of the crematorium have disappeared, here there seems to be confined decomposition, features gradually merging into each other, until all that is left is "a few holes". Yet, always undercutting and coexisting with the death imagery are life images, the upright body, its heart beating and the "two pale blue" belying its "grey face".

Section D brings a structural change to the language. The phrase "all gone from mind" is repeated ten times in an unchanging position in the sentence

1 W.B.Yeats, Collected Poems (London, 1933, second edition 1950, reprinted 1971) p.396.

structure. It comes like a refrain at the end of each sentence and serves to emphasize the sense of being wiped clean that dominates this section, reinforced by phrases such as "sheer white blank planes" and by such words as "void". The "little body" of the previous section has become, in the first phrase of Section D, "little void". It appears that the little void has been purged in this section by a "mighty light" until "all gone from mind".

It will be remembered that in Play three heads in their respective urns face a probing light beam. In Section D of Lessness physical imagery also concentrates upon the head and face. D 2, for example, has "head through" and D 4 "face to calm eye", while, in each case, the phrase "touch close" clearly associates the head with the light. It is contact with the light, the "calm eye", that appears to erase "all" from the mind:

D 2 Light white touch close head through calm eye light of reason
all gone from mind.

D 4 Face to calm eye touch close all calm all white all gone from mind.

In both D 2 and D 5 the phrase "light of reason" occurs following the phrase "calm eye" and thus associated with it. As in Play it appears that light, "the calm eye", performs a purging function. Towards the end of the section there is a particular sense of obliteration:

D 8 Blank planes sheer white eye calm long last all gone from mind.

D 9 Head through calm eye all light white calm all gone from mind.

In D 10 the idea of a "refuge" appears, as in Section A, only here it is associated with the light:

Light refuge sheer white blank planes all gone from mind.

A refuge from the light, perhaps, recalling the wish of the heads in Play; or is the light itself a refuge, an agent bringing about the desired state of oblivion? The statement as it stands can be seen both ways. Beckett's key,

however, shows him to have had a further possibility in mind, it reads:

Group D - Refuge forgotten - sign: 'all gone from mind'.

By the end of Section D there is not so much as a trace on the memory of the refuge that had collapsed in Section A.

In Section E all previous experience is denied:

E 1 Never was but grey air timeless no stir not a breath.

"The passing hour" is said to have occurred "in vanished dream" alone.

Beckett describes this section as:

Group E - Past and future denied - sign: 'never' - except
in the one sentence 'figment dawn .. etc.'

The idea of the past as merely a "vanished dream" links with a theme Beckett has presented in earlier works such as Play. It is a theme to which we shall return in Section B in connexion with Yeats¹ and concerns "dreaming back" after death over one's past life, until a state of innocence or purification is achieved. In Section D the fact that all has gone from mind could be seen as indicating that purification has been attained, so that life seems merely a "vanished dream". Yeats believed that once the state of innocence had been reached a further life or lives would be required from the human spirit, until it was freed from the cycle of creation. The statement in E 4 is of interest here:

Never but in dream the happy dream*only one time to serve.

The idea of servitude to a wheel of regeneration and the longing to be freed from it is one of the chief preoccupations of The Unnamable as we have seen in Section B (p.30 above) or again in the following example:

...Then the breath fails, the end begins, you go silent,
it's the end, short-lived, you begin again.²

Section E consists of a series of fictional propositions: that "the

1 p.39.

2 Trilogy, p.398.

days and nights" were dreams, that there "never was" another state of being, that light itself is a "figment". It is the same kind of fiction that occurs in Not I, where the voice's "vehement refusal to relinquish third person"¹, to acknowledge that "she" is "I", is the core of the dramatic situation. The "narrator" in Lessness relegates all manifestations of life (such as "this wild laughter these cries", and blue, the only life-giving colour in this blank world) to "wild imagining". The imagination "the blue celeste of poesy" has conjured up these ideas. It is as though what purports to be reason (though "light of reason" was said to have vanished in Section D) is attempting to discredit romanticism. But we recognize the veracity of the imagination, which alone recalls the vanished past that the mind refuses to countenance as other than a "figment". The words that echo in Section E are determined negatives, "never was" and "never but", which occur nine times. The final sentence (also the closing sentence of the piece in the shuffled arrangement) stands alone:

E 10 Figment dawn dispeller of figments and the other called dusk.

In Section F dream gives place to reality and an affirmation of life takes place, with the introduction of verbs in the future tense: "he will make it", "he will stir in the sand", "he will live again", "it will be day and night again over him", "the air heart will beat again". The auxiliary verb occurs in every sentence, rejuvenating the earlier sterility, while the section (and indeed the work as a whole) draws to a close with life-giving images of rain:²

F 8 On him will rain again as in the blessed days of blue the passing cloud.

F 9 Old love new love as in the blessed days unhappiness will reign again.

F 10 He will curse God again as in the blessed days face to the open sky the
passing deluge.

Beckett describes the final section thus:

1 Not I, London 1973, p.16.

2 Compare the rain at the end of "The Waste Land" (Complete Poems & Plays of T.S.Eliot, London, 1969) p.74.

Group F - Past and future affirmed - sign: future tense.

The final impression when Lessness is read through consecutively is one of transitoriness within the eternal cycle. The fleeting nature of human existence (implied in the repetition of "passing") contrasts with the "endlessness" stressed earlier and is contained by it. Existence is an endless succession of passing moments, in which both past and future are continually affirmed. Love will again become part of the experience of him who denied the reality of dawn and dusk. But the experience is not to be wholly positive. Love, in Beckett's terms, means unhappiness, and "unhappiness will reign again". Regeneration will lead him to "curse God again", recalling Hamm's attack on his father in Endgame: "Accursed progenitor!"¹

With such an interpretation in mind, the repetition of "passing" becomes almost hopeful, implying at least a cessation of suffering. But the particular irony of Beckett's vision is that nothing lasts, but the inescapable fact of "being" itself. The way ahead is only "one step more in the endlessness", like Zeno's unattainable millet heap.² Within the "passing" of the rainshower in the natural order is contained its future recurrence. Similarly "being" consists of an endless series of fleeting existences, each bringing its own unhappiness and ending in a temporary and thus delusive silence. The most that can be hoped for in such a vision is to pass the time not too unpleasantly, as in Godot:

1 Endgame, p.15.

2 Zeno of Elea (c.490-430 B.C.) Greek philosopher, who devised a number of arguments (subsequently related by Aristotle) demonstrating the unreality of motion. Attributed to him is the argument that it is impossible to reach the end of an infinite series in a finite time. e.g. If a heap of millet is divided in half, and half of one heap is added to the other, followed by half the remaining quantity (and so on..) although the second heap is seen to increase, the transfer of all the millet to a single heap cannot be completed in a finite universe. (See W.D.Ross, Aristotle's Physics, Oxford, 1936, pp.71-85.)

Vladimir: That passed the time.
 Estragon: It would have passed in any case.
 Vladimir: Yes, but not so rapidly.¹

The fact that Beckett's personae throughout his work long to escape the cycle of being is not seen as perverse. Because their view of life is negative, the state of negation, of having been, is the one that appeals to them. The state described in Section D of Lessness, "all gone from mind", is the desirable one, and the return, in Section F, a mockery.

For the life-giving rainshower (the "gentle rain from heaven" of God's mercy,² perhaps) to be described as a "passing deluge" could be seen as the ultimate pessimism in Lessness. "He will curse God again" since such rain is a mockery of mercy. There are similarities here with the situation in Play, where the light gradually fades as the text unfolds, bringing implications of mercy and freedom for the trapped voices, only to return to full strength as the play closes. Any hope of help from divine intervention is thus seen to be ill-founded.

F 10 is not the end but part of the "endlessness" of Lessness. But the cycle that may be discerned when provided with Beckett's key, remains, for the general reader, intricately enmeshed in sentences that turn back upon themselves, creating a limbo world of their own. A search for meaning in this void seems to parallel the enigma of the human condition - the use of the future tense hinting at positives ("he will make it") but each such usage trapped in its own paragraph cycle. The text is thus doubly poised: there is both the original scheme which, when read consecutively, helps us to understand the work, and the published reading of the interleaved arrangement, which makes its own comment on the human predicament, and, by breaking up the repetitious sentence groups, balances the text. The cycle of being or content of the work is thus brilliantly fused with its form, in the cyclic structure of the language.

1 Godot, p.48.

2 Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice, IV 1.

SECTION B

The fusion of form and content we have noted in Lessness is precisely of the kind to which Beckett drew attention in his early critical writings. The essay on Joyce referred to earlier (p16) contains the statement "Here form is content, content is form",¹ while of Proust he said:

Proust does not share the superstition that form is nothing and content everything ... For Proust the quality of language is more important than any system of ethics or aesthetics. Indeed he makes no attempt to dissociate form from content. The one is a concretion of the other, the revelation of a world.²

I have taken these remarks by Beckett as the starting point for an analysis of the patterning of Play. It is appropriate to begin this study of the patterning of Beckett's plays in English with Play because its structural precision conveniently follows our consideration of the mathematical exactitude of Lessness. Starting with Play, Section B comprises a discussion of a series of plays in which structure is of particular importance.

At the end of his article on Joyce,³ Beckett considers in some detail the patterning in Joyce and Dante, contrasting Dante's conical view of purgatory with Joyce's spherical one. Since Play also takes the purgatorial theme and makes use of both motifs, this is of especial interest. Beckett interprets Joyce as depicting the "vicious circle of humanity", Dante a spiral, implying culmination. An implicit parallel is made between the Joycean concept and Vico's division of human history in the Scienza Nuova into recurring cycles, each followed by a ricorso or return. Vico's ricorso may also be seen in relation to Play, where the text is repeated once in its entirety and is beginning for a third time as the play ends.

Before looking at Play in detail, certain affinities between the plays of Beckett and those of W.B. Yeats should be taken into consideration. We

1 "Dante...Bruno.Vico..Joyce", p.14.

2 Proust and 3 Dialogues, p.88.

3 "Dante...Bruno.Vico..Joyce", pp.21-22.

have already noted (p.10) Beckett's admiration for the play At The Hawk's Well, which he saw, among "other Yeats' plays" when in Dublin.¹ He quotes the first line of At The Hawk's Well as part of the sweep of English poetry in which he sets Winnie, her head full of half-remembered lines, in Happy Days.² Moreover the title of his latest play for television...but the clouds... is taken from the last verse of Yeats's poem "The Tower".³

It would be strange indeed if Beckett, born and brought up in Ireland, had not been interested in the growing reputation of Yeats. As a young man, moreover, Beckett formed a close friendship with the poet's younger brother, Jack B.Yeats, and published reviews of his work as both writer and painter.⁴ Parallels between Jack Yeats's writing and Beckett's own work have been noted in a thesis by Roger Angus.⁵

In the winter of 1913-14, Ezra Pound introduced W.B.Yeats to the Japanese Noh play, by bringing to his attention Ernest Fenollosa's work on the subject. It must be remembered that, though Yeats subsequently took a great deal from the Noh tradition, he evolved his own style of dramatic writing, so that his plays are very much "Yeats Noh" rather than pure Noh.⁶

1 R.U.L. Catalogue, p.23.

2 Happy Days, London, 1963, Second edition 1966, p.43: "I call to the eye of the mind..."

3 "...The death of friends, or death/Of every brilliant eye/That made a catch in the breath -/Seem but the clouds of the sky/When the horizon fades;" W.B.Yeats, Collected Poems, pp.224-225.

4 "An Imaginative Work!", Dublin Magazine, Vol.11, July-September 1936, pp.80-81; "MacGreevy on Yeats", Irish Times, 4 August, 1945, p.2; "Hommage à Jack B.Yeats, "Les Lettres nouvelles, No.14, April 1954, pp.619-620.

5 R.M.Angus "Connections between the Works of Samuel Beckett and Jack B.Yeats" (unpublished B.Phil.dissertation, University of Oxford, 1969.)

6 See Yasuko Stucki, "Yeats's Drama and the Nō. A Comparative Study in Dramatic Theories", in Modern Drama, Vol.9, May 1966, pp.101-122.

He particularly liked the spare, stylised form of the Noh play, its dialogue counterpointed by linked opening, central and closing choruses, and his later and most successful plays (from At The Hawk's Well, 1916 onwards) are similarly shaped. Beckett also uses the technique of the chorus in Play, where the three voices all speak together at certain points, before emerging singly, compelled by the light.

From ideas gained in a wide reading of philosophers from Plato to Swedenborg Yeats in A Vision formed the view noted earlier (p.33) that, after death, the human spirit was destined to dream back through its life.¹ Gradually the skein of life would be unwound until a state of innocence was reached - after which the spirit was either given a new life, or, if it were fortunate, freed from the necessity of "becoming" and allowed to remain at rest in the intuitive centre of the world, or anima mundi. In The Only Jealousy of Emer, for instance, we see the Goddess Fand offering to free Cuchulain from the burden of future incarnations, if he will only enter the state of eternity by kissing her.

Yeats stressed the fact that if the life has contained some unresolved emotional "knot", the spirit is forced to stay at that point until the knot is untied and it can continue the process of purification. This is the situation in his Purgatory and The Dreaming of the Bones - where the spirits are trapped and compelled to relive their unhappy experience, like a record stuck in a groove. This also is the starting point for Beckett's Play, where voices issue from three human heads surmounting three urns centrally placed onstage.

Although nowhere specifically stated, the implication is that these voices are reliving an emotional experience likely to have taken place immediately before death, since each moves from thoughts of the experience

¹ See F.A.C.Wilson, W.B.Yeats and Tradition (Gollancz 1958, Republished Methuen, 1968) pp.140-147.

to a consideration of his changed state of being. When elicited by a probing light-beam which moves from urn to urn, each voice intones a monologue apparently into a vacuum. But although the occupant of each urn is unaware of the presence of the other two, the audience gradually becomes aware that all three voices have been involved in the same emotional situation. This is achieved by a process of echo and counterpoint, so that one voice may repeat a phrase or apparently answer a question asked by another. The earlier statement is thus extended and the whole picture is built up fragmentarily, in the manner of Cubist art.¹

As if to emphasize this point, the entire play is then repeated, so that the audience, at first unaware that the action has ended, begins to recognise phrases, finally with a sense of déjà vu, registering the da capo effect. Immediate recognition is made more difficult by the fact that the repeat is conducted at a slower pace and with a decreased intensity of light and sound. The word picture builds itself up again in the way that a figure is suddenly recognised within a mass of Cubist shapes.² Beckett achieves a dual Cubist effect here: the initial picture is built up fragmentarily and the audience forms a concept as to its meaning. The repeat then gradually re-exposes the same picture and the audience is forced to readjust to the realisation that it has heard it all before.

For convenience I have referred to a building up of "the whole" picture. This, of course, is not the case. Beckett is always ambiguous and no sooner has he metaphorically revealed a minus, than he demonstrates the corresponding plus. For example, the nihilistic view of existence he is often said to demonstrate can emerge as a positive quality, that of endlessness. Beckett

1 See Francis Warner, "The Absence of Nationalism in the Work of Samuel Beckett", Theatre and Nationalism in Twentieth Century Ireland, ed. Robert O'Driscoll, Toronto, 1971, pp.192-204.

2 Compare Dorothy Sayers (in a letter to John Cournos, 1925) discussing the "craft" of writing mystery stories. "It is rather like laying a mosaic - putting each piece - apparently meaningless and detached - into its place, until one suddenly sees the thing as a consistent picture." Quoted by Janet Hitchman in Such a Strange Lady. An Introduction to Dorothy L.Sayers (1893-1957) New English Library 1975, p.87.

always balances his extremes, "I take no sides..." he has said.¹

Thus, while we are enabled to get a fairly clear idea of the stresses of the emotional tangle in which the three voices in Play were involved, we cannot state when or how their deaths occurred - or even, with absolute certainty, that they are dead - although, given the urns, this would seem to be a logical starting point for our understanding of the play.

The relationship in which the voices are still trapped is what is often called the "eternal triangle". Beckett here seems to be playing upon the fullest possibilities of the word "eternal", just as the whole play puns upon its title: Play is a play in which a beam of light seems to be playing a game with three urns. The male voice refers to the past as "just . . . play" and wonders how long it will be before he can see his present situation in the same light. The final question, which echoes beyond the play, considers whether his presence in the universe is perhaps no more than an appalling joke. This question is emphasised by the ensuing repetition of the play, which reveals Beckett to have been playing an elaborate game with his audience. Is our supposedly God-given existence no more than the artifice of a supreme dramatic craftsman?

Beckett's play cannot be dismissed as mere trickery, however, for it can be seen to have developed structurally from the initial idea of the triangle: not only are there three voices issuing from the three urns, but each voice in its monologue makes nine basic statements, or the square of three - making the total statement three cubed. Further, the concept of one person excluded implicit in a triangular relationship is carried through into the language: two voices continually echo each other, while the third makes an unrelated statement, yet still maintains its connexion with the

1 International Theatre Annual, No.1, p.153.

other monologues, emphasising the complexity of the human situation. As the man's allegiance shifted between the two women, so the pattern of linked voices fluctuates. At the beginning, however, the intrusive statement comes from Woman II - who emerges as the "other woman", threatening the man's marriage with Woman I. As the man says at one point: "Adulterers, take warning, never admit".

It will be remembered that Dante's Purgatorio is in terza rima. This form works by introducing between a couplet an unrhymed line, which takes over the rhyme in the ensuing verse and is, in its turn, supplanted. This in effect is what Woman II has done to the relationship of the man and Woman I, although the parallel should not be taken to excess. Interesting too is the fact that Beckett's prose both echoes the terza rima effect, and, by making an implicit link with Dante, strengthens the view that the three voices in Play are trapped in the purgatorial state.

A closer look at the alleged terza rima patterning reveals, in the opening chorus for example, both the man and Woman I contemplating their obliteration and using the same words at exactly the same points in their statements: "It will come" and "all over". Woman II's statement, punning on the word "shade", is sandwiched between them in the text. When the voices divide into their separate statements, that of Woman II is again placed between the others. All three voices make a similar statement, but the first and last relate to the other woman ("give her up" and "give up that whore") while the central one relates to the man - "give him up". Moreover the first and third statements refer to an oath - which is not found in the central statement and could be an oblique reference to the marriage bond. Woman I says: "I swore by all I held most sacred" while the man recalls her as having said "So help me God". The phrase emerges through repetition as the man's own cri de coeur.

In the next group of three statements, the two guilty figures are linked by their common pretences to Woman I, who now becomes the central figure: "What are you talking about?" says Woman II - and the man: "What have you to complain of?" In the series following the two women are linked by their common use of the verb "confess", but perhaps rather more tenuously with a phrase similar in meaning "there was no denying" at the centre of the previous series.¹

It is obviously important not to be dogmatic here, because other verbal connexions between the statements may be made. An abrupt break in the triads (or series of three statements) occurs at the first blackout.² By leaving the final triad incomplete, the apparent intervention of death in the narrative is paralleled. Had it been completed, there would have been 33 statements to this point, paralleling Dante's usual practice of having 33 Canti to a book in the Divine Comedy.³

Returning to the article on Joyce, we find Beckett specifically noting Dante's emphasis on the number three:

The death of Beatrice inspired nothing less than a highly complicated poem dealing with the importance of the number 3 in her life. Dante never ceased to be obsessed by this number. Thus the poem is divided into three Cantiche, each composed of 33 Canti, and written in terza rima.⁴

Beckett compares this emphasis with Joyce's preoccupation with the significance of numbers, ending: "He (Joyce) is conscious that things with a common numerical characteristic tend towards a very significant interrelationship." It is just such a "significant interrelationship" that we find in Play.

1 See Appendix IV.

2 Play, p.15.

3 Inferno alone has 34 canti; but Canto 1 may be regarded as a Prelude to the whole Divine Comedy, thus making 33.

4 "Dante...Bruno.Vico..Joyce", p.21.

The man's monologue may be taken as the type for the other two, in that each voice passes through similar stages of thought. Following the man through his series of nine statements, we find the opening statement presenting what might be called the "thesis" - to which the voice returns in more detail as the monologue progresses. The man's thesis consists of a consideration of his new state. The second phase comprises the history of the triangular relationship - in the man's case of being hag-ridden between two women. He speaks of them alternately, sometimes hiccuping, which serves to emphasise the dichotomy of his situation. His request for "pardon" is clearly doubly meant. The climax comes with: "Finally it was all too much. I simply could no longer - "the latter phrase being repeated just before the blackout. This time the strain has not merely held up the narrative, but apparently separated him from life. The third statement is a renewed consideration of his present state, leading to a questioning of the future (4th). In the fifth statement he fantasizes about the two women and a realisation of pity for them both develops (6th). In the seventh statement he addresses the light, relapsing into fantasies about the women in the eighth. Finally he returns to questioning the light (9th) as a prelude to repeating the entire text.

This formula is paralleled exactly by the two women: since they are telling their own versions of the same story, it is obvious that some correlation will occur - but Beckett gives their statements a precise balance. In the initial expository phase, for example, the first woman speaks of the man then the second woman consecutively twice - while the second woman in the same manner speaks of the first woman then the man.

As each square of statements progresses, certain variations of theme occur: while, for example, the man and the second woman both spend phase four in questions, the first woman considers the possibility that there are no more

questions to ask or answer: "No-one asking me for anything at all". In the fifth phase they all think of each other in various ways, leading, in the sixth phase, to pity. It is possible that this learning of pity¹ is the "truth" that is needed from each of them in order to unravel the emotional knot, before they can be freed for the downward spiral towards oblivion. It certainly marks a great change from the cat-like qualities the women had exhibited in their previous state, when, for example, Woman II was sharpening her claws with a nail-file as Woman I entered, spoiling for a brawl.

All three voices are conscious that the light is making demands of them - demands they are unable to fulfil, since they do not know what is being asked:

W I Is it that I do not tell the truth, is that it, that
 some day somehow I may tell the truth at last and
 then no more light at last, for the truth?²

By the end of her monologue Woman I seems to be challenging the light to register that it has had all it can from her - all she is able to give: "Yes, and the whole thing there, all there, staring you in the face. You'll see it".

With his usual ambiguity Beckett has allowed this hint of possible discovery to apply to the woman herself; one day she may register the truth, which is perhaps no more than an acceptance of her situation. Since, however, Beckett sometimes leaves a way open to Christian interpretation,³ there could be a link between the light and the opening of St. John's Gospel: "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."⁴ The

1 Compare the auditor's "helpless compassion" in Not I.

2 Play, p.16.

3 Such interpretation tends to be undercut by contrary information e.g. M. Godot favouring the goatherd at the expense of the shepherd.

4 I John 5 (A.V.)

light is both friend and enemy to the voices, who each sense, with a mixture of relief and apprehension, that the time will come for it to leave them:

W 2 Some day you will tire of me and go out . . . for good . . . Give me up, as a bad job. Go away and start poking and pecking at someone else . . . On the other hand things may disimprove, there is that danger.¹

Although the voices are unaware of having uttered any liberating truths, the light is less brilliant, less apparently demanding in the repeat and the reaction of the voices is correspondingly slower and more hesitant, as if they were finding it increasingly difficult to remember, and had been dragged by the light from a greater distance. The energy which had stimulated the investigation seems to be becoming exhausted and the light now appears as the victim of its own inquisition. On releasing the voices into darkness it must cease, a kind of hara-kiri effect that might also have religious implications; the voices are enabled to continue their dreaming back, but the light itself is extinguished.

That this was not Beckett's original concept is clear from the first English text of 1964, which lacks stage directions for the repeat. In the 1968 text there are detailed suggestions for its possible variation.² The choice between playing the repeat as "an exact replica", or with variations in speed, light, sound and speech order is left to the producer. In his letter to George Devine (producer of the first English performance in 1964) Beckett discusses the evolution of the repeat, which he describes as the da capo. The idea arose in the 1964 Paris production, at which Beckett assisted:

According to the text it is rigorously identical with the first statement. We now think it would be dramatically more effective to have it express a slight weakening, both of question and of response, by means of less and perhaps slower light and correspondingly less volume and speed of voice . . .

1 Play, p.16 (3 speeches.)

2 Ibid, p.24.

The impression of falling off which this would give, with suggestion of conceivable dark and silence in the end, or of an indefinite approximating towards it, would be reinforced if we obtained also, in the repeat, a quality of hesitancy, of both question and answer, perhaps not so much in a slowing down of actual débit as in a less confident movement of spot from one face to another and less immediate reaction of the voices.¹

These new ideas were incorporated as alternatives into the stage directions of subsequent editions of Play. The original cyclic concept is still present, because the play ends just after the opening of a second repeat, with voices once more at "normal strength". Nevertheless, the possibility of release from the cyclic experience always existed in Yeats's plays, and Beckett seems to have played upon a similar concept when rehearsing Play, until a linear appearance developed. Precise instructions for light intensity give a reduction to half strength at the first blackout the first time round, so that further reductions for the repeat produce an impression of continuous fading, heightened by the slowing down of the voices and their diminished sound. Beckett is in fact using the light as a conductor's baton,² to elicit tone and speed effects from the voices. It becomes virtually a fourth character - generating the "action" - a kind of celestial ventriloquist, the heads its dummies.³ The idea of a controlling but unseen presence is reminiscent of Endgame, where Hamm plays out his final game of chess against an unseen King.

Despite its linear implications, the fact that Play ends on a third repeat makes a strong parallel with the end of Yeats's Purgatory: just as the old man is congratulating himself on having freed his mother from "all that consequence",

1 R.U.L. Catalogue, p.92.

2 Compare use of baton in Words and Music.

3 Compare "Texts for Nothing (VIII)" (in No's Knife, London, 1967, p.109): "I'm a mere ventriloquist's dummy."

he hears his father's approaching hoof-beats, precluding the re-enactment of his parents' copulation - during which he himself will be beaten into being once more and his mother compelled yet again to repent. In Play just as it seems that the voices are to be freed, the needle sticks - and they are forced to start again at the beginning of the record.

It may be that Beckett intended the final repeat to be omitted from the text, following the evolution of the linear effect in production. It seems odd, if so, that he did not cancel it when changing the stage directions - since the new linear pattern is offset by the return to cyclic action. In terms of pattern it is as though Beckett were toying with the idea of the Dantean cone or spiral and its implied culmination, only to find that there is no escape from the circle - Joyce's "vicious circle of humanity". Replying to an enquiry of my own about the diminishing light, Beckett wrote "exact repeat preferable", and this approach was adopted in the 1976 production of the play,¹ again upon Beckett's recommendation.

Even if the investigation should prove linear, oblivion cannot be guaranteed, since "being" is a continuous state. There could be other lights impeding the backward progress of the voices, and on arrival at the state of innocence, a new life might immediately be required of them, a new upward spiral. We have noted in Section A (p.30) that Beckett seems to have such an idea in mind. Towards the end of The Unnamable, for example, Mahood says:

But say I succeed in dying, to adopt the most comfortable hypothesis, without having been able to believe I ever lived, I know to my cost it is not that they wish for me. For it has happened to me many times already, without their having granted me as much as a brief sick-leave among the worms, before resurrecting me.²

1 20 May 1976, Royal Court Theatre, London (director Donald McWhinnie.)

2 Trilogy, p.344.

And at the end of the book, the "I" persona feels that release from the necessity of being can only be achieved through saying the thing unknown¹ - which is exactly Woman I's preoccupation in Play and that of the Mouth in Not I: "Perhaps I've said the thing that had to be said, that gives me the right to be done with speech, done with listening, done with hearing, without my knowing it."¹

It is important not to reduce Beckett's work to a single interpretation, however. The particular delight of his work is its richness of possibility. For those prepared to make the initial effort to overcome resistance to an unfamiliar theatrical technique, his plays have a direct subjective appeal. An investigation of possible avenues of approach such as his use of patterning serves, nonetheless, to deepen our understanding of his work as a whole. In Play, since it would be alien to Beckett to state the existence of so positive a condition as an "after life", it remains an implication, gathering weight from the play's links with Dante and Yeats.

The triangular relationship in Play becomes the starting point for a complex structure of triple patterning. A recent play, That Time (1974)² makes use of a tripartite structure very similar to that of Play. In this case the triangular theme is used to express the three main stages of a human lifespan: childhood, adulthood and old age. The protagonist, an old man, does not speak. We see his face only, in mid-air "about ten feet above stage level." It is an "old white face, long flaring white hair as if seen from above outspread". The head seems to be suspended in space as though resting on an invisible pillow.

The old man listens to his recorded voice coming to him from both sides of the stage and above his head. The voice is labelled A B and C and each, as in Play, speaks a separate monologue. The first monologue (A) tells the

1 Trilogy, p.397.

2 First published London, 1976.

tale of a lonely child hiding in a ruin "where none ever came", "talking to yourself who else". On returning in old age to try to take a tram or train to the same spot, the voice describes finding the tram lines "all rust" and the station "closed down" so that he "gave it up" and never got there.

Monologue B relates a relationship of a kind, but: "never turned to each other...no touching or anything of that nature always space between..." The relationship seems to involve the duty unceasingly to avow mutual love, so that the reiteration becomes not only a mockery of the marriage vow, but has perhaps implications of punishment for lovelessness. The two are "always parallel like an axle-tree", recalling the Noh Play Nishikigi (and Yeats's treatment of the same theme in The Dreaming of the Bones) where two lovers are condemned to eternal separation. Voice B describes them as "stretched out parallel in the sand...stock still side by side", a graveyard situation that compares with the parallel urns in Play.

The essential sterility¹ of such an approach to love is summed up in a reference to a dead rat "caught in the reeds".² Throughout Beckett's drama an experience of love lost is remembered with nostalgic regret. In each case, from Krapp to Winnie, the experience is associated with water: a boat on a lake in Endgame and Krapp; a fantasy of "a little dinghy, on the river" in Play; "watching the ducks...Holding hands exchanging vows..." in Eh Joe; Winnie recalling "that day...the lake...the reeds" in Happy Days or Words, in Words and Music, describing the "flare of the black disordered hair as though spread wide on water". Effective living for Krapp and Croak seems to have been arrested at this point and in old age the memory holds them in a masochistic embrace.

1 Note also the emphasis on stone in the play (as in Embers). Voices A B and C are continually described as sitting on stone of some kind, or else "in the sand".

2 That Time, p.12.

It is in Krapp's Last Tape that we find what may be called the archetypal image of love in the Beckett canon, of which the other versions are merely echoes. A romantic river setting is the frame, with sexual undertones of reeds bowing "before the stem" when the boat drifts over them, and the gentle rocking motion of the water; the girl is lying on the floorboards, eyes closed. The moment of vision Krapp experiences in later life is the memory of these eyes opening as he bent over her.

In subsequent works the stimulus "love" produces in Beckett the response of similar imagery, though abbreviated (as with Winnie's "that day...the lake...the reeds"). The memory is always poignant, a recollection of love lost. But in That Time there is no girl, no lost love, in a boat caught in the reeds, but a "dead rat it looked like". Love is not only lost here, but dead and putrid. Nostalgia has become a horrifying cynicism. This is particularly ironic since That Time is very close in concept to Krapp's Last Tape. Both plays were written for Patrick Magee and have as protagonist an old man reviewing his life, either through voices in the head, or on tape. But in That Time there is not even the transcendent memory of love that gives Krapp insight (however masochistic) in old age, the vision has shrunk.

The third monologue, C, describes the old man, now a Beckettian tramp, haunting public places: the Portrait Gallery or the Public Library ("free culture") or the Post Office, for warmth and somewhere to sit. He has Mouth's reluctance to accept his identity: "could you ever say I to yourself in your life..." and is always having "turning points", experiences he will "never be the same after". He remains, however, "year after year sunk in your lifelong mess". He is also confused: "was that the time or was that another time?" The question is rhetorical. Each voice suggests that his so-called experiences are merely words and life itself a fiction.

Recalling the solitary child turning himself "into children" in Endgame,¹ Voice A describes "making it all up on the doorstep as you went along making yourself all up again for the millionth time forgetting it all where you were and what for..." Beckett's protagonists all pass the time in story telling, a situation that aptly parallels the authorial creative process. Much of the irony of his work rests on the tension between actual author and protagonist author, and the difficulties experienced by both.² In That Time Voice B describes why it feels the necessity to tell stories: "just one of those things you kept making up to keep the void out just another of those old tales to keep the void from pouring in on top of you the shroud." Voice C, on the other hand, deals with the problem of potential void by attempting a story in which he has never existed: "trying making it up that way as you went along how it would work that way for a change never having been how never having been would work the old rounds trying to wangle you into it..."

Voice B finally abandons his attempt to keep out the void: "no words left to keep it out so gave it up gave up there by the window in the dark or moonlight gave up for good and let it in and nothing the worse a great shroud billowing in all over you on top of you and little or nothing the worse..." The "shroud" seems to link with the dust in which Voice C, after turning the leaves in the library, finds everything enveloped: "whole place suddenly full of dust when you opened your eyes from floor to ceiling nothing only dust and not a sound."³

There seems to be a return here to the grey world described in Lessness, and again the idea of an endless cycle of life and time is implicit in "the old rounds".⁴ There is, however, a possibility of release at the end of

1 Endgame, p.45.

2 See Pilling, "The Conduct of the Narrative in Samuel Beckett's Prose Fiction", unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of London, 1971.

3 Compare Beckett's interview with Israel Shenker, "Moody Man of Letters": "At the end of my work there's nothing but dust..."

4 That Time, p.13.

the play, to which we will return in Part 3. The stages of human life described by the three voices in That Time are soon passed. C's final words make an explicit link with another precisely patterned play, Come and Go: "come and gone no one come and gone in no time gone in no time."

Such then are the themes of That Time. Structurally the three main stages of the human lifespan are presented in the form of interleaved monologues, as we have seen in Play, though the threefold patterning is even more precise here than in the latter play. That Time consists of thirty-six paragraphs in all. The play is divided into three sections of twelve speeches each and each voice speaks four times in each section, thus having one third of the total text. Unlike the random ordering we have noted in Lessness, the speeches are precisely interleaved, so that the play opens with the first speech from Voice A and closes with the last speech from Voice C.

In Section I Voice A begins and Voice B closes the section.

"	"	II	"	C	"	"	"	A	"	"	"
"	"	III	"	B	"	"	"	C	"	"	"

The balance is perfect. The division into sections is marked not with blackouts (as in Play) but with silences (as in Not I). It is an appropriate device for plays where the possibility of silence is, elusively, present, challenging the voice.

The pattern made as each voice speaks its twelve paragraphs emerges thus:

I				II				III			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
A	A	A	C	C	C	C	B	B	B	B	B
C	C	C	A	B	B	B	C	A	A	A	A
B	B	B	B	A	A	A	A	C	C	C	C

The speech pattern varies in each section. The rhythm established in 1-3 and 5-7 changes in 4 and 8, in each case just before silence intervenes. But in Section III the pattern is unchanged at 12. In each case one particular voice speaks last in each triad, making an entirely regular shape throughout.

The language of the interior monologue is Beckett's natural mode of expression, a stream of consciousness made up of phrases only. Here phrases are strung together without breaks, without even the dots between them that mark the frenetic pace of Not I. There is no punctuation at all in That Time and not even capital letters at the beginning of each paragraph. The paragraphs are merely a convenience for breaking up and interleaving the monologues. But, as in Lessness, the different voices and series of interwoven images have an impact that would be lost were each monologue spoken separately. In a prefatory note to That Time Beckett states that "the switch from one (voice) to another must be clearly faintly perceptible", and that such an effect should be "assisted mechanically (e.g. three-fold pitch)" if necessary. But he also stresses that A B and C are essentially "moments of one and the same voice".¹

It was such an effect of sameness with difference that Beckett hoped to achieve in the radio presentation of Lessness but found disappointing because the voices were too individual.² It is also the effect achieved visually in the 1966 Schiller Theater production of Come and Go, where the three women each appeared in clothes of essentially the same style, though the colours were different, as if they were, Proustian-fashion, facets of a single personality.³

In Lessness the fusion is between the human life cycle and the word circles in which it is expressed. In Play and That Time the tripartite structure expresses two kinds of triangular theme: the so-called "eternal triangle" in Play is, fittingly, part of a cyclic structure; That Time, in considering the different stages of a life cycle with implications of a final culmination, develops a linear structure. But the intertwined monologues and repetitive

1 That Time, p.8.

2 See Cohn, Back to Beckett, p.266.

3 See Proust and 3 Dialogues, pp.45-53 in which Beckett discusses the "multiplicity of Albertine".

language patterns give the play a circular movement as well--and the circle is Beckett's dominant pattern. His archetypal use of this form is Breath, the thirty-second sigh that begins and ends with an identical birth cry, and encompasses between the two an instant of orgasm followed by the death rattle. The play is often dismissed as a mere joke or gimmick, not least because it first appeared as a preface to Kenneth Tynan's sexual farce Oh! Calcutta.¹ Breath is, however, the ultimate reduction of Beckett's life-cycle theme. Moreover the stress laid in the stage directions on the two cries ("important that the two cries be identical")² reinforces the view of existence as endless repetition that we have noted in The Unnamable, Lessness and Play.

The cry in Breath is often linked with Pozzo's famous lines in Waiting for Godot:

They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant,
then it's night once more.³

But, as a statement of Beckett's vision of the human situation, these lines are incomplete. The transitory nature of human life seems bad enough to Pozzo, but the vision of life that emerges in the later plays goes further. Human existence, Beckett seems to be saying, is an issueless predicament, Joyce's "vicious circle of humanity" in fact, from which there is no way out, because a "step forward is, by definition, a step back".⁴ Nightfall (in Pozzo's terms) would be a release from such a situation, if it brought a cessation of consciousness. But it does not. Even in the dark (as in Play, Not I and That Time) Beckett's protagonists must continue, endlessly, to narrate.

1 Details of this production are given in Part 2 (p185).

2 Breath and other shorts, London, 1971, p.11.

3 Godot, p.89.

4 Dante...Bruno.Vico..Joyce, p.22.

Before broadening the focus of this study by considering patterning in the remainder of Beckett's plays, three further plays where form is of particular importance should be noted. They are all cyclic in structure. The earliest is the mime Acte Sans Paroles II written in French in 1956.¹ It is a mime for two players, who are a typical Beckett "pseudo couple" of complementary types. A is slow, lethargic and awkward, B "brisk, rapid, precise". The contrast is not unlike the pre-war laxative advertisement portraying Mr Can and Mr Can't!

When the mime opens, both men are in sacks onstage and beside each sack is a pile of clothes. A phallic-looking goad enters stage right and eventually succeeds in rousing A from his womb-like refuge. He dresses, performs various actions with reluctance, takes pills, prays, moves both sacks towards centre stage, undresses and crawls back into his refuge. The second sack is now nearer the reentering goad. A single prod produces B, bustling with energy, briskly consulting watch, mirror, map and compass, getting through far more action than A and once more moving the sacks before returning to a recumbent posture. When the goad reappears at the end of the mime, it again prods A, so that the seemingly infinite routine is just starting once more as the mime closes.

The cyclic action could hardly be more explicit. The tools of living, the toothbrush, comb, watch and mirror that occupy B's time presage Winnie's handbag in Happy Days. Even the wheels of the goad are given a symbolic function. At the first prod (of A) no wheel is visible; a single wheel appears when B is prodded and two wheels when A is attacked once more. At the same time the sacks move from stage right to stage left, in what is evidently an infinite progression of the wheel of life.

1 R.U.L. Catalogue, p.98: "...written, according to Beckett, at about the same time as Acte Sans Paroles I" (i.e. 1956.)

With the exception of Breath, no Beckett play is more clearly structured in circles than the "dramaticule" Come and Go. Together these two stage pieces mark Beckett's most concise statement of the cyclic theme. Come and Go is the stage play immediately preceding Breath in the Beckett canon and the linguistic reduction is from 121 words to none at all. The drafts of Come and Go, where the play evolves to its 121 words, are to be discussed in Part 2. We should note, however, that the cyclic quality of the piece emerges in greater relief as the language decreases.

Beckett's diagram of "successive positions" in his notes to the published text emphasizes the pattern of movement. By the end of the play each woman has progressed in rotation, thus:

1.	FLO	VI	RU
2.	(FLO		RU
	(FLO	RU
3.	VI	FLO	RU
4.	(VI		
	(VI	RU	
5.	VI	RU	FLO
6.	(VI		FLO
	(VI	FLO
7	RU	VI	FLO ¹

The progression could not be more precisely structured. In stage 7, Vi has returned to the centre position again and Flo and Ru have circumambulated the stage and changed places. It is Vi's turn to exit left as the curtain falls, thus setting in motion a further turn of the wheel that would bring the women

1 In Breath and other Shorts, p.21.

back to their positions in Stage 1 above, ready to begin a further series.¹

As in Breath and Acte Sans Paroles II, the progression seems infinite. When the play ends each woman has made an entrance and an exit, sat in the central position to gossip and been gossiped about in her turn. These gossips form the main "action" of Come and Go, contributing to the structural balance and circularity of the piece, as the following diagram reveals:

FLO already knows VI is ill, tells RU

RU	"	"	FLO	"	"	"	VI	whom	she	now	knows	to	be	ill	also
VI	"	"	RU	"	"	"	FLO	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"

The possibility that the three women are aspects of a single personality has already been mentioned (p54). They certainly play "many parts" in deceiving each other and "have their exits and their entrances".² The link is appropriate, since Shakespeare uses Jacques's speech to sum up the various stages of a human life span, and this, as we have seen, is Beckett's constant theme in his use of the circle.

The cyclic patterning of movement and action in Come and Go is echoed in the repetitive language. Speeches are not identical throughout, but variations on a theme, thus:

1 The women exit on alternate sides of the stage and, on reentry, sit on the same side, the seat having been vacated by whoever has moved centre stage, thus:

1. Exit VI Right
Enter " and sit Right
2. Exit FLO left
Enter " and sit left
3. Exit RU Right
Enter " and sit Right

In order to reach the position of Stage 1 (above) Vi must now exit left and complete the pattern:

4. Exit VI left
Enter " and sit left
5. Exit FLO Right
Enter " and sit Right
6. Exit RU left
Enter " and sit left.

2 Shakespeare, As You Like It, II 7.

RU Does she not realize?
 VI Has she not been told?
 FLO Does she not know?

or:

FLO God grant not.
 RU God forbid.
 VI Please God not.

Such variations are carried out further in the floral-cum-herbal names of the women; in the colours they wear (different, yet all muted); and in their voices, "colourless" throughout, except during the gossips, when "three very different sounds" are allowed to break the uniformity. Thus the play is wholly patterned and controlled, but not so rigidly as to become boring.

If Acte Sans Paroles II presents cyclic action and Come and Go combined circles of language and action, Not I, the third example of formal precision in this section is primarily concerned with linguistic circularity. The play is a spate of words, structured into recurring patterns or circles expressive of Mouth's predicament. She is stuck in a mental groove beyond which she is unable (or unwilling) to progress. Once again in Beckett's writing, theme and form coalesce. The text is composed around five pauses, triggered off by the utterance of a particular phrase. During these pauses the lips cease to move, but the hitherto motionless figure of an auditor, a dimly-lit cowed figure at one side of the stage, stretches out his arms. The pause is a recurring part of the action and therefore cyclic, but the diminishing gestures of the auditor present a linear pattern. By the end of the play he has ceased to respond to Mouth's repeated denials of selfhood.

Beckett's "analysis" of Not I (to be discussed in Part 2) reveals the care with which the text is built up from certain themes, some expanding, some contracting as the play progresses.¹

1 See Appendix V.

As in Play there are nine basic statements in Not I: birth, the April morning when "all went out", buzzing and light, God, punishment, words and mouth, speechlessness, Croker's Acres and the unknown thing that must be told. These are interlinked throughout and all reappear in the last 14 pages of the text - except the Croker's Acres episode, which is never repeated. But "face in the grass" could be taken as a substitute here, since this phrase does not appear in the text until after the incident at Croker's Acres.

Certain other episodes occur once only and could be seen as landmarks in a bleak cycle of existence; these are: the gathering of cowslips to make a ball, the eye on a distant bell, the supermart visit, the arrival one evening at Croker's Acres, and the court scene with its implication of judgement. The Croker's Acres episode alone forms a brief life cycle:

. . .Just the birth cry to get her going. . . then no
more till this. . .home! . . .a little mound in Croker's
Acres. . .¹

These cycles fall within a framework of cyclic word patterns which both echo and reecho what appears to be the life cycle of the voice and form part of the complete circle the text may be taken to describe. There is no closing full stop, but an implication of rebirth, so that reading from the last line to the first is both syntactically and thematically possible.

It should be emphasised that nowhere is it stated that the April morning blackout was the time of death, although the idea is perhaps suggested in subsequent references to the body:

. . .more likely the machine. . .so disconnected. . .
never got the message. . .or powerless to respond. . .
like numbed. . .²

1 Not I, London, 1973, p.12.

2 Ibid, p.9.

Beckett's lack of syntactical definition allows statements to fold at least two ways throughout the play. This can be seen in the contraction of the birth theme, occurring on its repetition: "Before its time", for example, could mean either premature birth or that the world is unready for the child; "Godforsaken hole" could refer equally to the womb or the world and "no love" to the parents for each other, or for their child, or that the child has entered a loveless world. As the birth theme contracts, so the thought of the April morning gathers momentum - with additional images such as "larks", "face in the grass" and "pick it up".

The linking of the buzzing and light themes appears to tie Not I closely to the subject of Play. It is not only a pun that links the thought "flashes" with the light. The light, which is said to be "ferreting" and "poking around", may be seen as stimulating the thought. It is always mentioned in conjunction with the buzzing in the skull - to which, by the question ". . .what?. . .the buzzing?. . .", attention is repeatedly drawn.

With the idea of purgatory in mind, the early laughter at the mention of God is interesting; it develops into ". . .God is love. . .she'll be purged. . .", the first positive mention of love in the play. Earlier "she" had experienced "no love of any kind", but the idea of purgation heralds her hope of a merciful God, replacing her early thoughts of punishment. Self-questioning about her lack of suffering (" . . .so far. . .ha!. . .so far . . .") is sandwiched between her changing attitude to God. His name at first produces laughter but "...God is love. . .tender mercies. . ." are among the last words spoken and contribute to the irony of the play. There is no "mercy" for Mouth, since her compassionate auditor is "helpless".

In a play where a mouth is the central image, words and mouth appropriately form the longest theme and contrast with the narrated memories

of speechlessness. She who was "practically speechless all her days" except for an occasional ". . . sudden urge to . . . tell" is compared with the numb body from which words now pour in an uncontrollable stream, the brain all the while begging the mouth to stop. As the words come "quicker and quicker" they are paralleled by the brain "flickering away like mad" and the probing light.

The remembered urge to tell links with the voice's realisation that there may be ". . . something she had to tell. . . something she didn't know herself . . . wouldn't know if she heard. . ." ¹ This theme is the last to develop and emerges as the crucial question of the play. As with Woman I in Play, the voice does not know what is being demanded of her, but is determined to find out: "Keep on . . . hit on it in the end. . ." The implication is that if this something is told, all will become clear. It may be no more than an obligation for the voice to accept the story as her own. Throughout the play the gigantic self-deception that "she" is NOT "I" links ironically with the fact that, when trying to simulate suffering, "she" is said to be "incapable of deceit"; nor is she able to deny responsibility for the voice; "then finally had to admit . . . could be none other . . . than her own," ²

The structure of repeated themes is composed around an underlying structure of pauses, each time preceded by the phrase "What? . . . ,who?, . . .no!, . . .she!" It is this vehement refusal to relinquish third person" that provokes gestures of helpless compassion" from the auditor. ³ As Mouth's denials increase in strength, so the gestures diminish, until the final pause where the word "she", emphatically repeated, elicits no gesture at all. Mouth has carefully avoided accepting the story as her own, but until she does so there can be no progress.

1 Not I, p.14 (various phrases).

2 Ibid, p.10.

3 Ibid, p.16.

As the curtain falls on her determination to "keep on", the voice can still be heard, recalling the "largely unintelligible" chorus in Play, before each voice is singled out by the light.

In terms of pattern although, as in Play, the cyclic element is omnipresent, the monologue takes place at such speed that the impression is of a whirlwind of words. The total effect is not unlike a Francis Bacon painting of a screaming mouth - vocalized. The whole desperate spate of words may be seen to be pinpointed by the two screams as a cry of pain.

Beckett once said in conversation with Tom Driver:

What I am saying does not mean that there will henceforth be no form in art. It only means that there will be a new form, and that this form will be of such a type that it admits the chaos and does not try to say that the chaos is really something else. . . To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now.¹

In Not I Beckett appears to have found such a form. He holds "the mess" in a tight geometry, so that the image of the frantic mouth repeating word patterns becomes a visual and oral symbol of the human predicament.

1 Tom F.Driver, "Beckett by the Madeleine" (Columbia University Forum, IV, Summer 1961), p.23.

SECTION C

We have now considered two aspects of Beckett's use of pattern: Lessness, with an authorial key to the principles on which it is built, stands alone. We have also explored certain plays, discovering how precisely they are structured, and found that their patterning is predominantly cyclic. Careful patterning of language and action occurs, as we have noted, throughout Beckett's work. The novels, for instance, abound in so-called "closed systems" for comic effect. The ginger biscuit "routine" in Murphy is an example, or the sucking stones in Molloy, while in Watt we find the complexities of feeding the dog or exhaustive calculation of the ways in which five committee members may contemplate each other. These are painstaking but fruitless attempts to cover all possibilities, to structure experience into manageable proportions and serve to illustrate the futility of attempting to impose order on living. It is only in art that an appearance of order may be achieved, through the artificiality of selection and arrangement.

Watt also contains the picture of the broken circle and its elusive centre, on Erskine's wall: "... and at the thought that it was perhaps this, a circle and a centre not its centre in search of a centre and its circle respectively, in boundless space, in endless time, then Watt's eyes filled with tears that he could not stem."¹ Here again we find Beckett using the circle as a motif. The fact that it is a broken circle and separated from its centre (described as "a point, or dot")² seems to be a visual realisation of a preoccupation of the Unnamable, namely to pinpoint the self. We shall return to this concept when discussing Cascando. We have, however, already noted a contrary trend, a fleeing from the self, in Not I, and this will be

1 Watt, p.127.

2 Ibid, p.126.

considered further in connection with Film.¹

Having established that the circle is a constant motif in the works so far discussed, let us now widen the focus to see whether the same motif occurs throughout Beckett's plays, and whether any other kinds of patterning are evident in them.

In En attendant Godot, Beckett's first published play, we find a clear example of cyclic action,² in that the events of Act 2 largely repeat those of Act 1. Although Pozzo and Lucky have changed between the acts, Vladimir and Estragon remain the same. This is emphasized linguistically by the identical repetition of the final lines of each act, though the speakers are reversed in Act 2. The two acts in Godot appear to be part of an endless series. As Ihab Hassan points out:

The inaction of the play is cyclical, and its events are endlessly repetitious; its two acts are symmetric, both equal images of an absence. Two acts, as Samuel Beckett knew, are enough to represent a sequence stretching to infinity..³

In the later plays (with the exception of the repeat of Play) the idea of a series is left as an implication. In Not I, for example, Mouth continues speaking after the fall of the curtain.

Beckett's 1975 Schiller Theater production of Godot (seen at the Royal Court Theatre, London, in April 1976) was remarkable for its structural balance. Beckett emphasized not only the cyclic nature of the play in the repetitions of language and action, but brought out the visual-aural balance within the

1 It may be noted here that Nicholas Zurbrugg in a recent thesis (D.Phil., Oxford, 1977) entitled "A comparative study of some aspects of language and perception in the fictional and critical writings of Marcel Proust and Samuel Beckett" discusses the proposition (pp.318-333) that Beckett's mature vision in the trilogy and subsequent works is fundamentally concerned with a flight from the self.

2 See En Attendant Godot, ed. Duckworth, chapter 5, for a detailed discussion of structure. The Act 1/Act 2 repetitions are usefully charted on p.lxxxiv and the geometrical shape of the overall structure on p.xcii.

3 Ihab Hassan, The Literature of Silence, Henry Miller and Samuel Beckett, New York, 1967, p.176.

contrasting comic routines and language rhythms of which the play is composed. Words were liberally invaded by silence, periods of movement by stillness, yet the production went at a tremendous pace. Language rhythms sprang to life as speeches were rattled off like a comedian's patter, while comic action routines constantly called to mind the circus clown. James Knowlson said of the production that Beckett had emphasized the "sense of form in movement, shaping speech, gestures and movements into a precisely organised, musically balanced and aesthetically satisfying work".¹ Knowlson is here echoing Beckett's remark to Charles Marowitz in 1962:

Producers don't seem to have any sense of form in movement. The kind of form one finds in music, for instance, where themes keep recurring. When in a text, actions are repeated, they ought to be made unusual the first time, so that when they happen again - in exactly the same way - an audience will recognise them from before. In the revival of Godot (in Paris) I tried to get at something of that stylised movement that's in the play.²

The following extract from the account of rehearsals for the 1975 German production given in the programme by Beckett's production assistant, Walter Asmus, reveals Beckett's approach to the play to have remained unchanged:

It should be done very simply, without long passages. To give confusion shape, he says,³ a shape through repetition, repetition of themes.⁴ Not only themes in the script, but also themes of the body. When at the beginning Estragon is asleep leaning on the stone, that is a theme that repeats itself a few times. There are fixed points of writing, where everything stands completely still, where silence threatens to swallow everything up. Then the action starts again.⁵

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- 1 James Knowlson "From Godot to Footfalls" (Radio 3 talk given on 23 May 1976) B.B.C. Archive Recording.
 - 2 Charles Marowitz Encore, March/April 1962, p.44.
 - 3 Compare "To find a form that accommodates the mess" (p.63).
 - 4 Compare the structuring of Not I.
 - 5 Walter D.Asmus "Beckett Directs Godot", Theatre Quarterly Vol.V No.19, 1975 pp.19-26 (p.23), translated by Ria Julian.

We have established that it is not the purpose of this thesis to explore Beckett's early plays in detail; but, for a perspective view of his patterning, it is necessary to consider the plays as a body. Fin de Partie, the play immediately preceding the works in this study is no less patterned than Godot. Certain limited actions recur, with a deliberation which has caused them to be compared with the moves in a game of chess. Hamm's position (enthroned, kinglike, centre stage) and Clov's admission that he used to inspect Hamm's "paupers" like a knight "on horse",¹ together with the English title "Endgame" (as in chess) reinforce the view that chess is part of the experience of the play. It appears, moreover, that an early French title for the play, "La Fin du Jeu",² had the same connotations. The parallel must not be taken to excess, although it is interesting to compare the unseen king, against whom Hamm's endgame must be played, with the hostile forces offstage in the mimes, written the same year as Fin de Partie.

In a production notebook prepared for a Schiller Theater production of the play in September 1967,³ Beckett structures the play as follows, for rehearsal purposes:

1 Endgame, p.15.

2 See Esslin, "Samuel Beckett and the Art of Broadcasting" Encounter, September 1975, pp.38-46, p.38.

3 R.U.L. MS. 1396/4/5, p.1.

1		xxx Clov	1 - 1st Inspection
2	30	Hamm "	2
3		Nagg - Nell	3
4		1st Runde	4
5		2nd Inspection	5
6		Flea	6
7	42	Dog	7
8		Pegg - Boathook - Madman - alarm	8
9	6	Hamm	9
10		Naggs Curse	10
11		Order - Hamm's Story - Nell dead	11
12	20	2nd Runde	12
13		Rug - Clov's refusal to touch	13
14		Hamm	14
15	28	Rat escaped - no more paink. - 3rd Inspection	
16		Hamm	

Ruby Cohn in "Beckett directs Happy Days"¹ states categorically that such divisions are not structural but "a matter of mechanical convenience for rehearsal purposes only". However Stanley Gontarski rightly points out that they cannot be called entirely arbitrary because they "reveal points at which the author-director thought shifts in the play occurred."² The latter is obviously an important caveat, but both views should be borne in mind when considering Beckett's production notebooks. The divisions are partly for convenience, but the points at which breaks occur do help to reveal the rhythms and action routines noticed earlier.

Looking at Beckett's divisions for the German Endspiel it is particularly

1 Performance I, No.2 (New York, April 1972), p.112.

2 Beckett's Happy Days: A Manuscript Study (Ohio, 1977). p.15. (Hereafter Gontarski).

interesting to find that the left-hand brackets build the play up to a focal point, that of Hamm's story, which stands alone. There are three sections bracketed together at the opening and close and five and four sections respectively on each side of Hamm's story. This seems to produce a pyramidal structure, a building up to and away from a central point.¹

The end of Endgame is often seen as cyclic, in that Hamm's face is once more covered, the bin lids are replaced and Clov, though prepared for departure, does not leave. Such a view would compare Clov's continued presence with the immobility of Vladimir and Estragon at the end of Godot. This reading of the play is possible, but so is the view that the play marks the closing stages of a game of chess. There has been an advancement of action during the space of the play. Nell appears at last to have died (see section 11 of Beckett's production diagram (p.68 above) "Nell dead") while the final section is subsequently referred to in the production notebook as "Hamm's last monologue".²

These may be seen as repeated events in a continuing series, but it is perhaps more appropriate for our purposes to regard Fin de Partie as the forerunner of certain plays in which a linear structure is not eclipsed by the circle. Ihab Hassan points to a dwindling, spiralling motion even in the circularity of Godot:

And yet the force of entropy may be felt even in a cyclical system: the world of the play tends to run down."³

The mime Acte Sans Paroles I was to have had its Première with Fin de Partie, at the Marseilles Festival in August 1956, but the arrangements

1 The figures to the right of each left-hand bracket probably refer to the number of actions in each section, but are not identified precisely in the notebook.

2 R.U.L. MS. 1396/4/5, p.2.

3 The Literature of Silence, p.176.

founded.¹ The mime also develops a linear theme. It is a nightmare vision of the arena of life ("Desert. Dazzling light")² from which there is no exit and no reward for endeavour beyond the realisation, on which the mime closes, that there is no point in trying again. The protagonist undergoes a process of conditioning throughout the mime, during which he learns that, though a whistle may urge him to strive, he can never achieve. It is the myth of Sisyphus told in mime, combined with the tale of Tantalus. No matter how hard the man tries to reach his goal (a carafe of water above his head) and no matter how nearly he succeeds, it remains always just out of reach.

Conditioning begins with the protagonist's realisation that he cannot leave the stage. He is flung on from the wings at the outset and, each time he tries to leave, attracted by a whistle offstage, he is catapulted back again. On the third occasion he has learned his lesson and makes no attempt to leave. His attitude here is paralleled by the situation at the end of the mime, when water is dangled before his nose but he makes no attempt to take it. He "does not move" (as at the end of Godot) having learned there is "nothing to be done". Any effort to reach the water would result in its disappearance, so he might at least save energy.³

The protagonist's gradual learning of acceptance and stoicism is hard to take because it is so explicit and lacks the leaven of ambiguity. The circus clown comic routines with which the failures are cumulatively effected do not really lighten the piece. Rather do they produce a cynical laughter, a cynicism eventually learned by the protagonist. The fact that suicide

1 See Esslin, Encounter, September 1975, pp.38-9.

2 Breath and Other Shorts, p.25.

3 Compare Yeats's At The Hawk's Well, where again the water can never be reached.

is denied him has no positive implications. He cannot even die; the bough on which he was about to hang himself collapses and the scissors, for which he finally bares his throat, are whisked into the flies. All he can do is perform unnecessary actions, such as neatly coiling the useless rope when the tree has failed him.

The pattern is that of:

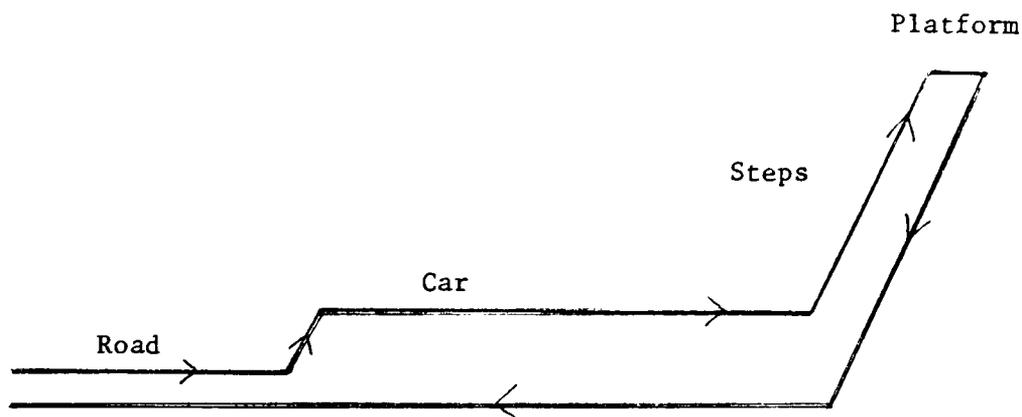
(1) Stimulus (2) Response (3) Barrier

repeated throughout until each lesson is learned. Finally repeated stimuli produce no response at all. He remains contemplating the hands that have proved such ineffectual tools. The linear pattern has been completed.

Linear patterning of some description is to be found in all the plays from All That Fall to Cascando, but in most cases the line is seen to be contained by the circle. In Happy Days, for example, although we see the earth encroaching upon Winnie, the heap can never be completed in a finite universe, as Richard Coe points out, "for the nearer it gets to the totality, the slower it increases".¹ Even were the mound to cover Winnie in some future Act 3, the implication, in the context of Beckett's later drama, is that she would still be there, under the soil, contemplating her causes for happiness. It should be remembered in this connexion that Play is Beckett's next stage play after Happy Days.

All That Fall is circular in form, if the term is taken to mean a return to the starting point. The actual shape of the journey, however, is an ascending and descending line, from road to car to steps to platform on the outward journey, repeated on the return, with the exception of the car:

1 Richard N.Coe, Beckett, London 1964 (Revised 1968) p.90.



We first meet Mrs Rooney on the road en route for the station and leave her on her way home at the end of the play. The difficulty of the journey is emphasized by her dragging feet and the hazards of travelling in general by the hinny that will not move, the flat bicycle tyre, the car that will not start until it is choked ("she was getting too much air!") and the train that has stopped on the line. Maddy's hopes of their arrival home bringing them "safe to haven"¹ have perhaps implications of a final end to journeying, which, given their age and state of health, cannot be far off. In these terms the shape of the play parallels life itself: making their separate ways to an union at the station and then dragging painfully towards oblivion. "Nearly home", as the voice in his head says to Joe in Eh Joe.²

In musical terms the journey out rises (literally, as Mrs Rooney ascends car and steps) to a crescendo as the train arrives, while repeated themes pattern the route home. A certain amount of correlation between the two journeys must be expected, in that Mrs Rooney is retracing her steps. But more oblique echoes (such as the reference to Hardy in both sections) could suggest conscious patterning. In order to register these parallels it is simplest to see the "events" of each journey in diagram form. It should be noted that parallels within a single journey have been excluded. Mrs Rooney sticking in the car and on the station steps, for example, both occur

1 A.T.F. p.34.

2 Eh Joe and other writings, London, 1967, p.18.

on the outward journey. Moreover one reference only has been taken where several are present in each journey, as with the footsteps. To some extent, then, the following shape is controlled by selection, but the paralleled elements in each journey occur in a very similar sequence:

<u>Outward Journey</u>		<u>Return Journey</u>	
1	Footsteps	Footsteps	12
2	"Death and the Maiden"	Dead child - killed by train	11
3	Hinny	Wild laughter	10
4	Dung	Hardy	9
5	Mrs Rooney's language	"Death and the Maiden"	8
6	Laburnum	Dung	7
7	Hardy	Hinnies	6
8	Rural sounds	Laburnum	5
9	Wild laughter	Mrs Rooney's language	4
10	Dead hen - killed by car	Rural sounds	3
11	Up station steps	Down station steps	2
12	Up mail passes	Down train draws in	1

The above scheme brings out the play's cyclic qualities, though of course the play ends in a climax, with the news of the death of a child.

Beckett's next radio play, Embers, is structured on a similar kind of continuum to All That Fall. The progression of evocations in Henry's monologue is regularly paralleled:

1	Sea	Sea Sea (a little louder)
2	Boots	Boots
3	Sea (louder)	Sea (a little louder) Boots
4	Henry's Monologue	Henry's Monologue
5	Ada and Henry	Ada and Henry
6	Addie and Music Master	Addie and Riding Master
	Ada and Henry	

All That Fall built up to the event of the arrival of the train, but the central "event" (No 7) in Embers is merely a three-line exchange between Ada and Henry, regarding their daughter's education, and cannot be regarded as a climax. The cyclic element in the play is, however, conspicuously present in the diagram.

Krapp's Last Tape, Beckett's first stage play following Fin de Partie has obvious linear implications. It is Krapp's LAST tape and death lurks in the shadows close at hand. Beckett, when preparing the German actor Martin Held for the part¹ explained: "Old Nick's there. Death is standing behind him and unconsciously he's looking for it."² Beckett requested Held to glance over his shoulder from time to time, as though aware of someone behind him.³

Structurally, therefore, Krapp's Last Tape must be seen as a linear play, although once again the line is modified by the circle. There is constant repetition of action, for example Krapp's drinking bouts. Above all, however, there is the linguistic repetition of the episode in the boat, recorded on spool five box three. The constant replaying of this extract reflects the mental groove or "deeper coil" in which Krapp remains trapped.⁴ Beckett is once again fusing form with content. Krapp's tapes may also be compared with the spools of life the characters in Play are attempting post-humously to unravel. In Krapp, the earlier play (1958) we see the life line actualised in the spools of tape, whereas in Play (1963), it is understood.

1 Schiller Theater, Berlin, 5 October 1969.

2 "Martin Held talks to Ronald Hayman", Times (Saturday Review) 25 April 1970.

3 Compare That Time, p.11: "as you peered trying to make it out gradually of all things a face appeared had you swivel on the slab to see who it was was there at your elbow..."

4 Murphy, p.172: "Scraps of bodies, of landscapes, hands, eyes, lines and colours evoking nothing, rose and climbed out of sight before him, as though reeled upward off a spool level with his throat. It was his experience that this should be stopped, whenever possible, before the deeper coils were reached."

Beckett told the actor Pierre Chabert of Krapp "The spool is his whole life."¹ Krapp throws away the present in favour of a moment in the past beyond which he is unable, mentally, to progress. In both plays the progress of the line is impeded by an emotional knot, the problem of sex, which entraps the characters in a recurring experience.

Beckett's structuring of the completed text of Happy Days for rehearsal purposes has already been noted in the introduction to Part 1. Introducing his study of the drafts of Happy Days, Gontarski points out that "The shaping of themes, tone, the pattern of literary allusions, and the overall structure of the play, ostensibly different categories, are all, fundamentally, matters of form."² Happy Days has, as we have seen, a visually linear appearance, in that the mound grows. But it is an "impossible heap",³ the line is contained by the circle. The days spiral by for Winnie, bringing a little more earth but no end to the cycle.

As we have come to expect of Beckett, the visual image of Happy Days is carried out linguistically, in that many themes are presented and actions performed in Act 1 that are reduced in Act 2, thus forming a diminishing circle or spiral. It has been noted (p17) that Beckett divides Act 1 into eight sections and Act 2 into precisely half that number. His production notebook also specifically points to repetitions from act to act. Act 2 may be seen as a climbing towards silence that parallels the rising mound. The upward expansion of the mound produces a pyramidal shape, as does the contraction of the language in Act 2, but in the reverse direction.

Various kinds of pattern are revealed in Act 1 of Happy Days. In the first place Beckett's requirements for the set are the "maximum of simplicity and symmetry".⁴ The action is cyclic in form - in that things end as they

1 Gambit International Theatre Review, Vol.7, no.28, London, 1976, p.61.

2 Gontarski, p.4.

3 Endgame, p.12.

4 Happy Days, p.9.

began, though the "bell for sleep" has not yet rung when the curtain falls. But the objects extracted from the handbag are replaced with the first (i.e. the toothbrush) last; Willie returns to the newspaper he had at the outset, and prayer is again referred to in connexion with Winnie. Whether or not she prays is ambiguous. There is a perfunctory prayer at the opening, but at the end of the act, merely a long pause.

The toothbrush action both contributes to the cyclic effect and provides the climax to the theme that begins almost with her monologue. Willie finally defines a hog as a "castrated male swine"¹ or, it seems, himself.

Act 2 shows Winnie much the same, still mercifully unable fully to appreciate her predicament. Now embedded to the neck, her possibilities for action are restricted to facial expression, and she has to rely more on language to pass the time, introducing, for example, the story of Mildred. Again two bells rouse her to consciousness. In Act 1 she had remarked "Another heavenly day", on waking to her merciless exposure to "blazing light"; the remark, in relation to her obvious plight, seeming to imply a malign divinity. In Act 2 the irony is intensified: "Hail, holy light!" is the opening line of Paradise Lost (Book 3) and Winnie, despite her positive thinking, is now reduced to a head.

Winnie refers to the bag in Act 2 but cannot inspect its contents, nor can she see Willie. Her subsequent attempt to see her nostrils, lips etc. recalls the facial inspection of Act 1. Compressing two more early themes, she thinks of the sunshade and revolver, both of which are evident on the mound beside her. She also wonders once more whether to sing, and repeats the Shower/Cooker narration.

There are more bells in Act 2, as though time is at last getting shorter for Winnie, and because there is less text, there also appear to be more

1 Happy Days, p.35.

unremembered quotations. Indeed, as critics have noted, the introduction of a minor Irish poet like Charles Wolfe (with "Go forget me")¹ could suggest a weakening in the standard of literature! The smallest details may become part of the patterning of the whole, such as Winnie's complaint of a painful neck in Act 2, recalling the crick in her neck suffered when admiring Willie's antics in Act 1.

Finally Willie's appearance at the end of Act 2 may be compared with his verbal presentation of himself at the end of Act 1. In the latter, the physical separation between husband and wife points the mental distance between them. In Act 2 the "reunion" is marked by the fact that Willie cannot reach his wife and, as they look at each other, Winnie's happy smile disappears; a linear movement thus closes an otherwise cyclic play.

A group of radio plays follows Happy Days, and the first of these, Words and Music, uses the concept of arrival and departure as a structural device, as in Beckett's first works for radio. In All That Fall, however, the journey itself takes up most of the action. Words and Music follows the structural pattern of Embers and uses the concept of arrival and departure as a frame. Croak's coming and going merely occupy the opening and close of the play, and it is his encounter with Words and Music that is important. All three plays reveal a circular movement, by ending in footsteps as they began.

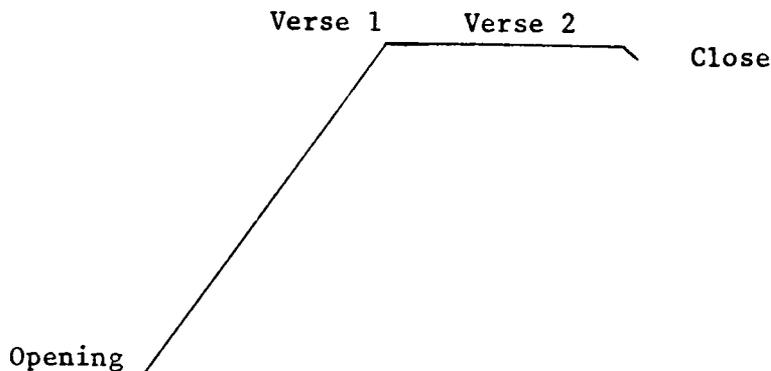
In the Faber text Words and Music comprises 9½ pages.² Over half the play is spent in the coming together of Words and Music and it is not until the sixth page of text that the first verse of the lyric emerges. Verse two follows, on pages eight and nine, after which the play ends abruptly in

1 The Poems of Charles Wolfe, London, 1903, p.5:

"Go, forget me - why should sorrow/O'er that brow a shadow fling?"

2 In Play and two short pieces for radio, pp.27-36.

Croak's departure, with a brief reprise from Music. The pattern is thus:



The themes of love and age proposed by Croak have come to fruition in the culminating lyric. Offsetting the linear movement, however, is the fact that Croak appears trapped in memory by the experience the lyric records and will thus at some stage demand its repetition. The cyclic theme cannot be excluded. In this Words and Music makes a strong parallel with Krapp's Last Tape. Croak's "anguish", as the lyric comes nearer to pinning down an experience connected, apparently, with "the face" that delayed him on the stairs, compares forcibly with Krapp's masochistic replaying of spool five box three, the experience to which he has remained emotionally bound. The two old men with their antipathetic names are in a similar state of physical decrepitude; Krapp's may be seen onstage, Croak's deduced from the sound of his voice and his shuffling gait.

"The face" is the catalyst that unites Croak's two themes and brings about the union of Words and Music. When Words introduces "the face in the ashes" into the lyric, the theme of love that Croak had demanded on arrival, after seeing the face on the stairs, is at last expressed.¹ Now old, love for Croak is no more than a memory, hence his ironic proposal of age as the theme to follow love. When a union between the two themes is achieved, it proves too much for him, and he drops his club and shuffles off.

¹ Compare Eliot's "devil of the stairs" in "Ash Wednesday" (Complete Poems and Plays of T.S.Eliot, p.93).

Words and Music have managed to unite, but Croak and his love can unite only in memory.

In Krapp's Last Tape the memory that holds Krapp captive to his past is also that of a face, the face below him in the rowing boat and the eyes that finally opened. In Words and Music, too, the emphasis is upon the eyes:

the brows uncloud, the lips part and the eyes... (pause)
... a little colour comes back into the cheeks and the eyes...
(reverently) ...open. ¹

The two experiences are essentially the same, and, as we have noted, recurring.

Words and Music was written late in November 1961 and two days after its completion Beckett wrote the French Esquisse Radiophonique.² A union between Voice and Music (both controlled by a "click" suggesting a radio switch) is again the theme. As the two unite they become fainter and the protagonist ("he") to whom they have become "needs" is in terror of losing them altogether. The situation resembles an advanced state of mental illness, where the fear is not of hearing voices in the head, but of their disappearance. As he tells the doctor on the telephone:

...I tell you they're ending...ENDING...I can't stay
like that after...³

When he switches on again after this conversation, Voice and Music are described as "failing".

The protagonist's final shock (received by telephone) concerns a double confinement. The word "confinement" embraces both imprisonment and birth. It is further left ambiguous whether the doctor is merely prevented by two

1 Words and Music, p.34.

2 The dating will be discussed further in Part 2. Esquisse Radiophonique was first published in the Minuit Revue Periodique, No.5, in 1973. Its first English publication was in Stereo Headphones, No.7, Spring 1976, edited and published by Nicholas Zurbrugg. It was republished as Radio I by Faber and Faber (in Ends and Odds, 1977).

3 Ends and Odds, p.91.

confinements from visiting him until noon the following day, or whether the double birth is scheduled for that hour, and bears any relation to the dwindling into silence of Voice and Music, on which the play ends. In the "long pause" that follows their extinction, the protagonist is left in agonised expectation:

He: (Whisper.) Tomorrow...noon...¹

Once again in Beckett implications of birth follow on the heels of extinction, but, despite this cyclic theme, the Esquisse is clearly linear in conception, since it leads to the blotting out of Music and Voice.

Cascando, written just after the Esquisse, also has a linear construction, and again the characterization of Voice and Music objectifies the difficulty of turning into words an imaginative idea. Beckett first used the title "Cascando" for a poem written in 1936. Towards the end of Verse two the problem of creation is beautifully stated:

the churn of stale words in the heart again
 love love love thud of the old plunger
 pestling the unalterable
 whey of words.²

In the play Cascando the same compulsion to tell stories is present, combined with a longing for freedom:

Voice: - this time... it's the right one ...finish...no more stories..
 (together)
 Music: -----3

The opener's function is to release Voice, Music, or both "at will". But, as the play progresses, they seem to appear without him, or else he has stopped informing us of his actions. Opener, however, maintains he has a definite function:

Opener: They say, It's in his head.
 No. I open.⁴

1 Ends and Odds, p.91.

2 Poems in English, London 1961, p.41.

3 Play and two short pieces for radio, p.48, hereafter Cascando.

4 Ibid, p.42.

No enmity exists between Voice and Music in this play. It seems to be partly their fusion that gives them the impression they have found the right story at last, the story of stories that will free them from the necessity of telling more. This is the "Woburn" story¹. The implication seems to be that if they can catch up with Woburn, pinpoint him somehow, they will be able to achieve full self-realization:

Woburn ...it's him ...see him...say him...to the end...don't let go--²

Woburn seems to be the missing link, for which the Unnamable also searches:

...you must say words, as long as there are any, until they find me, until they say me.³

Whether Woburn is finally caught remains ambiguous. Teller and tale are on the verge of achieving some kind of fusion (Opener's last speech is a fervent "good!") but the final words belong to Voice and Music and are non-committal:

Voice: don't let go...Woburn...he clings on...
 (together)
 Music: -----
 come on... come on—

Silence.

CURTAIN.⁴

As Clas Zilliacus points out, "The play ... does not end. It is cut off."⁵ Silence could represent Woburn's final evasion, or the release of achievement, what the Unnamable calls "the true silence"⁶ that extinguishes further words.

1 "Maunu" in the original French version.

2 Cascando, p.48.

3 Trilogy, p.418.

4 Cascando, p.48.

5 Beckett and Broadcasting (Abø, Finland, 1976) p.127.

6 Trilogy, p.397.

Rare though it is in Beckett, the weight of Cascando lies with the latter. We have already noted a comparable linear movement at the end of Esquisse Radiophonique and in the later play That Time. But a Beckett play never wholly escapes the circle and a circular movement is also present in Cascando. Certain phrases, such as "the month of May", recur like a refrain, for example, and the Opener's function is cyclic:

Opener: I open the door And I close.

(Silence.)

I open both And I close.

(Silence.)

I start again.¹

In Film, Beckett's only venture into writing for the cinema, instead of an attempt to pinpoint his identity, we find the protagonist in headlong flight from himself. The progression is again linear, in that the eye/I following the object O gains ground gradually, until the final inescapable confrontation.

There is, however, a circular pattern of movement as the piece unfolds, in the repetition of O entering "perceivedness". In the street and on the stairs O becomes paralysed by his awareness of E, who twice withdraws and lets him move on, only to catch up with him irrevocably in the room. The piece thus falls into three sections, each with its confrontation. Beckett's description is as follows:

The film is divided into three parts. 1. The street

(about eight minutes.) 2. The stairs (about five

minutes.) 3. The room (about 17 minutes.)²

1 Cascando, p.40 (Music and Voice omitted).

2 Eh Joe and other writings, p.31.

Inside the room there is a further three-part structure, comprising the preparation of the room, the inspection and destruction of the photographs and the confrontation between E and O.

In Eh Joe, Beckett's first play for television, the situation of a man haunted by memories alone in a room recalls both Krapp's Last Tape and Words and Music, while the image is an extension of Film. The play opens with a brief section of preparing the room and ascertaining that there are no intruders (as in Part 1 of the room sequence in Film). The bulk of Eh Joe is then concerned with Joe "relaxed" as (in Part 3 of the room sequence in Film) O dozes before the confrontation with E. Joe's eyes, however, are wide open and intent, as he listens to a voice in his head. It is that of the woman whom he betrayed into suicide by loving her too little.

Each time the voice gains a point, the camera moves a little nearer Joe's face. As in Film, he never utters. Both protagonists attempt to escape self-knowledge by shutting themselves in a room away from observation. O in Film is afraid of the self that is observing him, Joe of the voice in his head that is forcing him to face the implications of the woman's death.

The camera has nine moves in towards a close-up of Joe's face, but, despite this, the pattern is cyclic rather than linear. By the last move, the camera has gone as far as it can and holds Joe firmly in its eye, but there is no indication in the text that it will release him. Voice and image both fade out together at the end of the play. It is possible that Joe may succeed in achieving "mental thuggee"¹ and that the voice will leave

1 Eh Joe, p.17.

him eventually, as have other voices in his head in the past. But what we are shown in the play is Joe trapped in a cycle of past experience, as are the protagonists of so many Beckett plays.

Beckett's latest stage play, Footfalls (1975)¹ seems to combine line and circle in a similar manner to Eh Joe. The play, like Play and That Time, is structured into three sections. Each section is divided by a blackout and silence and there is a marked impression of the passage of time between them. Each blackout is distinguished by the gradually softening chime of a bell and is followed by a diminished level of light. Since both levels were "faint" and "dim" at the outset, there is minimal sound and light by the end of the play. The technique recalls the procedure for performing the repeat of Play that evolved in rehearsal in Paris in 1964.²

At the beginning of Footfalls May is said to be "in (her) forties"³ and her mother still needing the attentions required by the old and infirm. But as the play progresses, an extreme distancing effect occurs, so that we begin to doubt the physical presence of either woman. The two lives appear to have set up echoes which reverberate ever more faintly from section to section. "It is" (as Beckett told Rose Hill (who played the mother's voice) during rehearsals for the Première at the Royal Court Theatre in May 1976) a play of "one ghost speaking to another."⁴

Light gleams faintly on a strip of bare stage at the end of the play. May/Amy has apparently stopped her pacing and disappeared. To this extent

1 First published London, 1976.

2 See p. 46 above.

3 Footfalls, p.10.

4 Conversation with Martha Fehsenfeld 17 May 1976, who was present at rehearsals on that day.

the play is linear. But in the context of the play, the likelihood is that beyond the hearing of the theatre audience, the protagonist's feet still pace. She has not done:

... revolving it all. [] (Pause.) It all. (Pause.) It all.¹

The echoes of her restless feet have simply widened out beyond our hearing.² The echoing phrases both suggest an infinite cycle³ and parallel her pacing feet as seven days spirals into endlessness:

one two three four five six seven wheel one two three four
five six seven wheel.⁴

Thus at the end of this discussion of Beckett's use of pattern we still find him fusing form and content as in his earlier plays and still using the circle as a motif with which to express the unending cycle of being. Although in a few plays linear progression may be said to have escaped the circle, in most cases it is contained by it and a circular movement is present in every play. We have seen Beckett making his circles in different ways, while employing largely the same themes. The later plays have been remarkable for the ever-narrowing focus and growing brevity of the scale, until circle and life-cycle join in the reductio ad absurdum, Breath.

In his inaugural lecture as Merton Professor of English Literature at Oxford, John Carey remarked on the "relatively modern consciousness of the indissoluble fusion of form and content in a work of literature".⁵ He went

1 Footfalls, p.13.

2 Compare The Unnamable, p.364: "... when steps are heard on graves as the saying is, genuine hell."

3 Compare the poem "Roundelay", 1976, Collected Poems in English and French, London 1977, p.35:
"... Steps sole sound/long sole sound/on all that strand/at end of day".

4 Footfalls, p.9.

5 4 June, 1976; New Statesman, 6 August 1976, p.178.

on to say that "It is a fusion, we now take it for granted, so subtle and profound that the terms "form" and "content" have themselves come to seem coarse and obsolete - no longer acceptable elements in a critic's vocabulary, since they insist upon a separation in which we no longer believe." But, when Beckett pointed to the form/content fusion in his early essays on Joyce and Proust, he was helping to create the "modern consciousness" of their indissolubility, and subsequently structured his own works upon the same principle. In so doing Beckett achieves what Walter Pater already in the nineteenth century regarded as the desirable condition for a work of art: "... that this form, this mode of handling, should become an end in itself, should penetrate every part of the matter: this is what all art constantly strives after,"¹

1 Walter Pater, The Renaissance, London 1873; First Pocket Edition, 1924, p.140.

P A R T T W O A

DRAFTS

Introduction

The publication in 1970 of ten typescript drafts of Beckett's French prose text Bing, together with the author's English translation, Ping, brought Beckett's painstaking reworking of his material to general notice. These drafts were published in the Beckett bibliography by Raymond Federman and John Fletcher, but they do not as claimed cover the development of the piece "from first conception to final copy dispatched to the printer."¹ As well as the ten typescripts referred to above, the Samuel Beckett Papers at Washington University Libraries, St. Louis, Missouri, contain "6 MSS. in notebook." Two manuscripts and one typescript for Ping are also noted in the catalogue of the same collection. Thus, even for a small text, the volume of reworking is immense.

Preliminary drafts of a single Beckett play are often widely scattered and material is continually coming to light, several universities now having substantial collections.² The Ohio State University, for example, has drafts of Fin de Partie and Happy Days so extensive that they would seem to be complete. But an alternative version of part of the former is to be found at Trinity College, Dublin,³ while the first signs of the latter may be seen in a notebook at Reading University that also contains additional fragments of Fin de Partie.⁴ Moreover the Reading library has a further

1 Samuel Beckett: His Works and His Critics, University of California Press 1970 (pp.325-343) p.325.

2 See Appendix I.

3 TCD MS.4663. Beckett's explanatory note with the MS. reads "This seems to be 1st draft of 2nd act, much of which subsists in final version in 1 act." Draft dated at the close 16 February 1956.

4 "Été 56" notebook. (RUL MS.1227/7/7/1).

typescript (with author's MS. corrections) of an abandoned play inscribed by Beckett "avant Fin de Partie".¹ It may well be that more drafts of both plays remain to be found. Thus, in the absence of definite authorial information, no set of preliminary drafts should be regarded as complete.²

There were no studies of the genesis of the later plays when I began to assemble the drafts in 1973/4. It became apparent, therefore, that an attempt to consider the later plays in English as a unit would at least provide information as to the nature of the draft material and the kinds of changes made as the drafts progressed and at best might throw light on larger issues of interpretation.

Work on the drafts of individual plays is gradually appearing. Clas Zilliacus's useful account of the radio plays, for example, includes some discussion of their genesis.³ Richard Admussen's article on Play⁴ and articles by James Knowlson⁵ and Breon Mitchell⁶ on Come and Go are all concerned with the drafts of these plays, while Stanley Gontarski has recently published a full-length study of the development of Happy Days.⁷

Important precursors of these works are the studies of En attendant Godot by Colin Duckworth⁸ and separate work on Fin de Partie by John Fletcher⁹ and Ruby Cohn.¹⁰ Before embarking on a discussion of the drafts of the later

1 RUL MS.1227/7/16/7.

2 Professor Richard Admussen of Washington University St.Louis is currently compiling a catalogue of the whereabouts of known draft material.

3 Beckett and Broadcasting (A study of the Works of Samuel Beckett For and In Radio and Television) Åbo Akademi, Vol 51 Nr 2, Åbo (Finland) 1976.

4 "The Manuscripts of Beckett's Play", Modern Drama, Vol 16 Toronto (June, 1973) pp,23-27.

5 "Good Heavens", Gambit, Vol 7 No.28, London 1976, pp.101-105.

6 "Art in Microcosm: The Manuscript Stages of Beckett's Come and Go", Modern Drama Vol 19 Toronto (Sept,1976) pp.245-260.

7 Beckett's Happy Days: A Manuscript Study, Ohio 1977.

8 En attendant Godot, London 1966.

9 Fin de Partie, London 1970.

10 "The Beginning of Endgame", Modern Drama, Vol 9, Kansas (December 1966) pp,319-323.

plays, it is necessary to consider these accounts of the genesis of the early plays, in order to establish whether any radical differences in method are apparent.

Colin Duckworth was informed by Beckett that: "There were no preliminary drafts of GODOT. I still have the original MS. which you are welcome to see."¹ Duckworth's description of his two hour examination of the MS. in Beckett's Paris flat is well known,² but it presents some curious features. The manuscript Duckworth saw was an exercise book in which "Beckett wrote on each right-hand page to the end of the book, then continued on each left-hand page beginning at the beginning of the book again."³ This is most unusual. Beckett's normal practice is to write on the recto pages of an exercise book, leaving the verso pages blank, for notes, second thoughts, alterations and (in the first stages of a work particularly) complicated and grotesque doodles, made, presumably, while wrestling with the dialogue.

On the other hand Beckett told Duckworth that the composition of Godot came without struggle: "I didn't have too much trouble with it." Duckworth comments: "I found out when I studied the manuscript months later, he was telling nothing less than the truth."⁴ Referring to the incident, Gontarski notes that:

Beckett also had a number of typescripts for Godot, but these Duckworth did not (evidently could not) see. Duckworth's implication is that the original holograph of Godot (or at least the one with which he worked) does not significantly differ from the printed text and therefore examination of additional manuscripts is unnecessary.⁵

It may well be that these typescripts were later versions of the holograph Duckworth saw. But it should be noted that Beckett's typescript versions

1 RUL MS. 1227/1/1/2 (letter dated 7 October 1964.)

2 Colin Duckworth, Angels of Darkness New York, 1972, p.19.

3 En attendant Godot, p.xlviii, note I.

4 Angels of Darkness, p.17.

5 S.E.Gontarski, untitled typescript, RUL MS. 1484/1, p.9.

of a play are sometimes interspersed with holograph ones.¹ In Happy Days, for example, Gontarski demonstrates nine separate stages of composition, of which stages 3, 5, 6, 8 and 9 are typescripts.² Stage 7, the final holograph is thus a longhand revision made at a surprisingly late point in composition. A holograph Godot not differing significantly from the published text could have been written at just such a point in the development of that play. Indeed in answer to some enquiries of my own about the various manuscript holdings, Beckett stated specifically that the Godot MS. at Texas (listed in the Beckett bibliography as the "original French MS")³ is "merely a fair copy made in a foul moment for the sake of a few quid."⁴

This is not to suggest that Duckworth saw "merely a fair copy" of the Godot MS. Several observations later to be discussed make it clear that he saw an early version of the play. It is, however, important when considering the drafts not to lose sight of the fact that holograph sometimes alternates with typescript in the development of a work, though Beckett has pointed out that "normally" there is "no such alternation",⁵ and that a holograph fair copy may be made even of a finished work.

Accepting that the exercise book examined by Duckworth was the original version of Godot and that it came fluently and easily to the page, it seems likely that it came the more easily because the way had been prepared in earlier works. Beckett himself suggested to Duckworth: "If you want to find the origins of En attendant Godot, look at Murphy."⁶

1 Beckett "Does all his own typing". Reply to author's questionnaire, January 1978.

2 Beckett's Happy Days: A Manuscript Study, pp.10-11.

3 Federman and Fletcher, Appendix I, p.323.

4 Letter from Samuel Beckett dated Paris 22 March 1974.

5 Reply to author's questionnaire, January 1978.

6 En attendant Godot, p.xlvi.

Duckworth looked further, at the then discarded novel Mercier et Camier, tracing "many coincidences of style and theme" between it and Godot.¹ He also noted echoes of the Glazier's conversation with his son in Eleuthéria, in Vladimir's with the boy in Godot.² Thus, although we have no drafts of Godot, we can to some extent see its evolution from earlier works.

Perhaps Duckworth's most interesting discoveries in the MS. concern the withholding of information from the final text. Noting, for example, a particular debt to Dante's Purgatorio, he remarks:

Certain 'clues', then, have been progressively suppressed - clues which the reader of Dante will follow without hesitation (hence, no doubt, their suppression).³

In the MS. version, moreover, M. Godot exists, in proof of which he sends a letter to Vladimir and Estragon.⁴ Beckett himself drew Duckworth's attention to a note in the MS. about the identity of Godot, remarking that he had subsequently "completely forgotten about it":

Suggérer que Pozzo est peut-être Godot après tout, venu au rendez-vous, et qu'il ne sait pas que Vladimir et Estragon sont Vladimir et Estragon. Mais le messager?⁵

Duckworth comments that the above cannot be a preliminary note, since none of the characters are distinguished by name at their first appearance in the manuscript; "proof enough", he continues, "that it is the original draft."⁶

The suppression of the written message from Godot gives the play an extra dimension, balancing it on the resultant ambiguity. Duckworth, after noting various linguistic transformations (that, for instance, Lucky's "quaqua"

1 En attendant Godot, p.xlviii.

2 Ibid, pp.xlv-vi.

3 " p.lvii.

4 " pp.l-li.

5 " pp.lx-lxi.

6 " p.lxii.

was initially "quoique" and that the reference to "la divine Miranda" was originally more overtly literary: "à la façon de la Miranda du divin Shakespeare") concludes:

We can see, therefore, that part of the process of mystification through the disintegration of language originates from post-manuscript stages in composition. Repeated, deformed, and nonsensical words replace some earlier coherent expressions. ¹

Here then, in the manuscript of Beckett's first published play, we have evidence of a "process of mystification" taking place in the drafts. Beckett completed En attendant Godot in 1948, but it was not until five years later that he first attempted a further play. It was the beginning of Fin de Partie. The "struggle" of its creation is detailed in a series of letters from Beckett to his friend the American director, Alan Schneider.² Among the most significant of these is one dated 12 April 1956, where Beckett outlines a structural problem:

It has turned out a three-legged giraffe, to mention only the architectonics, and leaves me in doubt whether to take a leg off or add one on. ³

A subsequent letter (dated 21 June 1956) shows him to have taken the former course; "one act" has emerged, but "longish, hour and a quarter I fancy". Beckett describes the play as "Rather difficult and elliptic, mostly depending on the power of the text to claw, more inhuman than 'Godot'".⁴

The bulk of the drafts of Fin de Partie, a holograph and three successive typescripts, are held by The Ohio State University Libraries.⁵ The first "represents" (as John Fletcher points out) "to all intents and purposes a fair copy of the manuscript, and the second does not differ substantially from

1 En attendant Godot, p.lxvii.

2 The Village Voice Reader, New York, 1962 pp.182-186; reprinted from The Village Voice, 19 March 1958, pp.8, 15.

3 Ibid, p.183.

4 Ibid.

5 The same library contains a 42 page typescript of Beckett's English translation of Fin de Partie, with MS. alterations.

the published text." The important reduction to a single act thus took place "between these two typewritten drafts (both made by Beckett himself)".¹

All three typescripts are much altered in manuscript. Typescript 1 consists of 65 pages, while the text is cut virtually by half in Typescript 2, to 35 pages. Typescript 3 has 38 pages. A note on the first page of Typescript 1 states "75 minutes." On the first page of Act 2 another "35 minutes" is added, making the play one hour and fifty minutes. Beckett's estimate of an "hour and a quarter" for the one-act play (a reduction of only 35 minutes, despite the greatly reduced text) seems to indicate the speed of delivery required. A later letter to Schneider describes the play as "A very long one act, over an hour and a half I shd. think."²

A MS. note described by Fletcher as preceding Typescript 1 reads: "Act 1. Hilare. Act 2. Mortellement triste."³ Act 1 closed with the death of Nell; her bin has been removed from the stage when Act 2 opens. The three men wear black headgear in Act 2 and their formerly red faces are white. Nagg too appears to be nearing extinction, and, in his final speech, tells Clov not to bother to renew his sawdust. There is no major alteration in the shaping of the play; Beckett simply amalgamated the two acts. But in so doing he removed the specific from the text, so that a study of the early draft makes explicit what is merely implied in the finished play.

The most substantial changes in the later play are the omission of three scenes, described at some length by Ruby Cohn.⁴ Two of these concern Clov disguised. In Act 1 Clov turns himself into a woman because Hamm, after listening to a passage from the Old Testament, decides that he should be begetting. Should a child be conceived, however, the disguised Clov tells

1 Fin de Partie, p.8.

2 Village Voice Reader, p.184.

3 Fin de Partie, p.8.

4 "The Beginning of Endgame", pp.321-2.

Hamm they will drown it ("Nip (the) young doom in the bud" as Mr Rooney muses in Beckett's next play.)¹ In Act 2 Clov disguises himself as a schoolboy and Hamm teaches the boy to carry out the duties Clov used to perform. But, despite Hamm's pleas, the boy finally leaves the stage. He appears to be a foreshadowing of the child sighted by Clov from the window in the final version, while his hunger links with the famished child in Hamm's "chronicle". Thus in the repetition of the element of disguise in the embryo Fin de Partie, Act 2 deliberately parallels Act 1, as we have noted with Beckett's other two-act structures in Part 1.

In the third excised scene Hamm requires Nagg's head to be placed in a pillory, obliging his father both to listen to him and then to recount his life story. Nagg refuses, but is finally bludgeoned into speech (reminiscent, as we shall see, of Fox being whipped into narration in Radio 2.) The pillory scene takes place in Act 2, after the death of Nell.

Beckett's reworking of Fin de Partie does not consist entirely of excisions. Two passages in the published text are entirely missing from the Ohio drafts. The first of these is Nagg's comic tale about the tailor and his trousers; the second is Clov's speech "from (the) heart" just before the play closes, that recalls Lucky's outburst in Godot. It is Clov's longest and most significant utterance.

We have noted that the death of Nell is implied rather than stated in the published text. A similar lack of clarity is introduced into the stage properties. A large Bible on a stand in the MS., for example, is replaced in Typescript 2 by an anonymous painting, face to the wall. Similarly the relationships between the characters are much more clearly stated in early versions of the play. Final names do not appear until a MS. note in the margin of Typescript 2. In the first three drafts of Fin de Partie, as

1 A.T.F., p.31.

Fletcher notes:

the characters are simply designated as A, B, P and M. In the dialogue, however, A is addressed as Guillaume, B as James, Pas P  p   (by A) and Walther (by M), and M as M  m  . It is clear that P and M are A's parents, and there is a suggestion (which survives in the final version) that B is his son; but the holograph notes preceding T1 speak only of a 'p  re adoptif' and 'fils adoptif'.¹

Typescript 3 bears the following MS. note on the first page:

NAGG
NELL, sa femme
HAMM, leur fils
CLOV, un factotum.

These precise identifications are, however, expunged from the published text, the technique we have already noted Beckett employing in Godot.

Although the above remarks are to a large extent a restatement of observations already made by Duckworth Cohn and Fletcher, it has enabled us to see the draft material of the later plays in context. The ensuing discussion falls into two parts: in Part 2A we shall consider the genesis of the later plays and in Part 2B we shall discuss what has been learned from the drafts about Beckett's working method.

In the course of 2A we shall follow the most significant changes that occur as the drafts progress, in particular alterations in the presentation of theme and their bearing on the interpretation of the final text. Any indication that Beckett is moving away from explicit statement into ambiguity in successive drafts, a trend already distinguished in the drafts of En attendant Godot and Fin de Partie, will be noted especially.

2A consists of two sections, beginning (as in Part 1) with the "prototypes". The most striking examples of draft development, in which the final text differs markedly from early jottings, form Section 1 of the study. Section 2 will discuss the development of the remaining plays and consider whether similar trends to those apparent in Section 1 may be found.

¹ Fin de Partie, p.9.

SECTION 1

Come and Go

A preliminary scene among the early drafts of Come and Go bears virtually no relation to the published text, except that it concerns three women with floral names who seem to be on the fringe of life, in that they hear about sex (from a book read aloud) rather than participate in it.

The remainder of the early drafts are Beckett's first attempts at achieving the cyclic form of entrance and exit that we recognize from the published version, but they contain two themes absent in the final text. The first of these, the question of sex, recalls the preliminary scene. But there has been a development. Active participation now occurs and each of the women rejoices in a lover. The second theme states explicitly that all three women are in the last stages of terminal illness, whereas the published text merely implies that this may be so.

The beauty of the final version is its brevity: movement stylised, dialogue pared to 121 words, but perfectly patterned and proportioned. The more concise, the more highly stylised Beckett's "dramaticule" becomes, the more telling it is, until the final point is wordless. "I can feel the rings" says Flo, as the three women sit, hands linked, staring into space. But it is on three pairs of ringless hands that the light focuses just before the curtain falls.

The early drafts of Come and Go, a holograph and two typescripts, are at Reading University.¹ They are all undated. Two further holograph versions, the second dated at the close "Ussy 16.1.65" were published in facsimile by

1 RUL MSS. 1227/7/16/4 and 5.

the Manus Presse, Stuttgart in a limited edition of Kommen und Gehen in 1968.¹ Four minimally altered pre-publication typescripts are held at Washington University, St. Louis. These are undated, but the manuscript of the French translation (also held at Washington) is dated "Ussy 21.3.65".

The version bearing least relation to the published text is not the Reading holograph, but a typescript headed "Scene 1".² Its title suggests that it is the first scene of a sketch. Since the scene stands very much alone in the play's development, it will be considered first. There are three characters, Viola, Poppy and Rose. Poppy reads aloud from a titillating book, interrupted at intervals by the others. She is required to re-read an earlier passage, in order to establish the whereabouts of Aubrey, whose habits recall those of Willie in Happy Days:

Poppy. '... Aubrey stretched out to the flames his long hairy legs, took a sip of his brandy *Sandeman*³ relit his cigar and resumed alone his collection of obscene postcards.'

Literal-minded Viola, having established Aubrey's current occupation, is not prepared to hear more until she has ascertained the level of his trousers:

Viola. Are his trousers off already then?

Rose. Not in my recollection - why?

Viola. His long hairy legs.

Rose. ~~A-t-over~~'s The legs may be hairy and his *the* trousers still be on. Poppy.

Poppy. (who has been checking the text.) When last seen his trousers were still on.

Poppy continues reading, a parody of pornographic writing that arouses

Viola's critical faculties:

Poppy. '...then falling to her knees plunged them between her thighs in an exstasy of anticipation.'

Viola. This is ~~careless~~ *slipshod* writing.

1 This edition contains a reprinting of the English and French texts of the play as well as the German Version and seven original etchings by H.M. Erhardt. I have been unable to establish the whereabouts of the original manuscript versions of the facsimiles.

2 RUL MS. 1227/7/16/5.

3 Authorial alterations are indicated throughout in *script*. Page references are not given in short MSS.

Rose. You mean one cannot plunge one's knees between one's thighs?

The sketch ends with Poppy, apparently overcome by her text, leaving the room:

Poppy. '... Finally she sprang to her feet and, still moist, entered the ~~darkened~~ bedroom.' Excuse me just one moment.

Poppy gets up, lays down the book and goes out laboriously.

I have quoted liberally from this typescript to indicate how little connects its hilarious revue-like style with the disturbing short text finally printed. Beckett must have realised its inappropriateness as a preliminary scene and the entire script is crossed out in his own hand.

In the holograph, headed by Beckett "Before Come and Go" two separate attempts at a text much nearer to the final version appear.¹ According to current placing, the first of these is entitled Good Heavens and the second Type of Confidence. It appears, however, that the latter is the first attempt and Good Heavens a rewrite. The following linguistic comparison shows Good Heavens improving upon the vocabulary in Type of Confidence:

<u>Type of Confidence</u>	<u>Good Heavens</u> ²
<u>B</u> (appalled) No!	<u>B</u> (appalled) No! <i>Good heavens!</i>
<u>A</u> ... she thinks it is acidity.	<u>A</u> ...she thinks it is acidity <i>heartburn</i>
<u>A</u> ... so as to make my peace with God in the time that remained.	<u>A</u> ...so as to make my peace with my maker in the time that remained.

Although the last example has no words crossed out, the alliterative change (from "God" to "my maker") is the kind of alteration typically made by Beckett as drafts progress. Furthermore C's sister, referred to in both sections, is nameless in Type of Confidence, but becomes "Mrs Flower" in Good Heavens. Thus it appears that the sheet containing Type of Confidence should be placed first rather than last in the collection of holograph sheets

1 RUL MS. 1227/7/16/4.

2 The title emerges from a phrase in the text, as with All That Fall. In this draft the phrase "Good heavens" is repeated several times, like a refrain.

at Reading University. The error arose because Beckett himself wrote "Before Come and Go" beside the Good Heavens title, thus making it appear the first page. Beckett naturally chose a titled page for the description, when gathering his material together for the Reading Library, but happened to select the second holograph title rather than the first.

If the misplacement hypothesis is correct, an interesting corollary ensues. The Type of Confidence heading appears on a clean sheet, as would be expected of a new draft. But, at the top of the sheet, preceding the title, is a diagram that reveals Beckett to have plotted the entire play before writing any dialogue. The diagram schematizes what is known to whom throughout the piece, thus:

	1	ABC	
	2	AB Exit C	
B knows about C	3	A to B about C	B-to-E A knows about C
" " " A			A " " B
	4	Enter C	
	5	Exit A	
C knows about A	6	B to C about A	E-to-B
" " " B			
	7	Enter A	
	8	Exit B	
	9	C to A about B	A-to-E
	10	Enter B	.

Type of Confidence is a fragment, and consists solely of dialogue between A and B, ending on the entrance of C. Good Heavens is almost complete, but lacks the final conversation between C and A. In both attempts conversation centres upon two secrets: first the recipe each woman has for her apparently flawless complexion and secondly the terminal illness of the absent member of the trio. The diagram reveals it to be

Beckett's intention that all three women should both gossip and be gossiped about. The difference between what is said face to face and what is said behind the back of the missing person reveals both a devastating feminine hypocrisy and the irony that the secret is told by one whom the hearer already knows (or soon discovers) to be doomed also. And while each woman muses upon the fate of the other two, she remains supremely unaware of her own. In Good Heavens, each admires the complexion of that other with whom she is left alone, while silently appalled by how ill she looks. A merciful lie (A: "You do look wonderful"; B: "You look so fresh") elicits in each case the secret behind the radiant skin. It is not beauty creams but, in A's case a discharged prisoner, in C's "the croquet champion" and in B's, what appears to be a visit to a brothel:

A Good heavens! Is that place going still?

B Oh very much so. (Complacent laugh.)¹ Very much so indeed.

B makes a further self-revelation, capable of even broader interpretation, not to mention a side-swipe at the university:

BC ... Have you been using something on your skin?

(E B whispers in B C's ear.)

B Good heavens! ~~Is-he-up-again?~~

B Oh very much so. (Complacent laugh.) Very much so indeed!

B No cream to touch it.

BC I did not know he was up.

The alterations reveal that when writing the holograph dialogue Beckett at times became confused as to what dialogue belonged to which letter. This shows him to have been thinking in terms of what had to be said, rather than who should say it. The voices are mouthpieces, letters rather than characters, and Beckett is merely working out the pattern he set himself on Page 1. Even when names appear the personalities are indistinguishable, as if the three were one. Indeed the costume note in the published text reads:

1 "Unpleasant laugh" in Type of Confidence version.

"Apart from colour differentiation, three figures as alike as possible."¹

Unlike the undisclosed secret in the published text, those in the holograph, though whispered, are at once clarified for the audience by the recipient's response. The first open secret is the comic complexion cure. The second secret both reminds us of the published text (in the "appalled" response it elicits) and is unlike it, in that serious illness is not implied, but explicit and fatal:

A. She told me she was condemned.

She whispers in B's ear.

B. (Appalled.) No! Good heavens!

A. The worst kind. (Pause.) Three months. (Pause.) At the outside.

The second typescript at Reading University is also headed "Before Come and Go" in Beckett's hand.² It is a further attempt to shape the conversations taking place between two of the women in the absence of the third. Each dialogue is typed on a separate sheet and the women are named, Rose Vi and Poppy. This is both an extension of the holograph (in which the only name mentioned was "Mrs Flower") and an abbreviation of the first typescript, which has "Viola" rather than "Vi". The conversations are tightened by the omission of an exchange of skin secrets between the women. In each dialogue one woman only discloses her complexion recipe, instead of a mutual exchange of sexual confidences, and discussion of the imminent demise of the absentee ensues. The pattern of utterance is highlighted by the reduction of words.

The draft is, however, extended by a comic addition, the introduction of three sorrowing husbands, all conspicuously absent:

1 That all three women are aspects of a single personality is an attractive explanation for their extraordinary resemblance and mutual mortal illness. But in Beckett's terms the fact that all are dying is more likely to be the inescapable outcome of "birth astride of a grave".

2 RUL MS. 1227/7/16/5.

Rose (of Poppy). I ran into her husband at the Gaiety. He is
 half crazed with grief.
 Poppy (of Vi). Her husband wrote me from Madeira. He is
 heartbroken.
 Vi (of Rose). Her husband called me from Naples. He was
 weeping over the wire.

Typescript 2 is classified at Reading University by the same number as "Scene I" (already discussed) suggesting it is a sequel to the latter. The heading II on the first page of the three page typescript reinforces this view. But the numerals IV and VI are typed at the head of the two remaining pages of text and do not represent different scenes, but different stages of the same scene. Thus the first gossip is headed II, the second IV and the third VI. The figures would appear to represent stages II, IV and VI of Beckett's fully developed vision of the play. Stages I, III, V and VII would thus consist of the linking material that occurs in the final text (before, between and after the three gossips) when all the women are present onstage.¹

That Beckett was shaping his text in this manner is evident from a diagram that follows the first dialogue:

I V. R. P.
 II V. R.
 III V. R. P.
 IV P. R.
 V V. R. P.
 VI V. P.
 VII V. R. P.

Stages II, IV and VI are clearly identified here as the three dialogues noted above. Typescript 2 is thus not "Scene 2" but three stages in the development of the play first envisaged in the Type of Confidence holograph.

1 It is possible that "Scene I" was Beckett's first attempt at drafting such linking material.

Beckett could not resist the introduction of sorrowing husbands into this draft, but a cutting and shaping of the gossips has already begun. Moreover the precise patterning of the final text is beginning to evolve. Stage directions for the rotation of each woman from seat to seat occur here for the first time. Each is to move to the seat of the absent woman while the gossip takes place. The entire typescript is crossed through, except for the diagram, which is hand written. On the back of the last sheet, a further note in Beckett's hand describes the piece as a "dramaticule".

The Manus Presse facsimiles of two further holographs reveal a text much nearer the final version than the Reading material. In the first (a single page) Beckett reverts to the ABC characterization of the Reading holographs, but he has begun to work on the text that links together the three gossips. Thus the dialogue opens on a scene we recognize:

I

C When did we three last meet?
 A Let us not speak.
 B Just sit together as we used to, in the
 playground at Miss Wade's, on the log.
 A Holding hands that way.
 B Dreaming of ~~life~~ and love
 Exit C.

The elements of the final version are here, but the dialogue has not yet been split up into three sections, punctuated by the exits of B and A.

A second scene (II) is attempted in the first facsimile. It covers two brief snatches of dialogue, in which B asks A how she finds C and A asks C how she finds B. Beckett is here trying out the pattern of repeated phrases evident in the final text. At the top of the page he lists various possibilities:

She may not
 Who knows

 God grant not.
 God forbid.
 Please God not

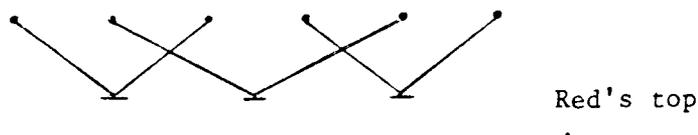
He selects the second group of phrases. In the first snatch of dialogue in II, B says "God grant not" and in the second, A says "God forbid."

The second Manus Presse facsimile reveals that the text as we know it has largely evolved. The initial dialogue in I has been split up and the brief dialogues in II have developed into the three gossips between the women, now named Ru (A) Vi (C) and Flo (B). The last line reads:

"Flo. I can feel **your** *the* rings."

The advantage of making the reference to rings non-specific has occurred to Beckett here.

The text is followed by the notes on "Lighting", "Costume", "Seat", "Exits" and "Ohs", found in the published version, with the exception of the final note on voices. On the blank verso page opposite these notes Beckett has jotted a diagram of the final hand positions, which is of great interest in that it shows him to have been visualizing the women as colours. He has described the costume colours in the notes, with Vi wearing "dull red". In the final tableau Vi sits in the central position once more, her arms, as Beckett notes on the blank page, above those of Ru and Flo. Underneath he draws the following diagram:



The remaining drafts are the four Washington typescripts, lettered 0-3. Typescript 0 appears to be a fair copy of the Manus Presse second facsimile, omitting the final notes. The title Come and Go is inked into this draft, but not in Beckett's hand; it is, however, typed into Typescript 1, which also contains the character note "Age undeterminable" for the first time. Fuller notes than those in the second facsimile appear in this draft. Diagrams for "Successive Positions" and for "Hands" are included, together

with the note on "Voices" missing hitherto and a ponderous note on "Colours":

Much duller in performance than samples herewith indicative only of relative values. If insufficiently dulled by nature of lighting they should be uniformly darkened.

This note remains in Typescript 2, but is omitted from 3, the final draft.

Typescript 1 is remarkable for manuscript additions to the text in Beckett's hand at the opening and close of the play. They are as follows:

opening:

Vi Ru

Ru Yes

Vi Flo

Flo Yes

Vi When did we three last meet?

close: Flo Ru. (silence) Vi. (silence) I can feel the rings.

These additions are incorporated into Typescripts 2 and 3 and are present in part in the New York edition of the play,¹ but not in the Calder text.² The latter seems to be based on the unrevised Typescript 1, also omitting the note on colours.

In the drafts of Come and Go we see Beckett advancing towards an ever stricter patterning, cutting and shaping until, as with a poem, not a word can be lost. By the final text he is no longer relying on identical phraseology to achieve the effect of repetition, but employing more subtle and interesting variations on a theme. In the Reading holographs, for example, a stock response ("Oh very much so...very much so indeed!") is made by each woman to a question about her lover. This is reduced, in the ensuing typescript, to Rose alone making the full response, Vi contenting herself

1 Cascando and Other Short Dramatic Pieces (Grove Press, 1968) pp.[65] -69. (This text incorporates the additional dialogue at the opening of the play, but not at the close.)

2 Come and Go, Calder and Boyars, 1967.

with "Oh very much so", while Poppy does not use the phrase at all. By the final version, the two secrets have become one. The responses all concern God, as we have seen, but are linguistically varied (God grant not/ God forbid/ Please God not); the three women invoke respectively a generous, a forbidding and a merciful God.

Visually the notes introduced into the Manus Presse holograph, particularly those on costume and movement ("Exits") emphasize the theme of similarity with difference. The colours worn are different, but all "dulled", the faces are all shaded by hats and all three women move noiselessly into and out of the surrounding shadow. The addition of the vocal note in the Washington typescripts gives them all low "colourless" voices, "except for three 'Ohs' and two lines following". The sense of ritual in both language and movement is strengthened by the final joining of hands, while the carefully plotted hand positioning forms the shape of the Celtic "endless" knot, symbolising infinity.

It is in the power and economy of the ending that the final version of Come and Go achieves its greatest effect. Not until after the last line has been spoken is a further dimension added to the play by the light, teasing the mind into additional speculation.¹ The stage directions reveal it to be hands rather than faces that are "made up to be as visible as possible" and that there are "no rings apparent". As soon as this point is registered, the full force of the play begins to emerge and the various hints fall into place.

Three lifetimes are suggested in the 121 words of the final Calder text. Three faded flowers sit recalling the days of their freshness "at Miss Wade's". Their floral names have been abbreviated to single syllables, their colours are dulled. Ru is in violet - and both puns are intentional. There is

¹ Beckett's use of light will be discussed further in Part 3.

nothing left to these women but rue for the love that has passed them by. Gone are the lovers and sorrowing husbands of the early drafts. The only reference to love in the published text is "Dreaming" and the only sexual experience known to these women appears to have been in fantasy. The play indeed ends in fantasy as Flo asserts she can feel the rings that are not there.

The fact that the women see "little change" in each other is significant. The overriding impression of the play is of lack of event. Precisely the tragedy of the women in Come and Go is that they appear perpetually to have been waiting for an event, possibly marriage, that never happens. And now, with death looming an unwanted lover in the shade, they seem to be about to die before having ever fully lived; "never been properly born" as Beckett notes laconically in the Appendix to Watt.¹ In the nightmare vision of his later drama the three women may indeed have to endure permanent waiting, condemned to an after-life in which the perpetually active consciousness endlessly recounts its life.

Come and Go is the waiting situation in Tchekov's Three Sisters (or in Godot) reduced to its essence. The brevity of the play makes us forcibly aware of impermanence, that "Beauty's a flower"² and must fade. Death "the invisible worm" in Blake's poem "The Sick Rose"³ is already at work. It seems likely that Beckett had the analogy in mind when writing Come and Go. "How do you think Rose is looking?" enquires Poppy in the second Reading typescript. "Sick." replies Vi.

1 Watt, p.248. Compare A.T.F., p.37: "The trouble with her was she had never been really born!"

2 Shakespeare, Twelfth Night, I.5.

3 Songs of Experience, 1794; Poetical Works of William Blake, ed. John Sampson, Oxford 1913, p.95.

Instead of the tangible lovers of the early drafts and the explicit notifications of mortality, the final text is ambiguous. The probability, given the horror with which each undisclosed secret is received, is that it is again Death who stretches out his arms in the surrounding darkness. "Ich bin nicht wild!" says Death, the lover, in Matthias Claudius's poem "Der Tod und das Mädchen";¹ "Sollst sanft in meinen Armen schlafen!" It was to this poem that Schubert composed his Quartet in D Minor² that is at the heart of All That Fall.³ The same poem, as James Knowlson points out, lies behind Krapp's uneasy glances over his shoulder into the shadows in Krapp's Last Tape.⁴ A similar weight of darkness surrounds the women in Come and Go and it seems likely that the poem forms part of the experience of this play also.

The ambiguities in the final version fill out with surprising richness and depth this textually bare play. Beckett has achieved such an effect by combining an obscure and minimal text with precise and explicit stage directions, capable of directing audience attention to possibilities not verbally stated and making the play a tour de force.

Play

In the drafts of Come and Go we have noted a movement away from the explicit, which gives the final text considerably more power "to claw". In Play a progression towards ambiguity may be discerned in the later drafts, but the embryo of the play has its own obscurities, notably at the close, where the apparently unfinished text breaks off. This early draft is an undated three page typescript which Beckett has headed "Before Play" in manuscript.⁵

1 Das Oxforder Buch Deutscher Dichtung, Oxford 1920, pp.77-8.

2 D 810 ("Der Tod und das Mädchen.")

3 The same music was used in the Claddagh recording (CCT3) that Beckett made with Jack Macgowran.

4 "Krapp's last tape: the evolution of a play, 1958-75", Journal of Beckett Studies, I, London 1976, p.55.

5 RII. MS. 1227/7/16/6.

The most startling difference between this text and the final version is that a woman and two men constitute the triangle. Three heads protrude from "three white boxes, one yard high." But there is no further visual resemblance to the final text. The heads in the early draft are not only named ("from left to right as seen from auditorium... Syke, Nickie and Conk") but comically characterised: Syke is "Bald, florid, plump, very long (18") absolutely horizontal blond moustache", while Conk is his opposite: "Bluey-pale, sleek black hair, long profoundly drooping black moustache." Nickie is a redhead with "milky complexion, full red lips, green earrings."

The three heads are spotlighted in turn, in order that they may introduce themselves by name - a more traditional but less effective opening than the muttered chorus from three urns "simultaneously faintly lit" in the published text.

Although in this early draft the three figures are not in urns (and might thus be argued to be in a more ambiguous situation than the play as we know it) the text is immediately more explicit. Instead of Play's inaudible chorus, followed by a gradual unfolding of the triangular relationship, Nickie plunges into a monologue in which she begs mercy from the light, thus at once revealing the purgatorial aspect of the play:

Nickie. I am not ready. (Pause. Spot off. Five seconds. Spot on.) I am not ready. (Pause.) I need more dark. (Pause.) I say I need more dark. (Pause.) Please! (Pause.) What is this mercy that when I beg oh please not again so soon again gives me back my dark and then this no mercy that when I beg a moment's grace not even a moment's grace so that I keep on begging, yes, that must be it, to keep me begging on. (Pause.) Please! (Pause.)

In the published text such speculations take place in the central section of the play, after the blackout that follows the account of the man caught between two women. Throughout Play, moreover, the light moves swiftly from

head to head, creating the necessary stage movement as it does so. Comic opportunities are also created by cutting off one speaker and juxtaposing another with a different point of view, whereas in the early draft, the comedy is largely visual. The text of the early draft is often amusing in its delineation of character, but loses tension because it is spoken in long monologue paragraphs, instead of being split up by the movement of the light. At the inception of the play, therefore, light is less likely to be seen as a character in the action.

Unlike Nickie, the two men in the early draft do not question their current situation at all. Their monologues are concerned entirely with self-description, culminating in their separate encounters with Nickie. Syke speaks first, briefly delineating his Oxford career: "Jesus... Brasenose...you know [... ...] midnight oil...all that"; his biological pursuits ("open air...bird lover...ringing pipits") and his war: "down in flames...usual show...permanent limp". Thence to a chicken farm in Dumfries, with nothing of moment to record until his meeting with Nickie. Towards her his reactions are still ambivalent: "then this bitch...wonder where she is now [] my sweet love...my one love...my -"

Conk, by contrast, was a man of the world, with "rank, looks, health, brains, charm, wit, French, humour, good humour, private means, a place in town, two outside..." combined with "the power to please. Women I won unwooded weekly..." He had in effect "no complaints, until the day I met that carrot-haired slut."

Nickie in turn recalls meeting the two men. Of Conk she says simply "such male beauty I had never seen [] never encountered" but her meeting with Syke is described in more detail. It was at an auction, his exorbitant moustache tickling her cheek, as he gazed at a stuffed bird: "Feeling the

tickle of hair against my cheek, and assuming the usual low familiarity, I turned sharply to rebuke the offender, and then there was this hair against my lips."

Syke had only become aware of Nickie after feeling her eyes upon him, as later she was to feel Conk's eyes boring into her back one evening after Syke had seen her home:

Conk ...She was with a ~~tout~~ *clod*, a gross pink bald whiskered ~~tout~~ *clod* with a gammy leg. I hope she's gone back to him. She got rid of him at the door after the usual and stood watching him hobble away. Then she ran up the steps and put her key in the door. I asked her afterwards, what possessed you to turn, why in the name of God didn't you go straight in? She said she felt eyes boring into her...

The draft ends with Conk driving Nickie home and their looking at each other, while Nickie again holds her door key. Beckett is thus already patterning the action in the play's early stages. But long sections of autobiographical monologue are clearly more suited to a stream of consciousness novel or to solo performance, as in Beckett's latest plays. In the final text the action is tightened by the omission of all personal detail except the situation of jealousy between the two women. Concentration on this dramatic conflict causes Beckett to omit the realisation of love by both men in the early draft, that, despite the comic undercutting, reaches a depth not found in the later text. Until he met Nickie, love for Syke had been of the mechanical variety, later to be found in Not I:

love...all my arse...who could love me...ten minutes...
button up and go home...sleep it off...then this...one
look and all gone...nothing but her...new life...

He finds himself needed for the first time:

me wanted...holy God...darling Syke...never leave me...
never done...getting...giving...all one...Grand Canary...
down at noon...lie touching by the sea...mouths...like
one...like one -

This is a far more sympathetic picture of love than Beckett usually allows himself. As we have seen in Part 1, for example, the two "lovers"

in That Time never touch. In the final version of Play, moreover, Syke's romantic idyll is distorted into Woman 1's attempt to celebrate her victory over Woman 2 by a trip to "our darling Grand Canary".

Conk's realisation of love is connected with the puzzling episode on which the first draft closes. While driving Nickie home she had suddenly commanded him to stop the car, leaped out and returned with a wounded bird that she cushioned in her breast:

Conk. A sparrow, she told me later, when it died. She put it down between her breasts and held it there from the outside, I mean she didn't put her hand down with it. What are your plans for that? I said. She turned and looked at me. (Pause.) Was it then I was - fleshed? (Pause.) In the end I put out the light and drove on. We stood together at the foot of the steps. The street lamps went out. She asked me to take the key ~~out-of~~ *from* her bag and put it in her hand, then hang the bag on her arm. I stood waiting for her to go up. Let me see you drive off, she said. (Pause.) So a little - from her hand. In the grey of the morning.

Here the draft ends. Beckett has added in manuscript "dwindle in reflector."

Cutting off the narrative at this point is equivalent to the blackout on page 15 of the Faber text. But the light in the Reading typescript is not yet the active participator in the action that it becomes in ensuing drafts, both in its role as inquisitor and in its power to frame and mark stages in the action by the use of blackouts. It is clear from the early draft that a mere juxtaposition of image (three people in boxes) with text (monologue narration of past events) is not enough to hold audience attention. But Nickie's first speech in this draft, in which she begs for dark, showed Beckett the way to progress and the ensuing drafts immediately increase the role of light.

The episode of the sparrow in the early draft is capable of wide interpretation. There may be echoes of Skelton's "Philip Sparrow" in the

bird at the breast. Moreover the introduction of a bird into Nickie's relations with Conk at once recalls the abandoned bird-lover, Syke, while the bird's injury parallels Syke's war wound. Nestling the wounded sparrow in her breast both marks Nickie's divided allegiance and, paradoxically, is the cause of Conk's subjugation to her ("Was it then I was - fleshed?") The incident has affinities with Clov's song in Fin de Partie, omitted from the English text:

Joli oiseau, quitte ta cage,
Vole vers ma bien-aimée,
Niche-toi dans son corsage,
Dis-lui combien je suis emmerdé.¹

There is more genuine sexual arousal in Nickie's description of Syke's moustache brushing her lips or Conk's feelings as she cradles the bird in her bosom than in the man's comic exertions ("What a male!") of the final text. The omission of such episodes demonstrates the changed tone of the final version. Beckett is concerned in Play less with human affection (characterized in his more typical manner in the final text as grotesque folly) than with a more serious form of delusion, to which human nature is also subject. In the final version it is man's folly in believing in the possibility of divine mercy that is under examination. We are confronted by endless recapitulation of the past, with no reprieve. The change of emphasis marks an extension from man's personal preoccupations in a love affair, to concern for his position in the universe: "Am I as much as being seen?"

Following the "Before Play" typescript, ten further drafts chronicle the development of Play.² They are all typescripts and three of them are dated. Typescript 4 is dated "August 1962" and Typescripts 8 and 10 "Ussy

1 Fin de Partie, ed. Fletcher, p.74.

2 Samuel Beckett Papers, Washington University Libraries.

December 1963". How far in advance of these "Before Play" was written is unknown. Richard Admussen notes that many of the Washington typescripts "are heavily rewritten, and the variety of inks used in the corrections give evidence of at least twenty-two separate re-workings".¹ This I cannot judge, having seen only photocopies, which do not distinguish sufficiently between inks. The photocopies do, however, chronicle a painstaking re-working through ten separate drafts, and this large body of material will be used in Part 2B to demonstrate in detail the kinds of changes that occur as the play progresses.

It may be noted here, however, that the general trend in the evolution of the play is once again towards ambiguity of expression. Richard Admussen comments:

The general state of being and the attitudes of the characters were originally much more explicit - that all are dead, for instance, is considerably clearer at the outset; each wonders if the others feel sorry for him, and someone speaks of reasoning "in the old earthly way." As work on the play progressed, one can see it become more hermetic as far as the dialogue is concerned, the author seeking to evoke the state of the characters rather than to describe it. So while the dialogue moves from the concrete to the vague, Beckett finds other means to make the spectator sense, and even experience, their state.²

We have now looked at very early material for two plays, "Before Come and Go" and "Before Play". In each case a play of depth and insight has metamorphosed from an explicit situation of broad domestic comedy. There are serious undertones in the early drafts and, as we have noted, genuine feeling in the men's reactions to Nickie in "Before Play". But the plays at this stage are inward-looking, dealing with the particular rather than the universal and almost everything is unmemorably evident.

In subsequent drafts Beckett sets about purging the concrete from his text, making a play that does not yield itself up entirely at first sight,

1 "The MSS. of Beckett's Play", p.23.

2 Ibid, p.24.

but has to be thought about and worked at, and has the capacity, in so doing, to extend our experience of human nature. He enlists our concern not with the characters in these plays (we have noted that characterisation in Come and Go is interchangeable) but with the predicament in which these characters find themselves, which becomes, by extension, man's predicament.

The final play to be considered in Section 1 because of the explicit nature of its preliminary material is Not I. The seeds of the play are to be found in three fragments in a notebook at Trinity College Dublin.¹ They were written in December 1963, the month of the completion of Play and it is not difficult to imagine Beckett, bored with the latter after laborious re-working, diverting himself by trying out a new theme.

Immediately following these fragments in the notebook, however, is a plan for a further play on the triangular theme. It is so like Play that it is worth quoting here, though the likeness apparently prevented it from developing beyond the planning stage. The three characters are a man (A) and two women (B and C). The two women sit upstage centre and the man downstage right. There is no dialogue, merely the following structural plan:

1. General light. All 3 seated. B & C plain chairs, A armchair. B & C bowed heads. A head up looking at them.
2. General light gradually down, all light on C's face, *her head lifts, rest darkness*
3. ~~C's~~-statement *C's statement*
4. XX Gradual return to general light, C's head down, B's still down - A's still up looking.
5. General light gradually down, all light on B's face, *her head lifts, rest darkness.*
6. B's statement.
7. Gradual return to general light, B's head down, C's still down, A's now down.

Curtain

¹ TCD MS. 4664.

A preliminary diagram of the stage considers a possible fourth character, D, sitting downstage left, opposite A. But since there is a question mark beside the letter D and he does not appear in the subsequent scheme, Beckett clearly had second thoughts about him. Following the scheme a note considers the possibility of A being female - and whether A's head should be bowed at stage 4 (after C's statement) and remain bowed at stage 7. It seems likely that the statements of C and B are intended to induce in A a feeling of remorse, which, with the emphasis on three heads and fluctuating light levels, links the scheme explicitly with Play.

Not I

The first fragment related to Not I in the T.C.D. notebook is headed "Kilcool". Kilcoole¹ is the name of a small resort south of Dublin, between Greystones and Wicklow. The fragment, a monologue for a female voice, centres upon childhood memories of Kilcoole and is dated 8 December 1963. It is followed by authorial aides-mémoire, in which Beckett decides how the play should be written and isolates certain themes. The second fragment (dated 23 December 1963) does not mention Kilcoole specifically though repeating some of the material found in the earlier draft. Its main innovations are the memory of being abandoned by a lover and the use of two voices (normal and assumed). In the final fragment (dated 29 December 1963) the voice senses that there is "someone in me, trying to get out", makes various calculations on the amount of silence that may be achieved in a year by judicious daily pausing and ends in an almost liturgical passage of repeated negatives.

The three dates do not, then, represent new beginnings to the work so much as continuations of a monologue. Each fragment consists of memories

1 In the text Beckett reinstates the "e" in Kilcoole.

taken from largely different stages of life, the first recalling childhood, the second adulthood, the third old age and perhaps beyond, as, for example: "Was I in someone once, and where is she now, if I was in her once, and she let me out -"

There are undoubted similarities here with the three strands of memory in That Time. Moreover the image envisaged in stage directions following the second fragment is of an:

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.

Beckett has called That Time "a "brother to Not I."¹ It appears that, just as, having completed Play, he went on toying with the triangular theme in the scheme for a play quoted above, so, having written Not I employing a more radical image than that envisaged in the Trinity College fragments, he decided subsequently to return to his original stimulus and produced That Time. It is even possible that he had Kilcoole in mind ("this ruin² in Kilcoole") when describing the ruin in That Time where the protagonist hid as a child.

What then are the particular resemblances between these fragments and Not I that justify considering them as early attempts to draft the play? Let us now look at the fragments in detail. The opening stage directions of the "Kilcool" fragment call for:

Woman's face alone in constant light.
Nothing but *fixed lined* lit face and speech.

The directions go on to note that a certain part of the text produces tears in the face "...near beginning, brief; towards middle, longer; and, longest, to close. Curtain down on *lit* weeping face." The tears are

1 Letter to James Knowlson, 24 September 1974.

2 Italics mine.

to be followed each time by a pause for their abatement, recalling the pauses after Mouth's repeated denials of selfhood in Not I. But perhaps the most striking resemblance to the theme of Not I is the final direction:

Talks of herself in 3rd person.

The monologue describes, like Mouth, an orphaned child ("...papa dead - we have seen and then mamma...") taken to the bosom of a widowed, childless aunt "to go on living with her in her humble home in Kilcoole that is the time we are come to now." Other memories of the voice have, it seems, been discarded before the text begins: "*We have seen* no more of that all has been weighed all that remained and tip tip now the one scale now the other so no more those other times other homes..."

It seems possible that the voice is "dreaming back" Yeatsian fashion, unravelling a life, while it is weighed in the purgatorial balance. But childhood memories appear to be its entire experience, since it moves immediately from thoughts of Kilcoole to "When she so young so long ago was laid in Redford by the sea [] that short sickness when we come to that and then the dark where she was laid..."

It is difficult to equate the story of the young girl laid in the dark with the woman's face that provides the visual image. Yet that we are supposed to do so is evident from the direction "Talks of herself in 3rd person." It is as though the girl who was laid in the dark has gone on growing, nonetheless, into the woman now speaking, whose face is seen held in the light from which she prays to be released:

this prayer giver of light and taker of it away this prayer
again take it away. (Pause. Weeps. Five seconds.)

After 1½ pages the text is marked "abandoned" and various aides-mémoire ensue before a further draft is attempted. Beckett appears to have taken a hard look at the preceding text and decided how best to develop it. The

passage is quoted in full for its insights into his working method.

Themes, lay down before writing.

to each theme a certain pause length.

" " " " different voice quality.
(speed, *high high or low* moved or cold etc.)

1 theme only leads to tears
" " " " " smile
" " " " " laugh

Details of above prayer to time for dark
as life is darkened. This is the tear-producer.
Three times, including curtain (light on weeping
face, prayer unanswered.)

Within given theme normal conversation
pauses. Only before text engaged put a full length pause.

Whole text spoken over soft rapid buzz only audible
in major pauses and during silent weeping.

"I" "me" etc. never spoken outside assumed voice.

Identification by final prayer to time in
assumed voice -

Beckett goes on to "lay down" eight themes that, as in Not I, tell the
story of a life:

Themes

1. Light - dark leading to prayer for dark & tears. ~~3-time~~
three times: opening, midway, end.
2. Voice imitated.
3. Thoughts.
4. Lover.
5. Age.
6. Never presumes seen, heard.
7. Her body.
8. Burial.

These themes compare interestingly with Beckett's holograph "analysis" of

the first full draft of Not I as such, at Reading University.¹ Here again the analysis seems to have been made after writing the first draft and fifteen themes are isolated. Several passages, moreover, are marked "amplify", one "mention earlier", one "add to" and one "another ex." The analysis is thus a breakdown of the holograph text, with Beckett's memoranda regarding its alteration and expansion. Beckett has underlined certain memoranda in red and ticked passages where new material has been drafted satisfactorily in some notes headed "Addenda". The following example elucidates:

I Analysis

Speechless...speechless infant - all her days - vowel sounds -
rare occasions - ex.supermart another ex.- how she survived

II Addenda

Ex 2. of Speechlessness (C) practically speechless...how she survived...
that time in court...~~guilty or not guilty~~...what what had
she to say for herself ... guilty or not guilty... speak up woman...
stood there staring at nothing...waiting to be led away...glad of
the hand on her arm...

Returning to the Trinity College notebook, we find Beckett drafting new material in the second fragment, to give substance to some of the themes he had isolated after the first draft. Thus the second fragment opens with theme 4, the "lover", leaving his mistress:

...leave her like that ~~without~~ *in* the state she was in -

The text is drafted in two voices "normal" and "assumed" to comply with theme 2 "voice imitated". Beckett first tried out ideas for the two voices on a blank page facing the Kilcool fragment.² But it seems likely that he used the first blank page he came to for the purpose, having already filled the verso pages of the second fragment with mathematical calculations and

1 See Appendix V.

2 As noted earlier it is Beckett's practice to write his text on the recto pages of a notebook, leaving the verso blank for notes and alterations to the text.

notes on themes. The notes for two voices bear little relation to the Kilcool text, but are incorporated almost verbatim into the text of the second fragment.

The notes consist of two pages. The first (described as "Ex.(ample) of I") describes the young girl:

Neari coming up to her the end alone quite still on her back...
and leads into the prayer to "time giver of light" and resulting tears that we have noted in the Kilcool fragment. The second paragraph is in deliberate contrast. The voice speaks in an assumed tone "low, fast, breathless", and scolds the normal voice for challenging her to live:¹

Ah you and your living, will you stop talking to me about living. (Pause-with-panting (*Panting.*) What else am I doing only living, what else do you call this I'm doing only living. (*Panting.*) Is it because I'm sitting here quiet with my thoughts - (*panting*) - not whining for anything and not fussing over anything - (*panting*) - that I amn't living...

The dichotomy in the woman is made more obvious than in the final version by the use of these two voices. Moreover the normal voice understands her predicament (hence the prayer to time for release) whereas the assumed voice, like Mouth in Not I, pushes such realisation away. When asked by the normal voice:

How is it that - (pause) How is it you-can't one cannot see the - (pause) - the cause...

the assumed voice responds in terror:

...(assumed voice, vehement.) Take it away! Take it away! Go away! (*Panting*) XXXXX Turn it off!²

Here, in explicit form, is the situation in Not I, where the self-questioning inner voice is unheard, but produces in Mouth a "vehement refusal to relinquish third person". In the Trinity College fragment the question is

1 Normal Voice: "...get up, open all up, go out, live! (Pause.) Can't you..."

2 Compare switching off radio in Radio I (Ends and Odds pp.87-91.)

voiced - and equally forcibly rejected. But the assumed voice has been forced to acknowledge its refusal to listen ("take it away!") whereas Mouth, more subtly, maintains her fiction ("she!...SHE!") until the end of the play.

"Take it away!" spoken by the assumed voice is also the "identification by final prayer to time in assumed voice" that Beckett planned in the notes following "Kilcool". The assumed voice has dropped her guard and joined in the plea from the normal voice to blot out her existence and take the light away. There is a further difference from the final text in the reversal of roles. In the Trinity College fragment, the normal voice, who is aware of the reality of her situation, carries the bulk of the text. The assumed voice is her wish-fulfilment or escapist fantasy, in which she tries, unsuccessfully, to convince herself it is not true. In Not I, Mouth avoids the truth throughout, so that the text (apart from the 22 inner promptings noted by Beckett in Typescript 5 at Reading University) is entirely self-deception.

Immediately after the second fragment in the T.C.D. notebook is the beginning of a rewrite. This consists of a mere snatch of text ("...leave her *there* like that in the state she was in - oh!") and the first attempt at stage directions since the Kilcool fragment. The first of these directions we have already seen (p.117) in connection with That Time. The remainder are as follows:

Grey hair drawn tightly back from forehead.

Shrill tremulous voice, bad enunciation.

Speech begins before rise of curtain.

The final fragment is spoken entirely in the first person and thus by the assumed voice (according to Beckett's note "I" "me" etc. never spoken

outside assumed voice.") In fact the fragment appears to be spoken by the normal voice throughout, since the instruction "assumed voice" is, as will be seen, given for six words of text only.

The fragment opens with paragraphs on two themes that were jotted down on blank pages below and facing fragment 2, but not belonging to that text.

The first theme insists that the voice has an audience:

I am not talking to myself, more than that I cannot say,
I am not talking to myself...

The idea of speech as punishment is then raised for the first time:

...there is ~~nothing~~ *no more* I wish to say *every word is mild torture*
I would give all I have to stop...

This leads to a consideration of how much silence the voice can hope to achieve. Calculations to this effect were made when the theme was first tried out on a blank page in the second fragment:

30 million seconds in a year
how many ~~pauses~~ *silences* of 3 seconds to
make total silence of 24 hrs.
= 86.000 seconds.

An even more satisfactory total is arrived at in fragment 3:

I have worked it out while going along, one second, two
seconds, every now and *then again*, a week a year, isn't
it not amazing...

The voice goes on to reflect on "things said before" in contrast with "virgin" remarks, calling herself in the process "this old whore", the first direct equation between voice and visual image in the text. Her "virgin" contribution to the ensuing passage is the feeling that:

~~There-is~~ *Someone* in me, trying to get out, saying let me out...

"Let me out! let me out!" is subsequently repeated by the assumed voice as its sole contribution to fragment 3. It now appears that the assumed voice is no longer prepared to cooperate in the wish-fulfilment fantasy of the normal voice and ignore her situation. Instead she joins with the normal

voice in demanding to be released.

Though apparently understanding her situation in fragment 2, the normal voice in panic questions it again in fragment 3:

Was I in someone once, and where is she now, if I was
in her once, and she let me out -

And the implications of punishment increase:

Oh I am wearied, if the impossible were being asked it
would ~~not-be-so-bad~~ be *less hellish*.

Reflections on the deficiencies of her memory ("memory gone") lead the voice into the moving litany of negation on which the fragment closes. The first half of this passage is quoted below:

Nothing speaks of nothing

xxx

There is no me and there is noone else, there is noone at all,
there was never anyone at all.

My I's are nothing and my mes are nothing and my my's
are nothing and so for all the other persons of the
quartet or quintet or minuet and trio

I am nothing speaking of nothing neither to myself nor to
anyone else

I have been speaking for ever and will go on speaking
for ever.

The fragment ends, then, in some kind of Cartesian nightmare, in which the fact of "cogito" brings no assurance of "sum".

The despairing nature of the vision does not change from first to last, but aspects of the Trinity College fragments are much more explicit than the final text. The fact that the voice is recounting memories from beyond the grave is the most striking example. We are informed in "Kilcool" that she "talks of herself in 3rd person". Thus when she describes the dark where she¹ was laid so young so long ago" it is herself to whom the experience refers. Corroboration that "the dark" means death is explicit. Burial is the eighth

1 Italics mine.

and final theme in the list made after "Kilcool", though Beckett had second thoughts about stating it too bluntly in the text: "~~Heari~~ coming up to ~~her~~ the end". By the final text the phrase has become much more subtle: "coming up to sixty when - ...what?...seventy?...good God!" "Seventy" draws attention to man's allotted span of three score years and ten, so that the idea of death remains a strong possibility, but it is the more telling for not being stated. That Mouth, moreover, can lie about her age, in her condition, sets a tone of grim humour in the final text that is lacking in the early fragments, where the tone is too often self-pitying.

Such refinements did not, however, come all at once. When Beckett came to write Not I in 1972, more than eight years after the Dublin fragments,¹ the play developed through two holograph and six typescript drafts. The jerky repetitious style of the final text is there from the start and the technique of self-questioning leading to further information being vouchsafed, rather than the two voices of the Dublin fragments. Some advance in technique on the earlier material is therefore present in the first holograph version of Not I.² But the content is still extremely explicit when compared with the final text. Some examples will indicate where this is so:

1. birth into the world - this world - of a ~~small~~ *tiny baby-boy-or-girl in a small---*
2. The child was born "in a small ~~place~~ *hole in the on-the-coast ...*
3. Walking in a field with ~~her~~ *my* youngest grandchild ~~looking~~ *searching* for cowslips...

The surprising change from third to first person occurs on page 1:

and ~~she~~ *I* found ~~her~~ *myself* in the dark - and:
for ~~she~~ *I* could still hear the buzzing in ~~her~~ *my* ears...

But Beckett thought better of this after about twenty lines, crossed out the first version and began to rewrite with Mouth at once denying her selfhood.

1 Holograph begun 20 March 1972 and completed 1 April 1972.

2 RUL MS. 1227/7/12/1.

...What?...I?...no...no!...she...

The phrase grows in importance during the second holograph. It is repeated twice and shaped each time to echo the first hearing and draw attention to the denial, thus:

- (1)...what?...I?...~~I-realised?~~ *no - no!*...she...
 (2)...what?...I?...no...no! *nothing* she *could* ...

Stage directions are crammed into the margin beside holograph 1, but with an arrow indicating that they belong to holograph 2. Beckett has decided that he wishes the image to be centred on Mouth, but has not yet envisaged that it can be completely isolated. The direction reads "as little as possible of rest of face." An auditor is present, but is to make only a "single brief movement where indicated." The idea of his gestures corresponding with Mouth's denials of selfhood only emerges at the end of various passages of addenda, drafted three weeks after the completion of the holograph.

The addenda passages were written in response to notes Beckett made in a holograph sheet headed "analysis" in which, as discussed earlier (p.120) he broke down the text under fifteen themes or headings.¹ The analysis elucidates several points in the text. It refers, for example, to Mouth's "fantasy of returning to the field where all went out" and calls its tale an "enumeration of woes". Under the heading "speculations" there is reference to being "denied by interrupter", while a further heading, "interruptions", clarifies that the interrupter is that part of the consciousness continually trying to prod the voice into self-acceptance and is signified by the question "what?" Beckett acknowledges a problem in "reconciling" interruptions "to propose 1st person" with interruptions "to deny she had to ^{tell} say anything."

¹ See Appendix V.

The notes most revealing of technique in Beckett's analysis show him intentionally to be working towards ambiguity in the text. One reads:

Tho not explicitly stated suffering begins with voice
and thought w. buzzing.

Two other notes, both underlined in red, state "not made clear", meaning, presumably, intentionally ambiguous rather than requiring clarification:

beam...from beginning - moon image - moon denied - just
part of punishment - but painless - so far - same spot
at first (not xxxxxxxx made clear) - then flickering
(analogy with thought) - ferreting - pain beginning -
(not made clear.)

The series of six typescript drafts that follow the Not I holographs give a clear picture of the kinds of changes that Beckett makes customarily when revising and polishing a text. A chart of these has been attempted, as the most economical means of demonstrating such changes, and is found at the end of Part 2B. Two developments in the direction of ambiguity may, however, be noted here: all reference to the first person is cancelled in Typescript 2 (so that the question "What?...I..." is altered to "What?...Who?...") and in Typescript 5 the image is restricted to Mouth alone.

A comparison of the draft material at Reading University with the final text reveals one extraordinary omission. The final note regarding the auditor's "gesture of helpless compassion" occurs nowhere in the drafts and appears suddenly in the Faber text. It must have occurred to Beckett that an explanatory note in the published text could prevent any serious misapprehension of his intention with regard to the gesture, described in the drafts hitherto simply as an arm movement. It is mentioned first in the addenda notes:

This consists in simple *sideways* raising of *Listener's*
arms clear of sides and their falling back with
if possible just audible thud of hands on thighs.

The audible thud was omitted from the notes to Typescript 6, but the final compassion note remains an authorial intervention in interpretation unique in Beckett, though arguably necessary. The note is helpful in developing our understanding of the situation described, and the play gains by this. The overall ambiguity is still present, moreover, in that the identity of the auditor remains uncertain.

A typed synopsis of the play is held with the drafts at Reading University.¹ It appears to be an abstract of the final text, in the same way that the analysis was made from an early draft. The synopsis, too, is uncharacteristically revealing, in that it lists five "Life scenes" (field, shopping centre, Croker's Acres, courtroom and rushing out to tell) implying that the voice recalling these scenes is now in some sense beyond life. The synopsis accompanies a list of "Breaks" (i.e., pauses in the narrative). The possibility therefore arose that both were prepared for the assistance of the actress creating the role. But a letter to Billie Whitelaw elicited the response that she had received no such information from Beckett.

The synopsis pinpoints the play in a manner alien to Beckett's general practice of keeping his options open. But since it is found only in a University Library, it is not accessible to the average playgoer. There is, however, a fundamental problem here about the study of an author's discarded drafts and notes. In their introduction to Fin de Partie, for example, John and Beryl Fletcher state firmly that:

in pruning his work Beckett undoubtedly improved it, but sometimes he compressed things so drastically that the surviving statement is somewhat obscure.²

Fletcher therefore decided to indicate "the original intention" in his notes.

Precisely the reason that Beckett suppresses the specific from his later

1 See Appendix VI

2 Fin de Partie, p.9.

drafts, however, is (as we have noticed in the three plays discussed in this section) to free the plays from limiting identifications. This is his intention; so to pin down the "original intention" in a note (however illuminating) may have a destructive effect upon the text, unless the full evolutionary process is stressed. It is like trying to place the husk of a seed on top of a flower, without explaining that, during the process of germination, one thing has become the other.

On the other hand, as Fletcher points out, it is certainly useful to be able to clarify the origin of such obscure expressions as Hamm's reference to pardon near the end of the play, which "is a survival from T(ypescript) I, where Clov pleads 'Pardonne-moi!' for having struck Hamm with the dog, and provokes this reply on Hamm's part."¹

The obvious danger of such explanations is that Beckett may be accused either of careless cutting or of ambiguity per se. Beckett has no wish to produce an impenetrable text, however, and has, on the contrary, a distinct vision of reality to communicate. But he is not prepared to compromise with that vision by pinning labels to his characters or making limiting identifications. It is profitless, for example, to attempt to ascertain the identity of Godot. When asked by Alan Schneider: "Who or what does Godot mean?" Beckett replied: "If I knew, I would have said so in the play."²

And of Endgame he wrote to Schneider:

Hamm as stated, and Clov as stated, together as stated,
nec tecum nec sine te, in such a place, and in such a
world, that's all I can manage, more than I could.³

Beckett gives enough information to stimulate the imagination and the ambiguities in his plays are compelling because they force audiences to work, rather than to sit back awaiting "entertainment". As he once remarked in an interview with Tom Driver: "... the key word in my plays is 'perhaps'."⁴

1 Fin de Partie, p.95.

2 Alan Schneider "Waiting for Beckett", Beckett at Sixty, London 1967 (pp.34-52) p.38. (Reprinted from Chelsea Review, 2 (Autumn 1958) pp.3-20.)

3 Village Voice Reader, p.185. (Letter dated 29 December 1957.)

4 "Beckett by the Madeleine", Columbia University Forum, 4, No.3 (1961) p.23.

SECTION 2

Introduction

In Section 2 we shall widen our investigation by exploring the drafts of Beckett's remaining plays, in each case using the preliminary material as a springboard for discussion of the final text.

The introductory material in these plays is generally less strikingly different from the final version than in the plays discussed in Section 1. Having established in the latter a movement towards ambiguous rather than specific statement as the plays progress towards the published text, we shall note any similar development in the remaining plays. But our main concern in Section 2 is the nature of the prefatory material for each play and its shaping into the final text. We shall go on to discuss in Part Two B what may be learned of Beckett's working method from his handling of the draft material and in Part Three consider his dramatic craftsmanship.

THE RADIO PLAYS

All That Fall

Since All That Fall was the first of Beckett's plays in English, it is appropriate to begin our investigation of the drafts with this play. We shall look subsequently at the rest of Beckett's radio plays before turning to the remaining stage works and those written for the camera. Beckett's capacity for writing in several dramatic genres will, however, be discussed in Part 3, rather than in the course of this section.

We have already noted (p.13) that All That Fall was written as the result of an invitation to Beckett by the B.B.C. Third Programme to write a piece for radio. Martin Esslin recounts the circumstances of the B.B.C. suggestion in his article "Samuel Beckett and the Art of Broadcasting".¹ Beckett was first approached towards the end of June 1956 and the play was

¹ Encounter, September 1975, pp.38-39.

sent to the B.B.C. on 27 September of the same year. "J'ai écrit All That Fall très rapidement, en 56" Beckett wrote to Jean-Jacques Mayoux.¹

Compared with most of the other plays under discussion All That Fall has remarkably few drafts. Only a holograph and a single typescript have come to light, both held in the Humanities Research Center of the University of Texas at Austin. Since the holograph is dated at its close "Ussy September 1956" and the completed text was sent to the B.B.C. on 27 September, it is unlikely that further drafts exist.² There are, however, three pages of jottings concerning the play in a notebook at Reading University, headed "Été 56".³ These jottings represent ideas for changes to the holograph and are frequently incorporated into it as alterations. The altered holograph then becomes the basis for the typescript, which in turn has some manuscript alteration. Minor vocabulary differences apart, the B.B.C. script is identical with the revised typescript.

Despite the paucity of draft material, a movement towards ambiguity may be observed as the play evolves. Clas Zilliacus describes this process as "the suppression of several 'clues'".⁴ There are two main instances of such a development in the play, from holograph to typescript. The first is a case of extension rather than suppression and concerns the evolution of the title. The holograph is headed

~~Lovely-Day-for-the-Races~~ ALL THAT FALL.*

The alteration appears to stem from the Reading notebook, where Beckett identifies the Psalm from which he takes his title:

The Lord upholdeth all that fall and raiseth up all those that be bowed down. (Ps. 145. 14)

It seems evident that the aptness of Psalm 145 to his theme only occurred to Beckett after writing the holograph. In the latter, at the point where an

¹ Jean-Jacques Mayoux "Le Théâtre de Samuel Beckett" Études Anglaises, T.X, No.4. Paris, Oct-Dec 1957 (pp.350-366) p.350 (note).

² I recently discovered a later typescript (1957) with some MS. corrections held at Washington University. It was made for the New York publication and is described by Beckett on the first page as "TS. for Grove...1957".

³ RUL MS.1227/7/7/1.

⁴ Beckett and Broadcasting, p.31.

enquiry about the sermon for the morrow is made, Beckett refers to a different text, also, apparently, worthy of ridicule.

Mr K. Has he announced his text.

Mrs K. quote "Sparrow text."

Silence. They join in wild prolonged laughter.¹

The "Sparrow text" is not lost by the introduction of Psalm 145, however, and is incorporated into the typescript separately:

Mrs Rooney. It is like the sparrows, than many
of which we are of more value...

The ambiguities inherent in Beckett's final choice of title for the play afford him opportunities for the kinds of irony at which he excels: the fate of the child proves that the fallen are not upheld; Mr Tyler, rather than the Lord, saved the preacher's life when they were climbing together; the Rooneys support each other as best they can on the treacherous station steps, but Mrs Rooney's wish to be "in atoms" and her spouse anticipating with relief the loss of further faculties, hardly holds out much hope for fallen humanity. Mr Rooney comments on their situation:

The perfect pair. Like Dante's damned, with
their faces arsy-versy. Our tears will water
our bottoms.²

The second development in the drafts of All That Fall introduces an ambiguity into the text. It occurs when Jerry runs up with the ball at the end of the play. In the holograph there is no doubt as to the ownership of the ball:

Mr K. Perhaps it is not mine at all.

Jerry. It has your name on it, Sir.

Jerry's remark is curious. Mr Kennedy's name on the ball makes it less likely to have been the child's toy. If, therefore, it was intended that

1 Mr and Mrs Rooney were originally Hugh and Emma Kennedy.

2 A.T.F., p.31.

the ball should link Mr Rooney with the child's death, it is, to say the least, a heavy-handed method of establishing murderer and victim on a "whodunnit" level. In the typescript Beckett strengthened the ending by omitting Jerry's remark, but leaving an implication of guilt in Mr Rooney's reluctance to accept the ball as his property, or to discuss the matter further. Suspicion of Mr Rooney is thus allowed to gather and cling because of the ambiguity.

Omitted also from the typescript is an earlier remark of Mr Rooney's that can, with hindsight, be seen to link directly with the death of the child announced at the end of the play. In the holograph Mr Kennedy states:

I should like to kill a child before I die. A little girl. (Pause.)

In the typescript, however, the wish has become capable of altruistic interpretation:

Mr Rooney. Did you ever wish to kill a child? (Pause).
Nip some young doom in the bud. (Pause.)

Had the holograph passage remained in the text, there would have been no ambiguity in the play's ending. But although direct reference to the death of a little girl is subsequently omitted from the text and we are never told the sex of the child who falls from the train, the final version is, nonetheless, permeated by the deaths of female children.

Once the play's ending has been registered, these deaths can be seen to contribute to a central theme, pinpointed by the music that introduces the play and is heard again just before its close. As noted in Section 1 (p.108) Schubert's Quartet No.14 in D Minor was inspired by the Matthias Claudius poem "Der Tod und das Mädchen". The theme is so central to All That Fall that one would expect Beckett to have had the music in mind from the outset. The holograph opens, however, with no indication as to what the introductory music is to be and it is not until a blank verso page towards the end that the title is noted. On the following page of text it is identified by Mr

Kennedy:

Mr K. (Indistinctly.) Death and the Maiden.

Silence

Mrs K. You are crying.

Mr K. Yes.

The music illumines Mrs Rooney's great sadness, to which her thoughts continually return, the death of her daughter Minnie:

Oh I am just a hysterical old hag I know, destroyed with sorrow and pining and gentility and church-going and fat and rheumatism and childlessness.
(Pause. Brokenly.) Minnie! Little Minnie! (Pause.)¹

It is not only the death of Minnie but a series of dead or dying women who provide the context for Beckett's play: there is the "poor woman" "alone in that ruinous old house" who plays Death and the Maiden; Mr Tyler's daughter has had her "whole - er - bag of tricks" removed, leaving him grandchildless. When, moreover, as if giving evidence, Mr Rooney narrates his account of the train journey for Maddy's approval, Mrs Rooney's sole response is to voice her musings on the "mind doctor's" tale of a little girl:

The only thing wrong with her as far as he could see was that she was dying. And she did in fact die, shortly after he washed his hands of her.²

The juxtaposition of husband and wife here not only highlights the spurious tale Mr Rooney has unfolded, but nicely counterpoints his unspoken thoughts of the death of the child on the train by his wife's broodings on the death of a little girl. The climax of the psychiatrist's account, recalled by Maddy, is that the trouble with the child was that "she had never been really born!"³ It is possible that the trouble with the Rooneys is that Minnie is merely a figment of Maddy's imagination. Such an interpretation makes sense of her obsession with hinnies (even, perhaps, of her "lifelong

1 A.T.F., p.9.

2 Ibid, p.36.

3 Ibid, p.37.

preoccupation with horses' buttocks"!)"¹ A hinny is the offspring of a she-ass by a stallion and hinnies populate the play, from Christy's beast at the opening, to the animal upon which Christ rode into Jerusalem. "Can hinnies procreate, I wonder?"² enquires Maddy. But hinnies are sterile, and it seems possible that Maddy also has failed to procreate, as later appears to have been the case with Winnie in Happy Days.

These are speculations. But themes of sterility and childlessness combine with the death of a child as part of the experience of All That Fall. And it is because such references are allowed in the final text to mount up gradually in the mind and then move sharply into focus against the ending of the play that it is so effective dramatically. Clumsy verbal underlining has been omitted and the audience is given the satisfaction of making its own judgements.

Embers

Fewer drafts have come to light for Embers than for any other Beckett play and Beckett has confirmed in a letter to me that he has no idea what has become of the early material. Bearing in mind his tendency to move away from the specific as the drafts develop, it is likely that access to the early material for this, his most baffling play, would prove illuminating. If the lack of drafts were to mean the exclusion of Embers from our discussion, however, it would mean ignoring this play alone among Beckett's plays in English. Moreover the extreme ambiguity of the final text would seem to make it both valid and relevant to include some exploration of Embers in Part 2, since ambiguity has been seen to be a major factor in the development of the plays so far studied.

I have been able to trace only two typescripts for Embers. The

1 A.T.F., p.36.

2 Ibid, p.38.

earliest, at Trinity College Dublin, is a typescript with manuscript corrections.¹ The second is the typescript preceding the Faber proof of the text. Both typescript and proof are held by the University of Texas at Austin and inscribed by Beckett "for Jake Schwartz, Paris, Feb. 1960."

Martin Esslin notes that "copyright clearance" for the B.B.C. script of the play ("this as yet untitled manuscript") was requested on 13 February 1959, that a subsequent B.B.C. memorandum is headed Ebb, but that by April 1959, the title had become Embers.² This may help to date the Dublin typescript somewhere between February and April 1959, since it is headed Ebb, with Embers written underneath. Beside these alternative headings are four phrases from the text which seem also to have been under consideration as titles. These are: "The Water's Edge"; "Why life, Henry?"; "Not a Soul" and "All day all night".

The Trinity College typescript shows Beckett toying with the idea of using several different voices to convey scenes in flashback during Henry's monologue, in addition to the scenes with Ada and Addie. Four separate voices are placed at one stage as afterthoughts in the stage directions: "Henry then", "Henry now" (as in Krapp then and now), "Father" and "Addie". But a note in the Texas typescript reverses this decision: "All his voice. Wail Addie's voice." Beckett's final solution is thus for Henry to speak for the characters in his head, though occasionally (as with his daughter's "wail" and the scenes with her instructors) they are so strongly present in his mind that they emerge as evocations, with no conscious effort on Henry's part. His power to evoke non-human sounds is underlined early in the text:

Hooves! (Pause. Louder.) Hooves! (Sound of hooves walking on hard road. They die rapidly away. Pause.)
Again! (Hooves as before. Pause. Excitedly.) Train it to mark time!³

1 T.C.D. MS.4663.

2 Encounter, September 1975, p.42.

3 Krapp's Last Tape and Embers, London 1959, Second edition 1965, pp.21-22.

The voice of Henry's wife Ada also appears to be an evocation. Beckett uses the technique again in Eh Joe, where the image dwindles to a man's face, listening intently to the voice of an unseen woman. That Ada is not present in the flesh is suggested in an addition to the stage directions of the Dublin typescript: "no sound as she sits." But ambiguity is introduced when, in a further addition, Beckett makes her remark "Poor Addie", showing her to have heard the scenes in which Addie is tortured by her teachers. Before this change Ada had merely remarked to her husband: "you are silent today" and "what are you thinking of?" thus proving, apparently, that she had not been privy to her daughter's miseries. It is not clear, however, whether she has not heard them simply because it is impossible to eavesdrop upon the thoughts of another person, or because she herself is an evocation and Henry, when thinking of Addie, has temporarily excluded his wife.

Beckett omits the more concrete proposition (that Ada did hear the Addie scenes) from the Texas version, with the resulting implication that she is an involuntary voice, passing in and out of her husband's head.¹ Ambiguity about her presence or absence is, however, central to the play and depends, for its effect, upon radio presentation. As Beckett remarked when discussing Cendres, the French translation, with Paul-Louis Mignon: "Cendres repose sur une ambiguïté: le personnage a-t-il une hallucination où est-il en présence de la réalité? La réalisation scénique détruirait l'ambiguïté."²

Both Addie scenes are appended to the Trinity College typescript and do not appear in context. They reveal the rigorous training to which the child's imaginative and physical nature are subjected. The riding scene is deliberately sexual in its language. Following Addie's cry from horseback

1 See Clas Zilliacus "Samuel Beckett's Embers: 'A Matter of Fundamental Sounds'", Modern Drama Vol 13 (September 1970) pp.216-225, p.220.

2 "Le Théâtre de A Jusqu'a Z", L'Avant-Scène No.313, 15 Juin 1964, p.8.

comes her father's evocation of his first love-making with her mother. Here a rough sea takes over the action, heralding Ada's orgasmic cry. At the close of the scene, Beckett notes as an afterthought: "*End of evocation.*"

It is evident from such additions to the Trinity College typescript that Beckett was aiming to clarify certain aspects of his text, while leaving its main purport (and particularly the relevance of the Bolton and Holloway narration) open to speculation. The Texas typescript is little altered, apart from the minor modifications noted earlier, though it is only after its completion that a manuscript note names Henry and Ada, who have been known hitherto simply as "He" and "She".

Two interesting changes are made among several small alterations in the Faber proof of the text. One of these inserts the phrase "little book" after Henry's anguished outburst "Christ!" at the end of the play, thus apparently inviting the possibility of Christian interpretation. The second change marginally increases the ambiguity of Henry's final speech by replacing the pronouns "him" and "he" by "you" in both cases, thus:

...Left soon afterwards, passed ~~him~~ you on the road, didn't see her, looking out to... (Pause.) Can't have been looking out to sea. (Pause). Unless ~~he~~ you had gone round the other side...¹

The only way of making sense of this passage is to assume Henry to be mulling over what Ada had begun to tell him about his father, adding to her account, as if trying to reconstruct the events of that day. "You" then becomes the father, to whom Henry speaks aloud.

Since all voices in the play are evocations, apart from Henry's own, only the sea may be said irrefutably to be present with him. All the pauses are filled with the sound of the sea and we hear Henry's footsteps crunching on the shingle. There is no silence. The play indeed ends on a contradiction worthy of the end of Godot: "Not a sound" says Henry, but we

1. Embers, p.37.

still hear the sea. Ada, however, appears to have found silence beneath the waves:

Underneath all is as quiet as the grave. Not a sound.
All day all night, not a sound.¹

Whether such knowledge means that Ada, like Henry's father, has drowned is unimportant. For Henry she is still present in his head. His concern is to drown the sound of the sea by some means, even to the absurdity of carrying about his gramophone. But his reasons for this remain ambiguous. Perhaps, in drowning the voice of the sea, he hopes also to drown the persistent voice of his wife, or to lessen his need to be with his father; for he both tries to evade the sea and yet is drawn to the shore, to try "to get him to be with me."² The function of the sea appears to be to help Henry to come to terms with his father's death by drowning, even, perhaps, with the fact of death itself. The sea is an impersonal, inescapable presence, that, having claimed his father, is, like death, in the background, until the time comes to absorb Henry into itself.

Henry may sit on the strand between life and death, but his life is a study in vacancy, a negation:

Saturday...nothing.Sunday...Sunday...nothing all day. (Pause.)
Nothing, all day nothing. (Pause.) All day all night nothing. (Pause.)
Not a sound.³

A wholly unsentimental, uncompromising position is taken in Embers, in which the whole business of living is decried. This is emphasised by Henry dashing two large stones together, before throwing them away crying "That's life!"⁴ Implicit here is both sterility and, in the clashing sound, a hint, perhaps, of the discord of Henry's marriage, exemplified also in his daughter's discords on the piano. The sound of stone striking stone heralds Henry's account of

1 Embers, p.34.

2 Ibid, p.35.

3 " p.39.

4 " p.33.

the sexual "hammering",¹ the long prelude to the engendering of Addie.

It is possible that the sea is trying to convey a more profound truth to Henry, that of his basic misconception about the life he is living, his deliberate avoidance (as in Film) of himself. By constantly escaping, as he does, into storytelling, Henry avoids definition as himself, denies his selfhood. This of course is the dilemma of the creative artist, with which Beckett concerns himself in so many works; it is also the situation of the actor, losing his own identity in a multiplicity of roles.

If Embers is interpreted in this way, the sea becomes the consciousness Henry seeks to avoid, as in Not I, where the "buzzing" of the subconscious continually questions the story Mouth is telling, in order to try to bring it to her attention that the story is her own. When Henry says "not a sound" he is thus successfully keeping his consciousness of reality at bay and taking refuge in fiction.

Henry, like Bolton in his major fiction, is living the embers of a life, with no future (as the negatives at the end of the play make clear) and only words to place between himself and despair. Either his fictions prevent him brooding upon an unwelcome reality, or that reality drives him to fiction. It appears that he has always told stories to pass the time. Ada draws attention to the fact that he never stops talking to himself and recommends a psychiatrist named Holloway, thus linking the fact of Henry's neurotic behaviour with the fictional doctor in his principal tale. An interesting ambiguity is introduced here: we have already remarked Henry's likeness to Bolton, so the possibility emerges that Bolton is a pseudonym, a mask or persona for Henry himself. Since, moreover, the Holloway in his story bears some resemblance to a doctor of that name, Henry's fiction now seems to contain elements of fact. He can only live disguised in his stories, as

1 Embers, p.34.

with the third person narration in Not I.

Like Not I also, the linking of words and excrement implies that what is said is not worth hearing. Ada remarks that Addie has heard Henry speaking "in the lavatory"¹ while Mouth in Not I rushes out occasionally to vent her flood of speech in the "nearest lavatory".² It is one of Beckett's most despairing comments on the human situation.

The main problem with Henry's story is that "I never finished it ... I never finished anything, everything always went on for ever."³ All Beckett characters face a similar problem. The Unnamable's last words are "I can't go on, I'll go on."⁴ The latter appears to be uttering from a limbo beyond life and might reasonably expect to have reached the end, only to find that there is no end. Henry has a foreshadowing of such a situation in his opening speech:

...that's what hell will be like, small chat to the babbling of Lethe about the good old days when we wished we were dead.⁵

Ada's small talk that had tormented him in reality in the past now lives in his head. Henry is condemned endlessly to rehearse his experience, as are the characters in the later plays, or the aged Krapp, whose living is reduced to an ear bent towards his tape.

The level of unreality in Embers is extreme. Henry lives in a fiction, carries on internal conversations with imaginary voices, himself eavesdrops on his daughter and her teachers, tells himself a story that may be partly a truth he does not acknowledge and is accompanied throughout by a surreal sound purporting to be the sea. Although we remain uncertain about details,

1 Embers, p.32.

2 Not I, p.15.

3 Embers, pp.22-23.

4 Trilogy, p.418.

5 Embers, p.26.

such as Ada's whereabouts, or whether Henry's father drowned or set up house in the Argentine, we have been able to establish something of Henry's current situation and state of mind. But the meaning of the Bolton and Holloway story remains ambiguous.

That this fiction is significant is apparent from the amount of text devoted to it. We have already considered that Bolton might represent Henry and Holloway his doctor or psychiatrist. It is also sometimes suggested that Bolton and Holloway represent the two sides of Henry's nature. That the two men are mutually dependent and yet irreconcilable might thus hint at Henry's life of inaction, paralysed by opposing forces. Such an interpretation takes Bolton, imprisoned in his room, gazing from the window, to represent mind. He needs help from Holloway, who comes ready to minister to physical ills, with his black bag containing "a shot". But he cannot leave until Bolton releases him, and Bolton merely stares at him with "the old blue eye" until Holloway begs for mercy and "covers his face". The situation remains unresolved: "Old men, great trouble, no good."¹

A rigid Cartesian parallel is unhelpful. It may equally be argued that Bolton's plea is for euthanasia, but that this, medical ethics must lead Holloway to reject. Bolton, holding aloft his lighted candle, may be seen as challenging Holloway to do a good deed (put him out of his misery) in a "naughty world".² But Bolton does not take up Holloway's offer of "a shot" (equivalent, presumably, to the painkiller in Endgame.) It seems likely that the cure Bolton requires is beyond Holloway's competence to prescribe, a cure for the human situation in an absurd universe.

Embers is perhaps Beckett's most impenetrable play. Its "complex, almost molecular structure"³ is noted by John Pilling. But clarity per se

1 Embers, p.39.

2 Ibid, p.39; see also Shakespeare, Merchant of Venice, V I:
"How far that little candle throws his beams!/So shines a good deed in a
naughty world."

3 Samuel Beckett, p.101.

is not Beckett's object. As early as 1938, in an essay on the poet Denis Devlin, Beckett had remarked:

The time is not perhaps altogether too green for the vile suggestion that art has nothing to do with clarity, does not dabble in the clear, and does not make clear.¹

Writing to the American actress, Jessica Tandy in 1973, regarding the pace at which she should play Mouth in Not I, Beckett showed that his view had remained consistent:

I am not unduly concerned with intelligibility. I hope the piece may work on the nerves of the audience, not its intellect.²

The ambiguities in Embers "work on the nerves of the audience" and are, perhaps, the play's main strength.

Pochade Radiophonique; Words and Music; Esquisse Radiophonique; Cascando.

Beckett's remaining plays for radio will be considered as a group, since three of them (Words and Music, Esquisse Radiophonique and Cascando) were all written within days of each other, in late November and early December 1961. As mentioned in Part 1, moreover, all three plays appear to be different approaches to a single theme, in the same manner that Beckett, shortly after the completion of Play, made notes for a further play on the triangular theme.³ The three radio plays are all concerned with the difficulties of artistic creation and the problems experienced by the writer. We shall look first at Pochade Radiophonique, for which the precise date of composition is unknown. The French publication states "années 60?" and the English "Circa 1960". The latter is unreliable, however, since a similar dating is given for Esquisse Radiophonique, although drafts date the latter precisely in November 1961.

1 "Denis Devlin", transition, no.27, April-May 1938, pp.289-294 (p.293).

2 Quoted by Enoch Brater in "Dada, Surrealism, and the Genesis of Not I", Modern Drama, Vol XVIII (1975) pp.49-59 (p.53).

3 See p.115 above.

Pochade Radiophonique

Pochade Radiophonique was not published until 1975.¹ Reading University has two typescripts prior to this publication.² The first of these is considerably older than the second and has manuscript alterations that are incorporated into the text of the second version. The play was first heard in Beckett's English translation on 13 April 1976,³ under the title Rough for Radio and was subsequently published in Ends and Odds, this time entitled Radio II.⁴ Contrary to my usual practice of quoting from a text in its original language, quotation here is from Radio I and Radio II since, owing to their recent publication, the English versions are more readily available in this country.⁵

Despite the four characters in Radio II, the play appears to be an example of Beckett's natural mode of writing, a dialogue with the self, for which radio proved so appropriate a vehicle. Radio II is an internal monologue concerned (like the other plays in this group) with the authorial problem of finding words to satisfy the insistent urge to create.

The difficulty of the creative process is seen in an extreme form in Radio II, with each character objectifying a part of that process. The Animator (or intellect) and writing hand (Stenographer) between them try to coerce the creative faculty or imagination (appropriately named "Fox") into telling a story. But Fox, who has been kept bound and gagged until the others are ready for him, only lets loose a few words when attacked with a ruler by the sinister Dick, despite an embryo idea inside him ("I had my brother in my stomach.")

1 Minit Revue Périodique No.16, Novembre 1975, pp.2-12.

2 MSS.1396/4/43 and 44.

3 Produced and directed by Martin Esslin for B.B.C. Radio 3, to mark Beckett's seventieth birthday.

4 Ends and Odds, London, 1977.

5 It has been possible to include these two plays, having translated the French versions before their English publication, because of the central position of Radio I in the group of radio plays.

Dick is mute. His function is entirely physical, he never utters, only beats. Not one of the four characters is free. Animator is impelled in his investigation by a force he cannot resist, a force perhaps comparable with the stimulus behind the light in Play. The stenographer is similarly obliged to write down Fox's emergent phrases and check them back with Animator. All are trapped in and by the process of creation. They may dream of freedom (Animator's last line is "Tomorrow, who knows, we may be free."¹) But freedom, if it ever comes, is likely to bring release only from one story to the next. Real freedom, as Victor Krap found in Eleuthéria, is impossible.

We do not know what lies behind the endless compulsion to create any more than what lies behind the light in Play. It may be that the stimulus is involuntary, as irresistible as the life-force itself that sets the natural cycle in motion, and self-perpetuating merely because it has no option. The ambiguity is central to Beckett's repeated handling of the problem, in which his protagonists are driven to utter against their will and without knowing why.

Words and Music

The first reference to Words and Music, the next radio play, is found in the "Été 56" notebook at Reading University, where two brief notes are headed:

.
Words Music, Paris, Feb 16, 1961. ²

The theme appears to have been well established in Beckett's mind at this time, since the notes refer to details, rather than the seeds of an idea, though the situation implied is not precisely that of the published text. The first note, for example, refers to a character not present in the later

1 Radio II, p.104.

2 R.U.L. MS. 1227/7/7/1.

version:

Commands of Word faint, repeated clarion by Usher.

The "Usher" might well be an early name for Croak, or first thoughts on what was to become the "Opener" in the subsequent play, Cascando. The idea of an usher repeating commands seems also to have connections with a familiar Beckettian image, that of a court scene; but it is impossible to tell from the note whether the Usher was concerned in a trial, or heralding a performance.

The second note shows Beckett to have visualized an entire scene and to be considering his final effect:

End: diminishing sound of alternating words and music till close on a few syllables and a few notes.

Again this differs from the ensuing versions, where the only diminuendo is the gradual dying away of the sound of Croak's slippers. The published play ends with Music, cajoled by Words, giving a repetition of the "well-head" passage.

A holograph and two typescripts of Words and Music are among the Samuel Beckett Papers at Washington University, St. Louis. The holograph took precisely one week to write, later in 1961. It is headed "Paris 20.11.61." and dated at the close "Ussy 27.11.61." The name "Croak" evolves on page 3 of the holograph. His first speech (on page 2) is headed "Old Man's Whisper" and ensuing speeches are prefaced "Whisper" until they are altered in favour of Croak. The first speech is then re-headed "senile Croak." Words and Music are referred to familiarly as Will and Louis, which may, as Clas Zilliacus suggests, have been an ironic nod in the direction of Shakespeare and Beethoven.¹ In the first typescript the two become the more neutral Joe and Bob.

1 Beckett and Broadcasting, p.100.

In the holograph and first typescript the first theme proposed by Words is that of "hope" not sloth, as it becomes in typescript two. Croak thus enters on an appropriate irony in the holograph:

By hope unvisited the soul - (Pause.) Listen! (Distant sound of rapidly shuffling carpet slippers.)

The sound of the slippers is subsequently increased, Expressionist fashion, to "a deafening crescendo all sense of slippers gone, stops. Silence." thus creating a Pinteresque sense of menace. By typescript two (which is virtually identical with the Faber text) there is no longer an attempt to colour the listener's interpretation by establishing a moment of terror with the advent of Croak, and the "crescendo" direction is omitted.

There is not enough information in the preliminary notes at Reading to suggest how like or unlike the final version of the play Beckett's first ideas were. The Washington drafts reveal only comparatively minor changes in the text, apart from linguistic polishing, which we shall look at in some detail when discussing Beckett's working method in Part 2B.

Words and Music is often considered ambiguous by students coming to the play for the first time, but it seems to me one of the most easily accessible of Beckett's dramatic pieces. A. Alvarez points out that the play

illustrates vividly that split between the music the poet hears in his head and the leaden words at his command, and the slow, unwilling process of disciplining and refining these two elements until they finally chime together in a single work of art.¹

A lyric may be defined as words sung to music² and Beckett characterizes both elements in this play that culminates in a lyric. The entire structure of Words and Music is reminiscent of musical composition, with themes tried out "hesitantly" at first and refined through repetition until their final flowering. It is when Croak proposes the theme of age that Joe and Bob

1 Beckett, London 1973, p.120.

2 "Of or for the lyre, meant to be sung; of the nature of, expressed or fit to be expressed in, song". (O.E.D.)

are at last heard to make efforts which, however faltering, are at least indicative of experience, rather than the gabble and sentiment previously emitted. These efforts gradually produce the first section of the lyric.

Joe's opening lines recall Adam's description of "unregarded age in corners thrown" in As You Like It:¹

Words: Age is when...old age I mean...if that is what my Lord means...is when...if you're a man...were a man ...huddled...nodding...the ingle...waiting -²

Bob's ideas of an appropriate accompaniment gradually crystallize into an "air" which he plays through alone, followed by a repeated invitation to Joe to join in, until at last, and very softly, Joe "tries to sing" the entire lyric. The prosaic opening ("Shivering for the hag/To put the pan in the bed") is balanced by the romantic close:

... The face in the ashes
That old starlight ³
On the earth again.

From the ashes of a love long lost or perhaps (as in Play) from the ashes of death, the face haunts Croak. Revisions in Typescript 1 emphasize his encounter with "The face [] On the stairs",⁴ which is followed at once by his proposal of love as the theme for the day.

The prose description of the woman that comes after the first verse of the lyric is again carefully balanced between realism and romance. A romantic description, befitting Croak's emotion, is subsequently undercut by a parody of voluptuousness:

the great white rise and fall of the breasts, spreading
as they mount and then subsiding to their natural-aperture.

Bob, however, is inspired to a rash display of enthusiasm:

irrepressible burst of spreading and subsiding music.⁵

1 Shakespeare, As You Like It II 3.

2 Words and Music, p.30.

3 Ibid, p.32.

4 Ibid, p.28.

5 Ibid, p.34.

The second part of the lyric culminates in Croak's departure, his exorcism temporarily completed, having faced the dreaded, longed-for agony of memory. Joe's sigh of satisfaction at the end of the play, after hearing a reprise of the "wellhead" from Bob, contains also Croak's regret for lost youth and indeed the regrets of all Beckett's aged romantics for "yesterday".

Esquisse Radiophonique

Words and Music was completed on 27 November 1961. On 29 November Beckett began Esquisse Radiophonique and finished it the following day, though it remained unpublished until 1973.¹ The French holograph is in the Mills Memorial Library at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario. Since the McMaster Library did not know about the publication of the play until it had taken place,² Beckett clearly retained a fair copy of the holograph, but was uncertain of the precise date of composition. The published text is dated "vers 1962-63?". As noted in Part 1 (p.79) the play was first published in English in 1976 (under the title Sketch for Radio Play) and was republished as Radio I in 1977.³

The McMaster holograph is much crossed out and very difficult to decipher, but the published version appears to be a fair copy with small alterations, such as the substitution of "Lui" and "Elle" for "homme" and "femme" to describe the two human characters. It is a play for four characters: a man with two companions (as in Words and Music) though here called Music and Voice. The fourth character is an intrusive woman, who comes to hear Voice and Music. This is effected by turning separate knobs to the right, as in an old-fashioned radio. The two perform separately at first, at low volume; but they come together briefly and, when the woman has left, they perform together entirely.

1 Minuit Revue Périodique No.5, Septembre 1973, pp.31-35.

2 Letter to the author 28 June 1974.

3 Ends and Odds, pp.87-91.

As we have seen in Part One the man fears Voice and Music are about to leave him, since they have become very faint. He telephones his doctor urgently to inform him of the fact and expresses great surprise that, since Voice and Music cannot see or hear each other, they have managed to unite:

He...they're together...TOGETHER...yes...I don't know...
 like...(hesitation)...one...the breathing...I don't know...
 (vehement)...no!...never!...meet?...how could they meet?...¹

Unlike Words and Music, where the union was achieved with such difficulty, the coming together of Music and Voice appears to have been involuntary, with no assistance from the man. Indeed the union is expressly against his wishes, since it seems to have brought about the silencing of his two "needs". To his terror he realises that he can no longer summon his companions by turning the knobs, for they have an independent existence and have chosen to leave him. All he can do is await the doctor, who has already told him there is "nothing to be done".²

The play as it stands is highly ambiguous. When read in conjunction with Words and Music and Cascando, however, it gains a new perspective. In Words and Music Croak forced his reluctant poetic imagination to coalesce in words. In Radio I "he" can no longer summon either an imaginative idea or the words in which to clothe it, because both are failing. We hear them growing steadily fainter until finally there is silence. The lonely writer is left knowing he can hope for no assistance before noon the following day. Seen in this context, the end of the play is the writer's nightmare. The emphasis on "tomorrow noon" and a "breech" birth may even be seen to take on implications of a noon deadline, with no words, no ideas with which to perform the creative act, so that the work has to be dragged out, as in a

1 Radio I, p.91. Note how the telephone question and answer technique is developed, ten years later, into the self-questioning in Not I, with "vehement" denials of selfhood.

2 Ibid.

breech birth. The writer is left with his "needs" (the compulsion to create) but without the means to bring it about.

Cascando

Beckett abandoned Esquisse Radiophonique on 30 November 1961 and began Cascando the following day. The first page of the French holograph is dated 1 December 1961. A very full set of drafts for the play is to be found in the Harvard Theatre Collection, Harvard College Library and in the Samuel Beckett Papers at Washington University Libraries, St. Louis. Harvard has the earlier material and Washington the later. In a letter to Herbert Myrom accompanying the drafts sent to Harvard, Beckett described the material as follows:

Herewith MSS. of Cascando. It tells its own shaky story.
 I Original MS. II Typescript of Voix I (Ouvreur). III
 Typescript of Voix 2 (élément soi.) IV Typescript of
 Voix 2 (élément histoire.) V Typescript of completed
 piece. VI Typescript of my English translation. VII
 Typescript of preceding revised.

He goes on to comment that:

It is an unimportant work, but the best I have to offer.
 It does I suppose show in a way what passes for my mind
 and what passes for its work.¹

There seems to be some confusion both in Beckett's description of the material and in Harvard's subsequent classification of it. Following the holograph, which is written in two parts (Voix 1 and 2)² Beckett made a typescript fair copy, again divided into two voices. He had little trouble with Voix 1 and, after making the fair copy, does not repeat this material until typing the "completed piece". Voix 2 was more difficult, however, and required three separate typescripts. The first is the fair copy already mentioned, while the second and third are headed separately in manuscript "soi" and "histoire".

1 Harvard Theatre Collection; letter dated 21 September 1962.

2 Voix 1 dated (start and finish) 1 December 1961. Voix 2 dated 3 December 1961 (start) and 18? December 1961 (close).

In his analysis of the material for Harvard quoted above, Beckett notes the fair copy of Voix 1 "Typescript of Voix 1 (Ouvreur)" but does not include that of Voix 2. Forgetting that there were three typescripts for the latter, he lists only two stages "soi" and "histoire". He then puts the "soi" and "histoire" typescripts together, labelling the first page "III". The first typescript is finally labelled "IV", as if, instead of being a fair copy from the holograph of the whole of Voix 2, it were only "élément histoire".

The following chart clarifies:

<u>Beckett</u>	<u>Harvard</u>
I "Original MS" (Voix 1 and 2)	Folder 1, (Beckett I) holograph Voix 1 and 2)
II "Ts of Voix I (Ouvreur)"	Folder 2, (Beckett II) Ts 1 (Voix 1 <u>only</u>)
III "Ts of Voix 2 (élément soi)"	Folder 3, (Beckett III) Tss2(<u>soi</u>) <u>and</u> 3(<u>histoire</u>)
IV "Ts of Voix 2 (élément histoire)"	Folder 4, (Beckett IV) Ts 1 (Voix 2)
V "Ts of completed piece"	Folder 5, (Beckett V) Complete Ts (entitled <u>Calando.</u>)

There is considerable evidence to support the above reordering of the material. In the first place the holograph of Voix 2 is written in eighteen separate sections. In Beckett's Stage II the Roman numerals I-XVIII are placed in manuscript in the right-hand margins of Voix I, where the speeches of Voix 2 are to be inserted. In the left-hand margins manuscript notes state which aspect of Voix 2 (Soi 1, Soi 2, Histoire, or a combination of Soi and Histoire) are to make each speech.¹ The fair copy of Voix 2 (Beckett's Stage IV) is then typed from the holograph into eighteen sections. Beckett also begins to note in manuscript which aspect of Voix 2 is making each speech, but abandons such identification after the first page, since it is already

¹ Voix 2's speeches are divided as follows:

Soi 1 et Histoire M	Soi I	Histoire M	Soi 2 et Histoire M	Soi 2	Soi 1 and 2
I	II, IV	III, V, VI, VIII XI-XIV	VII	IX X	XV-XVIII

present throughout the fair copy of Voix 1.

Internal textual evidence also supports the reordering of the Harvard draft material. A passage taken from the first speech of Voix 2 elucidates:

Holograph

xxx...il regarde la vitre...de temps en temps...elle s'assombrit...
~~xxx-xxx-xxx-xxx-xxx~~ la terre s'assombrit...

Beckett IV

c'est long...il regarde la vitre...de temps en temps...elle s'assombrit...
 la terre s'assombrit...

Beckett III (Histoire)

c'est long...il ~~regarde-la-vitre~~ leve la tête...de temps en temps...
 regarde la vitre... elle s'assombrit brunit... la terre s'assombrit
 brunit...

Beckett V

c'est long...il leve la tête...de temps en temps... regarde la
 vitre...ellebrunit...la terre brunit...

Such misplacement of material happens easily when collecting together several drafts of a work. We have noted a similar example in the early drafts of Come and Go at Reading University. But it shows that Beckett's ordering of the material needs careful checking before being accepted as the precise order of composition.

Beckett's description of the Harvard material is one of the most interesting features of the Cascando drafts. Not only are there two voices (the first of these subsequently named "Ouvreur") but the second voice is divided into separate elements, that of the self (Soi) and that of the storyteller or narrator (Histoire). Investigation of the material reveals, moreover, a further subdivision not mentioned in Beckett's description. Soi has a dual personality: Soi 1 and Soi 2.

From Hamm to Mouth we are familiar with Beckett's protagonists telling themselves thinly-disguised autobiographical stories to pass the time, but such precise identification of various elements of the protagonist is new.

We have noted a division into separate elements in the preceding plays for radio, but no preliminary material has come to light in which these elements are unequivocally stated to belong to the self, as they are in the Cascando drafts.

Not only Voix 2 in its various guises, but Musique and Voix 1 are also part of the pattern of selfhood in Cascando, with Voix 1 supposedly in control of the rest, in that he releases them. By the end of the play, however, this function is open to question and Voix 2 and Musique seem to be acting independently, as happened with Music and Voice in the preceding play, Radio I.

Clas Zilliacus points out that when Musique and Voix occur together, it is only as Soi that Voix speaks. Histoire, the teller of tales (not only the self attempting to structure experience into stories, but perhaps the fantasiser also) always occurs alone.¹ Zilliacus notes also that Soi 2 appears to be the self's consciousness of guilt, characterized by the words "coupable" "innocent" and "purgé".² This Soi 2 material is the most notable omission from the later drafts of Cascando. Beckett refers to it in the margin of Stage III (Soi) as the "motif coupable", but all overt mention of guilt is removed from subsequent drafts. "Le coupable" is altered in Stage III to "le chercher", suggesting that Maunu, who is sought throughout the play, was originally conceived as the guilty one.

In the last of the Harvard typescripts in French the play is entitled Calando and Voix 1 and 2 are brought together for the first time, instead of being written separately. Voix 1 is renamed "Ouvreur", so that Voix 2 becomes the sole voice; but its various elements are no longer separated, nor are they in the subsequent Washington typescripts. The removal of the

1 Beckett and Broadcasting, p.136.

2 Ibid, p.130.

explicit elements of the self from the later drafts of the play is not, however, a typical example of developing ambiguity because the holograph is equally obscure. The division of *Voix 2* into its three elements in the first typescript seems rather to have been so that Beckett himself could keep each separately in mind as he worked on developing the text.

Washington University has two typescripts of the French text that succeed the Harvard versions, but, beyond the emergence of the title Cascando in the first of these there is little development in the text. The second typescript contains what appear to be printer's markings and the text is identical with the 1966 Paris publication, except for a few small improvements in punctuation and presentation in the published version.

There are two typescripts of Beckett's English translation of the play at Harvard. The first has manuscript alterations, the second two spelling corrections only. Three further typescripts of the translation are in the Washington Library. The first is a carbon copy of the final Harvard typescript, but with more extensive alterations. The second version omits most of the alterations from the first typescript, while adding new ones. The latter are incorporated into the last of the Washington typescripts, which is very similar to the London publication of the play in 1964.¹ The New York publication in 1963² is identical with the final Harvard typescript (before the Washington revisions) except for the penultimate speech of Voice, where the typescript reads "I've had him" and the published version "I've got him".

1 The Faber text omits from the first speech of Voice: "(then rest...it's the right one...this time...I have it...) I've got it...Woburn..."; also from the second speech of Voice with Music: "we're there...(nearly)... I'm there..."

In the typescript, Opener says in his second speech "I open the other" where Faber has "the door". Faber ends with "Curtain" where the typescript simply has "End".

2 Evergreen Review, No.30, Grove Press, May - June 1963, pp.47-57.

Cascando is the last of Beckett's series of radio plays on the same theme and with a similar cast of characters. The fact that at one point Musique is weakening and has to be encouraged by Ouvreur links strongly with the failing sound in the preceding Esquisse Radiophonique. Ouvreur also recalls Animateur in Pochade Radiophonique, while Fox in the same play has much in common with the narrating voice (élément histoire) in Cascando. Fox's extreme reluctance to create is not, however, present in the latter play, because Voix senses that at last he is on the track of the right story and is determined to pursue it to the end.

Voix, as Clas Zilliacus points out, is "groping for the one story which would literally exhaust him, by exhaustively defining him."¹ He seeks the story to end all stories. The desire to find such a story is expressed by Soi, and Histoire accordingly returns to an old story, that of Maunu, in the hope that it might prove to be the right one. Soi becomes increasingly certain that it is the right story and will culminate in a release from storytelling. A comparison may be made here with the later play Not I. The implication in Cascando is that if Soi could somehow tell his own story or "say him",² the self would be able to unite, and, in so doing, achieve freedom. Similarly in Not I if Mouth could recognize or accept that she is telling her own story it is possible that she too would be allowed to stop repeating it. The more strenuously she denies her selfhood, the more powerless is the Auditor to help her.

It appears that Voix addresses himself as "je" in Cascando when he is sure of his identity and as "tu" when he is not. Since, however, the essential self must, by its nature, remain unnamable, those whom Voix addresses either by the pronouns "je" or "tu" or by name (Maunu) cannot be

1 Beckett and Broadcasting, p.129.

2 Cascando, p.44.

himself. The real, the nameless self has no pronoun to encompass it. In this sense Mouth in Not I is right to deny her narration. The tale she is telling is only an approximation towards selfhood and the essence of herself eludes her. The tale is truly NOT I because the real self is unknowable and cannot be caught in words.

If real self-knowledge is impossible and consciousness remains a stranger to itself, O's predicament in Film is a permanent dilemma, insoluble by confrontation. Any attempt to reach the self brings knowledge of the label rather than the essence. The real self remains elusive and the label of identity cannot encompass it. In The Unnamable Beckett reveals such a self, agonisedly awaiting the freedom that would result from uniting with his true identity: "it will be the silence [] I left myself behind in it, I'm waiting for me there"¹ and conscious that the many labels he has been given, the names by which he has been known, have never fully realised him.

Cascando remains full of ambiguities, whatever terms of reference are used for discussion. Whether, for example, it is interpreted as the self seeking its true identity, or the writer's search for the story of stories, the outcome remains in doubt. As noted in Part 1, however, the invasion of silence, cutting off the dialogue at the end of the play, does suggest a final culmination, however uncertain its nature.

It might be supposed that Beckett would not write one radio play in English, followed by two in French, on similar themes and without pausing between them, unless he were dissatisfied by each attempt and continued until, with Cascando, he approved of the result. Words and Music and Cascando were, however, written for collaboration with two different composers, John Beckett and Marcel Mihalevici. Esslin notes, moreover,

1 Trilogy, p.418.

that: "Words and Music finally realised Beckett's long-cherished intention of collaboration on an original work with John Beckett",¹ while Zilliacus quotes a letter from Mihalovici stating that "L'idée de Cascando est de Beckett lui-même. Mais l'initiative d'écrire une oeuvre radiophonique avec mon ami était de moi."² It would appear, therefore, that Beckett was merely carrying out two separate commitments, rather than making renewed attempts to write the same play.

Krapp's Last Tape

Returning to Beckett's work for the theatre, the remaining plays will now be considered in chronological order: Krapp's Last Tape is Beckett's first stage play in English. Like Cascando it is concerned with the changing self, though in a more concrete form than the latter play. This is probably partly due to the change of medium (Cascando is dealing with a concept that can be vocalized but not visualized). It may also be due to the fact that Cascando is a later play and Beckett's later work has tended to eschew naturalistic human beings in terrestrial settings for a limbo world from which voices endlessly recount.

Krapp has the mechanical assistance of the tape recorder to bring into being his earlier selves, but he has changed so much that he cannot identify with them. At 39 he comments:

Hard to believe I was ever that young whelp. The voice! Jesus! And the aspirations!³

And the 69 year-old Krapp summarily dismisses the 39 year-old self:

Just been listening to that stupid bastard I took myself for thirty years ago, hard to believe I was ever as bad as that. Thank God that's all done with anyway.⁴

1 Encounter, September 1975, p.42.

2 Beckett and Broadcasting, p.131; letter dated 12 March 1974.

3 Krapp's Last Tape, p.13.

4 Ibid, p.17.

The two comments echo each other so precisely across thirty years that we are able to make the connexion he denies and see in the aged Krapp the younger men, their vices merely more pronounced, as, over the years, he has sunk into solitude. The old man has learned from experience, however, recognizing that the time of real meaning in his past was a relationship with a woman, and not the intellectual vision that had so excited him at 39. It was a relationship he promptly denied; the episode is entered in his ledger as "Farewell to love". But, alone, at the end of life, the memory of perhaps his last meeting with the girl is the moment to which he clings.

Krapp's Last Tape was written very quickly. It stemmed from Beckett, in December 1957, hearing Patrick Magee reading extracts from Molloy on the B.B.C. Third Programme.¹ On 20 February 1958 Beckett drafted a text in the "Été 56" notebook entitled simply Magee Monologue.² On 15 March 1958 he wrote to Jake Schwartz that he had for him "four states, in type-script, with copious and dirty corrections, of a short stage monologue I have just written (in English) for Pat Magee. This was composed on the machine from a tangle of old notes, so I have not the MS. to offer you."³ By 5 April 1958 we learn from a further letter to Jake Schwartz that both the publication and first production of the play are going forward:

I have written it for Pat Magee and George Devine and it will be played by the former at the Royal Court with Endgame. This will be next May or in the early autumn, I do not yet know which. [] It will be published in a coming number of Evergreen Review.⁴

1 Broadcast 10 December, 1957.

2 R.U.L. MS. 1227/7/7/1.

3 Beckett Collection, Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, which also contains the four typescripts.

4 Ibid.

The writing was thus completed inside a month. The "tangle of old notes" must, I think, refer to the "Été 56" holograph versions, which appear to be in three stages. Stage 1 is a false start, in which the first tape heard records Krapp's thirtieth birthday. This version is broken off by a line drawn across the page below the text and a second attempt follows. Beckett did not, however, write out the opening of the monologue again, but began where he had decided revision was necessary, at the beginning of the taped voice. Stage 2 thus begins with Krapp's thirty-seventh birthday and the remainder of the text is broadly similar to the final version.

Stage 3 is a revision of the opening of the play, written on the verso blank pages of the notebook, facing Stage 1. Stage 3 breaks off at the words "Thirty-seven today etc." Typescript 1, which begins with the same words, appears to be a continuation of the Stage 3 text. It is followed by three further typescripts.

Krapp is called "A" until a MS. addition to Typescript 2, the same addition in which the opening clowning with bananas first appears. This replaces some cumbersome stage business (found in Stage 1 only) in which the table is moved and steadied. It seems likely that Beckett's main reason for abandoning Stage 1 was because it contained too much circumstantial detail. A recalls, for example, his nativity in North Great Georges St, making him a Dubliner born. He also refers to his cradle, Wildean fashion, as a "bassinet".¹

The omission of a Dublin setting for a non-localized one is one of several instances of a movement away from the specific in the drafts of Krapp's Last Tape. It may be compared with the decision to remove pronunciation directions for an Irish accent from the drafts of Not I. Not unnaturally the voice Beckett hears when writing his monologues is an Irish one. But to set his plays in Ireland could prove limiting for actor and audience alike, providing

¹ The Importance of Being Earnest, London, 1895; (Nelson edition, 1948) p.321.

problems of accent and perhaps distancing the plays into local curiosities, so that they lose the immediacy, the "Everyman" effect that is one of their greatest strengths. A specific date tried out at the opening of Typescript 3 is also subsequently omitted:

~~April 1986.~~¹ A late evening (sic) ~~in 1985~~ in the nineteen eighties.

The corrected version remains in Typescript 4, but becomes "in the future" in the final text.

Another point, clear in the holograph and subsequently obscured, concerns Krapp's vision. In Stage 2 he describes a sudden insight into his writing, a realisation that darkness is his true theme:

... clear to me at last that the dark I have struggled
to keep out of my work is in reality its true -

In ensuing drafts the passage becomes increasingly ambiguous until, in the final text, Krapp seems to be scoffing at a vision of life itself, rather than one of his artistic creativity. It is typical of Beckett's drafts to move from a narrow interpretation towards a wider one, as we have seen with Play and Come and Go.

It may be noted also that in Stage 1 Krapp's sexual problems were of a very different order from the final text. Instead of his plans, in the published version, "for a less ... (hesitates)... engrossing sexual life",²

A says:

what would help me more than anything, I think, is (lowering
his voice) ... sexual life. (Pause.) ~~With some partners.~~
a ... a fuller ... a more ... more natural ... a more ...
engrossing ... absorbing Enthusiastic. Intercourse!

Such reflections lead the old man to stop the tape and pause for several swift drinks. He then reenters "in a kind of shuffling dance", the first sign of the clowning that is later to become so evident. Stage 3, for example, gives stage directions for a clownish makeup:

Pallid face. Purple nose. Very near-sighted and hard of hearing.

Beckett's description of the play as being "composed on the machine" is somewhat misleading, in view of the initial holograph versions, although

1 Beckett's eightieth birthday on 13 April 1986 is clearly one reason for the change of date.

2 Krapp's Last Tape, p.13.

certain vocabulary changes are made silently between typescripts. At times no manuscript alteration is made, but a typed change occurs in an ensuing version. Examples of this are the word "widowhood" in Typescript 1 being replaced by "viduity" in Typescript 2 and Krapp's age silently increasing from 37 (in Typescripts 1-3) to 39 in Typescript 4.

All four typescripts are extensively corrected in manuscript, but the precise nature of these alterations need not trouble us here, since they are concerned not with radical change, but with the ways in which Beckett customarily refines his text, which is the subject of an ensuing section.¹ The title first appears as a manuscript addition to Typescript 2:

Crapp's Last Tape.

Some interesting jottings concerning the play are found in the "Été 56" notebook, following the holograph text. The first of these shows that Beckett wrote Krapp initially with very little idea of the mechanics of a tape recorder. In the notebook is the draft of a letter in which he asks a friend to

beg, borrow, steal, cadge or even buy, and send me
post haste, a prospectus [] of a tape-recorder.

Two diagrams of a tape recorder and some notes relating to these occur later in the notebook, showing Beckett to have had access to a machine, though at what stage in the play's composition is not clear. The tape recorder notes appear to have been written after the final drafting of the text, since a manuscript reminder of the necessity for some notes about the handling of the machine occurs at the end of Typescript 4.

The speed with which the play was written and the lack of major alteration from first to last reveals that the idea and its method of execution were visualized clearly from the outset. The play has, however, as James Knowlson points out, gone on developing over the years, in those productions in which Beckett has been concerned.² In a notebook prepared

1 Part 2B.

2 Journal of Beckett Studies, No.1, pp.50-64.

for his Schiller Theater production in 1969, for example, Beckett emphasizes the light and darkness "emblems" in the play.¹ He notes, moreover, in the margin of the Faber text that he used for the 1973 London production, a direct connexion with another play in which dark and light imagery is at the heart. Where the word "chrysolite" occurs, on page 15, he writes:

If heaven would make me such another world
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite
I'd not have sold her for it.

Othello V 2²

Like Othello, too, Krapp has lost his love through his own folly.

Beckett has cut from recent productions Krapp's singing of the Baring-Gould hymn "Now The Day is Over" because, as Knowlson observes, it is "in Beckett's personal view, too clumsily explicit".³ Further alterations in the play will be discussed in Part 3. They show Beckett to be thinking in terms of what works for a particular production, and are not generally introduced into the text.

Happy Days

The dating of Happy Days is puzzling. The first full holograph is dated 8 October 1960 at the opening and 14 January 1961 at its close. A holograph headed "Rewrite" was begun two days later (14 January 1961) and the close of Act 1 is dated 31 January 1961. Act 2 was begun on 2 February 1961 and completed on "7.2.62" (the latter clearly an error for 1961). A final holograph was begun on "29.3.62" of which Act 1 was completed on 12 May 1961. Act 2 was begun the following day (13 May 1961) and completed on 14 May. But in both cases the last figure in the date was hurriedly written

1 R.U.L., MS. 1396/4/16, p.45. See also Knowlson, Light and Darkness in the Theatre of Samuel Beckett.

2 R.U.L. MS. 1227/7/10/1.

3 Journal of Beckett Studies, No.1 p.54.

and is uncertain. The New York publication of the play in 1961 would seem to clinch the date of completion, were it not for an interview with Paul-Louis Mignon in June 1964, in which Beckett remarked that Happy Days had taken eighteen months to write, thus giving a new perspective to what had appeared dating errors:

J'ai écrit Godot, vite, en un mois. Oh les beaux jours
m'a demandé un an et demi!¹

On querying the matter with Beckett, his decision, in view of the play's prior publication, was the only one possible: "Draft date 62 presumably a mistake."²

I am indebted to Stanley Gontarski for establishing, in a recent study of Happy Days, the exact order of the drafts.³ I have seen only photocopies of this material, with the attendant difficulty of distinguishing between different inks in corrections. But internal evidence would seem to corroborate Gontarski's ordering, which is of great interest as an example of Beckett interleaving holograph material with typescript. The typescript in each case is an attempt at a fair copy of the preceding holograph stage, and is improved upon in turn by a new holograph version.

The first draft was begun in the "Été 56" notebook under the heading "Female Solo". But, after three pages, it was broken off.⁴ A second holograph (II)⁵ was begun on the same day (8 October 1960). The play at this stage was in one act only. An undated typescript of the one act version (III) marks the next stage in the evolution of the play. It is followed by a further holograph version, in which the play appears in two acts for the

1 L'Avant-Scène No.313, p.8.

2 Reply to author's questionnaire, January 1978.

3 Beckett's Happy Days: A Manuscript Study, pp.10-11.

4 First version R.U.L. MS. 1227/7/7/1; all remaining drafts in The Ohio State University Libraries.

5 Roman numerals from I-IX are used to distinguish the nine stages in the play's draft development.

first time (IV). After this come the first typescript of Act 2 (V) and then a typescript of the full play (VI). None of these typescripts is dated. The final holograph (VII, begun on 29 March) is followed by two further undated typescripts (VIII and IX).

So much preliminary material is available for this play that it seems appropriate to chronicle the main changes that occur from stage to stage.

Gontarski observes that:

In many ways, the early drafts of Happy Days are more 'realistic' than the printed version. The major structural and thematic alterations in the manuscripts demonstrate not an evolution toward fuller explanation of character and situation, but the opposite ...¹

We shall note any movements towards imprecision as they occur in the drafts.

The "Été 56" notebook was not only the recipient of the first holograph of Happy Days, but played a further part at various stages in the development of the text. After holograph I is broken off, six pages of jottings ensue, many of which find their way into the text later, for example:

Not Mildred: Winnie
" Edward: Willie.

and:

Cut out alarm clock. Invisible bell?

alterations which occur in stages III and IV respectively. The title Happy Days is also found in these notes, in preference to an earlier jotting, which had suggested "Title: 'A low Comedy'".

The most striking change between the first and second holograph is that a male figure (Tom) is also present onstage at the opening of I, but is banished from view in II. The first holograph, after describing the woman (W) reads:

¹ Gontarski, p.33.

Sitting on the lower ledge left, his back to the audience, a man, in striped pyjamas. He his (sic) sleeping, leaning so far forward that only his buttocks and foreshortened back are visible, his arms on his knees and his head on his arms. Bare flesh between trousers and coat of pyjamas.

The above directions are repeated in the second holograph, with the additional information that Tom's pyjamas are of the "same stripes as parasol",¹ but the entire passage is then crossed out and the following added:

To her right, behind mound and invisible from auditorium, Tom, also sleeping.

Beckett's second thoughts thus reject the rather obvious comedy of Tom's bottom, in favour of the woman's isolation.

As the second holograph progresses, Tom becomes "Bee" (or B) and later "Edward", but the woman remains "W". A passage of high comedy is introduced in this draft through B's newspaper:

B. 'Rocket strikes xxx Pomona.

Seven hundred thousand missing.'

(Pause. B turns page. W. resumes gesture xxx of hat towards head, suspends it as Bee reads. Rocket strikes -.

One female lavatory attendant spared. (Pause. B turns page. W resumes gesture of hat towards head, suspends it as Bee reads.)

Rocket strikes -. ~~Six-hundred-and-ninety~~ *fif eighty* 3 priests survive.

Further variations on the rocket theme appear in Stage III, but the idea has been omitted in IV, Beckett choosing once again to eschew broad comedy.

Stage II closes with Edward defining a hog and returning to his newspaper, while W gazes happily before her. In Stage III the idea of W's smile fading at the end of the play is introduced. A manuscript alteration reads "happy expression gone." Other additions to III establish the names Willie and Winnie² and also provide early evidence of the network of quotation on which the play rests. M says:

1 I merely mentions "a parasol"; II has "a collapsible (and collapsed) striped parasol".

2 Winnie is first "W" in III, then "M" (Mildred) and Willie "Bee" and "E" (Edward).

I am lost, in the old sense of course (Quote:Lear 1.1.236?)

Beckett has added in the margin:

lost me in your liking (Cordelia to Lear.)

Although this particular quotation disappears in IV it is the first indication of Beckett's intention to set the play in a literary context, indeed against a backdrop of seventeenth to twentieth century poetry - from Shakespeare to Yeats - a device similar to that used by Virginia Woolf in Between the Acts.¹

Another example of emergent structure in III is the fact that Beckett notes "30 minutes" at the bottom of a page two thirds of the way through the text. The idea of a two-act structure has now occurred to him and becomes the main innovation in the ensuing holograph (IV). The reshaping of the play involved a good deal of cutting, but Act 2, at its first appearance in IV, is much as the final version. Winnie's song at the end of the play is present (though unspecified) and her story of Mildred and the doll is there also.

The doll, in its pearly necklet, is wearing the clothes of a grown woman such as Winnie herself and in the episode of undressing the doll there are sexual implications that seem to have a bearing on Winnie's own predicament, as if she had developed a fear of sex at this time, beyond which she had never progressed. Recollection of the mouse provokes screams in Winnie, thus making it clear that "Mildred" is her childhood self. "Mildred", as we have noted, was an early name for Winnie and the story is another example of a Beckett protagonist speaking autobiographically in the third person.

1 When Virginia Woolf was writing Between The Acts and much preoccupied with the history of English literature, she wrote in her diary on 9 January 1941: "What is the phrase I always remember - or forget. Look your last on all things lovely." (A Writer's Diary, London 1953, p.362). This compares interestingly with Winnie's "What is that wonderful line?" in view of the structural similarity between the novel and Happy Days, suggesting that Beckett may have had Virginia Woolf at the back of his mind when writing the play.

To link Winnie and Mildred still further, Beckett deliberately juxtaposes Winnie's recollection of the Shower/Cooker episode and the Mildred story. Below Winnie's account of the man's puzzlement over what she may be wearing "underneath", Beckett notes "continue Mildred", and picks up the story of Mildred and the mouse, thus counterpointing speculation as to Winnie's underwear by the tale of the undressed doll. With this parallel in mind, the mound may be seen as the tomb of Winnie's sexual nature, her distaste for physical contact leading Willie to retreat into his tunnel as the years of refusal pile up around his wife, until she has become a kind of Everest - unassailable.

It is not suggested that this is the "meaning" of the mound. Indeed a reference to "tally-sticks" in Stage II seems to suggest that Winnie is making sexual demands on her husband, as does Maddy Rooney in All That Fall:

There was a time, do you remember, when once a month was enough for me. (Pause.) Don't you remember? (Pause. *Incredulous.*) Once a month! (Pause.) Then once a fortnight. (Pause.) The tally-sticks, don't you remember the tally-sticks Edward, they must be lying about somewhere still, every thirtieth xxx, then every fifteenth. (Pause.) Then weekly. I would wake up as usual, refreshed and without a care ...

It is also Winnie who attacks her husband with a phallic-looking parasol, "beak of handle emerging from sheath."

Reversing the picture again, however, Willie is the partner whose animal nature is emphasized in the play. A manuscript alteration in III substitutes "tail" for a reference to his bottom. There are also his "hairy forearm", his tunnelling activities in the background, and his final arrival "on all fours", while Beckett clearly intended his definition of a hog to be self-descriptive. Pornographic postcards are now Willie's only outlet, but who has refused whom in the marriage is ambiguous.

Sexual denial is, however, only one aspect of a mound that is capable of wide interpretation. It may be seen as, for example, the domestic trap,

the mental rut, the accumulated trivia of daily living (surmounted by the handbag, emblem of such trivia) and the whole forming a rubbish heap that is also a grave and the heap of years of a dead marriage. That living is dying in Beckett's vocabulary is nowhere more clearly expressed than in the creeping atrophy of death in life in Happy Days.

Stage V, the first typescript of Act 2, follows. Manuscript alterations here begin to build up the literary background, "shade", for example, becoming a Keatsian "beechen green". Willie and Winnie are revealed to have had at least one day of Romance in the past. It took place in the setting common to Beckett protagonists:

The sunshade you gave me ... that day ... the lake ...
the ~~flags~~ *willows*.

It will be remembered that a discarded stage direction in II linked Willie (then Tom) and the sunshade, by making Tom's pyjamas and the sunshade of identical stripes. This early detail provides a possible insight into the significance of the sunshade, as the emblem of Willie and Winnie's romance. It was their "old style", a present from Willie in their romantic heyday, but is now seen to be wholly inadequate, no protection for Winnie against the sun's glare. Rather does it tire her arm to hold it up, but she is unable to put it down.

Romance has not lasted for the couple, although the marriage yoke in which it resulted (the cause, perhaps, of the "anthrax" on Willie's neck) cannot be broken.¹ All that remains is a merciless exposure to the reality of the situation. Finally, emphasizing the death of love, the parasol goes up in smoke in Act 1 and Willie is not even aware of it. "Do you know what has occurred, Willie?" Winnie enquires. Moreover the parasol is there again on the mound intact in Act 2, as inescapable as the marriage itself.

Stage VI, the first typescript of both acts, is remarkable for a manuscript note beside the opening stage directions that reads simply "vague".

¹ Compare Belacqua's "flea in the neck", More Pricks Than Kicks, p.172.

The note is twice underlined and is explicit testimony to Beckett's policy of "vaguening" the later drafts of his plays. His immediate concern in Stage VI is to modify the opening directions, which he does as follows:

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.
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 normal stage level.

In the margin of Act 1 a quotation from Gray's "On a distant Prospect of Eton College" is identified¹ and "Wolfe" is noted in Act 2 beside the "go forget me" passage.²

Stage VII, the final holograph, is headed "Rewriting II". The title Happy Days appears here for the first time. The text has now virtually crystallized, has much less alteration and is more legible. In the opening stage directions Winnie is further linked with the Mildred story by the addition of a "pearl necklet" to her costume, such as that worn by the doll. Following the Shower/Cooker anecdote in Act 2, moreover, an unavailing cry for help is introduced. Winnie then returns to the Mildred story, which immediately culminates in a similar scream for help.

The phrase "what is that wonderful line?" is introduced to draw attention to the trellis of half-quotations on which the play is built. The quotation from Romeo and Juliet is written out on a blank verso page:

Beauty's ensign yet
 Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks
 And death's pale flag is not advanced there.³

Stage VIII, the penultimate typescript, still has a good deal of alteration. The musical box tune, for example, is at last identified.

1 "And moody madness laughing wild/ Amid severest woe."

2 See p. 77 (part 1).

3 Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, V 3.

"When Irish Eyes are Smiling" had been suggested tentatively in Stage V and rejected in VI. Beckett now specifies:

the waltz duet 'I love you so' from 'The Merry Widow'.

The romantic water image in VIII becomes precisely parallel with that in Krapp's Last Tape, when "the willows" (altered from "flags" in V) is changed to "reeds".

Stage IX has minimal textual alteration, but the substructure of quotations is identified in manuscript in the margins throughout, except for the opening line of Yeats's At the Hawk's Well, "I call to the eye of the mind." The latter is, however, included in a production notebook.¹ There are other possible literary echoes in the play, but Beckett does not identify these. The departure "hand in hand" of the Shower/Cookers, for example, may recall the final lines of Paradise Lost:

They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow
Through Eden took their solitary way.

In Biblical terms Adam and Eve are the forebears of all Winnie's woe and a link with the poem is certainly appropriate for a play in which paradise is so conspicuously absent. Moreover Winnie sees the couple as representative of the human race ("last human kind to stray this way") and, as we have seen in Part One (p.76) Act 2 opens with the first line of Book III: "Hail, holy light!".

Winnie's literary background does not help her predicament, nor would it make any difference were she able fully to recall the quotations. Her literary half-knowledge is shown to be irrelevant to her situation, except insofar as it gives her pleasure, helping (like the habits and rituals with which she structures her day) to stave off the suffering of being. "Habit", as Beckett points out, "is a great deadener".²

1 R.U.L. MS. 1396/4/10, p.66. (See Appendix VII.)

2 Godot, p.91.

The discussion of habit in Beckett's critique of Proust is highly relevant to Happy Days. To omit or remove the protection of habit is to introduce "suffering" which, says Beckett, "opens a window on the real."¹ It is such a confrontation with reality that Winnie experiences at the end of Happy Days. Throughout the play she has convinced herself that her greatest happiness would be for Willie to come round to her side of the mound; but, when he finally appears, she does, for a moment, see things as they are. First she chides him, in natural shock at his sudden appearance; next she plays out her fantasy that his arrival is cause for rejoicing, and sings her song. Only then, when she is left facing the man as he is, does her smile fade. And before she can turn this too into fiction (through what Beckett describes in Proust as "pernicious and incurable optimism")² the curtain falls.

The impact of Winnie's moment of truth at the end of the play is increased by the ambiguity surrounding the revolver that is lying on the mound. In the "Été 56" notebook, a jotting reads:

She: Is it the revolver you are after, dear, or me.

This becomes in IV:

Is it me you're after, Willie ... Or is it something else?

The rephrasing of the question is an example of ambiguity developing in the play. "Something else" contains the possibility of the revolver, but no more, and we are left with similar questions to those at the end of All That Fall. Willie enters "dressed to kill" at the end of the play; but is he a ladykiller in the sartorial sense alone, or is it the gun beside his wife he is after; and if so, for whom is it intended? Is he at last about to silence the ceaseless chatter that had driven him into his tunnel and now forces him to attempt to scale the mound; or is it for himself that the

1 Proust and 3 Dialogues, p.28.

2 Ibid, p.15.

gun is required? The ambiguities are beautifully balanced.

There seems to be a clue, however, in a marginal addition to Stage VIII. The revolver, despite its weight, always seems to come to the surface in Winnie's handbag and is thus ever present to her as an escape. But it is one she chooses to ignore: "I'm tired of you." Its constant surfacing, however, reminds her of a line from Browning: "I say confusedly what comes uppermost",¹ and, possibly because of this, she goes on to refer to the gun as "Brownie":

Ever uppermost, like Browning. (Pause.) Brownie.
 (Turning a little towards Willie.) Remember Brownie,
 Willie? (Pause.) Remember how you used to keep on
 at me to take it away from you? Take it away,
 Winnie, take it away, before I put myself out of my
 misery. (Pause. Back front. Derisive.) Your misery!

Winnie's scorn is as much for her husband's moaning as for his possible suicide; but this late addition to the text suggests the probable use to which the gun would be put.

The drafts of Happy Days thus help us to gain insights into the play that are largely obscured by ambiguities in the published version. Successive drafts also change the tone of the play considerably. The omission of the alarm clock in IV, for example, in favour of an "invisible bell" means that Winnie no longer controls "the hour for waking" but is controlled by an unseen force similar to that generating the light in Play or the goad in Acte Sans Paroles II. The Stage IV "Rewrite" also reduces the number of objects enumerated in Winnie's handbag, thus cutting down her pastimes and intensifying her isolation. In Stage II she had remarked:

~~Down-at-the-bottom-in-particular.~~ The ~~xxxx~~ deeper layers
 in particular. God Heaven knows what forgotten treasures,
 letters, ~~xxxx~~ favours, ribbons, trinkets, petals, dance
 cards with pencils, theatre and concert programmes.
 (Pause. Break in voice.) Prospectuses. (Pause. Do.)
 Buttons.

1 Robert Browning, Paracelsus, 3.372.

Beckett clearly had it in mind to emphasize Winnie's isolation, in the early revisions in II, which reduce the role of Willie by first banishing him from view and then cutting down his speeches. The result is a starkness both of image and situation at the opening of the play, in which no distraction or mitigation is permitted. As Gontarski points out, Beckett moves, in the drafts:

not toward a naturalistic, precisely-defined physical world, but toward an abstract clarity, an image free of cluttering detail.¹

The decision to make the play two acts instead of one also had the happy effect of intensifying Winnie's predicament. The largely comic tone of Act 1 gives place to the increasing horror of Act 2, and precisely because we have accepted the comedy of Winnie's situation in the first act, the implications of the second are the more chilling. The final result thus achieves the balance that Beckett had originally desired in Fin de Partie:

Act 1. Hilare. Act 2. Mortellement triste.²

Film

Film, written in 1963, is Beckett's only venture into cinema, although he has subsequently written three plays for the related medium of television. Like Krapp's Last Tape, Film was written very quickly, moving from a first draft to a semi-finished text in the same notebook.³

The notebook opens with "notes for film" dated 5 April 1963. These are followed at once by a first draft, dated at its close 9 April 1963. A revised holograph draft, headed "Outline sent to Grove"⁴ follows, with the closing date 22 May 1963. Since the latter is very similar to the published

1 Gontarski, p.43.

2 Manuscript note preceding Typescript 1 of Fin de Partie, The Ohio State University Libraries.

3 R.U.L. MS. 1227/7/6/1.

4 Grove Press, New York. Washington University, St. Louis has a carbon copy of a typescript sent to Grove Press in May 1963, which was used for the first American edition. Apart from some very minor word changes and a rearrangement of the opening paragraphs, this typescript is identical with the Faber text of 1967. Ensuing page references are to the Faber edition.

version, composition appears to have taken about six weeks from start to finish, suggesting that the idea was strongly present in Beckett's mind before he began to write.

There are, however, important differences between the first draft and published text, both in the conception of the film and in the removal of detail, thus allowing a wider frame of reference for the final version. The main conceptual change is that Beckett first envisaged sound for his film. The preliminary notes contain the following suggestion:

Throughout Film ~~sounds~~ of things (feet, curtains etc.)
^{NO}
 but no speech.

The first draft is conceived with sounds. O pants at the foot of the stairs, for example, and there is a "crunch of broken glass" as he stamps on God's picture; but a note makes it clear that Beckett did not have a musical "backing" of the kind typical in the silent cinema in mind for Film:

If music unavoidable, Schubert's Doppelgänger - with
 perhaps 'Ich bin nicht wild, komme nicht zu straten'?

Once again "Der Tod und das Mädchen" is Beckett's chosen musical signature, but he clearly decided after completing the first draft that sound was undesirable, and the second holograph is entirely silent, except for "the 'ssh!' from woman in part one".

Precise identification of the subject of the film with the Bishop Berkeley dictum esse est percipi that forms an epigraph to the published text does not occur until the second draft. The preliminary notes carry an introductory statement that might equally have prefaced Cascando, written some sixteen months earlier:

for one striving to see one striving not to be seen.

By the second page of notes, however, a hint of Berkeley appears:

'Percipi' Notes

Eye (E) One (O)

For Eye and one who would not be seen.¹

The importance of esse est percipi is, however, somewhat undercut in the second draft, by some notes included subsequently in the published version:

Subject of film: search of non-being in flight from extraneous perception culminating in inescapability of self perception.

No truth value attaches to above. They are simply a structural and dramatic convenience.

A point on which a preliminary note is considerably more explicit than the later text, concerns the room. The note reads:

His room or one he does not know? His mother's room.²

But, having so decided, Beckett is again at pains to point out the irrelevance of the information. In the first draft he describes the room thus:

Small (10' x 10') miserable barely furnished room (boarded or tiled floor.) See sketch. It cannot be his (he would not keep pairs of eyes and a mirror.) It may be supposed that it is his mother's room, which he has not seen for a number of years and is to occupy momentarily, to look after the pets, until she comes out of hospital. This circumstance has no bearing on the film and is not otherwise indicated than by his photo on the wall.

The photograph is described (on the facing verso page, which bears a sketch of the room) as:

~~Recent large--scowling--photo-of-himself-inscribed-'To-My Mother,-without-rancour,-Xmas-1929'.~~

Beckett decided immediately against personalizing the room in this way and the entire note is crossed out. The only picture on the wall in the final text is that of God.

The dating of the film is confusing. Beckett's first thought, in the preliminary notes, was "Period: ~~1913?~~ 1929" and the published text states

1 On page 1 of the preliminary notes, the characters are described as E and H (presumably "He" or "Him".)

2 Compare the opening of Molloy, Trilogy, p.7.

that the film takes place "about 1929".¹ But the packet of photographs complicates the issue. The description of these photographs in the published text states that the man in the seventh photograph is precisely 30 years old, though "looking over 40".² Since this photograph appears to be identical with the protagonist, it would mean that he was born in 1899 and graduated at 20 (photograph no. four) in 1919, already after the war. Yet photograph no. six (at age 25) shows him "newly enlisted" (in 1924) and in no. seven he appears to have a war wound.

Manuscript jottings in the notebook show that Beckett intended O to be about 50 when the film takes place. A marginal note in the first draft reads:

O: aetat. 50
25 in 1914.

This would make him 50 in 1939 and born in 1889, which would also fit in with a first draft note that the mother's beflowered hat (in photograph no. two) is "about 1890". A further note on the same page is conclusive:

25 in 14
50 in 39

It is difficult to appreciate why Beckett did not keep to this dating and decided after all to set the film in 1929. If O were 50 in 1929, he would be 25 and "newly enlisted" in 1904, just too late for the Boer War and a decade too early for 1914. It appears from the enlistment photograph that Beckett wished the sequence to include experience of the Great War. The first six photographs are all of smiling faces, but the seventh reveals a patch over the left eye and a "grim expression". It follows that, for the war photograph to be relevant, O has to be about 40 in 1929. It seems

1 Eh Joe and other writings, p.32. (Hereafter Film).

2 Film, p.44.

probable that Beckett would have preferred to be non-specific over such details, but was obliged to date the film for production purposes.

Beckett initially contemplated setting Film in the evening, but had to decide against this for a practical reason:

to remove possibility of his putting off light in room.

The main difficulty about the room is described in the first draft as the "problem of dual perception" (E's perception of O, and O's of the room).

Beckett expresses the problem on the first page of his preliminary notes:

In street *and stairs* all perception by E.
But in room?
H must perceive.
H perceiving perceived by E.
Express perhaps by simultaneous slightly incongruous images?

Beckett points out that since "H. perceives only when he feels himself not seen, i.e. when E directly or nearly directly behind him", all E's images must be "coupled with image of H seen from behind". "If insoluble", he concludes:

then assume identity of perceptions (E perceiving O's objects over O's shoulder) involving in foreground of all O's (sic) images blurred nape and top of shoulder (and sacrificing principle that E's unique concert and perception is with and of O.)

Beckett was clearly dissatisfied with the above solution and contemplates in the first draft the "possibility throughout of distinguishing two perceptions by a quality of image (filter oder ~~was~~)?" The latter idea subsequently developed into the final one of a transition "from greater to lesser and lesser to greater definition or luminosity"¹ for the separate perspectives. Whether or not this method is successful will be discussed in Part 3.

The Eye/I pun is, however, an effective one. E is, so to speak, O's blind eye. He has the function of making all with whom he comes into

¹ Film, p.41.

contact self aware. There is nothing intrinsically frightening in his image when at last it is presented to us at the end of the play. A sense of evil has been built up because of the looks of horror E arouses when perceived by others. In the first draft he appears to be neuter, a nameless menace:

She feels E fixed on them and turns, raising her lorgnon, to look at it.

But when we finally see that E is O, the implication seems to be that he has no reality other than as an inner eye. The camera thus performs a function whereby each beholder sees himself. It holds a mirror up to nature and the observed sees himself reversed, as at the end of Miss La Trobe's historical pageant in Virginia Woolf's Between the Acts.¹ It is an uncomfortable experience and E's audience is no less outraged than Miss La Trobe's.

In Film, as soon as O, the conscious man, has closed his eyes, thus dropping his guard, the watchful subconscious takes over. The situation has Freudian implications. In the first draft, moreover, Beckett describes the final confrontation in Freudian terms, with E as alter ego:

E = alter O (dénouement).

Having gained the upper hand, E, instead of vanishing when O starts awake, forces him to face himself, in a real awakening. The film culminates in their confrontation, in which, as Beckett points out in the first draft:

O's face fully shown for first time, E shown for first time.

The fact that E stole upon O unawares recalls the narrator in From An

Abandoned Work:

there's no accounting for anything, with a mind like the one I always had, always on the alert against itself.²

1 London, 1941; Penguin edition 1953, pp.128-130.

2 London, 1958; Republished 1967 in No's Knife, Collected Shorter Prose 1945-1966 (pp.139-149) p.141.

The acceptance of selfhood would, it seems, as in Not I, involve the acknowledgement of a predicament beyond contemplation.

Two literary analogues are of great interest in connexion with Film, in their parallel treatment of the theme of the second self and as possible source material for Beckett. We have noted in the first draft Beckett's reference to "Schubert's Doppelgänger" "if music unavoidable" for the film. The doppelgänger theme has had many exponents, but none better known than Stevenson's Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde.¹ The following extracts reveal an extraordinary resemblance between the latter and Beckett's protagonist in Film.²

- (a)... he discharged the cab and ventured on foot, attired in his misfitting clothes, an object marked out for observation ...
- (b)At all hours of the day and night I would be taken with the premonitory shudder; above all, if I slept, or even dozed for a moment in my chair, it was always as Hyde that I awakened.
- (c)Hence the ape-like tricks that he would play me, [] destroying the portrait of my father;
- (d)...that insurgent horror was knit to him closer than a wife, closer than an eye; lay caged in his flesh, where he heard it mutter and felt it struggle to be born; and at every hour of weakness, and in the confidence of slumber, prevailed against him, and deposed him out of life.

It is of course mistaken to "identify" O with Hyde and E with Jekyll. Beckett, it is true (in notes following the first draft) toys with the idea of making "E tall" and "O short (and) fat" which corresponds with the dual physique of Jekyll and Hyde. But Film is not concerned with representations of good and evil, only with the concept of the second self, of pursuer and pursued.

A further parallel that Beckett, a student of French literature, can hardly have missed, is Victor Hugo's poem "La Conscience".³ "Conscience" in

1 London, 1886.

2 All references are to the Collins edition, 1953, chapter 10, pp.72, 73.

3 H.E.Berthon, 9 French Poets 1820-1880, London 1953, pp.75-76.

French can mean either "conscience" in the English sense, or "consciousness" and the double meaning is important. The poem concerns a man haunted by an eye that stares at him unceasingly from the sky. He runs away from it, ever further, even to the grave, where, in the tomb, the eye awaits him. The man is Cain. He has been trying to escape consciousness of himself, the self that killed his brother, but his conscience will not let him rest. The eye/I is always present and, when he can run no further, must be faced in the tomb.

Not only is a similar dichotomy the subject of Film, but The Eye was an early title for the film. Moreover Cain's attempts to hide (behind the fabric walls of a tent, for example) resemble O's compulsive drawing of the curtains and blotting out of eyes in an attempt to find security in the room. In both parallels the discrepancy between outer and inner man is apparent in the nagging unrest of the outer, hounded continually from within, so that he manifests signs of advanced paranoia. Such, too, is O's state of mind, and that of Joe, in the television play Eh Joe, Beckett's next venture into film.

Eh Joe

Eh Joe was written in 1965. The holograph is dated at start and close 13 April 1965 and 1 May 1965. It is followed by six undated typescripts (numbered 0-4 and "final version"). The full set of drafts is in the Samuel Beckett Papers at Washington University, St. Louis.

The holograph reveals Beckett to have had a clear concept of the text he wanted from the outset, though changes made as the writing progresses show him once again to be avoiding the specific. The holograph, for example, makes it clear that the voice is telling her own story and describing her own suicide:

Ever hear ~~what-became-of-me?~~ *how I did it* ... Just the announcement in the Independent?

Later in the holograph the denial of selfhood begins and (as in Not I) the announcement in the Independent describes "her", not "I". By the first typescript all details of the death are given in the third person, though it is still apparent that the voice could not have known such details unless the experience were her own, and that Joe's conscience must have reconstructed the "crime".

After the first suicide attempt ("lying down on sand with face in it warm night failure") a second attempt, that appears to have links with the boat at the end of Cascando, is described in the holograph:

Boat out from Bullock Cap sur kish? sitting in bow
facing lights of land murmuring oh jo oh jo - there's
love for you etc. till end whisper.

The protagonist is referred to as "J" then "Jack" on page 1 of the holograph, but becomes "Joe" by page 3. The holograph seems to have been headed Eh Joe after completion, since the title is in a different ink. In the first typescript (0) a fair copy of the holograph, the change of name has been forgotten and "Jack" is typed into the text until page 3 (where the holograph becomes Joe). The main innovation in the typescript is that, whereas the holograph had been written phrasally, each phrase separated by three dots, a new line is taken for each phrase, giving the play the appearance of a prose poem. The text is then divided in the margins into eleven numbered sections, between which the camera moves are to take place.

In the ensuing typescript (1) the numbered sections are reinstated as phrasal paragraphs,¹ Beckett either being dissatisfied with the "poetic" formation, or having used it simply as a convenient method to establish

¹ In Typescript 1 paragraphs 5 and 6 from Typescript 0 are merged, thus making ten paragraphs in all, not eleven.

where the camera moves should take place. The phrasal technique adopted in Eh Joe was first used in Radio I (followed by Cascando) and appears later in Not I. It proved an efficient means of conveying the random nature of interior monologue. Moreover several phrases from Eh Joe return in Not I, Beckett's protagonists having a strong family relationship.

We have noted in Part One (p.83) that the situation in Eh Joe is an extension of that in Film. The confrontation between O and the camera is the climax on which the latter ends. In Eh Joe the entire text is a confrontation, the opening "business" in the room occurring before a word is spoken. As soon as Joe relaxes, having ascertained that he is alone, the camera inches up, capturing him; the room has become "the trap" (as Beckett describes it in notes following the second draft of Film) "in which he has cornered O." Echoes of Film are very obvious in the first draft of Eh Joe:

Noone can get at you now [] why don't you put out the light? [] *in case there's an eye you've forgotten.*

And the second draft is modified, in consequence:

~~in-case-there's-an-eye-you've-forgotten~~ *There might be a fly looking-at watching you.*

Typescript 1 is the first draft to present a significant advance in the text of Eh Joe. It is prefaced by manuscript stage directions for the opening action in the room, as well as separate instructions for "Voice", "Face" and "Camera" and several sketches of the set. These directions are then typed into the draft, with manuscript revisions. An afterthought in the preliminary notes for the face reads "mouth chiefly" and refers to the "mounting tension of listening" being expressed mainly in the "distorted" mouth. After being typed into Typescript 1 this direction is crossed out, but it shows the way in which Beckett's dramatic imagery is evolving, from the clay-baked faces in Play (1962/3) to a face in which expression is concentrated upon the mouth in Eh Joe (1965) to the eventual mouth alone

of Not I (1972). There are also careful marginal notes in Typescript 1 regarding the number of repetitions of the title phrase "Eh Joe" that occur in the first five paragraphs.

Typescript 2 is headed "text only", omitting the opening directions and some of the revisions made in Typescript 1. Typescript 3 restores the opening directions and contains on Page 3 a note written in French, showing Beckett either to have been thinking in French while revising the English text or possibly to have been making a simultaneous French translation. The penultimate section of the final speech in Typescript 3 is rewritten in manuscript to include the repetition of phrases such as "the hands", "the stones" and frequent insertion of the word "imagine". To imagine is precisely Joe's current predicament. These revisions are incorporated into Typescript 4 but largely omitted from the final version. The exhortation to "imagine" remains in the latter but phrasal repetition disappears, except for the last phrase "the stones".

Typescript 5, the final version, has many small variations from the Faber published text, which is closer to the unrevised Typescript 3. Typescript 5 appears, however, to have been used to rehearse Jack Macgowran, since certain phrases are underlined for emphasis and directions for an actor's movements are added in manuscript in the margins throughout. Following the text, moreover, is a blank page containing what appear to be directorial jottings, such as "Head down up fraction on. How's yr. Lord", "brief smile for the green" and "story faster". Typescripts 2-5 reveal Beckett's painstaking reworking of a text that had virtually crystallized in Typescript 1, through four subsequent versions.

Breath

Breath, as is well known, resulted from a request by Kenneth Tynan to Beckett for a short piece for the review Oh! Calcutta that Tynan was staging

in New York. Among his unpublished MSS. Beckett found a text that he thought might be suitable and this was used by Tynan as the opening sequence of the American production of Oh! Calcutta on 17 June 1969.¹ But Tynan decided to extend Beckett's stage directions to include nude figures:

Faint light onstage littered with miscellaneous rubbish,
including naked people.²

Beckett promptly withdrew permission for the performance of his text and it did not appear in the subsequent London production of Oh! Calcutta in 1970.

I have been unable to trace the original manuscript of Breath, although two holograph versions and a typescript have come to light. Facing the text, in the first publication of the unadulterated work, is a photocopy of a holograph version.³ Since there are no alterations, the holograph appears to be a fair copy. The printed text is identical with this, apart from small misprints.⁴

A typescript given to Francis Warner by Beckett in 1969 appears to predate the Calder versions, in that it is untitled, while the published texts are headed Breath. The wording of all three versions is identical and corresponds with the Faber text of 1971.⁵ Warner states that on asking Beckett whether he had any new work for performance in Oxford, Beckett gave him the typescript, remarking that he would be glad of a production of the work as it was intended to be performed, rather than the American travesty. Unknown to Beckett, however, his agents (Curtis Brown Ltd.) had meanwhile sanctioned a production of Breath in Glasgow,⁶ that preceded the Oxford Première on 8 March 1970.

1 Conversation with Francis Warner, 9 May 1977.

2 John Calder, Gambit, Vol 4, No 16, 1970, p.6.

3 Ibid, pp.8-9.

4 The printer has misread "bright light" in the final line of the holograph as "light light".

5 Warner's typescript misprints "before" as "bafore" in direction 3.

6 October 1969; at the Close Theatre Club, producer Geoffrey Gilham.

The second holograph version is signed "Samuel Beckett 1969" and was written from memory for inclusion in the programme of Warner's revival of the play at Hart House Theatre, Toronto, on 16 November 1970. Although Beckett dates this version "1969" it was written after the first Oxford performance, in the summer of 1970. It seems likely, therefore, that 1969 refers to the date of composition.

There are several discrepancies between this version and the earlier text. There is no reference to an opening and closing "curtain", for example; instead Beckett writes "Black" each time. Probably with Tynan's liberties with the text in mind, the first direction is made more ambiguous, describing "miscellaneous unidentifiable rubbish". The second direction reads "faint cry" (rather than "faint brief cry") and instructions for the second cry in direction 3 ("and immediately cry as before") are also omitted. Since this version was written from memory, however, it cannot be deemed a variant draft.

Lessness

Before completing this study of the drafts of Beckett's plays, it seems appropriate to mention the drafts of Lessness, since this is the only work discussed in Part 1 for which the preliminary material has not been considered. The drafts, in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, naturally show Beckett at work as a translator. They are of particular interest, however, for the authorial explanatory material that accompanies them, and it is with the latter that I am concerned here.

The extent of the Yale material is as follows: first there is what Beckett describes as a "MS. reduction of French text to 6 statement groups for translation purposes". There follow a heavily revised holograph of Beckett's first attempt at rendering these statement groups into English, and

a typescript fair copy, also much altered. A holograph "notation" of the sentence and paragraph order that resulted from the shuffling process ensues,¹ and after this come a holograph and a corrected typescript of the first twelve paragraphs of Lessness. Finally there is a typescript of the whole text, also somewhat revised.

Beckett's explanatory material consists partly of the introduction to Lessness that appears on the dust jacket of the Calder text, together with what he describes in his analysis of the material sent to Yale as the "key" to the work. The latter is a structural description, in which Beckett isolates the themes on which the work is based. It is here reproduced in full:

LESSNESS proceeds from PING.
It is composed of 6 statement groups each containing 10 sentences, i.e. 60 sentences in all.

These 60 are first given in a certain order and paragraph structure, then repeated in a different order and different paragraph structure.

The whole consists therefore of $2 \times 60 = 120$ sentences arranged and rearranged in $2 \times 12 = 24$ paragraphs.

Each statement group is formally differentiated and the 10 sentences composing it "signed" by certain elements common to them all.

Group A - Collapse of refuge - Sign: "true refuge".

Group B - Outer world - Sign: "earth ... sky" juxtaposed or apart.

Group C - Body exposed - Sign: "little body".

Group D - Refuge forgotten - Sign: "all gone from mind".

Group E - Past and future denied - Sign: "never" - except in the one sentence "figment dawn xxxxx etc.".

Group F - Past and future affirmed - Sign: future tense."²

¹ See photocopy of holograph ordering of Sans (headed "Montage") at Appendix II, with which the English notation is naturally identical.

² The six statement groups of Sans are headed: A. Effondrement du refuge; B. Terre; C. Homme; D. Refuge Oublie; E. Passé - Futur Nié; F. Passé - Futur Affirmé.

Completing the key is a typescript of the finished translation, again in its statement groups, duly lettered and numbered, and a typescript of the sentence order and paragraph structure.

The composition of Sans/Lessness has already been discussed at some length in Part 1. It is the most highly organised and, at the same time, the least formal of Beckett's works. To subject a careful structure to the hazard of the shuffling process is perhaps the most rigorous text of his work that a writer can devise, and that each new combination of sentences forms a satisfying whole indicates the quality of Beckett's achievement.

The ambiguity of the final text is extreme. Beckett's Preface to the published text allows a reader some insight into its themes:

Lessness has to do with the collapse of some such refuge as that last attempted in Ping and with the ensuing situation of the refugee.

Ruin, exposure, wilderness, mindlessness, past and future denied and affirmed, are the categories, formally distinguishable, through which the writing winds, first in one disorder, then in another..

But such a Preface gives no indication of the precise structuring of Lessness. It gives the "signature" to each family of sentences (and the reader will recognize these as they recur in the text) but the mathematical nature of the work is entirely obscured. The sentences cannot be recognized individually (as, for instance, A3 or F8) so that the piece cannot be read through from first to last and the development that we have noted in Part 1 appreciated.

It was not Beckett's purpose, however, for the work to be stripped to its roots in the manner in which we explored the text in Part 1. The rigorous structuring of each sentence has produced a text that will communicate landscape, mood and tone colour in no matter what order it is read. Each reordered text develops its own strength from a new juxtaposition of sentences, each sentence giving just enough information to add its particular

colour to the pattern, but never enough to throw the work out of balance when shuffled. Nothing less than a perfect balance of language and statement has made this possible.

The writing of Lessness reveals a development similar to that we have noted throughout the drafts of Beckett's plays. As the work evolves the original statement is obscured, until the final text has become a balancing of possibilities in the scales of ambiguity. As Beckett remarked to Martin Esslin, when comparing his own method of working with that of James Joyce:

The difference between Joyce and myself is that Joyce was a synthesizer. He tried to pack the whole world into a book, in as much detail as possible, and I am an analyser, I try to take as much of the detail away as possible.¹

¹ "Beckett Symposium", New Theatre Magazine, Vol XI, No 3, Bristol 1973, p.12.

P A R T T W O B

WORKING METHOD

"Knowing how an author works" says Gontarski, knowing "what sorts of additions, excisions, or alterations he makes, is a valuable aid to literary criticism."¹ It is our purpose in this section to consider what we have learned of Beckett's working method from the draft material.

To take first the question of planning a work. Where an initial plan is present among the drafts, Beckett's careful attention to detail is evident. We have noted, for example, in the introduction to Part 1 (p.20) the outline for a play, in which the potential text is timed before writing. We have noticed also in Part 1 the extraordinary precision of planning of the sentence structure of Lessness, without which the text could not have emerged satisfactorily from the shuffling process.

The early stages of Come and Go and Not I, as seen in Part 2, also reveal meticulous structural planning to be part of Beckett's working method. But that he is prepared to shape his plays according to the demands of the evolving text and sometimes to make radical changes, rather than stick rigidly to a preconceived plan, is evident from the reshaping of both Fin de Partie and Happy Days. In each case the act structure finally decided upon reverses the original intention.

Careful self-analysis has been seen to be part of Beckett's approach when drafting a text. In the preliminary material for Not I, for example, we have observed him analysing the emerging text at various stages in its development. After writing the first fragment, "Kilcool", he jotted aides-mémoire in the Trinity College notebook, to be borne in mind when attempting

1 Beckett's Happy Days: A Manuscript Study, p.2.

future drafts and went on to lay down eight themes on which the play should be based. Again, after writing the holograph of Not I some eight years later, Beckett made the "analysis" of the text seen at Appendix V and decided upon certain points that required amplification. These, as we have seen, were subsequently drafted in the "addenda". Finally, after completing the play, Beckett produced the "synopsis" seen at Appendix VI.

We have several times noted Beckett thinking ahead during the writing of a draft and jotting on a verso page facing an earlier section of text notes that are incorporated into a subsequent section. An early example of this process is the holograph of All That Fall, where, on the penultimate verso page, Beckett notes the following:

Conversation with Jerry.

He runs off.

Mrs K. calls to him. What kept the train late.

A child fell out of the carriage.

Pause.

Jerry runs off. *His* receding steps. Silence.

Storm of wind and rain.

These points all occur in the same order on the final page of text. A similar example occurs in Words and Music. The end of the play is once more being plotted, this time in the margin of the holograph, two pages before its close:

End

Words: (alarmed). My Lord.

Departure of Croak.

Words recalls briefly themes. etc.

A last illustration, taken from the holograph of Eh Joe, is particularly interesting. Here a list of words facing the concluding passage of text

is expanded into the final lines of the play:

Imagine
 Stone
 Joe Joe
 stones
lips imagine
 solitaire
 eyes
 xxx June
 Breasts
 Imagine
 stones
 fondling
 Love for you
 Eh Joe
 Eh Joe

The final lines, on the opposite recto page, are drafted as follows:

~~Leave-the-rest-to-your-imagination~~ *Now imagine...* Before
 she went out ... Face in the hole ... ~~Joe Joe~~ *Lips on*
a stone ... Thinking of you ... Joe Joe ... Moon gone ...
 From the shore ... From the xxx sea ... Joe Joe ... To the
stones ... Say it you now ... xxx *No one'll hear you* ...
 Say Joe ... It parts the lips ... Imagine the hands ...
 xxx ~~†~~ The solitaire ... Against a stone ... Imagine the
eyes ... How they opened after ... ~~The-girl-for-xxx-xxx~~
 ... Can you hear me, Joe ... ~~The-girl-for-Him-xxx~~ ...
Spirit-of-light ... Month of June ... *What year was that!*
 ... Not even pregnant ... Breasts in the shingle ...
 And the hands ... Imagine the hands...What are they
 doing ... In the stones ... (Image down, sound on) What
 are they fondling? ... Until they grow quiet ... There's
love for you ... wouldn't (Image out, sound on.) ~~xxxx~~
~~Wasn't-it~~ *Isn't it, Joe?* ... *Wasn't it, Joe?* ... Eh Joe?
 ... Compared to us ... ~~Compared-to-you~~ ... *Compared to*
~~God~~ Him ... Eh Joe?

End¹

¹ Some alterations appear to have been made while the passage was being written, some afterwards. Where the former seems to be the case, the alteration is entered in script as usual. Where the latter applies, the phrase is merely crossed out. A comparison of inks in the original MS. at Washington University would help to clarify this matter.

The reduction and refining of Beckett's later writing has been noted in the general introduction. It takes place in every aspect of his work. From the spate of words of The Unnamable in prose, for example, to the first publication of Lessness on a single page of the New Statesman.¹ In drama the three acts of his first play, Eleuthéria, dwindle to the sigh of Breath, while the archetypal waiting situation in Godot is reduced to 121 words in Come and Go. With fewer words, the tendency to use a still bolder image has appeared in the plays. The dustbins of Endgame, for example, from which, at intervals, named human beings show themselves, give place to three nameless and immobile heads in urns in Play and finally to the disembodied mouth of Not I.

As the text of the briefest plays is cut to a skeletal outline, detailed directions are required in order to convey meaning. Thus Come and Go has more directions than text and Breath is all directions. Beckett's use of stage directions and the various aspects of his dramatic craftsmanship will be discussed in Part 3. This section is concerned with the linguistic, textual development of the plays rather than with the evolution of Beckett's theatrical technique.

An important part of Beckett's process of refining a text is the enrichment of language brought about by a rigorous cutting and shaping. There is throughout a search for the allusive word to substitute for a direct reference and the choice of an alliterative or assonantal word or phrase for the purpose of euphony. In Krapp's Last Tape, for example, we can see how changing two words used in the holograph opens up wider possibilities in the text. In Typescript 2 "widowhood" becomes the archaic "viduity" thus allowing Krapp some useful by-play with the dictionary. In Typescript 4 "moonstone" is changed to "chrysolite", a word of great beauty

¹ May 1970.

which thus reflects and allows us to glimpse something of the beauty of the eyes Krapp remembers and also introduces the links with Othello discussed in Section 2.

The drafts of Eh Joe provide several further examples of the enrichment of language. In Typescript 1 "like ~~Waterford-cut~~ *flint glass*" cleverly introduces the idea of stone that is picked up at the end of the play when the girl lies dying in the stones at the tide's edge. In the same draft "no more old ~~chat~~ *lip* from her" puns on the incessant voice in Joe's head and the fact that it belongs to a cast-off mistress. In Typescript 2 "not another soul to ~~exterminate~~ *still*" both introduces ambiguity and greatly improves the aural effect. Sometimes, however, Beckett's aural enthusiasm has to be curbed, as in the final "Before Come and Go" draft at Reading University, where Poppy remarks of Rose:

Ghastly. I was aghast when I came in and saw
her sitting there.

Beckett's word changes in the drafts frequently suggest the poet at work. It is interesting therefore to compare them with changes made when a poem is being written. The development of the lyric from holograph to first typescript in Words and Music may be taken as an example here.

Holograph

Age is when ~~if-you're~~ *to* a man
~~erouching-shivering-over-the-dying~~ *Huddled over the ingle*
Waiting for the old hag
To put the ~~bottle~~ *jar* in the bed
And ~~come-with~~ *bring* the toddy
She comes in the ashes
Who loved could not be won
Or won not loved
Comes in the ashes
Like in that olden light
Her ~~eyes~~ *face* in the ashes
~~like-in-t~~ *That* olden starlight
Lying on the earth again.

Typescript 1

Age is when to a man
 Huddled over the ingle
~~Waiting~~ *shivering* for the hag
 To put the ~~jar~~ *pan* in the bed
 And bring the toddy
 She comes in the ashes
 Who loved could not be won
 Or won not loved
~~Or something else~~ *other thing* trouble
 Comes in the ashes
 Like in that old light
 The face in the ashes
 That old starlight
~~Lying~~ *o*n the earth again.

"Huddled over the ingle" is both more economical, understressed (and consequently more telling) than "crouching shivering over the dying".

"Shivering", moreover, is used in the revision to add colour to the succeeding line. The idea of lost sexuality is present at the outset in "comes in the ashes". But the verb is weakened by its earlier use in "come with the toddy" which is therefore altered in the typescript to "bring". The removal of the archaism "olden" from the penultimate line prevents the ensuing word "starlight" from sounding over-sentimental. But in order to keep the rhythm, the word "lying" with its implications of romantic delusion has then to be sacrificed from the last line. Verse two evolved easily in the holograph, there being only two main changes in Typescript 1: "dark" instead of "still" and the omission of "dear" from "Through the dear scum". There are no further changes in the lyric in Typescript 2.

The process of word polishing we have observed in the drafts of the plays is no different from that in the lyric. Having settled the basic form of the text, Beckett begins to shape the vocabulary until it is, as Zilliagus notes of All That Fall, "gradually enriched and enlivened."¹

¹ Beckett and Broadcasting, p.31.

This result is, however, achieved through a process of rigorous selection, rather than, as Zilliacus seems to suggest, one of accretion.¹

Beckett's linguistic alteration is of course considerably more than "polishing". The characteristic search for the evocative and resonant word to replace earlier more prosaic, non-dramatic vocabulary marks Beckett's great gift as both writer and dramatist. The process may take many drafts to complete, as in Play, for example, where Woman 1's description of her rival evolves through five typescripts:

1

S 1 Horse face, spotty, calves like a **beefeater flunkey**,
dugs you could -

This version remains in Typescripts 2 and 3. Typescript 4, however, not only adds a good deal of material, but splits the invective into two sections, with a speech from Woman 2 herself intervening:

4

W 1 ~~Horse-face;--spotty;--calves-like-a-flunkey;--dugs-you-could -~~
Moon face, puffy, spots, 2 moles with hair, eyes passable,
give her her due, mouth, blubber pout, jowls, no neck,
dugs you could -

[W 2]

W 1 Knobble knees, calves like a flunkey, varicose -

5

W 1 Moon Pudding face, puffy, spots, blubber mouth, jowls,
no neck, dug you could -

[W 2]

W 1 Calves like a flunkey -

We shall return to the vocabulary of Play when considering in detail the progress of the drafts. While studying the preliminary material for the later plays I charted the progress of each through its various drafts.

¹ Beckett and Broadcasting, p.31.

These charts are not included here because the wealth of detail accumulated when recording the progress of a play is appropriate only in a critical edition. Such a chart is extremely difficult to reproduce in typescript, cannot be read quickly and may raise problems that are best settled by reference to the material itself, which is not readily available to the reader. It is thus possible for a chart to be counter-productive as an aid to comprehension. Reducing the material to more easily assimilable chart form is, moreover, in most cases tantamount to making a reductio ad absurdum, governed by one's own subjective choices.

In the ensuing attempt to reproduce a detailed record of two key plays in this study as a practical illustration of the progress of Beckett's working method through successive drafts, the foregoing difficulties in presenting such material should be borne in mind. The plays selected are Play and Not I. It proved possible in the latter case to chart the Reading University material without undue distortion, and the chart concluding this section at least indicates the way in which Beckett's mind was working as the play evolved. In the case of Play a written abstract of the chart, though requiring very close reading, seemed the best means of presenting such detailed material. It covers the main changes in the typescript drafts held by Washington University.

There are ten typescripts of Play. In the first of these the heads are at first labelled H S1 and S2, only becoming M W1 and W2 in the final pages. Considerable care in shaping the text is apparent, particularly in the evolution of the chorus. The opening chorus does not appear until the end of the H, S1 and S2 section of the draft, and is lettered in manuscript "A and D". It seems possible that the chorus was intended to round off the play at D, but that Beckett subsequently decided to use it as an

introduction also, hence A. In Typescript 2 the chorus is typed out at the opening of the text.

The brief second chorus is a manuscript afterthought written above the text on the first page of Typescript 1:

(B)	S 1	}	I said to him, Give her up -	}	→ α (E)
	S 2	}	One morning as I was sitting -	}	
	H	}	We were not long together -	}	

Beckett's lettering thus establishes A and D as Chorus I and B and E as Chorus II (respectively the long and short choruses at the opening and close of the play). Only one blackout is indicated, as a manuscript addition in the text. Another manuscript addition establishes the second small chorus at C, immediately following the blackout:

H	}	When first this change -
S 1	}	Mercy Mercy -
S 2	}	To say I am -

The structure of the play is thus laid down as a pattern of linked choruses, resembling, as we have seen in Part 1, the Japanese Noh play. Choruses A and D with B and E frame the text and C comes as a brief central chorus, marking the abrupt change in the content of the narrative.

Marginal notes above and below the blackout direction calculate the number of speeches made by each voice in each half of the text, totalled as follows:

	<u>23</u>	
S 1	8 + 4 =	12
S 2	8 + 4 =	12
H	7 + 5 =	12

The precise total of twelve speeches for each voice is not, as we have seen,

present in the final text of Play, but does occur (spread over three sections of text rather than two) in That Time.

Only two directions for light are present in Typescript 1. The first is written in manuscript following the brief opening chorus and reads "Full light and voices". The second, a manuscript addition after the blackout direction, reads "Diminished light and voices". There are no instructions for light between the speeches, but its presence is proved by the text:

S 1. Get off me. (Pause. Light full on. In a scream.)
 Get off me! (Pause. Light down. Low.) Is it
 that I do not tell the truth?...

The variation of light within a single speech here is much weaker than the arbitrary unheeding game-playing characterization of light in the final text. There are no further stage directions in Typescript 1 and no mention of repeating the play. The last three pages of the typescript are a second attempt at rendering the text following the blackout, with the heads renamed W 1, W 2 and M.

A greater explicitness than in the later drafts is apparent in Typescript 1. S 2, for example, enquires of the light:

What do you do when you go out? Winnow what I have said?

In the second attempt at writing this passage, "winnow" has become "sift". But "winnow" has set an image of the light sifting the information it elicits and Beckett hesitates between the two words in succeeding drafts, finally (in Typescript 5) opting for the less direct "sift".

Detailed stage directions begin in Typescript 2. There are to be "Three white boxes" and the heads are still partially characterized, as in "Before Play": "Age: in their thirties. Appearance: indifferent." Voice directions are added in manuscript. For the opening chorus they are to be "just audible, ~~unintelligible~~ probably unintelligible." Light directions

are placed between speeches and eight blackouts are indicated: two at the opening (one after each chorus) one at the end of the first section of narrative (as in the previous draft) followed by another after chorus C. Four more blackouts occur at the end of the play, three coming before, between and after the two choruses and the final one after the man has repeated "We were not long together."

Linguistically the search for allusive vocabulary begins in Typescript 2, as here from Woman 2: "He stinks of *you bitch*." A range of judicial language is also introduced, emphasising the man's broken contract: "I said *swore*"; "threatened to *swore she would*"; ~~I had to admit there was no denying~~"; ~~take-my-life settle-my-hash swing for me~~"; ~~came-out-with the-whole-thing confessed~~."

Typescript 3 includes a rewrite of the second half of the text (headed 3A.) The rewrite cuts and splits up the long speeches of each character, so that the text loses its monologue effect. Each speech in 3A is ticked, presumably when shaped to Beckett's satisfaction. The word "play" first emerges in 3A. In 3 the man had said "I know now, all that was just a game." The passage does not appear in earlier versions, but the second version of Typescript 1 does have two manuscript additions "Oh I know now -" and "I know now etc." as though the speech had been drafted separately and is missing.

The three rewritten pages of Typescript 1 are puzzling, since they, rather than any other preceding draft, seem to have been the model for 3A. It seems likely therefore that these pages are misplaced with Typescript 1 and should be placed just before 3A in the draft sequence. A comparison of the following sentence elucidates:

Typescript 1

S 1. She had money, I imagine. Though she lived quietly.

Typescript 1 (last 3 pages)

W 1. She had means, I imagine, though she did not spend.

Typescripts 2, 3 and 4

W 1. She had means, I imagine. Though she lived quietly.

Typescript 3A

W 1. She had means, I fancy, though she ~~did-not-spend~~ *lived like a pig.*

Once again the resonant phrase has taken several drafts to evolve. The fact that versions 2, 3 and 4 are identical suggests that the most likely ordering of the drafts is Typescripts 1, 2, 3, 4, followed by the last three pages of Typescript 1 and in turn by 3A. Typescript 5 is the first draft to incorporate the emendations of 3A.

Typescript 4 is headed "Corrected Ehrenbach h8he August 1962". The speeches are numbered throughout. The text has grown considerably over successive drafts, since the total of thirty-six speeches counted in Typescript 1. The section up to the central blackout now has thirty speeches and the following section twenty-seven speeches. There are extensive changes in the opening stage directions, the boxes, for example, become urns, and a long manuscript insertion gives detailed instructions for light and voice:

Their speech, throughout act, will be provoked by spotlights.

~~Transfer-of-light.~~

All spots on faces alone.

Transfer of light from one face to another immediate. No blackout xxx except where indicated.

Extortion of speech by light not immediate. At every solicitation a silence of 4 or 5 seconds before voice begins. *Except on 5 occasions where longer delay indicated.*

Faces ~~expressionless~~ *impassive* throughout. Voices toneless except ~~where~~ *on few occasions where otherwise expression* indicated.

The basic text and paragraph structure of Typescript 4 have, as has been suggested, more in common with Typescript 3 than the alterations of 3A. But the text is considerably revised in manuscript, with such additions as " *Adulterers, take warning. Never admit.*" or "not forgotten *coming and going on the earth*" and vocabulary of greater depth. Among alterations in the latter we may note the punning on the word "shade" in "just a ~~little~~ *shade*" and the women's jealousy implicit in the man's fantasy of their getting together over a cup of "*china green tea*". Hiccups are inserted into this draft and the concept of the roller appears in full as a further insertion, though it has already been seen (improved and split up) in the last three pages of Typescript 1 and in 3A, further indication that the two latter are subsequent versions. In Typescript 4 the inserted passage reads:

W 2 Or is it your idea of mercy, to silence me ... in my stride? It is like dragging a roller, on a scorching day. The strain to get it moving, momentum coming, then stop, and strain again. And you perhaps pitying me thinking, Poor thing, she needs a rest.

Each head is given a speech inserted in manuscript pointing to its current situation as a bad joke:

W 2 Are you listening to me? (-) Is *there* anybody listening to me? (-) Is there anybody looking at me? (-) Is *there* anybody bothering about me at all?

W 1 Well ... one cannot have lived as long as I have, here I mean, telling the same old disaster, day after day, in the only way one knows, the old *earthy* way, and not sometimes wonder if it is not all falling, if it has not fallen, from the beginning, on empty air. (-) Something is being asked, that seems clear, speech is all one has to give, so one speaks. (-) So one reasons, when one reasons, in the old *earthy* way. (-) But is something being asked. (-) Perhaps nothing is being asked. (-) Yes, one cannot have lived here as long as I have, giving in vain the only thing to give, and not say sometimes to oneself, Perhaps no one is asking me for anything at all. (-) Yes.

M Are you a deaf? A mere eye? ~~As-deaf-as-an-eye?~~
Lip reading? Or not interested? Not interested
in words. Just looking at my face. Looking for
something in my face. In my eyes. Or not even
that. A mere eye. Quite unintelligent. Opening
and closing on me. (-) Am I as much as being seen?

In Typescript 5 the tripartite structure of the play emerges for the first time. The first part of the narrative is a corrected version of Typescript 4, with corrections made in the latter typed into the text. Instructions for the blackout and brief central chorus are not given at the end of this section.

The second part of the narrative in Typescript 5 is a false start. It begins as the corrected version of Typescript 4, but ends after only half a page. There follows a further attempt that has much more in common with 3A than with Typescript 4. In the latter version, the second part of the narrative is based on the paragraph structure of Typescript 3 and does not follow the form of 3A (in which the paragraphs are split into much shorter units). The second part of Typescript 5 thus begins in the mould of Typescripts 3 and 4 but breaks off almost immediately to adopt that of 3A. Typescript 5, moreover, improves upon 3A by splitting the text of part two into still shorter units. Beckett has clearly realized that a more rapid movement of light from head to head would have the effect of concentrating audience attention and be dramatically more effective.

A brief blackout is indicated in the middle of Woman 2's roller speech, thus dividing the narrative into three sections:

W 2 Like dragging a great roller, xxx on a scorching day.
The strain ... to get it moving, momentum coming -
(light off and back) - kill it and strain again.

A further blackout is introduced at the end of the play, splitting up the man's final speech and emphasizing the closing question:

M Mere eye lens eye. No mind. Omening (sic) and closing on me. Am I as much - (off and back) - am I as much (sic) ... as being seen?

The vocabulary in the second part of Typescript 5 closely resembles that in 3A, while part one, as has been mentioned, incorporates the corrections of Typescript 4. A manuscript alteration in part one shows Beckett working towards greater immediacy in the man's narrative:

M ... ~~She swore she would do away with herself if I didn't give her up.~~ (Hiccup). Pardon. Give up that whore, she said, or I'll cut my throat - (hiccup) pardon - so help me God.

Direct instead of reported speech thus gives expression to the linked themes of blackmail, sex and death. "Her" becomes the much more satisfactory personalized image "that whore" while a mere social apology "pardon" is developed into a prayer to the Almighty. It is a typical example of Beckett's linguistic craftsmanship, showing his capacity to breathe life into the flatter parts of his dramatic speech as the drafts progress.

The play's title appears for the first time in Typescript 6: "PLAY/ An Act" and several important developments occur in the stage directions. The three heads, for example, are further depersonalized ("Age and appearance indifferent") whereas their age had been specified as "in their thirties" in previous drafts. A much altered manuscript note on the title page finally decides the matter as follows:

~~xxx age and appearance so abstracted
Faces so petrified beyond age and expression
so lost to age and aspect as to be scarcely more
differentiated than the urns as to seem almost part of
urns. But masks forbidden.~~

The play largely takes the form of the published text in draft six, with directions for the repeat appearing for the first time and the two

further blackouts introduced in draft 5 now established in the text, making ten in all. The idea of a single spotlight also emerges for the first time in the opening directions:

Their speech, throughout act, will be
throughout
 provoked by spotlights. *a spotlight directed projected on*
*faces alone (see note p.)*¹

Vocabulary alterations are again towards greater immediacy. The marvellous line "Not even a squeeze of lemon" is jotted on the title page and sexuality is further introduced in the man's "Then I got frightened and ~~owned-up~~ *made a clean breast of it.*" The idea of his being overcome by the situation is made more apparent in "I simply could ~~not~~ *no longer*", while the simple alteration of a verb in a speech of Woman 1 suddenly spotlights the horror of her predicament: "Silence and darkness were all I ~~asked~~ *craved*".

Richard Admussen raises an interesting point for the comparative linguist by noting that the French translation of Play came as [Beckett] was still working on the English version. Comédie, originally entitled "Que Comédie", of which there are four manuscript versions giving evidence of at least ten separate reworkings, was translated in April and May of 1963 and seems to have been based on the sixth of the ten English versions." Admussen does not, however, advance the discussion, adding merely: "Since the original developed along with the translation, there may well have been influence of one language upon the other, although no patterns are readily decipherable."² A close study of draft 6 compared with the French versions

1 A final "note on light" is not in fact present until draft seven.

2 "The Manuscripts of Beckett's Play", Modern Drama, vol.16, June 1973, p.25.

is clearly desirable.

Typescript 7 is headed "SB corrected". It includes most of the revisions of Typescript 6 and makes some further changes in the stage directions. The peremptory "masks forbidden" of 6, for example, becomes "no masks". A final "Note on light" is included to accompany that on the rhythm of the chorus established in Typescript 2. In the closing direction "Repeat play exactly" the word "exactly" is hesitantly crossed out, though it reappears in the ensuing drafts.

A note on the title page states "Erskine for Arsene throughout", while vocabulary alterations follow the now familiar pattern of increasing resonance. The ideas of God and purgatory, for example, newly characterize the following: "all I held most ~~dear~~ *sacred*" and "~~toterable~~ *endurable* moments", while "lolling on air - ~~cushions~~ *pillows*" introduces a sexual element to parallel that already present in the latter part of the line "in the stern ... sheets".

The corrected version of Typescript 7 closely resembles the published text. Typescript 8 is dated "Ussy december 1963". The text incorporates most of the revisions made in draft 7, though "Arsene" is retained throughout, despite the "Erskine" note in 7. The text of Typescript 8 is minimally altered, though such changes as do occur are important. In the opening directions, for example, the urns finally become "grey" not white and the tempo throughout is to be "very rapid". In order to achieve this effect, the response to light is speeded up, as it is in the published text:

The reaction to light is instantaneous. No pause between stimulus and reflex (speech) except where indicated."

A final note on the urns is introduced in 8 to accompany those on light and chorus. There are also manuscript instructions in French for the urns (*jarres*) indicating, presumably, the progress of Beckett's translation.

Typescript 9 is a carbon of draft 8. There are few alterations, but an important one occurs in the opening directions. Beckett has here decided to ignore the "instantaneous" response to light of draft 8 and return to the form of draft 7, where there is "a pause of about two seconds before utterance is achieved." The latter note is written into draft 9 as a manuscript alteration, but with one difference. The pause is reduced by a second to "about one second". "Erskine" is inserted in manuscript throughout the text.

Draft 10, the final typescript, is also headed "Ussy december 1963" and has a prefatory note "Conform with Faber proofs and script sent to George 12.1.64."¹ The text is a retyping of draft 7, incorporating only some of its revisions. Many differences from the Faber text thus occur, hence the note to "conform" with Faber proofs, which seem to have been based on the corrected version of draft 7.² Draft 10 has, for example, "large white urns" and "masks forbidden" in the opening directions.

Draft 7 is thus seen to be a crucial text, from which stem two distinct versions. Drafts 8 (and 9) are a fair copy of draft 7 and include most of its revisions; draft 10 is a further copy of draft 7 that omits most of its revisions. Of the last four drafts of Play, therefore, the last least resembles the Faber text. On the other hand the published text sometimes derives from both versions of draft 7. The Faber notes on chorus and light, for example, correspond with those in drafts 7 and 10, with the addition of the note on urns from drafts 8 and 9. The arrangement of blackouts following the opening chorus is a further example:

1 George Devine directed the first English production of Play for the National Theatre at the Old Vic on 7 April 1964.

2 Some of the corrections in draft 7 do not enter the Faber text until the 1968 edition (see chart overleaf). The 1964 text has more in common with drafts 8 and 9.

Typescripts 7 and 10. Blackout. 5 seconds. Spots on 3 faces. 5 seconds. Voices..

Typescripts 8 and 9. " 3 " " " " " 3 " "

Faber Text " 5 " " " " " 3 " "

The following chart comparing the last four typescripts with the Faber text indicates the double derivation of the latter more fully.

TYPESCRIPT 7

sene (title page changes to Erskine)

Identical large white urns
talk chat

Manuscript inclusion of direction for light to flick on and off man, without voice

I have come dropped in
He swore we should

tolerable endurable moments
a)Not even a sice squeeze of lemon
b) " " sice squeeze of lemon

none whatsoever
great roller
Pardon

of both. They being one
à la rigueur
air-cushions pillows

there, all there
Repeat play exactly

Mobile pivoting spot

TYPESCRIPTS 8 and 9

Arsene (8); Manuscript changes to Erskine (9)

identical grey urns
talk

Direction typed into text

I have dropped in
He said we should
endurable moments

a)Not even a squeeze of lemon
b) " " " -

none whatsoever
heavy roller
Par-Pardon

of both, they being one
at a pinch
air-cushions

there, all there
Repeat play exactly

Mobile spot

TYPESCRIPT 10

Arsene

identical large white urns
talk chat

Direction omitted

I have come
He swore we would
tolerable moments

a)Not even a squeeze of lemon
b) " " " -

none whatever
heavy roller
Pardon

of both. They being one
à la rigueur
air cushions

there,
Repeat play exactly

pivoting spot

FABER TEXT 1964-68

Erskine

identical grey urns
talk (1964) chat (1968)

Direction included

I have dropped in
He swore we should
endurable moments

a)Not even a squeeze of lemon
b) " " " -

none whatsoever
great roller

Par-Pardon (1964) Par - don (1968)
of both. They being one
at a pinch

air-cushions (1964) air-pillows (1968)

there, all there
Repeat play exactly (1964)
Repeat play (1968)

Mobile spot

TYPESCRIPT 7

Note on "Rhythm of Chorus" -
Spacing identical with Faber
No urn directions
Final directions for light as
Faber, except minor word
changes

TYPESCRIPTS 8 and 9

"Chorus" note
spacing differs from Faber
Directions for urns
Omission of section of final
light directions present in
Faber

TYPESCRIPT 10

Note on "Rhythm of Chorus" -
Spacing identical with Faber
No urn directions
Final directions for light as
Faber, except minor word
changes

FABER TEXT 1964-68

"Chorus" note (as 8 and
spacing as 7 and 10
Directions for urns
Final directions for light as
7 and 10, except minor word
changes

A note on the repeat of Play is held at Washington University with draft 10. It is described in manuscript as being "made after National Theatre production". The note does not appear, therefore, in the 1964 Faber text, but, with slight variations, in the 1968 edition.

To conclude this discussion of Beckett's working method is a chart indicating the main stages in the development of the text of Not I through the two holograph and six typescript versions held at Reading University. The same library contains two further versions.¹ The first of these is a six-page stencilled text with manuscript alterations, described by Beckett as the "script".² This version is almost identical with the corrected Typescript 6. It has minor variations from the latter and also from the Faber text. MS.1227/7/12/9 is a nine-page photocopy of an uncorrected typescript, possibly an early proof. It appears to be based on Typescript 5, but does not include all the alterations made in the latter. The typescript is entitled Not I, but the first page is headed, surprisingly, "Act One" and the ensuing text is paginated 1.1 to 1.8.

The important addition to the final note ("in a gesture of helpless compassion") occurs, as observed earlier,³ in the published text alone.

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1 R.U.L. MSS. 1227/7/12/8 and 1227/7/12/9.

2 On the envelope in which the material was presented to R.U.L.

3 pp.127-8.

Holograph 1

Holograph 2

R.U.L. MS. NO.

1227/7/12/1

1227/7/12/1

A
Description

3/4 page.
Headed Paris
20.3.72
Entire text
crossed out.

4 1/2 pages. Full text. Dated at close
Paris 1.4.72.
Reverse of pp.4/5 numbered pp.6/7 and
headed "Addenda". P.7 contains note
on movement. Dated at close Paris 21.4.72.
Further unnumbered MS. sheet, headed
"Analysis" (breakdown of full text with
suggestions for improvement, some of which
drafted in addenda.)

B
Stage
Directions

NONE

Written sideways in margin of p.1 and crammed
into top of page above holograph 1.
MOUTH: "back up stage audience R, convenient
level, faintly lit from close up and below,
as little as possible of rest of face."
AUDITOR: No podium. "downstage audience
L. tall, upright figure"; "dead still
throughout except for single brief movement
where indicated *right stage right*."
instructions for "ad-lib" before curtain up.

C
Addenda
and
Notes

NONE

Addenda passages lettered A - H.
Movement "This consists in simple
sideways raising of *Listener's* arms clear of
sides and their falling back with if
possible just audible thud of hands on
thighs.xxx It ~~is-less-at~~ *lessens* with each
recurrence and xxx scarcely perceptible at
third. There is just enough ~~silence-to~~
pause to contain it as MOUTH recovers from
vehement refusal to ~~abandon~~ *relinquish*
third person."

D
Question

NONE

What?...I?...no...no!...she

E
Selected
Verbal
Alterations

birth into the
world...this world
...of a ~~small tiny~~
baby boy-or-girl
in a small ...
what?...girl?
small place *hole on*
~~the-coast~~
in the ~~downs bog~~
coming up to sixty
this...what?...65?
walking in a field
with my youngest
grandchild ~~looking~~
searching for cowslips
and ~~she~~ I found her
my self in the dark
for ~~she~~ I could still
hear the buzzing in
~~her~~ *my* ears

*tiny baby little thing...5 pounds...in
a small remote godfor...what?...girl?...
tiny baby little girl
dead-silent-thought thought silent as
the grave*

F
Selected
Verbal
Additions

that *early* April
morning light

the *old* buzzing
then working down *the whole frame*
the face alone...*face and mouth*
keep on *trying*

Typescript 1

1227/7/12/2

Typescript 2

1227/7/12/3

A 1½ pages.
First attempt at fair copy of
holograph, with MS. alterations.
Ends on realisation not suffering:
"not a twinge ah ... for the moment."

4 pages (+ 1 page headed "A".)
Full text typed from holograph,
with MS. alterations.
Stage directions added in MS. on
p.1.
Letters ABC in margins, where
addenda passages to be inserted.

B NONE

As holograph 2, except:
MOUTH: "~~convenient-level~~
~~unnaturally-high-level~~ 8 ft
above stage level
~~as-little-as-possible-of-rest-of~~
face upper face in shadow
AUDITOR: "standing on invisible
podium 4' high."

C NONE

"A" (Addendum)
Includes passage in which old
woman finds her hand wet. Addendum
ends:
"head doesn't move but eyes ...
Oh very much so ... hundred
degrees at least."

D As before except "she"what?...~~I~~ who?...~~what?~~...no...No!... she

E

any subsequent
time stage
none whatsoever
not the slightest
perhaps no doubt
all part of the xxx
wish to ... torment

~~done-his-devilish-work~~ pulled
buttoned up his trousers
nine eight months
flood stream
sensation-so-lessened feeling so
dulled
~~some-little-time-later-it-is-true~~
long after
trying to...~~trying-to-what~~ not
knowing-what...~~trying-what...~~
not knowing what...what she
was trying
snatching at comfort the crumb

F

searching aimlessly
for cowslips

"imagine" added many times (as in
later drafts of Eh Joe)
with the other ~~waifs~~
sudden flash
on the rare occasions
guilty or not guilty
tender mercies...now every morning
nothing she could say?
before her time
poking around

1227/7/12/4

A 5 pages. Full text with MS. alterations.
Stage directions typed p.l.
A-H lettered in margins.

1227/7/12/5

5 pages. Full text with MS. alterations.
Headed in MS. Not I.
2 dots separate the phrases,
increasing pace of flow.

B AUDITOR: "dead still throughout but for 4
single-brief *slight* movements where
indicated. See note below."
4 movements are cued in MS. in margins.

scream (screams) .. then listen
... (pause silence) scream
again (screams again) .. listen
again (pause silence).
Beside final typed directions
Beckett has added in MS. in
margin "grim truth".

C "Note Movement
This consists etc." (not completed).
Addenda ABC typed into text and marked in
margins
Addenda DEFGH marked in margins (to be
inserted).

Text ends with movement note
typed in. Beckett heads this
in MS. "Note 1." Below it he
adds:

"Note 2
'any': pronounce 'anny'".

D what?...who?...what?...no...no!...she

what?...who?...what?...no..no!..
she!

E what?...~~sixty-five~~...~~seventy~~...yes my God
trousers breeches
minute tick
cowslip ~~flower~~ bloom xxx bell
since she-had-uttered heard-~~it~~ it
had sounded
unbroken steady stream
nothing she could say tell?
~~winter-mostly~~ always winter some
strange reason
God... (long good laugh.)

my good God!
showered visited
only-a just the face
flow stream
woman hag
on the way back home..home!
.. a little mound

F in margin beside "distant bell": *in a
cowslip bell/he
no cry...just the tears
how it was...could...what?...had been?
...yes...something that would say...
how it had been*

kneeling occurs for first time
in list of postures. Typed
straight into text. "Croker's
Meadows" also typed straight in,
but altered to "acres" in MS.
no love of any kind; stop and
stare again;
meant to be suffering..ha!
no sound of any kind; mouth half
open as usual;
but no spared that; couldn't
pause a second; drifting
around...day after day;
to get her going breathing;
lying light failing in her lap;
crawl back in;

1227/7/12/6

1227/7/12/7

6 pages. Full text with MS. alterations.
MS. note p.1: "corrected".
Title typed in.
Numbers in margins relating to
A incidence of buzzing (B1 - 7) and
interruptions (1 - 22)
2 dots separating phrases.

6 pages. Full text. Fair copy with
light MS. corrections.
2 dots separating phrases.

AUDITOR: *sex undeterminable with hood*

B MOUTH: *ad-libbing from text
as required*

Central image now mouth not face.

As Typescript 5 (revised version)
Two MS. jottings on final page:
1) Consider pause for Mouth to stare
*in-pauses after "stare into space" -
"stop and stare again" - once or
throughout.*
2) For ad lib after curtain down:
*"there .. get on with it from
there etc."*
For ad lib before curtain up:
?"whole-body-like-gone"

Notes 1 and 2 typed in. Note 2 with
MS. additions:
*"baby pronounce babby
either " eether"
(suggestions qualified by "for example".)
MS. note headed Buzzing divides text into
C 3 sections and notes 7 buzzing references,
to be synchronized with movement of light,
7 sentences on reverse of final page (no
heading.)
List of 22 interruptions on final page.*

Note 1 altered:
*"this consists in simple slight
sideways raising of arms from sides
and their falling back. with-if
feasible-just-audible-thud-of-hands
on-thighs."*
Note 2
Pronunciation details typed in, then
cancelled.

D As before. (Second "she" entered in
margin, but cancelled.)

*what?...who?...what?--no..no!..SHE!
(last occasion "she..SHE!")*

*birth out
visited inflicted vented
exactly actually insentient
snatching-at-straws grabbing at the straw
one quick grab
E just the face mouth
trying straining to hear
gone-mad like maddened
sudden flash in-the-dark
in court the dock
merciful God is love
face buried in the grass*

*"dulled" underlined twice (p.1) and
"numbed" in margin; alteration not
made.*

*"imagine" added twice more.
vowel marked in margin "vow-ell"
quick grab and on nothing there
and can't stop
stand up woman*

F *nothing she could tell...try something else
whole body like gone
then forgiven back in the -
dull roar
what she was trying...what to try
how she had lived*

*the buzzing so called
all that steady stream
old hag already sitting staring at
her hand*

P A R T T H R E E

DRAMATIC TECHNIQUE

Introduction

Waiting for Godot, said Kenneth Tynan in 1955:

forced me to reexamine the rules which have hitherto governed the drama; and, having done so, to pronounce them not elastic enough.¹

It is in the breaking of theatrical "rules" that Beckett's greatest strength as a dramatist lies. We shall examine in this section the different ways in which his innovatory technique has altered concepts of dramatic possibility.

As Peter Hall remarked, in a talk following a National Theatre production of

Happy Days:

Beckett has changed the way we do Shakespeare, the way we act, the way we write and the way we direct in the theatre.²

Commenting on the progressive nature of Beckett's dramatic thinking, Alec Reid points to the way "scenery and local colour are pared down to a minimum" in Godot, with "no resolution of conflict or development of character"³ while Gordon Macdougall, director of the Oxford Playhouse, goes so far as to say that "Beckett makes theatre out of the deliberate abnegation of the theatrical."⁴

In considering Beckett's "abnegation of the theatrical" we shall look particularly at his use of light, of sound and silence, at the way he handles movement and stage space and presents his visual images. The artificiality of isolating light from image and sound from both is obviously a problem here, since all are inseparable parts of the dramatic experience. They have been treated separately, however, in an attempt to establish the several ways in which Beckett's dramatic concepts are innovatory. Some repetition is inevitable in making such distinctions; moreover certain matters already

1 Reproduced in Tynan on Theatre, London, 1964, p.38.

2 Lyttelton Theatre, 7 April 1976.

3 "From Godot to Not I - A Survey of Beckett's Dramatic Forms", The Arts in Ireland, Vol 1, No.4, Dublin, 1973 (pp.25-32) p.26.

4 Oxford English Faculty Lecture, 26 February 1975.

raised in our earlier investigations will be considered further in Part 3. But in each case the focus will be different. The object of this section is to consider the plays as dramatic artefacts, how they work in the theatre.

Beckett's theatrical choices are usually fundamentally simple. He has approached dramatic convention without preconception as to what may be attempted. He has, moreover, experimented successfully in several branches of theatre, studying the potentialities of each medium. Indeed the apparent restrictions of each seem to stimulate him, resulting in the freshness of approach that has made him the great theatrical innovator of our time. Our discussion of Beckett's handling of the various media will notice especially his introduction of mechanical devices as characters in the action.

Because he creates for a particular genre, Beckett strongly resists directorial attempts to translate his work from one medium to another. Of

All That Fall he wrote:

It is no more theatre than End-Game is radio and to "act"
it is to kill it

adding:

If we can't keep our genres more or less distinct, or extricate them from the confusion that has them where they are, we might as well go home and lie down.¹

We shall observe the importance of Beckett's stage directions in various dramatic media and notice their application in production by Beckett himself as well as other directors. The views of actors will be included where relevant.

IMAGE AND METAPHOR

Gordon Macdougall points out that Beckett "demands more from the audience than they have been accustomed to give."² Audiences are, however, becoming increasingly familiar with Beckett's dramatic terminology and increasingly

1 Letter to Barney Rosset, Grove Press, 27 August 1957; quoted in Zilliacus, Beckett and Broadcasting, p.3.

2 Lecture op.cit. (p.216)

prepared to think beyond the initial hurdle of the dramatic image, a woman stuck in a mound of earth, for example, heads emerging from urns, or a disembodied mouth. In 1955 audiences streamed from the theatre, outraged by the static nature of Godot. Compared with the later plays, however, Godot now seems almost conventional. At least its characters converse and are relatively mobile and the play takes place in a stylised but recognizable setting, as indeed do Endgame and Krapp's Last Tape.

From Happy Days onwards, however, Beckett's visual images have become increasingly more startling, in settings that have no pretensions to the representational, except insofar as they are dramatic metaphors, accurately reflecting a human predicament. Winnie's mound is a decisive instance of this and the extraordinary image communicates directly, as does the mouth speaking from space in Not I; while the gigantic figure of the auditor becomes a metaphor for both pity and helplessness in the face of human suffering and error.

John Fletcher, comparing Beckett's plays with those of Sartre, describes the latter as "competent dramatizations of political and philosophical discussions", whereas "Beckett's are powerful and vital dramatic images in their own right."¹ Analysing the metaphor of Fin de Partie Fletcher points out that:

(it) is the stage itself. Hamm, like a ham actor, plays to an imaginary audience. He delivers his "story" in a theatrical manner, pausing every so often to comment on his own performance; likewise Nagg, in his tailor joke. Clov points his telescope at the audience and remarks ironically on their delirious enjoyment of the fun. We are in a world where all is illusion and all is play: we are in the theatre, but a theatre that Shakespeare would have understood - theatrum mundi, or all the world a stage.²

1 Fin de Partie, ed. Fletcher, p.18.

2 Ibid, p.17.

The stage as a metaphor for living is of course particularly appropriate to the cyclical view of existence which, as we have seen in Part 1, is revealed in Beckett's plays. Not only is a cyclic element already present in both text and action, but the nightly repetition of the play itself implies a similar inability to reach an end, in absolute terms, to that experienced by Beckett's protagonist narrators. Indeed the figure patiently paced out nightly on the strip of stage by May:

One two three four five six seven wheel,
one two three four five six seven wheel¹

may be seen as the visual equivalent of the mathematical symbol for infinity.²

Martin Esslin points to the immediate visual impact of Beckett's dramatic metaphors:

Drama of the kind Beckett writes is poetry of concrete, three-dimensional stage images, complex metaphors communicable in a flash of visual intuitive understanding. [] In plays like Not I, That Time and Footfalls it is by no means essential that the audience in the theatre should be able to decode the complex story lines and intellectual puzzles they enshrine. On the contrary, what the audience should experience [] is precisely the overall impact of a single overwhelmingly powerful image ...³

Beckett's stage images have become increasingly bolder in the plays that follow Krapp's Last Tape. From a concentration on the head and face that began in Happy Days, was continued in Play, became conspicuous by default in Film, reappeared in Eh Joe, dwindled to a mouth in Not I, only to reemerge in That Time, Beckett turns to the opposite end of the body in Footfalls and uses not visible feet, but the sound that they make, as a metaphor for living and re-living.⁴ As in Come and Go, where the faces are shaded and light concentrates on the hands, Footfalls has "least (light) on head". Instead the floor, where May's feet pace unseen hidden by her "worn grey wrap", is

1 Footfalls, p.9.

2 

3 "Voices, Patterns, Voices - Samuel Beckett's Later Plays", Gambit, Vol 7, No 28, London 1976, p.95.

4 Compare Giacometti sculpting not the human figure but "the shadow that is cast." Quoted by Francis Warner in "The absence of nationalism in the work of Samuel Beckett", p.182.

emphasized, to prepare the way for her disappearance at the end of the play.

The latest plays have dispensed with certain concrete metaphors from earlier plays, though still dealing with similar themes. In Footfalls, for example, the image of parents in dustbins dominant in Endgame has disappeared and instead the mother's voice emerges from the darkness in her daughter's mind. Similarly the voices first heard on the tape recorder in Krapp's Last Tape are still present in That Time, but they now alternate in the skull of the old man whose sleeping face we see. In the two later plays the abandonment of the concrete image allows a more fluid stream of consciousness approach to language.

Whether Beckett's stage imagery has become more radical in order to avoid precise repetition as his options narrow, or whether it has been possible to adopt a less concrete approach since audiences have become more familiar with his world is open to debate. Visually, however, it is clear that the images in most of the later plays stem directly from the situation described in The Unnamable and give visual embodiment to the predicament of a consciousness trapped and unable to cease.

SPACE AND SETTING

Part of the presentation of stage image is the manipulation of space, and here again Beckett shows himself to be a master craftsman. From the beginning his sets were economical: a divided set in Eleuthéria, a tree on a country road in Godot, a "bare interior" that, with its high rear windows, is sometimes said to resemble a skull in Endgame, a table in Krapp, a mound in Happy Days. Thereafter, with the exception of the urns in Play and the bench in Come and Go, there is no stage furniture at all. Beckett's protagonists are either suspended in space (as in Not I and That Time) or pace a strip of stage (as in Footfalls).

"All I want on the stage is a pair of blubbering lips" Beckett remarked to Desmond Ryan and his cousin John Beckett as early as 1958.¹ In achieving this object in 1972 with Not I space became an important ingredient of Beckett's image and was used again in That Time. In both plays Beckett appropriates for his action what has always been considered unusable space outside the circus - mid-air itself. It is a similar kind of challenge to convention to that represented by his oeuvre in the literary spectrum:

My little exploration is that whole zone of being that has always been set aside by artists as something unusable - as something by definition incompatible with art.²

Beckett creates in his audience an extraordinary awareness of offstage space. There are, for example, the emissaries from the unseen M. Godot and the boy glimpsed from a window in Fin de Partie. In the latter play also we are made aware of the blasted landscape and dead sea outside the windows while in Krapp's Last Tape Krapp's bottle-filled offstage darkness is also dramatically present to us. Perhaps the most surprising example is Willie's unseen crawl in Happy Days, for which Beckett draws careful diagrams in a production notebook.³

In the mimes there are mysterious unseen forces, offstage tyrants who entice, command or prod Beckett's protagonists into action, catapulting the man back onstage in Acte sans Paroles I, for instance, and then taunting him with descending and retreating "comforts". The merciless (if comic) goad in Acte sans Paroles II is of the same species, as are the bells controlling Winnie's day in Happy Days. In the later plays the light in Play appears to be generated offstage, the voices in That Time sound from space above and to each side of the old man's head, while the women in Come and Go drift silently

¹ Letter to the author from John Beckett 10 May 1975.

² Interview with Israel Shenker, New York Times, 6 May 1956, Section 2 (x) p.3.

³ R.U.L. MS. 1396/4/10, p.9.

in and out of an enveloping darkness, like that into which May disappears at the end of Footfalls. Beckett in these ways makes maximum use of theatrical space, while appearing to use only a very small portion of it.

MOVEMENT

The mimes were written in 1956, before Beckett had decided that the pattern of restricted movement set in Fin de Partie should become his dramatic "signature". To those familiar with the Beckett world the mimes often seem over-explicit. It should be remembered, however, that the object of mime is such clear visual communication with an audience that words are redundant. Beckett's comment on the mime Marcel Marceau points the difference between the languages of word and gesture: "With Marceau", he remarked, "I always feel the absence of words; the need for them."¹ Marceau goes beyond straightforward communication through gesture to the kind of complexities for which words are more suitable. Beckett avoids such a trap in the Actes sans Paroles which communicate directly with audiences unversed in the Beckett idiom. Their success on these terms can thus be conceded.

In the later plays, apart from the role of light in stage movement (to which we shall return) and the ritualized movements in Come and Go and Footfalls it is the minimal movement of static characters that holds audience attention. In Happy Days, for example, after the initial impact of stage image has passed, Beckett succeeds in holding attention by a series of small movements connected with the handbag and by a technique of arrested gesture, such as Winnie's delay in donning her hat. Winnie's slightest movements become extraordinarily important, since they are almost the only ones in the play. Moreover her running commentary on the movement in progress, whether her husband's or her own, focuses attention still further:

¹ Charles Marowitz "Paris Log", Encore March/April 1962, p.44.

(testing upper front teeth with thumb, indistinctly) -
 good Lord! - (pulling back corner of mouth, mouth open, do.) -
 ah well - (other corner, do.) - no worse - (abandons inspection,
 normal speech) - no better, no worse - (lays down mirror) - no
 change - (wipes fingers on grass) - no pain - I

In Act 2 only the infinitesimal movements of Winnie's face, of her eyes, nose and mouth are left, until the arrival of Willie, yet the concentration is such that attention does not flag. The same is true of Not I, where the luminous lips moving in darkness are sometimes described as a "mesmeric" image. In Eh Joe where the face dominates the camera, just before the woman's voice drops to a whisper at the end of the play, a manuscript note in the final typescript reads "Eyes remember". The direction does not appear in the published text and seems, therefore, to have been a rehearsal note; but it shows the immense concentration that Beckett was demanding from his actor, movement having dwindled to a flicker in the eyes. Jack Macgowran, for whom the play was written, called it "the most gruelling 22 minutes I have ever had in my life", while acknowledging its suitability for television:

It's really photographing the mind. It's the nearest perfect play for television that you could come across, because the television camera photographs the mind better than anything else.²

MAKEUP AND COSTUME

Beckett's makeup directions are extreme. In the earlier plays they range from the masklike "very red" and "very white" faces in Endgame to Krapp's "White face. Purple nose. Disordered grey hair", the traditional makeup of the clown (an impression reinforced by an immense pair of narrow, pointed white boots). In the later plays, as we have seen, hands rather than faces are emphasized by makeup in Come and Go; the faces in Play are "so lost to age and aspect as to seem almost part of urns"; while the mouth, the only

1 Happy Days, p.10.

2 Theatre Quarterly Vol III No 11, London, 1973, p.20.

visible facial area in Not I, is customarily painted a luminous white, though there are as yet no makeup directions in the text.

Apart from Hamm's bloodstained handkerchief no costume colour is specified in Godot or Endgame. In subsequent plays, such as Krapp's Last Tape, Not I and Footfalls, colour is controlled and these plays either present a contrast of black and white or the median colour, grey. The same colour scheme informs the world of the later prose, as we have seen in Lessness. In Happy Days, however, there is a chance for variation in the club ribbon on Willie's boater and Winnie's bodice, striped parasol and "small ornate brimless hat with crumpled feather." The only precise suggestion in the directions is her hair: "Blonde for preference".

But Beckett's general practice in the later plays has been to make colour functionally relevant, as in his use of the black/white dark/light contrast. In Come and Go, moreover, the only play in which Beckett specifies several shades, the dulled floral colours have an organic function and, as we have seen in Part 2, are related directly to meaning.

MECHANICAL AIDS

It is by the introduction of technical apparatus and mechanical aids as characters in their own right that Beckett achieves some of his most startling dramatic effects. The first of these, the tape recorder in Krapp, was conventional insofar as it is the machine's function to store voices and replay them as required. But the juxtaposition of Krapp's younger selves, so like and yet so different from the old man now listening to them, is an exciting dramatic innovation. Beckett instructed the actor Pierre Chabert in his 1975 Paris production of the play:

to become as much as possible one body with the machine.¹

The play is at once a commentary on Proust's vision of the changing self and

1 "Beckett as Director", Gambit, Vol 7, No 28, London 1976, p.62.

the fusion of a dramatic technique hitherto thought proper only to radio, with a stage monologue. Having found the technique successful, Beckett adapted it for further use in That Time.

LIGHT

Inseparable from the stage image is the light that presents it, and, by the manipulation of light and darkness, gives it life. Beckett characteristically takes the use of light beyond the normal stage convention. Instead of merely animating the stage picture the technical apparatus, light itself, becomes a character in the action in certain plays and provides the necessary movement to prevent them becoming static. In Play light is often recognized in the programme as a fourth character,¹ an inquisitor controlling the action. As Robert Wilcher points out, Beckett reverses:

the usual theatrical convention that the lighting technician is subordinate to the actors. Instead of the light being there to serve the performer, the performer is in bondage to the light.²

Of course any actor who leaves the safety of the wings for the stage finds himself gripped by a spotlight, marked down while he delivers his lines. Beckett simply takes this dramatic fact further, imprisoning his actors in urns, so that any movement but that of the light is prohibited. Light's inquisitorial function of drawing speech from its victims is thus starkly revealed. The essential simplicity of harnessing a process already taking place in the theatre and drawing attention to it in itself, rather than using it as an accepted part of theatrical illusion is typical of Beckett's contribution to the contemporary stage.

Light has of course been used symbolically in the theatre by dramatists such as Maurice Maeterlinck³ and designer-directors such as Edward Gordon Craig.⁴

1 e.g. Royal Court Theatre, 20 May 1976, director Donald McWhinnie.

2 "'What's it meant to mean?': An approach to Beckett's Theatre", Critical Quarterly, Vol 18, No 2, p.31.

3 e.g. Les Aveugles (1890) Pelléas et Mélisande (1892) La Mort de Tintagiles (1894).

4 Denis Bablet, Edward Gordon Craig (translated by Daphne Woodward) London, 1966, p.54.

Beckett, however, goes further in Play not only personifying light, but using it to control the entire dramatic action. He does not ignore the fact that movement is necessary to animate the stage picture, but simply introduces a new kind of movement and paralyzes conventional action.

In Come and Go and Footfalls although light is no longer a character as such, it is through light that the climax of both plays is reached, after completion of the text. Both light and sound diminish steadily throughout Footfalls which, though a short play textually, seems thus to encompass aeons of time. The strong linear image produces an impression similar to that of a ripple gradually widening outwards until it is lost in the wideness of water. The protagonist in Footfalls seems to have departed, at the end of the play, into that area of distance and sound waves that is space, the light alone being left to register the absence of the body, its entry into another dimension.

Before writing Footfalls Beckett had experimented with diminishing light levels in Play, again making a climactic point by ending the play with light at "normal strength". Play is thus a catalytic play with regard to Beckett's use of light. Not only is light characterized in the play but the possibility of eventual freedom from its scrutiny is suggested only to be dispelled finally by the increased light level. The latter may be compared with the unrelieved "blazing light" of Happy Days or the "dazzling light" of Act Without Words, I. The tone of Endgame, however, is expressed by the opposite end of the lighting scale, the grey light of unrelieved gloom, while in Godot Beckett used light to parody the naturalistic tradition by an exaggeratedly swift nightfall: "The sun sets, the moon rises."¹ The parodic intention was particularly evident in Beckett's 1975 Schiller Theater production of the play.

Beckett has thus used light with increasing subtlety throughout his dramatic oeuvre, to make functional points in the action and, in his most

¹ Godot, p.92.

extreme concept, given it a personality in its own right and a dramatic power within the framework of the play itself.

CAMERA

Beckett's use of the camera is a further example of his personification of a technical apparatus. In Film the old man spends the entire film escaping the camera eye, only to be confronted by it at last. The camera has been used to personify his second self - it is his own inner eye that holds him in an ironic scrutiny.

Beckett uses the camera as an externalization of the self once more, in Eh Joe, the lens inching up on Joe while he listens to a voice in his head. As we have seen in Part 2 the camera virtually becomes his conscience, the means by which he is exposed, confronted by a self-knowledge he would rather evade.

The central dramatic idea here, as with Beckett's use of light, is both bold and simple. The camera exists as an apparatus capable of producing for us images of ourselves. Beckett simply explores this fact, using the camera to probe beyond the external image into the recesses of being. When, moreover, Martin Held's Schiller Theater Krapp (directed by Beckett in 1969) was recorded for television by Westdeutscher Rundfunk (Cologne) Beckett gave the television team a typescript entitled:

Suggestions for T.V. Krapp¹.

In these suggestions Beckett calls for two cameras, A and B, and once again the apparatus is personified. A is "mere eye"² but B is intelligent:

This camera listens and its activity is affected by words spoken. It can thus be used, not only as 'savage eye', but as a means to distinguish in this recorded past those moments which matter little or nothing to Krapp from those which matter much or extremely.³

1 Zilliacus, Beckett and Broadcasting, p.203.

2 Compare Play, p.21, M: "And now, that you are...mere eye. Just looking."

3 Zilliacus, op.cit., p.204.

SOUND

Beckett's first stage plays contain no extreme experiments with sound, though Godot is full of linguistic effects, such as Lucky's "tirade", the comic routines of Vladimir and Estragon, and their occasional, haunting stichomythic exchanges. Endgame provides more of a foretaste of what is to come in Clov's few words from the heart spoken with "fixed gaze, tonelessly towards auditorium". But it is not until after his initial experience with radio that Beckett really begins to experiment with the possibilities of sound onstage. Let us therefore look first at the work for radio.

RADIO PLAYS

Surprisingly it was Donald McWhinnie, director of Beckett's first play for radio, All That Fall, who made the decision to use stylised rather than realistic sound effects in that play. Beckett was dubious about the decision but did not prevent McWhinnie from going ahead. The latter wrote to Beckett justifying his choice:

Of course we have realistic recordings, but the difficulty is that it is almost impossible to obtain the right sort of timing and balance with realistic effects. By using good mimics I think we can get real style and shape into the thing. The other factor is that existing recordings are very familiar to our listeners and I do feel that without being extreme we need, in this particular case, to get away from standard realism.¹

Esslin notes that experiments undertaken to produce the sounds required for All That Fall led directly to the establishment of the B.B.C. Radiophonic Workshop, which, in turn, created the sound effects for Embers. It is likely that the success of All That Fall led Beckett to decide to continue his radio writing with non-realistic sound effects. At all events the sound of the sea in Embers is essentially non-realistic, as Henry explains at the outset:

¹ Quoted from the B.B.C. Archives by Martin Esslin, Encounter, September 1975, p.40.

That sound you hear is the sea, (Pause. Louder.)
 I say that sound you hear is the sea, we are sitting
 on the strand. (Pause.) I mention it because the
 sound is so strange, so unlike the sound of the sea,
 that if you didn't see what it was you wouldn't know
 what it was.¹

However lacking in realism, the sound of the sea is a constant in Embers, audible "whenever pause indicated" so that it is on the way to becoming a character in the action, a role subsequently achieved by Music, in the later plays for radio. As Zilliagus points out:

More than two hundred pauses are called for in the text of Embers. Thus the sea, which goads Henry on by surfacing in every one of them, achieves the dignity of a dramatis persona.²

Precisely because the medium is radio, the crucial enigma in Embers of whether Ada is present indeed, or simply in Henry's head is made possible. Beckett develops a similar ambiguity in Cascando, with regard to the identity of Woburn. Duckworth notes:

The play is, as Beckett explained it briefly to me, 'about the character called Woburn who never appears'.³

In both plays Beckett uses as an integral part of his conception the fact that in an invisible medium neither presence nor absence can be taken for granted. Characters can come and go at will in radio, in the same way as they can pass in and out of a stream of consciousness in the novel. Thus to use this invisible medium for the invisible people in Henry's head is particularly appropriate. Radio is uniquely suited to Beckett's dramatic writing, since his plays are generally monologues, dramatic realisations of a stream of consciousness.

In Radio II Beckett takes the extraordinary step for a radio play of making one of the four characters, Dick, a mute. His presence is effectively

1 Embers, p.21. First broadcast 24 June 1958, director Donald McWhinnie.

2 Beckett and Broadcasting, p.89.

3 En attendant Godot, p.xxii.

registered, however, by his manipulation of a whip, with which he chastises Fox into speech. The virtuosity of Beckett's work for radio may thus be seen to cover the introduction of a mute into a spoken medium, the ambiguity as to whether voices heard are evocations or real presences, stylised sound effects, and, in the later plays, the characterization of music in its own right.

A distinct progression is evident from the use of a Schubert Quartet as a signature tune in Beckett's first play for radio, All That Fall, to the characterization of Music in Words and Music, Radio I and Cascando. In these plays Beckett uses music to give sound value to that which is beyond words. This, of course, is the function of music as an art form and Beckett characteristically attempts to harness the means of expression in its own right, rather than provide a libretto for which a score has to be set. In Words and Music, for instance, the coming together in the lyric of Joe and Bob is a fusion of equals, Joe creating the words and Bob the sounds that will evoke Croak's state of mind. Bob indeed strives to achieve not merely the complement of Joe's efforts at the lyric, but its higher expression. His success is evident from Joe's repeated importunities at the end of the play for Bob to play the "well head" passage yet again.

VOICE

Krapp's Last Tape, Beckett's first stage play after All That Fall at once reflects his work in the new medium of radio, by fusing recording technique and visual image. It is with the voices in Play, however, that Beckett's real innovation in stage sound technique begins. The voices are to be "toneless except where an expression is indicated". When, moreover, the voices speak in chorus they are "faint, largely unintelligible" and when isolated individually by the light, their strength of tone depends on the

strength of the light beam, getting softer as the light diminishes. The monotonous computer-like tone emphasizes the routine to which the speaker is subjected.

Beckett thus deliberately restricts the vocal range of his actors, a pattern that becomes increasingly evident in subsequent plays. In Come and Go, for example, the voices are largely "colourless" and "as low as compatible with audibility", culminating in a stream of sound in Not I, where intelligibility is secondary to the vocal tone and pace. It is a similar development to that in Beckett's novels, where his writing culminates in the stream of words that is The Unnamable. Mouth seems also to be foreshadowed (even to the buzzing that so troubles her throughout the play) in the following passage from Molloy:

Yes, the words I heard, and heard distinctly, having quite a sensitive ear, were heard a first time, then a second, and often even a third, as pure sounds, free of all meaning. [] And the words I uttered myself, and which must nearly always have gone with an effort of intelligence, were often to me as the buzzing of an insect.¹

Beckett in Not I is using the human voice as an instrument to convey mood more than meaning. Again the dramatic idea of using the spoken voice as an instrument is essentially a simple one. It is a commonplace in an actor's training that his voice is an instrument that requires great skill to tune to capacity. Beckett's deliberate denial of vocal range, requiring instead perhaps a monotone, perhaps breakneck speed, paradoxically takes the voice into a new dimension, where how it sounds rather than what it says makes the initial impact, the sense only gradually emerging through repetition. The similarity of approach to that of musical technique will be discussed later, in the context of Beckett as director.

1 Molloy, p.50

In Beckett's handling of the voice in Not I there is once again something in common with an idea of Artaud, that of language as "incantation". Beckett, however, describes himself as "unaware of any influence" from Artaud.¹

Artaud writes:

To make metaphysics out of spoken language is to make language convey what it does not normally convey. That is to use it in a new, exceptional and unusual way, to give it its full, physical shock potential, to split it up and distribute it actively in space, to treat inflexions in a completely tangible manner and restore their shattering power and really to manifest something; [] and finally to consider language in the form of Incantation.²

When, moreover, Artaud describes his dramatic vision as "very near to a tremendous scream, a human vocal source, a single, solitary human voice" uttering a cry,³ Mouth seems to embody that vision.

SILENCE

The experience of my reader shall be between the phrases, in the silence, communicated by the intervals, not the terms, of the statement ...⁴

Beckett's manipulation of stage silence is an important counterweight to his use of sound. Ihab Hassan comments on this in a discussion of Beckett's use of language:

The syntax is often the syntax of nonsense, the grammar of absurdity. And silence, literal silence, invades the interchanges between human beings.⁵

Predictably for a dramatist who has characterized music and light, Beckett makes his silences take some of the burden of the action. The delicacy and economy of the ending of Come and Go, for example, is achieved by a dual aural/

1 Reply to author's questionnaire, January 1978.

2 Antonin Artaud Le Théâtre et son double (Paris, 1938) Translated by Victor Corti, London, 1970, p.35.

3 Seraphim's Theatre (Artaud essay, included in English Translation of The Theatre And Its Double, London, 1970; Ibid) p.100.

4 Dream, p.123.

5 The Literature of Silence, p.206.

visual effect. The echo of the final words in the succeeding silence is contradicted by the spotlight image of ringless hands. A similar contradiction occurs during the pauses in Not I, after Mouth has denied the stimulus urging her to self acceptance. The auditor's gestures of compassion decrease with each denial, eloquently contradicting Mouth's reiterated lie, in the silence which follows it. Thus "the pauses" (as Zilliachus points out with regard to Embers) "are not scattered dramatic effects, but integral parts of the total artistic statement."¹

In That Time the silence used throughout to mark the "acts" or divisions in the play takes on a further meaning at the close. On realising that the three voices have ceased, the old man gives a toothless grin, which is held until the image fades. Silence has "invaded" the action here as it does at the end of Cascando and the stage is speaking what Artaud calls "its own concrete language".² The "specifically theatrical" in Artaud's terms is "everything which cannot be expressed in words".³

STAGE DIRECTIONS

No playwright has more exacting stage directions than Beckett. To alter the directions may destroy the meaning of a play; as with a production of Come and Go I once saw, where, following a chatty confidence from Flo ("I can feel the rings") the curtain descended smartly, preventing any observation of the women's hands!

It is our purpose here to consider the form generally taken by Beckett's directions. "Character" details, for example, are never given, though fairly detailed physical descriptions are sometimes present, as with Krapp, Winnie, Joe and May. The only interpretative hint as to character comes in

1 Modern Drama, September 1970, p.223.

2 The Theatre And Its Double, p.27.

3 Ibid, p.26.

the "helpless compassion" note that follows the text of Not I. Notes on the text occur only in the later plays, from Play onwards. It is a natural result of the reduction of dialogue, of less requiring more. In Come and Go, for example, notes and stage directions form the bulk of the text.

From Play onwards the structure of the later plays seems to have been influenced by Beckett's radio experience. He uses either silence (radio's tool for marking different phases in a text) or blackout (its stage equivalent) or a combination of the two. Thus Play is structured by blackouts, Not I and That Time by silence and Footfalls by both.

Apart from their structural use, the most important function of Beckett's stage directions is to carry the climaxes of his plays. One of his most typical means of reaching a climax is the use of surprise or shock endings, dramatic stings in the tail that are designed to throw the preceding text sharply into focus.

DRAMATIC CLIMAXES

The endings of Beckett's plays are generally a balancing of ambiguities. In Godot there is simply the contradiction between speech ("Yes, let's go") and direction ("They do not move".) It is a situation of stalemate, already experienced at the end of the first act. Endgame also ends in impasse and with ambiguity increased by its single act. Clov is dressed to leave, but still present. As Alec Reid points out:

The curtain falls with Clov standing on the threshold,
but we must decide for ourselves whether he will cross
it or not.¹

It is in his first radio play that Beckett begins to develop the ambiguity of an ending to something approaching thriller proportions. The presentation of the ball to Mr Rooney appears to link him with the child's death of which we are told in the last lines of the play. As we speculate

¹ The Arts in Ireland, p.28.

on this, directions for a twice-repeated:

Tempest of wind and rain

are given, and this becomes virtually an objective correlative for the suspicion aroused in the listener. A somewhat similar weight of suspicion occurs at the end of Happy Days, where, after smiling at Willie, Winnie's final direction reads:

Smile off. They look at each other. Long pause.

In this pause we recall Willie's struggles to reach perhaps his wife, perhaps the gun. Since his back is to the auditorium we can gain no clue from his expression, but Peter Hall's 1975 National Theatre production, at which Beckett assisted, gave the play a distinctly menacing close.

We have noted that a climactic silence marks the ending of both Cascando and That Time. In Eh Joe, too, the actor Jack Macgowran felt the end of the play to be a silence achieved:

It's a little victory he has at the end in dismissing the voice; he finally crushes it.¹

I see no indication of this, however, rather the reverse. The voice certainly drops to a whisper on the final page, but, in the penultimate stage direction the face fades also:

Image fades, voice as before.

And in the last direction the fading image and sibilant voice disappear together:

Voice and image out. End.

Again the outcome is ambiguous. In the context of the play escape is a possible interpretation, but in the wider context of Beckett's oeuvre, escape from a situation of torture is rare.

Of the remaining works Krapp's Last Tape and Embers apparently end inconclusively, with Krapp and Henry still living in the past, as they were at the outset. But the final direction in Krapp's Last Tape:

1 Theatre Quarterly July-Sept.1973, p.20.

The tape runs on in silence may be seen as functional. Krapp's spool is almost wound, and the silent tape is both the time it has left to run and the silence into which he must pass. Film ends in a climax of self-confrontation, the precise reverse of Not I which closes on a final evasion of selfhood.

The disappearance of May at the end of Footfalls shows Beckett in his latest stage play still using the same dramatic formula: a final climax is presented, sometimes involving a shock effect that employs the very nature of the medium concerned and requires the audience substantially to refocus its view of the play. The final ambiguities serve to strengthen such endings.

MUSICAL TECHNIQUE

"All art", as Walter Pater pointed out, "constantly aspires towards the condition of music."¹ In his study of Proust Beckett draws attention to the musical element in his writing, commenting:

A book could be written on the significance of music in the work of Proust.²

The importance of music is continually evident in Beckett's own work, both as writer and director. In three plays All That Fall, Happy Days and Ghost Trio a particular piece of music is used to develop the central theme. Beckett has also collaborated with several composers. John Beckett and Marcel Mihalovici have each written music for one of his radio plays and the latter describes Beckett as "a remarkable musician" with "an astonishing musical intuition, an intuition that I often used in my composition."³ More recently Beckett has written an original text entitled Neither for a one-act opera by Morton Feldman, first performed in Rome on 13 May 1977.⁴

1 The Renaissance, p.140.

2 Proust and 3 Dialogues, p.91.

3 "My Collaboration with Samuel Beckett", Beckett at Sixty, London 1967 (pp.20-22), p.21.

4 "Beckett as Librettist", Music and Musicians (May issue), London 1977, p.5.

It is for a musician to consider Beckett's interest in musical composition in relation to his technique with words. The actor Pierre Chabert draws the following analogy in an essay on Krapp's Last Tape:

The writing and the composition of the text are perfectly musical insofar as they are organised around a network of repetitions, echoes, alternances, oppositions and transpositions. This musical analogy can be analytically described on three levels: that of text alone considered like a score; that of the alternations between the two voices; that of the relationship between the recorded voice and the movement, thus bringing together all the factors which create the final "score" and the staging of it.¹

To attempt a close analogy between a particular musical form and a particular Beckett play tends to result in an arid series of possible identifications that has merely the virtuosity of the crossword puzzle. We may note, however, that in Play Beckett uses musical terminology to describe his technique, referring to the repeat of the play as the da capo.² Similarly, when describing Footfalls to the actress Billie Whitelaw, Beckett called it "a piece of chamber music"³ and in the final rehearsals for the World Première of the play Beckett again said "It's Chamber theatre and it must be perfect."⁴

DIRECTOR/CONDUCTOR

A Beckett play presents us with an experience that involves us in much the same way as we become involved when attending a symphony concert. The director's function is comparable with that of a conductor, as George Devine had the insight to appreciate in 1964:

When working as a director on a Beckett play [] one has to think of the text as something like a musical score wherein the "notes", the sights, the sounds, the pauses, have their own special inter-related rhythms, and out of their composition comes the dramatic impact.⁵

1 Gambit, Vol 7, No 28, London 1976 (pp.41-63), p.43.

2 Letter to George Devine 9 March 1964. Quoted in R.U.L. Catalogue, p.92.

3 Michael Davie "'Le Grand Sam' Plays it Again", Observer Review, 2 May 1976, p.36.

4 Conversation with Martha Fehsenfeld, 17 May 1976.

5 Programme note to National Theatre production of Play at the Old Vic, 7 April 1964.

Today this has become the accepted view of a Beckett text. Peter Hall described the precise actions that Beckett indicated to Dame Peggy Ashcroft (when rehearsing Winnie with her for the 1975 National Theatre production of Happy Days) as becoming "a kind of notation, like music" with Beckett as "conductor". The task of actor and director is, said Hall, "to work back" from the notation, to reach "the core of the text". First "the actor must get the actions right" (learn the notes) and only then can he begin to make the role his own.¹

PACE

Beckett frequently requires an unusually rapid pace for the delivery of his text. In Cascando, for example, although no directions as to pace are given in the published text, the holograph and first typescript of Voix 2 have a note "débit rapide, haletant". Moreover manuscript notes in the margins of the first version of the full text (entitled Calando) time the speeches of Voix 2 throughout:

I 1 minute; II 30 sec; III 40 sec; IV 20 sec;
 V 30 sec; VI 10 sec; VII 20 sec; VIII 20 sec;
 IX 20 sec; X 20 sec; XI 20 sec; XII 10 sec;
 XIII 15 sec; XIV 20 sec; XV 10 sec; XVI 10 sec;
 XVII 10 sec; XVIII 10 sec.

The total of 5 minutes 55 seconds corresponds with a further manuscript note at the end of Calando: .

Voix à elle) de 5 à 6 min.
 Seul)
 Musique
 Ouvreur 5 -
 Temps et silence 3 -

The total playing time for the text is thus envisaged as approximately 14 minutes, excluding musique. But, as Zilliacus points out, "It would require an almost superhuman effort to obey these instructions" and "Much of the text

¹ Hall's remarks were made in the discussion following the National Theatre production of Happy Days on 7 April 1976.

would necessarily be lost if delivered at the speed demanded."¹

Directions for pace were omitted, at all events, from the final text. In Not I, however, Beckett returned to the idea of a vocal delivery at top speed, although again there are no directions for pace in the text. In the 1973 Royal Court Theatre production, Beckett directed Billie Whitelaw at such speed that full intelligibility at first hearing was impossible. Rather did meaning accrue gradually through repetition as a torrent of sound emerged from an uncomprehending mouth, words streaming forth in tones and rhythms, like notes.

Enoch Brater timed this production at 15 minutes, noting that Beckett subsequently "revised the manuscript", thus "slowing the pace of the verbal onslaught" for Jessica Tandy's second attempt at the role, at the Lincoln Center, New York, in 1973.² Beckett "specified eighteen minutes" for the production, but pointed out to Miss Tandy (as noted in Part 2, p.143) that he was "not unduly concerned with intelligibility", hoping the play would "work on the nerves of the audience, not its intellect".³

ACTING BECKETT

Such a directorial approach makes huge demands on the actor. Chabert remarks that the Beckettian stage consists:

of a rigorous mastery of theatrical space, where the word in its relationship to the gesture, the phrase to the movement, the language to the body, the writing to the direction, are all thought out and explored to their extreme limits.

The result is a staging full of constraints, that must be read and performed like a musical score in terms of sound and vision, textually and spatially.⁴

1 Beckett and Broadcasting, p.128.

2 Modern Drama, Vol 18, 1975 (p.53).

3 Ibid.

4 Gambit, Vol 7 No.28, p.41.

Some of the "constraints" are described by Brenda Bruce in a letter to James Knowlson recalling rehearsals of Happy Days in 1962:

Beckett placing a metronome on the floor to keep me on the rhythm he wanted, which drove me into such a panic that I finally broke down.¹

Similarly Billie Whitelaw described to Michael Davie how Beckett, when rehearsing Not I "told me that in one place I had paused for two dots instead of three".² Davie's description of Beckett rehearsing Rose Hill in Footfalls reveals the same technique:

Beckett stood below the stage, his head about five feet away from the speaking woman. You felt an intense atmosphere of concentration. She kept her eyes fixed on Beckett as she rehearsed her lines; he kept his eyes fixed on hers. He had his head on one side; as she spoke, he moved his right hand an inch or two up and down, as if he were listening to, or conducting a piece of music, making very slight gestures.³

The Beckett actor's movement is restricted, if not cut off altogether; he is denied the full range of his voice in the later plays and is sometimes deprived of his sight. In Not I except for his mouth he is entirely cut off from the audience by a blackout curtain. There are, as we have seen, no "character" notes; "Age undeterminable" is all the three women have to go on in Come and Go.

Thus there is nothing left to the Beckett actor but to master the notation of action allotted him and then reach beyond his normal creation of an identity. As Peter Hall remarked, the Beckett actor "must feel but not show it".⁴ He must first attempt to make himself a void and then allow this to fill with Beckett's speech rhythms and repetitions until gradually an

1 Letter dated 18 September 1970. R.U.L. MS. 1227/1/2/14.

2 Observer Review, 2 May 1976, p.36.

3 Ibid.

4 National Theatre discussion, 7 April 1976.

identification with the creative consciousness behind the lines takes place. The actor in fact "tunes in" to Beckett rather than creating his own character. At best his imaginative identification is so strong that he gives himself to the lines as well as taking what they offer him, a fusion of actor and author that in turn creates the extraordinary impact Beckett's plays often have on audiences.

It is perhaps to some extent a consciousness of the freedom from "character" in the conventional sense that leads so many actors, despite the constraints outlined above, to remark on the "freedom" they experience when performing Beckett's plays. Moreover the energy demanded for the delivery of monologues such as Winnie's or Mouth's has a cathartic effect on the actor. Beckett's hope, as Ruby Cohn points out, is that severely imposed limits will demand more of the actor, thus extending, rather than inhibiting, his emotional range.¹

BECKETT AS DIRECTOR

Production Notebooks

The preparation of minutely detailed production notebooks before rehearsals begin characterizes Beckett as director. His general practice is to divide the text into numbered sections, noting in detail the incidence of, for example, movement, gesture, facial expression, laughter. Repetitions are carefully counted, variations on a theme noted and occasionally a small sketch of an object or diagram of a movement is made. His concern is clearly both to structure the play into workable sections for rehearsal purposes and to bring out the beautifully patterned balance and contrast in the text.

Certain extracts from Beckett's production notebook for his Schiller Theater production of Glückliche Tage in 1971 were quoted in Part 1 (p17). But the extraordinary detail of the notes for stage properties in that

1 "Beckett Directs Happy Days", Performance I, No 2, New York 1972, p.114.

production requires further examination when considering Beckett's production method. His intention is for the objects listed to be both manifestly inefficient and in a state of dilapidation paralleling that of the protagonist. The toothbrush, for example, has "hardly any hairs left", the lipstick is "visibly zu ende", the pearl necklace "more thread than pearls" and the parasol:

faded red and yellow striped, mangy fringe, diminutive canopy, disproportionately long telescopable stick.¹

The disproportion between the component parts of the various properties reflects the disproportion in the text in, for example, the union of Winnie and Willie or their unequal contributions to the dialogue. The revolver with its "short butt and long muzzle" is a further example. Beckett even notes tiny details, such as that the mirror should be "small, square (because of round mag. glass) long handle". He has visualized the scene with such concentration that the smallest contrast between square mirror and round magnifying glass becomes relevant.

Beside the list of properties Beckett sketches the "old fashioned steel" spectacles he requires for Winnie and the kind of parasol he envisages, noting, at the top of the list:

Generally Speaking:
 Conspicuousness.
 Inadequacy or exiguity of primary element
 (brush, glass), as compared with secondary (handle etc.)
 Narrowness and elongation
 Agedness, endingness.

Beckett in Rehearsal

Peter Hall, commenting on Beckett's detailed vision of a play before the first rehearsal, remarked:

It became clear in rehearsal that Beckett had a complete visual picture of the play in his head and that is how he rehearsed.

He did not, said Hall, discuss "how Winnie feels but what she does" and even "which hand she does it with". Beckett had told Dame Peggy Ashcroft "On that line you pick up that, on the other this", thus giving her a complete choreography of small actions.¹

From such rehearsal experiences an oral tradition of Beckett directing his plays is gradually accumulating and this is particularly interesting in cases where precise directions are not present in the text, as with the pace of Not I. The extension of meaning in Krapp's Last Tape resulting from the introduction of the "hain" into later productions is another example. Beckett described the hain to me as follows:

Freund Hain (or Hein = Heinrich)
= Death (easeful) the Scytheman

pointing out that Matthias Claudius (author of "Der Tod und das Mädchen") "dedicates to him his collected works".²

No instructions for the hain are present in the English text, though Beckett has used it in all productions in which he has been concerned since Martin Held's Schiller Theater Krapp in 1969, including Albert Finney's Royal Court Theatre performance in 1973.³ In his preparatory work for the 1977 San Quentin Drama Workshop production, with the convict Rick Cluchey, a note on the action of the hain is made by Beckett:

Having finished reading from ledger he stands and stoops over recorder to adjust reels. This action interrupted by sense of presence behind him in shadows. He turns slowly (left), still stooped, long look, comes back slowly front, completes action, sits, assumes listening position, switches on, etc. Same interruption exactly towards end of play as he adjusts reels for lake passage.⁴

1 National Theatre discussion, 7 April 1976.

2 Reply to questionnaire, January 1978.

3 See Knowlson, Journal of Beckett Studies I, p.55: "Although the looks were rehearsed by Albert Finney, they were omitted in performance".

4 San Quentin Drama Workshop, Samuel Beckett inszeniert Krapp's Last Tape mit Rick Cluchey, Heft 2, Publikation 5, Berlin, November 1977, p.16.

The rehearsal situation also sometimes leads Beckett to make a remark to his actors or give an explanation that presents new insights into the text. Ruby Cohn, for example, notes that Beckett likened Willie to an old turtle, very much of the earth. His subsequent comment that:

Winnie's fate is all the more pathetic because this weightless being is devoured by the earth

is thus directly relevant to Beckett's view of the marriage.¹

In the 1975 Schiller Theater production of Godot Beckett again linked his characters to earth and sky, as Walter D. Asmus noted in his rehearsal diary:

"Estragon" (Beckett explained) "is on the ground, he belongs to the stone. Vladimir is light, he is oriented towards the sky. He belongs to the tree."²

Beckett pointed out later that the two "are, in fact, inseparable".³

Asmus also describes Beckett at the first rehearsal plunging into Lucky's monologue, dividing it up for rehearsal purposes and outlining its main themes:

"We are going to divide it into three parts and the second part is going to be divided again into two sections. The first part is about the indifference of heaven, about divine apathy. This part ends with 'but not so fast...' The second part starts off with 'considering what is more', and is about man, who is shrinking - about man who is dwindling. Not only the dwindling is important here, but the shrinking, too. These two points represent the two under-sections of the second part. The theme of the third part is 'the earth abode of stones' and starts with 'considering what is more, much more grave'." Beckett is very concerned to be exact in his explanations and repeat certain ideas, underlining them with short gestures while we are looking for them and marking them.⁴

1 "Beckett Directs Happy Days", p.116.

2 Theatre Quarterly, Vol V, No 19, London 1975 (translation by Ria Julian) p.21.

3 Ibid, p.23.

4 Ibid, p.22.

Material such as the Asmus diary enables us to see not only Beckett the director, skilfully establishing rehearsal procedure with his cast, but the playwright intent on sharing his vision with his actors.

Production Changes

At a panel discussion in Toronto in 1971, Jack Macgowran was asked by A.N.Jeffares:

"Do you have experience of, for instance, Beckett's plays being altered at all, or have they come, as it were, perfect onto the stage?"

Macgowran replied:

"No they haven't come perfect onto the stage all the time ... Beckett himself made many alterations the more he became acquainted with the theatre."¹

The ability to compromise when circumstances warrant within the particular production is characteristic of Beckett as director. Despite the apparent stringency of his stage directions, he himself adopts a fluid approach to his text when problems arise, though, as has been shown, it is generally unwise for other directors to do the same.² A notebook prepared for the 1975 National Theatre production of Happy Days, for example, suggests cutting the sunshade exploding into flame "if change not feasible technically" and also notes: "perhaps cut breaking and discarding of mirror".³

Similarly in the original text of Footfalls, seven steps are taken to cover the lighted strip of stage. But when the play entered rehearsal and it was found that nine steps was Billie Whitelaw's natural stride, Beckett altered the text accordingly.⁴ The later text of Footfalls also replaces the south door of the church by the north. When asked about this Beckett explained:

1 "Theatre and the Visual Arts", Yeats Studies No.2, ed. R.O'driscoll and L.Reynolds, Shannon, 1971, p.135.

2 When he trusts a director (as with his friend Alan Schneider) Beckett gives him complete freedom. (See Alan Schneider "'Any Way You Like, Alan': Working with Beckett", Theatre Quarterly, Vol V, No 19, London 1975, pp.27-38, p.31).

3 R.U.L. MS. 1396/4/11 (pp.13-14).

4 Faber text of the single play (1976) has seven paces; Faber collected edition (Ends and Odds, 1977) begins with seven paces, but (p.35) increases to nine.

That is a correction. South Door is too warm, North Door is colder. You feel cold. The whole time, in the way you hold your body too. Everything is frost and night.¹

James Knowlson notes that certain alterations in the 1969 Schiller Theater production of Krapp's Last Tape "are incorporated into the text published in Das letzte Band Regiebuch der Berliner Inszenierung."² Moreover following his experience of rehearsing Comédie in Paris in 1964, Beckett decided, as we have seen in Part 1 (p.46) that the play was "dramatically more effective" if a diminution of light and voice occurred in the repeat.³ Notes for alternative ways of performing the repeat were therefore included in the next Faber edition of the text, in 1968.

We have observed, however, that the English text of Krapp remains unaltered, nor are the directions for the repeat of Play preferred alternatives. Beckett's opinion in 1976 was "Exact repeat preferred".⁴ In Not I, moreover, although Beckett encountered lighting problems with the auditor from the outset and was forced to prune his gestures for the London première in January 1973⁵ and cut him altogether in a subsequent Paris production, both figure and gestures remain in the text. The French translation was made after Beckett's experience of the lighting problems in London, but the notes for the Auditor in Pas Moi do not reflect these difficulties in any way, and are identical with the English text.

Thus, although variations (even radical changes) may take place in an individual production, the text finally arrived at after completion of the lengthy draft process, generally remains the authoritative version and is

1 Journal of Beckett Studies No.2, London, Summer 1977, p.85.

2 Frankfort, 1970. (Journal of Beckett Studies I, p.52).

3 R.U.L. Catalogue, p.92.

4 Reply to author's questionnaire, January, 1976.

5 "There are four gestures indicated in the script for the Auditor but I don't do them now because they couldn't be seen, so Beckett worked out a final bowing of the head into hands on the final - 'She...She'." Letter to me from Brian Miller (Auditor) 26 January 1973.

rarely altered. The changes discussed above have been made either for practical reasons or reasons of artistic judgement. The role of accident during rehearsal has also produced some interesting results. Alan Schneider has described how eyes began to proliferate in the studio once the film crew became alive to the possibilities of pairs of holes, such as the folder in which O's photographs were kept.¹ Similarly what Beckett referred to as "originally an accident - heaven sent"² was the faint glimmer of light coming from Krapp's tape recorder at the end of the play, when the rest of the stage was in darkness. The implications of a glimmer of light at this point so impressed Beckett that, as Knowlson points out, he "included the 'voyant blanc du magnétophone dans l'obscurité' among (the play's) light emblems".³

Production Problems

There are sometimes real difficulties in realising Beckett's dramatic concepts and transferring them from page to stage. For audiences accustomed to regarding the limit of light's stage capacity as achieving subtle effects of shading and providing an appropriate setting for the actors, suddenly to find it making points in its own right may be disorientating. Once the new technique has been registered, however, it is, paradoxically, easier for an audience to accept a full characterization of light, as in Play, than to appreciate the final effect in Come and Go. Since light in the latter has revealed the stage picture in the conventional manner throughout, an audience does not suspect that the last few seconds' focus are adding a new dimension to the play, are, in fact, refocussing it.

1 Film (Illustrated Scenario, with an essay by Alan Schneider) Faber, 1972, p.85.

2 Letter to James Knowlson, 18 May 1972.

3 Journal of Beckett Studies I, p.56.

The lighting problem in Not I arises because audience attention is mesmerized from the outset by the luminous, moving mouth and finds it difficult in the pauses to switch its attention to the other side of the stage. The two images were separately inspired; Mouth by a Caravaggio painting of the head of St. John the Baptist in St. John's Pro Cathedral, Malta¹ and the auditor by a djellaba-clad woman silently listening for the arrival of her child, whom Beckett had seen in North Africa.² The listener's helplessness is, however, an integral part of the dramatic vision and experience of the play as written.

There were also problems in translating Film from the page, and the result is slighter and less powerful than its realisation in the imagination, when reading the scenario. The problem is partly one of audience reaction. It has always been a convention of cinema photography that the camera is all-seeing, capable both of recording a scene and of being the protagonist's eyes. Independent recording of the room in Film will thus be taken as a matter of course by the audience. Moreover when shots of the room are handled both in greater definition and more blurred, in an attempt to achieve the dual perception of E and O, it is quite possible that an audience will register merely that it is being shown the room in the conventional manner, and the protagonist's perception of it as that of an old man with failing sight.

The idea of someone following O undoubtedly grows in Parts I and II of the film because of the looks of horror on the faces of those encountered on the way. But in Part III the sense of pursuit tends to be lost, on O's arrival in the room, in his concentration on blotting out the eyes he encounters there. Inside the room, therefore, there is no clear reason why

1 Letter from Beckett to James Knowlson, 30 April 1974.

2 Enoch Brater, Modern Drama, Vol 18, 1975, p.50.

an audience should take the double view as other than a matter of course, until O is finally stalked in his sleep. Beckett, in other words, is demanding a high degree of sophistication from his audiences, requiring them to treat the normal in cinema terms as abnormal, and also to develop a paranoiac fear of the camera as pursuer. Martin Dodsworth suggests that Schneider should have resisted Beckett's wish for a dual perspective:

An audience unprejudiced by a reading of the scenario is [] not likely to understand the difference between O shots and E shots until E confronts O, if then. Simply to have more of these different-quality shots is not to make them more acceptable or comprehensible for the audience.¹

It is necessary to note these failures in the communication of Beckett's dramatic concepts in order to obtain a balanced view of his technique. But they are infinitesimal in comparison with the revitalizing effect of his dramatic imagination in the theatre over the past two decades. Come and Go and Not I are, moreover, undeniably stimulating dramatic experiences, even if the desired effect is not fully communicated to an audience unfamiliar with the text. And for those who are prepared to abandon their preconceptions as to what theatre should be and open their minds to Beckett's dramatic vocabulary, the plays remain alive long after the final curtain, as Watt found with "all the incidents of note proposed to (him) during his stay in Mr Knott's house".² Contrary to Watt's experience, however, rather than losing meaning during the process of recapitulation, the plays go on expanding in the mind:

...in the sense that it was not ended, when it was past, but continued to unfold, in Watt's head, from beginning to end, over and over again, the complex connexions of its lights and shadows, the passing from silence to sound and from sound to silence, the stillness before the movement and the stillness after, the quickenings and retardings, the approaches and the separations, all the shifting detail of its march and ordinance, according to the irrevocable caprice of its taking place.³

1 "Film And The Religion of Art", Beckett The Shape Changer - A Symposium, ed. Katharine Worth, London 1975, p.167.

2 Watt, p.69.

3 Ibid.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has looked at Beckett's plays in English from several angles, considering their genesis and development, their eventual structure and their realisation in performance.

In discussing the precision of planning of Beckett's writing in Part 1, we noted the recurrence of a particular pattern in the plays, a cyclic movement. This was seen to reflect Beckett's constant theme of the human life cycle, in a precise fusion of content with form. The virtuosity of Beckett's dramatic writing has been found to lie not in variation of theme, but in the many different ways in which the same theme is treated; the continual refining both of language and image until all that remains is the essence of an idea, a skeleton, which the audience is forced to flesh for itself.

The reduction in scale of Beckett's dramatic oeuvre is especially evident when comparing his later plays with the first plays in French (though here also a reduction is apparent, from the three acts of Eleuthéria to the long one act of Fin de Partie). We have observed, however, that implicit in the brevity of the later plays is the concept of an infinite repetition, exemplified in the repeat of Play, or, in its most extreme form, in Breath.

The shrinkage of the text may be seen as a natural development from the Trilogy, a way of demonstrating more concisely Beckett's view of the cyclic nature of existence. Moreover the use of visual symbols as dramatic metaphors in the plays, Winnie's mound, for example, or the urns in Play, has made the plays more accessible than the novels, to a public increasingly prepared to accept the Beckett universe on its own terms, rather than demanding that those terms should be different.

Beckett shows people at their extremity, with no choices left to make, unable, even, to choose to stop; "... you must go on, I can't go on, I'll

go on" ¹ are the Unnamable's last words, while the decision to leave the stage at the end of Godot merely results in immobility. Man is shown to be in an absurd situation in which there is "nothing to be done" but continue to play out the comedy in the hope of an eventual conclusion.

The fact that significant change is impossible in Beckett's terms is reflected in the cyclic structure of the plays. His protagonists cannot break out of their limited cycle of experience and apparently even in death are found repeating it to themselves, unable to understand why they are speaking or to find meaning in the experience recounted. By a merciful self-delusion, however, such experience is sometimes distanced, as in Not I, into third person narration. The self can only be faced at one remove, and, when recognition presses uncomfortably close, is deliberately denied.

Thus, where drama traditionally presents protagonist and antagonist in action, Beckett's characters are in self-conflict. When the later plays begin, moreover, the "action" has already taken place. From Krapp's Last Tape, onwards, as we have seen, all that is left in most of the plays is recapitulation, a struggle with voices in the head, and a masochism that both demands and dreads the assaults of memory, "all the dead voices" that will not be silent.

Unlike Brecht, who believed that to present a problem on the stage presented also an implied solution, in the desirability of social change, Beckett has no solutions to offer. Nor does he believe that it is the task of the artist to provide any. Writing in 1938 of the poet Denis Devlin, he comments on the limitations of an art in which "solution (is) clapped on problem like a snuffer on a candle".² Instead he confronts his audience with the problem, the image of human suffering. This, he says, is "how it is".

1 Trilogy, p.418.

2 transition, No.27, Paris, April-May 1938 (pp.289-294) p.290.

The rigorous patterning in which Beckett's nightmare vision is enclosed is itself an ironic comment on the shapelessness of most human experience. Attempts to structure living can be only partial, because the unpredictable can never be excluded. Art, on the other hand, in the nature of the word, means a shaping and selection of material, exclusion of the unpredictable. The problem for the contemporary artist, as Beckett remarked to Tom Driver, is to "admit the chaos"¹ to allow the unpredictable and unformulable into the text. Throwing open his highly organized structure, Sans, to the hazard of a chance arrangement may be seen precisely as an attempt to "admit the chaos" by making unpredictability functional in a work of art.

The second area of investigation in this thesis has been to see how the ultimate shape of Beckett's plays has evolved through several drafts, a study of the creative process in action, until the desired effect is achieved. The process of drafting each play is a microcosm of the development of Beckett's oeuvre as a whole, a refining and scaling down of the text.

A meticulous craftsmanship of both structure and language has been evident throughout the drafts. A tendency for the text to develop, as the drafts progress, from the concrete and comparatively straightforward to the indefinite and more complex has been noted also. Such development is part of the refining process and increasing ambiguity becomes as much the signature of a study of Beckett's drafts as a circular motif is characteristic of his structure.

The plays gain in power from a balancing of possibilities. To try to pin down a Beckett play like a moth on a naturalist's board is to impoverish the text and hamper its resonance. As Duckworth pointed out when editing Godot:

It is impossible to summarize Beckett's novels and plays without divesting them of almost all significance.²

1 "Beckett By The Madeleine", p.23.

2 En attendant Godot, p.xxvi.

It is thus important to keep the evolutionary aspect in mind when studying Beckett's draft material and not to diminish the final text by too literal interpretation. Nonetheless a knowledge of the process by which the final version was arrived at and the ideas from which it grew greatly enriches our understanding of the plays and of Beckett's craftsmanship as a writer.

The final purpose of this thesis has been to look at Beckett's plays in performance and to consider the various aspects of his dramatic technique. Beckett's theatrical innovation may be seen to some extent as a natural consequence of his growth as a writer and his search for new ways to express familiar themes. But, as we have seen, Beckett has considered the particular qualities of each medium in which he has worked with an eye uncluttered by convention.

The result has been the introduction of dramatic effects which make use of the distinctive nature of each medium; effects such as the personification of light, music and the camera, or the unorthodox use of stage movement in the frantically working lips in Not I. Beckett in these ways has extended contemporary concepts of dramatic possibility. His plays have been, in Katharine Worth's words, "one of the great freeing influences on modern theatre" and, as she continues:

It would be hard to overestimate Beckett's importance,¹
as the opener of the door to this disturbing freedom.

¹ Katharine J. Worth Revolutions in Modern English Drama, London, 1972, pp. 146-147.

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