SAMUEL BECKETT: A STUDY OF HIS DRAMATIC TECHNIQUE

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BY
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Dedicated
to

My Parents, Brothers & Sisters
March 12, 1996

This is certify that Mr. Khalid Rifa't Hussien Al-Udayli's Ph.D. thesis on *Samuel Beckett: A Study Of His Dramatic Technique* is the outcome of his own research on the subject carried out under my supervision. It is a fairly satisfactory and original effort.

(IQBAL AHMAD)
Supervisor
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(Khalid R.H. Al-Udayli)
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INTRODUCTION

This is a textual analysis of five stage-plays of Samuel Beckett for a study of their respective dramaturgies. The dramas considered are Waiting for Godot, Endgame, Krapp’s Last Tape, Happy Days and Play. Each work is read through almost from cover to cover. The effort is to see how does the playwright supply the context of what Leventhal calls a Non-ent or Nothing-is on stage. The idea of a Non-ent, Leventhal takes from Gorgias of Lentini, a Sicilian rhetorician and sophist, who flourished from 483-375 BC. Simplifying the orthodox language of Encyclopedia Britannica in his article, The Beckett Hero, Leventhal restates Britannica’s summing up of Gorgias, to propound the Non-ent as follows:

1. Nothing is.
2. If anything is, it cannot be known.
3. If anything is, and cannot be known, it cannot be expressed in speech.¹

'Nothing is' in the original was 'There is nothing which has any real existence'. Experience of existence was that of an empty, meaningless void. Therefore, art should be bereft of 'occasion', and if there be 'an occasion' at all, it should be 'failure' and not the 'domain of the feasible'.² Beckett was relentlessly honest in his commitment to the theme of existence as a Non-ent, both as a void, and, as an inexpressible. Deirdre Bair (whose biography of the playwright, Enoch Brater considered unauthorized in why beckett) writes of 'the cold, hard, exacting look' which Beckett had learnt to take at himself. He was once struck by an entry in Jules Renard's Journal, whose author had 'trained himself to be absolutely honest' about its entries. Bair quotes from the Renard Journal and says that the first time Beckett read the passage, he spent hours repeating the words, over and over, as he sat in his armchair sipping whisky in front of a fire---

Last night I wanted to get up. Dead weight. A leg hangs outside. Then a trickle runs down my leg. I allow it to reach my heel before I make up my mind. It will dry in the sheets.³
Ruby Cohn finds the playwright's mind 'compulsively examining', and that it had 'garnered an impressive fund of knowledge'. Cohn says that Beckett's heroes howl and stutter that their lives are not worth living, nevertheless, they continue to examine experience, 'propounding the old philosophical questions' about the Self, the World, and God.  

Cohn thinks it paradoxical however, that all Beckett heroes insist upon and rebel against the Cartesean definition of Man as 'a thing that thinks' and, against a knowledge confined to consciousness. Trapped in an irrational existential predicament, even 'to think' was futile. Earlier, Alfred Jarry had coined the word 'Pataphysics to ridicule Man's effort at thought. Again, according to Cohn, Beckett's heroes are haunted by 'the Cartesean cleavage between world in re and world in intellectu and therefore bear the scars of this disjunction, like Murphy who was split into two: Mind and Body! Descartes' answer of a 'pineal gland', as the place in the brain where the Mind and Body were one, was found unsatisfactory by the dramatist, who mocked at it as a no man's gland and had puns and obscene jokes for the 'con' of the conarium. Furthermore Cohn treats Mercier as a representative of the Mind, and Camier of the Body; together they formed what the hero of The Unnamable will later call a 'psuedo-couple'. As Mercier and Camier journey through life they grow further apart until they finally bid each other adieu; and 'physical Camier', says Cohn, ends up 'in a hospital with skin ailments', and 'mental Mercier' in an asylum 'to observe the growing shadows'. In Waiting for Godot, Gogo and Didi, as nicknames 'summarize the polarity'. In Beckett's trilogy, Cohn finds a mind 'precariously fastened to bodies in successive stages of decay'. Moran begins as a champion walker but towards the end, creeping paralysis puts him on crutches. Molloy started on crutches, but the close has him crawling and rolling. Malone, immobile in bed, has only dim memories of a life spent in walking. Cohn also sees The Unnamable begun with the hero's claim to be seated, but concluded with the hero in 'headless thought', 'mouthless speech', and 'earless listening to words' that may
not be his. Yet, all these heroes work themselves ‘into frenzies of meditation’.⁶ But then, Cohn also says that Beckett thought Sartre and Heidegger difficult reading, and said he was no philosopher; infact, the dramatist asserted that he found the world a mess and situated that on stage. Now, it is generally accepted that Belacqua Shua, the hero in More Pricks Than Kicks which is a set of short stories by the playwright, was the genus of the Beckettian world. According to Doherty, Belacqua sought ‘absolution from life’.⁷ Leventhal argues that Beckett could not rid himself of Belacqua, who persists in the Murphys, Molloys, Morans, Watts, Estragons, Hamms and Pims. Belacqua’s familiar position was the ‘embryonal repose’, the knee-and-elbow position. The embryo has haunted the dramatist. According to Leventhal, Beckett wants to ‘reduce his characters to silence, himself in embryo, back to womb life, back to the foetal image of the unborn’.⁸ Belacqua’s progress is always slow, and handicaps many; besides lameness, blindness, general debility reduce the tempo of locomotion. Therefore, motion ends in a crawl. Such a ‘stasis or near stasis’ is an outstanding characteristic of Beckett’s creations. Leventhal sees them reveal themselves in physical pain. However, they ‘do not suffer gladly but inevitably’. They accept ‘the ignominious situation’, and ‘the insult’, and turn more and more inwards to ‘the haven of their minds’, for ‘solace’.⁹ Doherty is of the opinion that Murphy is ‘a non-heroic hero’, whose cancer is ‘a solipsistic self-communion’, and Watt ‘depicts painfully the tragic-comedy of a mind breaking down in its pursuit of meaning’. In fact, Watt is ‘the first of a long series of works which confronts squarely the possibility of Man discovering meaning in life and answers the question ‘What’ by ‘Not’.’ About The Trilogy, Doherty says that it is a a hunt for identity by writers through writing. However, in pursuit of meaning through existence, they find themselves in ‘progressive states of decay’. But then, more and more it becomes ‘the problem of the writer who uses writing to avoid the inevitable task of facing himself’.
Or is it, thinks Doherty, that Beckett is ‘pushing his problems away into Watt’.\textsuperscript{10}

Esslin considers Sartre’s plays written in the traditional cannon, for, they indeed do not escape that mould. In fact, his creations could be ‘characters’ with ‘souls’.\textsuperscript{11} Further, that ‘the philosopher has followed the logic of his position to the point of putting his ideas into the form of his fiction or drama’.\textsuperscript{12} On the other hand, Beckett’s works are more than mere illustrations of existential philosophy; this is ‘precisely because they are free of any abstract concepts or general ideas’. That is why they escape from the ‘inner contradiction of existentialist statements that are couched in the form of generalizations’. Esslin finds Beckett’s work ‘certainly superior’ to the works of Sartre. Infact, the Irish playwright ‘rigidly avoided comments on his ouevre’. He categorically refused ‘to allow any philosophical meaning or thesis to be attributed to his work’. This was because there could be ‘no abstract truth divorced from existential experience’. Abstract statements ‘are necessarily dead, the mere empty shell of living truth’. Thus existence precedes essence, and therefore ‘subjective thought is of a higher order than objective truth’. Beckett’s refusal to explain meaning is carried over into his ouevre, from where Esslin quotes to show Hamm in Endgame uncertainly question Clov if they were not beginning to mean something, but is sardonically laughed at:

\begin{quote}
Hamm: We’re not beginning to.....to.....mean something?

Clov: Mean something! You and I mean something! Ah, that’s a good one. (p.27)
\end{quote}

Esslin agrees w.th this perception because now there was no ‘exalting the glory of a creator’, nor any effort to capture a glow of the ‘cannons of the beautiful’, which would remain ‘pristine and unchanging forever in some celestial sphere beyond the physical universe’. Faith too was lost, whether it was ‘religious or secular’, and the artist was
'left to fend for himself without intelligent purpose in a world devoid of meaning'. An added dilemma, under 'the circumstances, was the obligation to express'. It was an urge, an inescapable compulsion, embedded in the artist's nature 'as strongly as ever'. It is a situation 'as absurd as it is tragic', continues Esslin, and calls it the artist's 'inevitable paradox'. It is because of this that the 'fidelity to failure' becomes 'the new occasion'. Unable to act, he is obliged to act. The Beckett-Duthuit dialogue has the artist make 'an expressive act' of this impossibility--

even if only of itself, of its impossibility, of its obligation.......

Further, quoting Bishop Berkeley's 'Esse est percipi' (To be is to be perceived), Esslin interprets it to mean that 'self perception is a basic condition of our being'. 'We exist because, and as long as, we perceive ourselves'. The artist is led by the perception 'to the obligation to express what he perceives', because for the artist 'the compulsion to express his intuition of the world is a condition of his very existence'. However, the perceived position of the Self, by its very nature is in constant flux, and the artist 'can do no more than be true to each momentary action of self-perception'. Quoting Beckett, Esslin says, the individual is in a 'constant process of decantation' from a future time to a past time. Therefore, Beckett's persistent practice, is of 'instantly withdrawing any positive statement'. This is 'neither coyness, nor teasing'. It is rather an 'inevitable consequence of his artistic personality, his creed as a thinker and as an artist'. Therefore, Esslin finds the nature of the Self inevitably split into the percieve and the perceiver, though there is 'failure to achieve non-being'. This is why Esslin sees Beckett refusing to be more than a 'pains-taking recorder' of 'modes of existence', of Existenzgeful, disallowing any effort to lift his 'precarious and perilous enterprise' into a 'sphere of significance'. Beckett explores 'almost on an unprecendented scale', the 'nature of one human being's mode of existing', and 'the
nature of existence itself'. Rightly therefore, this
dramatist is 'not an illustration' but a 'culmination of
existential thought'. He subjects human existence to a
relentless, uncompromising examination. For this, the
measure is the truth of experience; a generalized statement
of experience is far from the experiential truth. Processes
are important, not results. Each moment is a negation of its
predecessor, and therefore, 'those', says Esslin, 'who deal in
abstract, unchanging verities, the positive thinkers, are by
definition wrong'. The negative is present everywhere in
existence. Therefore, we must always remain aware of the
negative. 'Existence is in constant becoming', and, the
'negativity of the existing subject......springs from the
make-up of the subject, from it being an existing, infinite
mind'. Consciousness cannot conceive of itself as non-
existing. It is 'unlimited, without end'. This should
explain the 'talking I'. But it is traumatic because
language, the medium, also appears inefficacious; the object
and the word for it having lost affinity. However, despite
consciousness keeping a compulsive 'talking I' perpetually
active, and, despite the Beckett ouevre being subjective, the
plays are not entirely surrealist, for as Esslin says, craft
is an essential feature. Esslin recognizes a basic tension
in 'the transient unendingly decaying nature of the physical
universe', and the 'immaterial aspect of consciousness which
incessantly renews itself'. Consciousness being an ever
recurring self-perception, the more 'the material envelop is
stripped away the more awful is the 'tension between the
temporal and the infinite'. Senses decay, but awareness of
Self continues unrelentingly. The final moments of
consciousness will find a human being 'externally suspended
in limbo'. Reckett's Play institute this on stage as a
concrete experience.

Therefore, it is not the 'thought', but 'the shape of
thought' that matters. What is important 'is being able to
experience the course of the imaginative process as an
existential experience', and as a playwright, to situate it
on the proscenium, a context supplied, as a 'presentational
there'. Generalizations, results, meanings, abstract truths
would be a mismatch with this predicament. The imaginative
process shall be of a consciousness in constant flux. The
fleeting images of the Self shall pass through an existential
emptiness. The dramatist's effort will be a succession of
attempts to stage the void. The shape, then, is of this
drama of experiencing an existential meaninglessness. It is
imagined as an on-going process which can only be appreciated
while seeing it actually take form in a Beckett play, either
on stage, or in the reader's imagination. Also, it is in the
context of this that 'games' become important.

However, what Esslin does not notice is that Bishop
Berkeley's 'Esse est percipi' or 'To be is to be perceived'
can also mean the ever watchful eye of a divinity, awatch
over its creation. To be is to exist under the patronage and
scrutiny of a creator. Of course, the dramatist's response is
of disbelief, and he never misses a single opportunity to
disparage the maxim as a worthless illusion.

Now, this tradition of disillusionment was already
there in Western drama, even as far back as Ibsen, though the
two World Wars, industrialization, and various art-movements
of this century are generally considered the more immediate
cause. Absurd Drama gave expression to this disillusionment
and yearning through its endavour after new forms and themes,
and attempted to concretize in powerful stage-images the
general disenchantment with the irrationality of existence.
It was not a movement because, it had neither a slogan, flag
nor manifesto. Rather it was a state of mind and an attitude
to life that had become a general condition. As a result, all
intellectual and artistic effort was influenced, including
that of playwrights, who though far and away from each other,
and of different nationalities, had begun to think and write
on similar lines. But, as already remarked, illusions had
started becoming suspect early. Truth had descended from its
pedestal of the Absolute and had become a Relative. As the
nineteenth century finally closed, Nietzsche announced God dead. Man too ceased to be a hero; infact, acute perceptions found him a victim rather, not only of society, but also of heredity, and, of the physical and chemical forces inside the human body. Gassner thinks the human spirit to be the first casualty of the advance of science. The Sun, Man, and Worm were all one for a telescope or microscope analysis. But then, this had left the homo sapien at least with a body, which, as Corporeality, is one of Beckett's favourite themes. However, the dramatist could not reconcile to this contraption either, moved as it was, by a complex set of levers; he found mobility a curse. Descartean pineals being absent, Mind and Body were at a perpetual divide. Sheer Mentality was yoked to banal Corporeality. Hugh Kenner visualized Beckettian Man as a Cartesian Centaur. Existence was irrational and meaningless. It was a Non-ent, a Nothing is, and Grillet saw the playwright's creatures, purposeless presences, 'there', in permanently entrapped corporeal constriction.

This was a brief description of the critical and conceptual scenario, in the context of which, the textual analysis to follow proceeds. The problem studied is the dramatic technique the playwright employs to situate his theme of an existential Non-ent, on stage. But what exactly is his dramaturgic method? Of course, the facility of music not being available to a textual analysis, the norm of total theatre will not be achieved. Yet, the text can yield the primary dramaturgic features and answer a few basic questions. Thus, what are the changes that occur in the dramatic technique of the five stage-plays studied? Are these changes outright, or do they cause theme variations only? If the theme only varies, what are the corresponding changes in a play's dramaturgy? With the theme remaining practically the same, is it, infact, the dramaturgy that keeps interest in the play alive? Is there a close relation between a play's thematic content and its dramatic technique? Is the on-stage phenomenon the Non-ent itself, or, is it, about a Non-ent
only? How do form and content relate in a Beckett play? Is a Beckett play representational only, or, is it presentational also? Does Beckett show a language collapse for its own sake, or, are the plays in fact logo-centric, the so-called language collapse having been put to effective creative use? Is it justified to let Beckett lie buried in clever critical prose and address him or his plays as something of a deified mystery? Finally, is it easy to have an honest commitment to a Beckettian Non-ent, and if not, how far is it worthwhile to basque in reflected glory, the existential Non-ent for most of us being only a flash phenomenon?

Apart from these questions, there are certain quotations that recur in many Beckett related articles and books which can best be understood only after a detailed textual analysis of a play’s dramaturgy. One is the St. Augustine piece about the two thieves:

Do not despair; one of the thieves was saved.
Do not presume; one of the thieves was damned.

Beckett is known to have caressingly quoted it and said—

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

Five critics or more refer to this episode. Hobson, began it, and, Kenner, Doherty, Fletcher and Spurling made it a tradition. Unfortunately, there is little follow-up, and the ‘shape’ that the Beckettian Non-ent takes even in a single play remains a tantalizer. Consequently, the St. Augustine reference is more of an obstruction than a facility to an understanding of Beckett.

Again, Beckett’s opinion on Joyce is also frequently repeated as example of Beckett’s own practice—

Here form is content, content is form. You complain that this stuff is not written in English. It is not written at all. It is not to be read... or rather, it is not only to be read. It is to be looked at and
listened to. His writing is not about something; it is that something itself.\textsuperscript{21}

However, how does even a single play get to be not 'about something' but 'that something itself', is left to the weary anticipation of the reader. Or, for that matter, how does form become content, and, content form, is never once worked out, however briefly, in any critical effort.

Yet again, the Grillet insight of a purposeless human presence 'there' is also often made much of. But, just how exactly is that 'there' made situate on stage, as an existential Non-ent, is almost always left untouched in critical analysis.

References to Descartes and Proust are also many, but how important is the Descartean factor for Beckettian drama is not followed up in one play in any detail. Also, that the Descartean factor could function as a counterpoint is yet to be considered from the point of view of dramatic technique. Similarly, the two well known articles on Proust\textsuperscript{22} one of which actually tries to clear whether Beckett was anti-Proust or not, do not at all contribute to the understanding of Krapp's Last Tape as a dramaturgic enterprise. That they are scholarly pieces is not challenged, but they poorly support a dramatic reading of Krapp's play.

Yet another oft quoted passage is from the Beckett- Duthuit Dialogues about both the obligation to express and the impossibility of expression. It is a crucial observation and is quoted entire. Its application to the plays is left to the reader's imagination once again---

The expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express.\textsuperscript{23}

Further, Kenner's Cartesian Centaur, in which a fine intelligence is imagined as yoked on to an animal, remains a
well informed critical analysis of the Beckett novels. However, that the fine idea can be given a detailed work out in the plays is never considered worth a critic's attention.

Similarly, the single concern of a language collapse has become such a permanent feature of Beckett criticism, that Kennedy's assertion, that the so-called collapse is creatively exploited by the playwright, comes as a pleasant surprise:

The central importance of language in all modernist writing becomes, in Beckett, a dangerous immersion in language as a creative/destructive element, language as the stuff that makes up or else annihilates the world and the self. 24

But then, how creative could the collapse be for the dramatist's dramaturgy is lost in Kennedy's concentrated thematic readings, so that the benefit of his insight to a study of Beckett's dramatic technique suffers tremendously. As a result there is a shock almost when Jonathan Kalb speaks of Rockaby and Ohio Impromptu as logo-centric, and that the dramatist was a classic author.25 In fact, Kalb's Beckett in Performance and Enoch Brater's why beckett were found far more conducive to an understanding of both Beckett's theme and dramaturgy than other conceptual renderings however profound.

Beckett scholarship is enormous, and willy-nilly a selection has to be made for a rounded-off effort. Of the critics relied upon for tentative support, Kenner, Doherty, Kennedy, Fletcher, Spurling, Esslin, Harvey, Kalb, and Brater, were read as books, and Cohn, Grillet, Iser, Leventhal, Kenner and Esslin again, and Wellershoff, in articles. The detailed textual reading of each play is the thesis' own.

Incidentally, Beckett's concern is not alienation at all, either as theme, or, as technique. Therefore his drama should not be confused with Brechtian plays. His theme is an
existential predicament, that is, Man and the Universe in an irrational bind, positioned on stage, as the futile constriction itself. Also, Brechtian Man does not suffer loss of humanity. In any case, he is not distorted into a grotesque. Brecht’s irreverences are never only comic, and his humour has charm, and, is not at all severe though the depths touched are profound. On the other hand, Beckett is utterly discomfiting in his play with the grotesque. Besides this, he is never a socialist, his theme being the Absurd. He dramatizes a metaphysical anguish, when Man is bereft of all illusion. All this of course does not mean that Maeterlinck, Chekov, Gorky and Pirandello had not been innovators of dramatic technique, and harbingers of powerful themes. Maeterlinck’s use of silence and absent presences; Chekov’s of stasis and inaction; Gorky’s of Luka’s illusions against an illusioness society; and, Pirandello’s inversion of theatric conventions are examples. Brecht, following Piscator, tried techniques to alienate empathy with the stage. However, Beckett’s theme and technique too have their characteristic individual features.

Now, textual analysis of a dramatic technique that bas itself on repetition and ritual, must entail limiting options to a limited vocabulary. Thus words like 'existence', 'existential', or 'irrational', or, 'the Absurd', or 'Non-ent', or, 'concretize', 'contextualize', or, even 'predicament', 'condition', 'quandary', 'impasse', or, 'banal', 'commonplace', 'trite', 'work-a-day' or 'debunk', 'demolish', 'fragment', 'reduce', or 'repetition', 'beat', 'rhythm' and 'ritual', or, 'pause', 'silence', 'blackout', or, 'tape' or, 'spotlight', or, 'presence 'there', or, 'on-stage', or, 'dramaturgic seive', or 'anvil', or 'mentality' and 'corporeality', or 'pineal gland', 'wait', or, 'end', or, 'dramaturgy', or, 'dramaturgic', get more than several mentions. For this, the thesis expresses regret because there is no way to compete with an artist whose theme and technique is often a subtle, almost innocuous repeat.

And, since, the instant theme is terminology, the thesis thinks it opportune to point out that there are some words used with a specific meaning. Thus, because one of the playwright’s concerns is the obligation to express, with
nothing to express, and nothing in which to express, language gets creatively used, to communicate a collapse. Still, to some perceptions, the dramatist's oeuvre remains logocentric. Be that as it may, 'failure' and not 'the feasible' was for Beckett 'the occasion'. Therefore, language is bereft of trope and metaphor. Consequently, like his persistent penchant for 'physical themes', there is also a consistent 'language theme', because the dramatist makes language 'the theme'. He confronts language as it exists, that is, as a commission when it is a spoken or written articulation, or an omission, that is, when it is a silence. This is the way that language always is, as a process, and, a dynamic. Under the circumstances, there is drama inherent in ordinary, banal, every day conversation also. And Beckett has his fingers a-press on the very nerve of this essentially dramatic phenomenon. Language at its 'irreducible dramatic' is the playwright's forte. Brater says that in Beckett, 'word' or even 'voice' becomes the hero. There is drama innate to the language phenomenon, even at its most simple articulate, its pause, silence, or voice modulation. Tropes, therefore, get the go-bye. They just are not necessary. This thesis in its effort at a detailed textual analysis of the five plays, therefore, often speaks of a 'language-dynamic', 'the language theme', or simply 'language ontology', aware, regretfully that the last use could have specific overtones of a word out of a philosopher's terminology.

The dramatist also makes abundant use of pauses, silences, spotlights and blackouts. Since this is a part of the technique, capital letters are used while writing about them. Thus, a pause will be written Pause and a silence, Silence; and, spotlight would be Spot.

Beckett creatively exploited whatever medium he worked in, be it simple prose, as in his novels, or the stage, or radio, or television. He found creative potential in all four, to communicate his vision of an existential Non-ent. The medium never appeared to get the better of him. After his experience with the radio in After the Fall, he may have become more aware of the use of sound as drama. Voiced-speech or sound as articulation he had already worked to dramatic depths in two stage-plays. After his experience with the
radio, Brater tells of his summons to the BBC for all the literature available to operate a tape, a new technology in those days, and Krapp’s Last Tape was the outcome. In this, as Brater says, ‘the act of listening is dramatized.’ It is the eye that ‘listens’. A visual field, Brater says is made to harmonize with acoustics. Therefore, speech, voice and sound were Beckett’s interests. In After the Fall, he is reputed to have made much of ‘radio silence’, and laid out what Brater calls an ‘aural landscape’.30 If earlier, ‘word’ had become the hero, now ‘voice’ takes on its mantle. In Happy Days, it is a female solo voice, as in Krapp’s Last Tape it is a solo male’s.

Furthermore, diminution, fragmentation or reduction is an essential Beckettian feature. The dramatist always felt the urge to create for a smaller space. The first stage performance of Waiting for Godot is said to have been before only a 60-seat audience hall. His director had searched for a pocket-theatre.31 All true grace, Beckett thought was economical. And very little happens on a Beckett stage, which is not either a truncation or reduction. The human being becomes a diminishing presence. Thus, Not I is just a Mouth, ‘the remnant of a material presence.’32 In Film, the protagonist is sundered into an object in retreat and an eye in pursuit. Embers ‘organizes sound within the recognizable rules of dramatic action’.33 Eh Joe is merely sound and light. It is diminuendo all through.34 Breath has its tell-tale title, so has Footfalls. In Not I, the stage is in darkness, and the light focus is only on Mouth, with the Auditor in semi-darkness. Mouth insists on impersonality. ‘What? Who? No... She!’ The apparent challenge in Not I was to stage a mouth. Just a moving mouth, with the rest of the face in darkness’. Brater says Still ‘condenses conflict between motion and rest, light and darkness, sound and silence’. If Mouth in Not I is a female, in That Time, Head is a male, which like Mouth, appears dismembered and faces its own Auditor. These were very late Beckett efforts, and would require independent study to get enough justice. The thesis therefore preferred to concentrate only on the five stage-plays, and found in the detailed textual analysis of their dramatic technique, substantial material for a close rapport with the essentials of Beckettian theme as well as
dramaturgy. What evolves and develops primarily in the playwright's oeuvre is his technique; his theme of the Non-ent only varies. It does not develop at all in fact, because whatever could, after an honest early commitment to 'failure' and an 'empty void'! The playwright was already at his Molloy, Malone Dies. The Unnamable trilogy when he was working on Waiting for Godot, that is, between 1946 and 1950. The commitment to existence as aborted was not ever got out of! Therefore, if it is technique merely then this thesis does attempt to make a small contribution to its understanding, and its further study. In any case, a detailed textual analysis of Beckett plays has yet to be done.

Finally, in Trousdale's article, the point that the play makes play 'the vehicle of the play' is interesting. However, the present thesis sets to find out, among other things if a Beckett play is about something, or that something itself. If it is about something, then only will notions of play-as-metaphor, or symbolic form apply. Needless to say, the thesis found the Non-ent made situate on stage, in all its grotesque profoundity, in the five plays studied. The stage is each time an extension of the audience, despite the spontaneous laughter, because the laugh is often of utter discomfiture. To understand Beckett and Beckettian technique, 'plot' or 'character' are hardly the key. Neither is 'anti-play' of much help to understand Beckett. The playwright has each drama prescribe its own rules of creation, and is best appreciated within its own prescription and not through superimpositions of external, unrelated categories. In any case, Aristotle could never have visualized existence as an abortion, and honestly remained stuck to it as a frank commitment. Estragon, the clochard, was always beaten up by 'them' and left in a pit to recoup if he could. Even Vladimir was a reluctant convert and had several platitudes in store to placate Estragon's persistent negations. We may not agree with the dramatist's bleak vision, but his example of an honest commitment to existence as constriction, empty and meaningless is difficult to emulate. The Absurd, for most people can only be a flash experience, and hardly ever a deep-rooted fixation. The playwright has given to it permanent art-forms.
References:


5. Ibid., p.170.

6. Ibid., p.171.


9. Ibid., p.43.


13. Ibid., Quoted by Esslin, p.2.


17. Esslin, Theatre of the Absurd, op. cit., p.14


30. Ibid., p.90.

31. Ibid., p.59.

32. Ibid., p.104.

33. Ibid., p.114.

34. Ibid., p.118.

CHAPTER-I

WAITING FOR GODOT

Waiting for Godot, (1948) was first performed in 1952, and made Samuel Beckett a cult-figure. It was a novel phenomenon. It had no story, plot, nor even characters as such. However, it showed Beckett's innate sense of the dramatic, which he effectively demonstrated in an alert ear, and quick pen. He creatively exploited the dramaturgy inherent in the corporeal human presence 'there' on stage, as an irrational existential condition. And, of course, of the drama inherent in the constitution of language itself, the Beckettian oeuvre established him, a classic and master. His drama therefore, is more presentational than representational, and characteristic for its immediacy.

Beckett is primarily concerned with presenting his own dark and bleak vision of life. But then, Impotence or Failure, or, a Non-ent can well be themes, however, it needs both commitment and artistic integrity to make art out of these profoundly intense existential experiences. Further, the collapse of language is always debatable, and the art required to show a language disintegrate needs imagination and creativity. The playwright's added interest was in the shape of thought, so that content and form were for him, two inseperables, making his oeuvre, be not about something, but that something itself.

To begin with, then, let us not just locate commedia dell'arte, vaudeville, circus or music-hall conventions in Waiting for Godot; for these could hardly be the dramatist's single interests. Let us look instead for those salient features in this play's dramaturgy, as also in the four others in this study, that help shape his theme, and, in
reciprocation are shaped by it. Thus, an almost empty stage strikes first, and how, space and time in it, are effectively manipulated. There is only a tree, a country-road and a mound. On the mound sits a tramp struggling hard with his boots, and it appears quite an exercise. This is apparently commonplace and hardly extraordinary, but becomes unusually significant with the tramp's announcement that 'nothing was to be done'. That tangible stage-image sets the tone to the existential impasse of a futile Waiting. The spectators had already sub-consciously carried it over into the audience-hall from the play's announcement of it on the bill-boards. Dramaturgical strategy gives to Waiting, such immediacy, that it becomes phenomenal, and indeed, absolutely un-redeemable. The Wait is for a certain Godot. It lasts for the full length of the two Acts, or, the three stage-hours, for which the play performs, but Godot does not at all arrive. Drama makes Godot an absent-presence. Just what technique helps drama to take the shape of the Beckettian theme is the purpose of these textual analyses of the five plays considered in this study.

    Estragon is at first the lone tramp struggling with his boots and regretting that there was nothing to be done. But he is joined by Vladimir, a second tramp who soon after enters and the two-some start the long ordeal of the futile Wait for an absent Godot. The context of such an existential bind is built up, through banal-talk and potent stage-images till, by the time the play ends in its oft characterized circularity, the spectator has had an intense experience of the trap of a purposeless Waiting, for an absent Godot who only promises but never arrives.

    Trite and stale torso-movements on-stage, are deliberately calculated stylized movements and lend their own theatre to the drama of the existential trap-situation.
Thought is also dramatized as idle because Descartean pineal glands being non-existent, the Body and Mind are disjunct phenomenon, and cannot function together. Therefore, Beckettian Man, as in this play, could just be a Validmirean mannequin, or, a Cartesian Centaur. Moreover, thought being fruitless, jaded and common place corporeal actions were the most that a krapp-existence could contrive. Infact, both work-a-day torso-activity, and logocentricity help Beckettian dramaturgy situate, on stage what Grillet considers an intense presence-on-stage. It is human beings, just 'there' on the stage of the Universe itself. Later, we shall examine what Kalb has to say about this human presence 'there' and also sheer human corporeality as an existential predicament.

What the dramatist handles very effectively is the tension inherent in a language dynamic, so that even a spiritless conversation, if put through a rhythm, beat, silence or pause, can work dramatic wonders, making a metaphor redundant. In any case, metaphors implied metaphysical systems, and these for Beckett were anathema. The guilt of the human being was not only, that he was at all born, and lived, but also that he presumed even to have thought. Therefore, Waiting for Godot creatively exploits the drama innate to language. Thus if a repetition may emphasize meaning, and be the basis of a sacred ritual, the same repetition could also demolish a meaningful word, and make it a bare articulation that hardly meant anything. It is like Othello's:

Is he not honest?

Iago : Honest, My Lord?


Or---

Othello: What dost thou think?
Iago : Think, my Lord?

Othello: Think, My Lord? By heaven he echoes me.  
(Act III, Sc III, p. 98)

As an example from Waiting for Godot we can take the many repetitions of the word ‘happy’, and notice how a ritual can also be terribly devastating---

Vladimir: You must be happy, too, deep down, if you only knew it.
Estragon : Happy about What?
Vladimir : To be back with me again.
Estragon : Would ye say so?
Vladimir : Say you ’re even if it’s not true.
Estragon : What am I to say?
Vladimir : Say, I am happy.
Estragon : I am happy.
Vladimir : So am I.
Estragon : Sc am I.
Vladimir : We are happy.
Estragon : We are happy. (Silence.) (Act II, p. 60)

The rhythm generated does not stop there. For one or two more beats, or a few more words can link the now meaningless word ‘happy’ to ‘waiting’, and make each articulation, take on the other’s ineffectual colour. And therefore, after the Silence, Estragon continues:

: What do we do now, now that we are happy?
Vladimir: Wait for Godot. (Act II, p. 60)
Next is an example of a generated word rhythm, that destroys the meaning content of a Vision, as at other places, the solace of a Dream, a Story, or, even Nature:

Vladimir: You must have had a vision.
Estragon: (Turning his head). What?
Vladimir: (louder) you must have had a vision!

Estragon: No need to shout! (Silence.) (Act II, p.75)

Language has a potential in its repetitions, beats and rhythms, as also when there is a Pause or Silence after speech. But first the rhythms, beats and repetitions---

Estragon: You gave me a fright.
Vladimir: I thought it was he.
Estragon: Who?
Vladimir: Godot
Estragon: Pah! The wind in the reeds. (Act I, p.19)

Or---

Vladimir: Before you go tell him to sing.
Pozzo : Who?
Vladimir: Lucky.
Pozzo : To sing?
Vladimir: Yes, or to think. Or to recite
Pozzo : But he’s dumb.
Vladimir: Dumb!
Pozzo : Dumb. He can’t even groan.
Vladimir: Dumb! Since when? (Act, II p. 89)
In these two examples, the 'Who?/Godot/Pah', and, 'dumb/Dumb, Dumb.../Dumb...' are the obvious rhythms. However, 'I thought it was he', began the movement which is actually rounded off in 'the wind in the reeds'. Similarly, 'He can't even groan' gives respite after the four 'dumbs', and the last 'dumb' is again rounded off by the beat, 'since when'. We shall consider the drama of Pauses and Silences as the analysis of the dramatic technique proceeds. There are in all about 113 Silences, of which 50 are in the first Act, and the rest in the second. This also includes the play's 6 Long Silences, that are 2, in Act I, and 4, in Act II. Indeed Pauses, Silences, and even Long Silences, form as essential a part of the language dynamic, as do its articulated sounds in this Beckett play.

Therefore, what have been called 'language-games' are in fact a consciously worked out drama of the essentially scintillating medium called 'language'. Two more characteristics of the tension inherent in the playwright's language are, first the 'finale' with which each game, exercise, rhythm, or, set concludes: and, the second is the use, of what may be called, a 'pungent interrogative'. Given below are some language 'finales' from Waiting for Godot. As quoted earlier, 'No need to shout', concluded the theatric exchange on Vision. Similarly, 'Nor I' terminates the rhythm in the following language set. It begins after a Long Silence---

Estragon: Do you see anything coming?
Vladimir: (turning his head) What?
Estragon: (Louder) Do you see anything coming?
Vladimir: No
Estragon: Nor I. (Act II, p. 74-75)
In the same fashion, 'Ah', completes the following piece, but where else could it both thematically and dramaturgically end? This rhythm also starts after a Silence---

Estragon: Let's pass on now to something else, do you mind?

Vladimir: I was just going to suggest it.

Estragon: But to what?

Vladimir: Ah! (Act II, p.84)

The 'pungent interrogative' is taken to mean the use of the question-word, particularly 'What?', to deliberately deat whatever has been spoken immediately before, and shrivel it of most of its meaning. Thus---

Estragon: (despairingly) Ah! (Pause). You're sure it was here?

Vladimir: What (Act I, p.14)

Or---

Estragon: You're sure it was this evening

Vladimir: What? (Act I, p.15)

Or---

Vladimir: ...(Pause) Two thieves, crucified at the same time as our Saviour. One---


Or---

Vladimir: One out of four, of the other three two don't mention any thieves at all and the third says that both of them abused him.
Estragon: Who?

Vladimir: What?


Of course, the 'pungent interrogatives' don't all begin with question-word questions, and of these also, there are many examples.

All this does not deny that language can be used to create confusion and uncertainty, which becomes worse confounded, if an overlap of sound, or meaning occurs---

Pozzo: Help!

Vladimir: Time flows again already. The sun will set, the moon will rise, and we away... from here.

Pozzo: Pity!

Vladimir: Poor Pozzo!

Estragon: I knew it was him.

Vladimir: Who?

Estragon: Godot

Vladimir: But it's not Godot.

Estragon: It's not Godot!

Vladimir: It's not Godot!

Estragon: Then who is it?

Vladimir: It's Pozzo. (Act II, pp.77-78)

The confusion between Godot and Pozzo creates semantic ripples which the playwright exploits thematically to great advantage, for, as always in Beckett, the theme shapes the drama which in turn gives shape to his theme.
One last example, to finally illustrate, how language dynamic, or, ‘ontology’, in its very nature and grain, supports the playwright’s technique. Language, as language, written or spoken, is movement. It is full of potential drama, what with its pauses and silences. This is more so when language is ‘spoken’, for then voice-articulation becomes part of the exercise, and all words cannot be spoken at once. Moreover, voice has its tonality and therefore, an articulated word is itself potential drama. Consequently, figures of speech are not all necessary for this drama.

The tonality and rhythm of the ‘spoken words’ themselves communicate whatever is said. Again, silence is also a part of speech, for speech is more noticed when it is either well regulated, or, when it is preceded or followed by silence. A prolonged silence, or, a sudden stop, when there was the possibility of word-articulation, creates a greater potential for drama, and colours both the silence and the speech, that went before or after, with various overtone. Beckett excels in the ability to use both voiced articulation and silence, to create ambiguity, confusion and uncertainty. He was committed to this state of irrationality, and artistically manipulated the dramaturgy of the language medium to suggest how he felt, not about a particular character, but about the trapped nature of human existence, and its Non-ent predilection.

But now the example referred to in the preceding paragraph: in this example, the points to be noticed are the unspoken implications and how the language dynamic or tension helps generate these ambiguities---

Estragon: (despairingly) Ah! (Pause.) You’re sure it was here?

That takes care of the security and sanctity of the concept of 'place', in the sense that a certain state of confusion is created about it. Let us begin again----

Estragon: (despairingly) Ah! (Pause.) You're sure it was here?

Vladimir: What?

Estragon: That we were to wait.

Vladimir: He said by the tree. (They look at the tree.) Do you see any others?

Estragon: What is it?

Vladimir: I don't know. A willow.

Estragon: Where are the leaves?

Vladimir: It must be dead.

Estragon: No more weeping.

Vladimir: Or perhaps it's not the season.

Estragon: Looks to me like a bush.

Vladimir: A shrub.

Estragon: A bush.

Vladimir: A----. What are you insinuating? That we've come to the wrong place? (Act I, p.14)

This quoted piece first berefts the 'object' of its identity. Now, the 'word' for an 'object', is no more than an articulated sound, with which ideas get associated. The reality 'there' has nothing to do with such empty articulations and irrational associations. By the time Vladimir reaches 'come to the wrong place' we realize that the earlier ambiguity created about 'place' is
dramaturgically driven home. But the quotation should be allowed to continue---

Estragon: He should be here.
Vladimir: He didn't say for sure he'd come.
Estragon: And if he doesn't come?
Vladimir: We'll come back tomorrow.
Estragon: And then the day after tomorrow.
Vladimir: Possibly.
Estragon: And so on.
Vladimir: The point is---
Estragon: Until he comes.
Vladimir: You're merciless. (Act I, p.14)

It must be noted that this time the five 'he' repetitions, make the pronoun 'he', acquire material significance. They don't destroy its meaning as yet, because beat and rhythm, as well as ritual, can both be creative and destructive phenomenon.

To return to the quotation let us treat the whole quotation as one piece, that is, starting from 'Estragon: (despairingly) 'Ah'! ---to Vladimir 'You're merciless'. Is this just cross-talk; a hackneyed common-place piece? Or, is it a carefully manipulated ambiguity-creating exercise based on characteristics innate to the language phenomenon itself; the drama that is, of spoken articulation. Or, is it the ability to put an innocuous word or expression, just at the right place, to cleanse the previous voiced-sounds of their meaning-content! Of course, there is always the advantage of a created context in the background which helps the innocuous acquire its sting. Therefore, this quotation has examples of
the least hurting speech 'And so on', 'Until he comes' or, 'And then the day after tomorrow'. However, just consider what they do to the words, which immediately precede them. Thus, 'And then the day after tomorrow' erases the meaning out of Vladimir's, 'We'll come back tomorrow', making the next day's Waiting also, a part of a time-old exercise, with Godot never caring ever to arrive. Similarly, 'And so on' stings the meaning out of 'Possibly', injecting the content of a 'Perpetually' in it, and also a 'Futilely'. Again the remaining example, 'Until he comes' devastates whatever point Vladimir has, and colours the expression, 'The point is ---', with the implication that since Godot has, till date, failed to arrive, he will not do so in the future also. Just three language jabs, apparently harmless, but appropriately placed, timed, and directed, knock the bottom off even the most well-intentioned meaning-content. Such is Beckettian dramaturgy, which has its pulse on the language-drama itself, and need not have recourse to figures of speech, to help make it a 'language of power'. That the effort suited the dramatist's theme also, was an added factor, given Artuadian doubts about language. The language is only apparently trite and stale. However, the creative manipulation of its essential dramatic nature, makes it profound and even an over-whelming experience. These, then, are some of the prominent features of Beckett's dramatic technique in Waiting for Godot.

To return to the play's outline, even as the two tramps Vladimir and Estragon wait, another two-some arrive. They are Pozzo and Lucky, a master and his servant. Their arrival is like some kind of dramatic relief to the tramps but it also serves to intensify and deepen the play's content. Then, Pozzo and Lucky after their extended presence on stage, leave the two tramps to their Waiting, and soon after, a Boy who is Godot's messenger, comes to inform that Godot will not come that day. The day ends. Night falls. The tramps want to
leave, they tell each other so, but donot move. That concludes the first Act. Act II begins with a lot of feverish activity made up of movement to-and-fro on stage and gazings into distances with eyes screened, as if somebody was expected. Godot had obviously, not yet arrived. A dog-song is also sung with the refrain 'And dug the dog a tomb'. Soon after, there is a repeat of the language refrain, spoken six times in the play, each time initiated by a different tramp, that is, either by Vladimir or Estragon---

Let's go./We can't./Why not?/Wer'e waiting for Godot./Ah!

And so, the two tramps have to continue their idle Wait, while Godot remains a perpetual absent presence. Act II has its similarities with Act-I, though the efforts of Vladimir and Estragon to pass time by desperately trying to bring in change and variety, paradoxically adds to intensify the boredom. They play language-games to ward off an eerie Silence. However, Godot still fails to arrive. Pozzo and Lucky enter a second time, the former blind, the latter deaf, and fall in a heap with Pozzo repeatedly calling for help, Soon after they leave again and the Wait continues. Estragon has dozed off, when the Boy of Act II comes to announce that Godot had sent word that he would not come that day also. Vladimir makes a hopeless lunge at the Boy who runs away and leaves the stage. When Estragon awakens, the two tramps can only talk of suicide. However, they cannot even hang themselves because they donot have a rope. Now it is night once more, and the moon casts a pale light. The tramps decide to leave, to come again the next day. They say so and yet again donot move; and, the curtain falls.

This is the play. This analysis will study how the playwright's strategies supply the empty Non-ent of a Waiting
as a concrete theatricalization to the stage, keeping in mind the fact that Beckett was profoundly impressed by the shape that thought takes. In fact, it was this deep interest in the shape of thought which made his form and content overlap and become one. However, let us begin with the conclusions of Jonathan Kalb who for his book *Beckett in Performance*, had viewed 70 or more Beckett performances and had even had interviews with the author. Kalb also includes conversations with some famous Beckett actors and actresses in his book. He concludes that Beckett plays, more particularly the later pieces, are text centered; that avant-gardists had best ‘cease chasing Artaudian Windmills’ and also ‘cease fearing the bugbear of logo-centricity, for one of their guiding spirits actually turns out to be a classic author’. Kalb insists that the avant-garde, due to its distrust of all forms of established language, has often run into ‘the cul-de-sac of unspecificity and vagueness’. The critic describes *Ohio Promptu* and *Rockaby*, two later plays, as ‘language structures of unprecedented beauty’. He observes that Beckett returned to language, though he understood ‘the limitations of language articulated by Artaud and comprehensively projected by Hamlet (Words, words, words)’. Kalb also refers to a coincidence when he chanced upon seeing two Robert Wilson Productions, both within a week of each other. One was that of Müller’s *Hamlet machine* and the other was of Wilson’s own *Death, Destruction and Detroit II*. The latter was textless and became ‘an unbearable four and a half-hour barrage of technical marvels’, which ‘embellished series of trite and over-embellished tableaux’. In contrast, he found Wilson’s production of Muller’s play, ‘a simple, elegant, unforgettable correlative to certain discernible meanings’. Finally, Beckettian plays particularly the later ones, were found to contain the ‘spectacle of actor in extremes’, because according to Kalb, the playwright’s theme is an existence ‘there’ on-stage, as a meaningless and futile
presence. Therefore, the physical predicament is the human figure’s complete existential condition, and, speech, ‘from these bodily conditions’ is ‘a vocalized aspect of them’. Under these circumstances, a Beckett actor or actress has ‘to refine his or her physical comportment’, inorder ‘to generate a corresponding mental state in him or her’, and, offer ‘a spectacle’ as in Biomechanics. Corporeality then, as existence on an empty stage, with accentuated physical posturings, attitudes, and movements, all as part of a ‘presentational’ dramatic exercise, and not a representational one only, with its text-centered theatre, was at the hub of Beckettian dramaturgy.

To recount then, a near vacant stage, a hapless human presence, and body kinaesthetics; and, logo-centricity, infact, the inherent tension within language itself bereft of all figures of speech, and, only as repetition, beat, rhythm or game complete with often a ‘finale’, or incomplete, as non sequitur; and, the pungent interrogative, Pauses and Silences; and, drama, as presentational more than representational, are some characteristic features of the dramatist’s technique and shall be kept in mind, while analysing the dramaturgy of Waiting for Godot. These singular dramaturgic traits appear for the moment to be the playwright’s primary interests, and if convention went in tow, it was the better for the convention! This is because, what Beckett was primarily committed to was to supply the stage with the Non-ent seen and heard as both human corporeality and language tension with their routine and work-a-day beat and rhythm, repetition and ritual, omission, and commission, and also their pauses and silences. This is because Beckettian dramaturgy had its own thematic and dramaturgic commitments, and for this the drama intrinsic to human corporeality and inherent in a language dynamic proved handy and effective instruments.
Let us see then how *Waiting for Godot* accentuates the existential predicament as a presence, 'there' and, makes it a part of the on-stage instituted circumstance of Waiting. As it has already been pointed out, Waiting and Godot, are two pronouncements that the spectator carries with him or her, over into the hall picked-up directly from the bill-boards, and the playwright's dramatic technique capitalizes on these announcements substantially. To begin from the beginning itself, Estragon sits on the mound, on an empty stage struggling and panting to remove his boots. There was nothing else to be done but that. Like measuring life out in coffee spoons, existence was reduced to a painful struggle to put on and put off boots. This is the first concrete stage-image of the existential predicament on stage. Then Vladimir enters with short stiff strides, for he has gall-bladder problems. He had heard Estragon speak and adds---

I'm beginning to come round to that opinion. All my life I've tried to put it from me, saying Vladimir, be reasonable you haven't yet tried everything. And I resumed the struggle. (He broods, musing on the struggle). (Act I, p.9).

Vladimir's 'stiff short strides', and the words he spoke, add a new dimension to the situation. Estragon was not alone in it. Vladimir was also one other, who had tried all life to distance himself from the awareness that life was irrational and only a purposeless predicament and therefore there was 'nothing to be done'. However, very painfully he had realized that he could not drive himself away from that awareness anymore. He was in it after a life-long struggle to keep out. And therefore the next telling stage-image is that of a two-some on an empty stage, beside a country road, near an almost leafless tree. Of course they are just two tramps, but the 'All my life' part of Vladimir's words, and of his resumption of a struggle, and, of him trying to keep away by
being reasonable, because he has not 'tried everything', makes the situation, on stage, quite problematic, what with Estragon's 'nothing to be done', and, the spectator, having carried the words 'Waiting' and 'Godot', directly in. Were the two, doing nothing but waiting for somebody? Was it a Godot they waited for? The spectator is yet not sure. There is talk of a beating. Were these two alone? Were some people after them; particularly Estragon! Next, Vladimir imagines a suicide attempt for the two! But what has Man to do with Vladimir's walk up to the Eiffel Tower! What, in any case, was actually involved? Was it a general existential impasse, or, were these two only being overly sensitive! Estragon seems to suffer more. Vladimir still has platitudes to mouth. We should attend to the little things of life too, and Estragon is advised by Vladimir to button up his fly! All the while, visually and corporeally also, Estragon's struggle with the boots dominates the stage. Skeptic though he is, is Vladimir being used as a convenient platitudinizer, in Beckettian dramaturgy, to help contextualize, on stage, the Beckettian theme of a Non-ent, a Nothing Is, an empty void, in which Man exists, meaninglessly and without purpose, an abject, impotent aborted failure? After his own 'never neglect the little things of life', Vladimir muses over the word 'the last moment', which were a part of the complaint Estragon had churlishly thrown at him---

What do you expect, you always wait till the last moment. (Act I, p. 10).

That helps the dramatist introduce his theme ---'the wait till the last moment', with Vladimir pondering over 'the last moment' part. However, the theme is a quiet introduction yet.
The boot and hat stage-business adds to the grotesquery. In fact, before the comic stage-business commences even a platitudinizer voices the pathetic existential bind---

Vladimir: Sometimes I feel it coming all the same. Then I go all queer. (Act I, p. 10).

The question is whether the tramps were being representational or presentational? They did establish the context of a potent presence on an almost empty stage, near a leafless tree, beside a country-road. But, what in any case, was Vladimir after, peering, feeling, searching inside his hat, shaking and putting it on again? And since he did not find anything inside, it is difficult to fathom why he is both relieved and appalled. He repeats the hat stage-business a second time, this time knocking on its crown also, as though to dislodge a foreign body, giving little or no hint as to what indeed was he after! Soon, he also voices Estragon’s theme of ‘nothing to be done’. Meanwhile, Estragon manages after effort to pull off his boot, and repeats Vladimir’s hat-actions with his boot. He peers and feels inside the boot, and turns it upside down, shakes it, looks on the ground to see if anything has fallen out, feels inside again, and finding nothing, stares sightlessly before him. This is one more striking stage-image of a hapless and hopeless existential condition, for the tramps were being like magicians, trying to extract pigeon-truths from their hats and boots! There was no truth anywhere; at least not in a human being from ‘top to toe’ that is, from hat to boot, and therefore, Vladimir was immensely relieved as well as appalled. He was relieved because there was no ready recourse to a pigeon-truth; but he was appalled also, for, no truth was forthcoming either! That indeed was getting far too serious with tramp-business, because the boot was next aired, and, Estragon admonished by Vladimir for ‘blaming on his
boots the fault of his feet. However, Vladimir could not stop himself from repeating his hat-business a third time, when he even blew inside before putting it on again. Then comes the first Silence, and Vladimir is observed in deep thought. The Silence as well as the deep thought posture is dramaturgically deliberate so that the spectator is compelled to take stock. The thought of a pigeon-truth came by way of an innuendo from the hat and boot stage-business. Did the two tramps find themselves bereft of truth? In any case, how had reason let Vladimir down? And this was despite his struggle, and his capacity to wait, and wait till the last moment! The tramps had been laughed at by the spectator; but the thought that they had some serious axe to grind could have discomfited him also. Thought and pigeon-truth were being cor-related and the rationale of human existence itself appeared at stake! The spectator’s worst fears could have been confirmed! Vladimir next speaks of thieves and repentance, while Estragon regrets even his birth. But was Vladimir now adrift from a general to some specific truth, in order to help Beckettian dramaturgy test that at its anvil also? And what with Estragon’s regret at being born, and also Vladimir’s regret, voiced earlier, of there being no early suicides, was it the general human predicament that was being dramatized? Vladimir stifles a hearty laugh and his face gets contorted. He follows it up by a smile, grotesquely a-stretch from ear to ear. The smile is grotesque as well as frightening, and, the on stage ‘there’, a profound experience. Vladimir says that one dare not laugh any more, and Estragon speaks of a dreadful privation. Meanwhile, the ‘nothing to be done’ toll had tolled thrice in three pages of the text. Thus Vladimir and Estragon, in presentational fashion, stage the tramp condition of an existential quandary, because truthless and therefore rootless, reason and thought were reaching them nowhere. It was indeed a dreadful privation, where nothing was to be done. A laugh was
out of question and a suicide too late. The wonder of it was that a deft dramaturgical strategy had helped Beckett say it all. Just an empty stage, with a lone tree, a mound, a country-road and to be able to include in his sweep and range not only the grotesque, but also the void of a Cosmos, with the help of only two concrete stage-images of a sheer corporeal presence, and some banal words at the appropriate places, is quite a marvel of technique. Added to this is the repetitive hat and boot stage-business and, a thrice repeated, appropriately spaced one-line refrain of 'nothing to be done', and, one Silence. A further addition is the failure of reason and of struggle, and a potential suicide. There is also the regret at being born. Finally, the on-stage context of confusion and uncertainty, implication and innuendo, help dramaturgy shape the theme. Both theme and its appropriate dramaturgy by now, appear well on their way. The best of the drama inherent in the language dynamic or tension was of course yet to come, but of that later; for the moment how drama debunks Grace and Redemption demands closer attention.

Having tilled the stage alive to life’s irrational existential condition, where no general truth was to be come by, though posturings of thought were many, a specific truth is tried at the anvil of drama. It is the truth of Christianity and the Absolutes that hold it together. It all begins very innocuously, the first thing after one of the Silences—

Vladimir: One of the thieves was saved. (Pause) It’s a reasonable percentage. (Pause). (Act I, p.11)

This was on the Christian theme of Grace and Redemption. But before that, let us keep in mind the fact that Beckettian performers are reputed to have been left at
the posture of the last spoken word or sentence, during the entire period of an ensuing Silence. Right now, two Pauses punctuate the newly broached subject of Redemption; a strategical Silence has immediately preceded it. The earlier subject of a General Truth was dramaturgically manipulated a pigeon-truth, and innuendoed into an uncertain ambiguity. The meaning-content of Redemption is now brought under the shadow of the same ‘pigeon-truth dramaturgy’, hedged as it is between a Silence and two Pauses. The question of Redemption is broached slowly, with Pauses in between, for, it is a new area that is being tried. Or, was it because, an age-old religious tradition was under scrutiny, and too quick an Estragon reprisal, had made Vladimir cautious? At its start, the move is quiet and slow, till it picks up spring at ‘Gogo’, and, the pungent interrogative ‘What?’ alerts us to the subject introduced. ‘One of the thieves was saved (Pause). It’s a reasonable percentage. (Pause).’ The effort to seek re-assurance compells Vladimir to spill the beans---

Suppose we repent . (Act I, p. 11)

This was like handing something over on a platter for deliberate assault, and Estragon is unsparing. He asks---

Repented what?

Vladimir utters an uncertain ‘Oh!’ and then reflects. Beckett appears to be marking time and his next step again has Vladimir play the role of the platitudinizer---

We won’t have to go into details .

This is once again strategy, for Estragon is put in a position to strike back---

Our being born .
That takes 'dramaturgical care' of Repentance and Grace, and also provides Beckett the opportunity to castigate even the idea of a human truth.

Not satisfied, the playwright has Vladimir forced into a hearty laugh, in order to make the laugh itself an occasion for having it stifled, and result in a facial contortion to help position on stage one more striking stage-image of the sad existential constriction on earth, seen, 'there' as a corporeal predicament. However, the piece is yet not complete. The movement becomes stuccato, and takes three strikes. First it is verbal---

Vladimir: One aren't even laugh any more.


Next, the opportunity is availed of to shape yet another powerful stage-image. A hearty laugh was prohibited, but a simple smile was not. And Vladimir stands smiling from ear to ear, but the smile disappears as suddenly as it had appeared. It was tragically grotesque all through, and, Vladimir's awareness that a hearty laugh was far different from a grotesque smile adds to the pathos of the existential bind that the tramps found themselves entrapped in. The piece ends with Vladimir's second pronouncement of the Estragon logo, 'nothing to be done'.

Beckettian dramaturgy is now well on its way. The Bible and the Gospels are the next targets; the context positioned on stage, was by now sufficiently profound to make the effort easy. It starts---

Vladimir: Gogo.

Estragon: (Irritabily) What is it?

Vladimir: Did you ever read the Bible?

Estragon: The Bible --- (Act I, p. 11-12)
The rhythm of this small exchange is itself enough to put on the Bible a mark of interrogation; and also, on the possibility of it being ever read! Of course the maps of the Holyland were pretty. The picture of the sea had often made Estragon feel thirsty; and in any case, it was an ideal place for a honeymoon. So much for the Gospels. The rest is easy to manipulate creatively—

Vladimir: You should have been a poet.

Estragon: I was....Isn’t that obvious. (Act I, p. 12)

The context deepens; drama makes itself discomfiting but profound and complex. It is indeed an existential plight but the spectator may yet not be in it. The sacrilege is set a move once more. The situation is made to worsen because Vladimir appears obsessed with the two thieves crucified along with the Saviour. Once again, strategy makes Beckett compel Vladimir to utter an easy platitude so that Estragon may dent its meaning-content with his sceptical interrogatives—

Vladimir: (Pause). Two thieves, crucified at the same time as our Saviour. One---

Estragon: Our What? (Act I, p. 12)

And later---

Vladimir: One out of four. Of the other three two don’t mention any thieves at all and the third says that both of them abused him.

Estragon: Who?

Vladimir: What?

Estragon: What’s all this about? Abused Who? (Act I, p.13)

---
Or, again, the rhythm begins---

Vladimir: ....Two thieves. One is supposed to have been saved and the other...damned.

Estragon: Saved from what?

Vladimir: Hell.

Estragon: I’m going (Act I, p. 12)

Drama even settles the question of Heaven and Hell, and, its technique is relentless. It now picks to destroy serially. The Evangelists and their veracity are at its anvil. The rhythm sets apace. This time Vladimir is more cautious. He breaks off, pauses, hesitates, apologises and says, ‘And yet.... (Pause).... how is it-- this is not boring you I hope’. (Act I, p.12). He puts the ball into Gogo’s court. There were four Evangelists but why does only one record that one of the two thieves would be saved? Why donot the other three say any thing about it? And, what after all was the principle that didnot promise redemption to the other thieves? The veracity of the Evangelists, and, the Logic of Redemption are together put into turmoil by the episode of the thieves. That they were ‘there or there abouts’ couldnot satisfy the question-asking-answer-seeking individual. Why believe only one Evangelist and not the others? Vladimir implores Estragon---

Come on, Gogo, return the ball, Can’t you once in a way? (Act I, p.12)

Estragon finds this extraordinarily interesting. Next, the playwright generates a rhythm which at its end leaves everything very uncertain, and ambiguous; it is a confusion galore. The pungent interrogatives. ‘Who?’, ‘What?’, ‘why’, are appropriately spaced, and Beckettian theme gets its
dramaturgic shape. ‘One out of four’, is the theme and that initiates the rhythm---

Vladimir: One out of four. Of the other three two don’t mention any thieves at all and the third says that both of them abused him.

Estragon: Who?

Vladimir: What?

Estragon: What is all this about? Abused Who?

Vladimir: The Saviour.

Estragon: Why?

Vladimir: Because he wouldn’t save them.

Estragon: From hell?

Vladimir: Imbecile! From death.

Estragon: I thought you said hell

Vladimir: From death, from death.

Estragon: Well what of it (Act I, p. 13)

The ‘Saviour’ in ‘him’ is again put against a context of ‘Who? ‘What?’, and ‘Why?’ , of which ‘The Saviour/Why?’ is one illustration. What had hell got to do with saving was the innuendo, for, all one could be saved from, was death!

However, the rhythm initiated is yet afloat and Vladimir is made to make the disagreement among the Evangelists an obsession, drama using repetition to score a point---

Vladimir: But one of the four says that one of the two was saved.

Estragon: Well? They don’t agree and that’s all there is to it.
Vladimir: But all four were there. And only one speaks of a thief being saved. Why believe him rather than the others?

Estragon: Who believes him?

Vladimir: Everybody. It's the only version they know.

Estragon: People are bloody ignorant apes. (Act I, p.13).

Very unobtrusively, the rhythm also introduced a general reference to 'people' as a plant for a reference to the spectators, but of this more will be said later.

It is at this juncture that the playwright finds his theme and its drama sufficiently contextualized on stage to introduce the first physical actions of Waiting. Estragon is made to rise painfully, go extreme left, halt, screen his eyes, and gaze into the distance. Then he turns, and goes extreme right, halts, screens his eyes, and again gazes into distance. The physical movements on an almost empty stage add to the stage-phenomenon of Waiting. In conceptual terms, it is an irrational impasse, in which one just waits, and keeps up a jaded cross talk, and work-a-day torso movements. No truths can be come by, whether general or specific. A cramping uncertainty therefore takes hold. Illusions have become defunct. Why then ape others?

It is a sad predicament indeed, made more tragic and grotesque by Vladimir's desperate peer into Estragon's boots, though he immediately drops them in disgust and spits. Drama is now in full control. Enough of the context of a Non-ent has been supplied to the stage. Consequently, one torso-movement and just four words spoken two at a time, incorporate the audience into the action of the play: theirs too is an uncertain ontology! Just then, Estragon moves
centre-stage; he halts, and, with his back to the audience says---

Charming spot. (Act I, p. 13)

And, then he turns, and facing the audience comments--


That achieved, Beckettian technique finds it opportune to voice for the first time, the rhythmic refrain, later repeated five more times, on appropriate dramatic occasions to add to the many stage-images of the overwhelming Waiting---

--Let's go
--We can't
--Why not?
--We're waiting for Godot.
--Ah! (Act I, p.14)

It is a Waiting indeed. The refrain confirms it and associates the name of Godot with it. Waiting, had by then been shaped and positioned as an excruciatingly disturbing stage-phenomenon. However, Godot had yet to appear, and would now be a greater curiosity!

Henceforth, Beckett finds creative manipulation of the language dynamic itself sufficient to help the play along, language-game after language-game. For, by now, drama had effectively dented the smug certainties of Time, Place, Object and even Thought! And the pungent interrogative 'What?' was an effective instrument. However, new language rhythms are initiated to startle and shock smug priorities. A
question mark is put against the confidence of such concepts as ‘place’, and ‘time’. First, the idea of ‘place’ is disturbed---

Estragon: You’re sure it was here?

Next, the certainty of ‘time’ is heckled---

Estragon: You’re sure it was this evening?
Vladimir: What? (Act I, p.15)

Earlier on pp.27-29, a full-length quotation, broken up in two parts has already been given. It has a language rhythm which attacks the illusions of Place, Object, Waiting, and even Time, although Vladimir’s protests go interspersed in between. Some of these protests are---

‘What are you insinuating?’ and -- ‘You’re merciless’ and -- ‘Nothing is certain when you’re about’. (A.I p.14)

The entire piece beginning with Estragon (Despairingly), Ah!...’ and ending at Vladimir’s ‘You’re merciless’ illustrates how Beckett’s primary instrument in Waiting for Godot is the tension inherent in the language dynamic itself. At this stage, reference shall only be made to how facile and innocuous expressions like ‘And so on’, ‘Until he comes’, ‘And then the day after tomorrow’ acquire sting, This is because the context supplied of an ineffectual Waiting, stage-image after stage-image has by now taken sufficient root, so much so, that this abstract phenomenon acquires a dramaturgy of its own. Therefore, because the context is in strength on stage, a piece like, ‘And then the day after tomorrow’ sucks the meaning out of ‘We’ll come back tomorrow’
insinuating that Godot will never arrive. Similarly, 'And so on' appears simple and work-a-day; however, it devastates the calm of 'Possibly', spoken earlier, insinuating a 'Perpetually', and a 'Futilely' in its place. 'Until he comes' also acquires colour and destroys the effort at the persuasion of a 'The point is...'. It can be noticed how 'he' repetitions actually institute 'a presence', instead of destroying it, possibly because these 'he' repetitions were spared the destructive force of a rhythm or beat. Thus we see once again how sheer language rhythm demolishes a meaning content. The following example shows how the 'time' of Godot's arrival is made uncertain---

Estragon: You're sure it was this evening.
Vladimir: What?
Estragon: That we were to wait.
Vladimir: He said Saturday, (Pause) I think.

That rhythm then consumes the surety of 'time' as does the beat of 'I think/you think', the confidence also of 'thought'. Finally, it is to be noted how in both quotations, Godot is unobtrusively introduced, and Godot's association with Wait very quietly though firmly established. Further still, Estragon's rhythmic beats of the names of week days, in the ethos already established, questions whatever there remained of the certainty of both Memory and Time, when considered in the play's effective build-up of an ethos of a purposeless Waiting. The following is an example of a rhythm that begins with 'But what Saturday?' and makes the confusion about Time, Waiting, as well as Godot, worse confounded---

Estragon: (very insidious). But what Saturday? And is it Saturday? Is it not rather Sunday? (Pause). Or Monday? (Pause.) Or Friday?
Vladimir: (looking wildly about him as though the date was inscribed in the landscape). It's not possible.

Estragon: Or Thursday?

Vladimir: What'll we do? (Act I, p. 15)

It should be observed that 'But what Saturday?' is not the same as 'And is it Saturday'. However, both interrogatives question Saturday and topple it as an absolutely certain day of a week. There is potential drama in language itself. It has it inherent in it. That is the way language exists. Its creative use has here made uncertainty take on frightening proportions. The two tramps cannot now trust either Time, or Place, Memory, or Thought, and, ultimately, even themselves---

Estragon: If he came yesterday and we weren't here you may be sure he won't come again today.

Vladimir: but you say we were here yesterday.

Estragon: I may be mistaken. (Pause.) Let's stop talking for a minute, do you mind? (Act I, p.15).

It can be noticed however, that Godot has till now been mentioned by name only twice: once, in the play's refrain 'Let's go/We can't/Why not?/We're waiting for Godot/Ah!', and, earlier, when the spectator picked the name up from the bill-broad! Only an uncertain 'he' gets repeated many a time as a Godot reminder. Of course the Waiting has by now been so effectively positioned on stage, that each moment thereafter, is a constant Godot issue. This then is the way that the playwright establishes, dramaturgically, on-stage, an absent-presence, Godot!
And therefore, the two tramps wait. This fact is sunk in for it is a Godot who has yet to arrive, and has to fail to do so also. Now, Estragon is prone to sleep. But who is not, when the Waiting is far too prolonged, and promises even to be perpetual, as in this case. Indeed the human ontological condition is a part of the Waiting-trap. Possibly, dramaturgical compulsions made Beckett put Estragon to sleep, because then, the playwright could single out the other tramp for the stage display of the Waiting torture. He could show Vladimir pace agitatedly, halt and gaze into the distance repeatedly, because then he felt more lonely, being awake and alone, and waiting. Also, being lonely he would find it necessary to wake Estragon, with three repeated calls of 'Gogo', who being thus woken up could provide the opportunity to be shown as restored once again to the horror of the situation of a futile Waiting. Again, the mention of Estragon's dream is yet another chance to demean the solace got out of this illusion. Later, the playwright will similarly put to the anvil, the illusions of Story, Vision and Nature, as earlier, he had literally dramatized out of their meanings the notions of Truth, Place, Time, Memory, and even Thought, as still earlier, of Redemption, Saviour, Evangelists, and the Bible. For this purpose, the technique shown so far characteristic of Beckett was a convenient instrument. It got its typical shape from the theme, and reciprocally, bestowed its shape to the Beckettian theme of an illusion-less Non-ent in which Silence was almost at a scream. The technique helped activate, ever so slightly, the meaning --content of these illusions, and bereft them of whatever significance they confidently boasted to have---

Estragon: ...(Despairingly) why will you never let me sleep?
Vladimir: I felt lonely.
Estragon: I had a dream.
Vladimir: Don’t tell me!

Estragon: I dreamt that---

Vladimir: Don’t TELL ME!

(Gesture towards the universe) This one is enough for you? (Silence) (Act I, pp.15-16).

Under the circumstances the spectator could hardly have the luxury of sparing himself out of the plight of humanity on stage, 'there', as a predicament, as one rarest of the rare exceptions. And for this he, or, she would need illusions about existence that are absolutely intact, a condition which would invite the charge of being inauthentic, smug, vegetable, or, even overconfident!

And, therefore, Man waits! He has waited for generations, in fact, for all history, and according to this Beckett play, no Godot has till date ever arrived. What is worse, dreams were always personal nightmares. The Universe itself was irrational and just a dream; or, for that matter, was everybody’s own personal nightmare. And in this, the spectator was also included. Human existence was futile to the core. Dramaturgic sabotage of illusions knocks the bottom out of every notion that could support a survival, be it corporeal, mental, religious or spiritual. And to do so Beckett exploits creatively the dramaturgy inherent also in the banal, mundane, and ordinary, demolishing with composure and even elan, and erases all meaning out of existence. He makes the reader or spectator feel intensely the metaphysical anguish of an Absurd existential impasse which is altogether irrational and futile. The sieve or anvil of his dramatic technique is the test of the authenticity of complacently accepted conventional paradigms. The following are some more
examples, and to begin with, let us repeat the example of the destruction of the meaning-content of Vision---

Vladimir: You must have had a vision.

Estragon: (turning his head). What?

Vladimir: (louder). You must have had a vision.

Estragon: No need to shout. (Silence) (Act II, p. 75)

Similarly, a verbal exchange activates an attempt to tell a story, and the very attempt is castigated when the short exchange concludes at ‘STOP/IT!’ Next an activated exchange on dream concludes its rhythm at ‘DON’T TELL ME!’ And, in similar fashion, the peace of a ‘calm’ is questioned by generating a small repetitious ‘calm...calm...cawm’.

Having come this far, emotion also is put through the playwright’s anvil. Activated as a stylized stage-movement towards the object of emotion, and, accompanied through by words of reconciliation, with five Silences punctuating the dramaturgic stress, the climax is reached at a recoil. For, Estragon discovers that Vladimir stank of garlic! Thus, emotion, literally put through the anvil or sieve of dramaturgy, just rinses out. And the last Silence of the episode ensues to help this concrete stage-image of stylized emotional recoil sink in.

The two tramps even contemplate suicide, because the Waiting was now getting on their nerves, but then, in the pervading state of uncertainty what branch of tree would hold! And therefore it was safer to remounce all activity, and do nothing---

Vladimir: Well? What do we do now?

Estragon: Don’t let’s do anything. it’s safer. (Act I, p.18)
Humanity was in sad plight indeed, and Beckett deftly controlled technique to pile nuances upon nuances to enhance the stage situation's traumatic ambiguities. Of course all the while, the playwright's theme kept taking shape, the shape, very appropriately of a Non-ent; that is, a meaningless, empty void!

When Godot is mentioned a second time in the play by name, the tramps decide to wait for Godot. Thereafter, with rhythmic repetitions of 'he' and 'his', Godot's decision making is dramatized. It is one of the few times that he receives overt, and extended dramaturgical attention. Though he has yet to arrive, the spectator is made aware of a presence, as overbearing as the Waiting, and as torturous too! Consequently, the slightest hint of a Godot, by name, reference, or, overtone, deepens the trapped Waiting situation. Gradually it becomes more overwhelming and unbearable, and very often, comically grotesque also. The playwright cannot resist exposing the process of Godot's decision-making itself. It is activated into a rhythmic ritual, and renders uncertain and very comic, all issues and all decisions, including Godot's own. It was an idle, and meaningless condition and, therefore, there could neither be an issue, nor, any decision, whatever. The beat generated exposes Godot and his decisions in any case---

Vladimir: I'm curious to hear what he has to offer. Then we'll take it or leave it.

Estragon: What exactly did we ask him for?

Vladimir: Were you not there?

Estragon: I can't have been listening.

Vladimir: Oh...nothing very definite.

Estragon: A kind of prayer.
Vladimir: Precisely.
Estragon: A vague supplication.
Vladimir: Exactly.
Estragon: And what did he reply.
Vladimir: That he'd see.
Estragon: That he couldn't promise anything.
Vladimir: That he'd have to think it over.
Estragon: In the quiet of his home.
Vladimir: Consult his family.
Estragon: His friends.
Vladimir: His agents.
Estragon: His correspondents.
Vladimir: His books.
Estragon: His bank account.
Vladimir: Before taking a decision.
Estragon: It's the normal thing.
Vladimir: Is it not.
Estragon: I think it is.
Vladimir: I think so too. (Silence) (Act. I, p.18-19)

'I think it is/I think so too', concludes the ritual, and the Silence that ensues puts a dramaturgical seal of a language-game completed. The Silence also invites the spectator to shift perspective, and adjust to the discomfiting scenario contextualized on-stage. In an irrational existential situation, what could at all be the issue and whatever could be the decision! Alfred Jarry's Ubu and his divine procedures could not have been better dramatized, and better debunked. The bill-board spelling of
Godot indeed did the veil thin! The innuendo, capitalized on by the dramaturgy, could hardly be lost to the spectator. Nothing is certain about Godot’s decision-making. He only postpones and shifts responsibility. The ridicule is taken to ridiculous extents. Even prayers and supplications were left unheard. If that was bad, then, that ‘he’d see’, was worse, and, that ‘it’s the normal thing’ no better. Between the next two Silences the piled up implications destroy all rights and prerogatives. And as always, the technical procedure is the same: a minimum of a few related ideas are activated to a rhythm that has a four-fold effect. First, it establishes the immediacy of the experience. Second, it destroys meaning. Third, it creates confusion and uncertainty. Fourth, it adds to the already existent context of Waiting. As the generated dramaturgic rhythm works itself out, a de-stabilizing sets in—

Estragon: (anxious). And we?

Vladimir: I beg your pardon?

Estragon: I said, And we?

Vladimir: I don’t understand.

Estragon: Where do we come in?

Vladimir: Come in?

Estragon: Take your time.

Vladimir: Come in? On our hands and knees

Estragon: As bad as that?

Vladimir: Your Worship wishes to assert his prerogatives?

Estragon: We’ve no rights any more? (laugh of Vladimir, stifled as before, less the smile.)

Vladimir: You’d make me laugh, if it wasn’t prohibited.

Estragon: We’ve lost our rights?
Vladimir: (distinctly). We got rid of them. (Silence.) (Act I, p.19)

It should be pointed out that 'And we?/I beg your pardon?/I said, And we?/I don't understand', is not just ordinary cross-talk. In the context, so far created, its overtones are frighteningly grotesque as well as tragic. So is the next sequence comic as well as disastrous, 'Where do we come in?/Come in?/Take your time./Come in? On our hands and knees/As bad as that?' The playwright appears at a nibble, bit by bit, piece by piece, language-set after language-set. The slant is obvious, the ambiguity notwithstanding. The grotesque does the rest, the stifled laugh and the contorted face included. What, in any case, had a Non-ent to do with rights. They were best got rid off. And the generated rhythm does it perfectly!

Human corporeality takes over, though temporarily, from the spoken word. The tramps remain motionless. Arms dangle, heads sink in, and knees sag, and we have one more concretized stage-image of the existential plight. Godot, the absent-presence, lurks around also, mentioned either by name, reference, or innuendo. Of course, the Waiting, reinforced by either human corporeality, or, the spoken-word adds fillip to this lurking Godot phenomenon, and becomes every bit an implied part of an uncertain Waiting. Sagging and motionless, Vladimir invites attention to something. 'Listen!' he says, and Estragon almost falls out of shock! He clutches Vladimir, who also totters. Huddled they listen, however no one appears, and they sigh and relax. There was opportunity in this to stage a timely dramaturgic dismissal of Godot, and it is not missed to be sure! Infact it appeared to have happened according to the playwright's plan,
which was already on its way when Vladimir was made to ask Estragon, 'Listen'---

Estragon: You gave me a fright.

Vladimir: I thought it was he.

Estragon: Who?

Vladimir: Godot.

Estragon: Pah! The wind in the reeds. (Act I, p.19)

This is again comic, but it also has a rhythm generated that erases even the hapless illusion of a last-straw-Godot! Later, 'I could have sworn I heard shouts/And why must he shout?/At his horse', completes this language-set, but the Silence that follows, as well as the burden of the generated rhythm, together add to the context, now potent and powerful of a wasteful Waiting. The stage-business of hats, boots and trousers, as also of carrots and turnips, further sink human existence to its most trite and crass, added to which the metaphysical slant makes it a grotesque tragedy.

But though the tramps might dismiss the notion of a Godot, yet the haunting quality of a promise to the absent-presence that they will wait, as well as his own word that he will come, is what they cannot even get over. Therefore, they wait for Godot. However, Beckett has their ties with Godot dramaturgically activated in order to show them non-existent, that is, if snap they can---

Estragon: ... Ah yes, now I remember.

Vladimir: Well?

Estragon: (his mouth full, vacuously). We’re not tied!

Vladimir: I don’t hear a word you’re saying.
Estragon: (Chews, swallows). I’m asking you if we’re tied.

Vladimir: Tied?
Estragon Ti-ed.
Vladimir: How do you mean tied?
Estragon Down.
Vladimir: But to whom. By whom?
Estragon: To your man.
Vladimir: To Godot? Tied to Godot? What an idea! No question of it. (Pause). For the moment.
Estragon: His name is Godot?
Vladimir: I think so.

That rhythmic exchange destroys whatever bond the tramps may have had with Godot. And once again, it is only a particular aspect, as in this case, just an articulation of words, is put through the dramaturgic sieve, as it were, and, by the time the initiated rhythm runs its course, the ties as well as the name Godot stand exposed completely! The last piece demonstrates an urge that the playwright appears unable ever to resist, the compulsion that is, to complete a generated rhythm, or round off a language game---

Estragon: His name is Godot?
Vladimir: I think so.
Estragon: Fancy that (Act I, p. 21)

On the face of it, this may appear simple, and even innocuous, but it can be terrible at hurting names and nomenclatures. In this case it is the name of Godot. This is
quite similar to an earlier urge at a rhythm he could not resist---

Estragon: You gave me a fright.
Vladimir: I thought it was he.
Estragon: Who?
Vladimir: Godot.
Estragon: Pah! The wind in the reeds. (Act I, p.19)

Through such language strategies, Beckett is able to work intensity into a Non-ent, as he sets out to shape in dramaturgic terms, a Waiting ---for Godot!

Now, just because Beckettian dramaturgy is so successful, the bleak state of human existence presented on stage, as the very thing itself, becomes a terribly intense experience, requiring a discomfitting re-assessment by the spectator of his own predicament. Of course to Vladimir, existence was muck, so much so, that he found a struggle useless. He often ended up bored because there was nothing else to be done.

Human corporeality, was meanwhile always there, as sheer torso, an irrationality worked by a complex set of levers, which as an ontology could just not be got rid of! There were no pineal glands to save the situation. Consequently, Mind and Body were at a perpetual disjunct, and were made manifest as just Mentality and sheer Corporeality. In the play, there is next one more shock, the tramps hear a terrible cry, which makes Estragon drop his carrot. It could be Godot again, but again it was a disappointment. Hearing the cry, Estragon runs, but rushes back to pick up his carrot. Half-way he stops, and repeats this movement thrice, rushing in and rushing away and for the last time, runs in to
pick up his boots. The two tramps finally stand huddled, in fearful anticipation. Then somebody enters, a rope around the neck, and burdened with baggage. His name turns out to be Lucky. He is followed by Pozzo, his master, with a whip. Drama had keyed itself to a particular arrival, and the pair that arrives takes on a shade of that absent-presence, for whom the two tramps had waited in earnest. Once again Alfred Jarry's Ubu could not have done one better. It is the crack of a whip all through, and almost single-word commands, 'Up hog!', 'Up pig!', 'Stop!', 'Back!', 'Turn!', 'Closer!', 'Stool!' 'Whip!', 'Basket!', or, a warning 'He stinks!' Pozzo is a bad master, a garrulous talker, and a voracious eater; and he is self-conscious also, a star-performer, confident both about his idea of Place and sense of Time. Together with Lucky, his slave, he is full of an overwhelming awareness of his 'torso-presence'. So much for a Godot expectation, and a Pozzo arrival! Earlier, illusions, hall-marks, milestones, issues and decisions were rendered spurious. The Absolutes were shorn of their sanctity. Now, the personage of a divinity itself, as Pozzo, appeared to occupy centre-stage, a version of Man-in-God's image, a self-conscious tyrant-figure, who as earlier dramatized, just postponed decisions and could not promise anything! That was not all. Pozzo's posturings are made dramaturgically effective with the help of five Silences. Thus, he smokes a pipe and puts a hand to his heart and self-consciously sighs. His heart, he says, goes 'pit-a-pat', and after which a Silence ensues. Nicotine hurts, so he is cautious. He sighs and there is another Silence. He cannot sit down if he has stood up, and another Silence follows. He begs pardon; did Vladimir speak? Perhaps he did not! Pozzo apologizes, and there is a last Silence, the fifth, and the impact of Pozzo's posturings (and Ubu's, as well as Godot's) have Beckettian drama take good care of them. Pozzo re-lights his pipe, the uncertainty about Godot's name adding to the confusion. Was it, Godet, Godot or Godin?
Also, the similar sounding Pozzo and Godot names keep the spectator conscious that there is an absent-presence, even while its name becomes a confusion worse confounded. But what of the way Pozzo had announced his own name and the three dramaturgical Silences that helped his self-conscious posturing then! In a terrifying voice he shouts 'I am Pozzo'. And a Silence ensues. Next, only the name 'Pozzo' is shouted, and another Silence follows. As if that did not satisfy him, he continues, 'Does that mean anything to you?' And the last of this series of Silences concludes this dramaturgic piece. Beckett creatively employs, altogether eight Silences in this small theatric exercise, inorder to situate on stage, a Pozzo, and through an obvious extension, a Godot-presence and even a deity-posturing. For the confusion between the two names is deliberate, what with the repetitions 'Bozzo...Bozzo', 'Pozzo... Pozzo', 'Ppozzo!', 'Ah! Pozzo... let me see... Pozzo...', 'It is Pozzo or Bozzo'. And, repeat as the tramps and Pozzo might the uncertainty is reinforced, at each repetition with Estragon having the last heave at the language game:

Pozzo...no...I'm afraid I... no...I don't seem to... .
(Act I, p. 22)

If there is any doubt of a God-Image, the context eliminates it, for, Pozzo very soon announces that he and the tramps are of the same species, 'Made in God's Image', as he says. Therefore Pozzo is Man, in Beckett's God-Image, and also, may be Atlas, the son of Jupiter. Pozzo is now God, now Man; now Man-God, now god-Man! Be that as it may, the self-consciousness of a star-performer is made by the playwright, the chief characteristic of Pozzo, so much so, that it provides the opportunity for a play-within-a-play. 'Is everybody ready?', 'Is everybody looking at me?', after which Pozzo sprays a vapourizer on his throat, clears it,
sprays again, spits, and announces a second time, 'I am ready. Is everybody listening? Is everybody ready?'. And, finally there is a shout of 'Hog!', which appropriately concludes the self-conscious posturing. That could be Ubu too, both Jarry's and Artaud's self-conscious cruel deity. For Beckett, it is indeed dramatic technique all through, shaping the theme, because the playwright was always fascinated by the shape of a thought.

Again, Lucky the abject-slave, through reflected affinity, continues the drama of Man-in-God's Image idea, which for that matter, also shows up in the tramps-on-an-empty-stage-concretization. Lucky carries Pozzo's entire baggage, including the whip with which he is slogged. He has a rope around his neck, and responds to Pozzo's single word-commands, and develops the inevitable running sore. He was not bad looking though, but a trifle effeminate, with a slobber and goggling eyes. Here, four ideas overlap: the Pozzo-Godot confusion; Man-in-God's image; the grotesque and pathetic existential predicament of Man; and, Man's response to a deity. There is little confusion however about the play's thematic penchant for a Non-ent, and the corresponding strategy which gives that Non-ent, a powerful tangible shape. But then, to treat Lucky like that, was a scandal, though Pozzo thought Vladimir too severe. However, Pozzo had no answer to the five times repeated, 'You want to get rid of him?' Now who was that question addressed to? To a deity, Godot, or Pozzo? The five repetitions of the question quoted reinforce and reiterate the notion that even as Pozzo had no answer for Vladimir's five times iterated question, so did Godot have no answer why he did not get rid of the tramps, and instead kept them waiting perpetually, because indifference and ties do not go together. Why does not the deity, or whatever it is, get rid of Man? Why does it allow so much uncertainty and confusion to prevail? Pozzo appeared
unhappy with Lucky. He wanted to dispose him off, but he had no answer to the dramatic and stuccato, 'You want to get rid of him'. And so, Vladimir and Estragon get overly interested in Lucky. Of course it seems to be a voluntary slavery! But that did not mean that Lucky did not ever weep, or, was never tired, or, never sagged. However, it was a self-inflicted slavery. Was it Man's too! Was Man too in a voluntary bind!? That aligned perfectly with Beckett's theme, because very few appeared to react to the futility of the pathetic existential impasse; and those that did, like Estragon, were often beaten up, and as now, even kicked! Indeed, 'people were bloody ignorant apes'.

But then what about the Man-aspect of Pozzo? For, Pozzo was smug, sure and confident, and he owned property, carried a whip, and a watch too. The latter kept him abreast with Time, and helped him keep schedule. However, Pozzo's regrets are not given the go-bye either. For one, Pozzo could not endure the way Lucky now behaved. Earlier, Lucky was very kind, helpful, entertaining, and a good angel. He even danced, and also 'thought'. However, Lucky apart, the twilight had enthralled Pozzo. Pozzo goes lyrical about the twilight, after which a Long Silence follows! Just before this, a Silence had preceded the play of hats, boots and whip, after which Pozzo had asked, 'What is your name?' and Estragon had replied, 'Adam'. Dramaturgic strategy repeatedly emphasizes these overtones, and they can hardly be missed. There was something basically wrong with Creation, for, Adam now found himself in quite a poignant quandary, caught as he was in a grotesque, existential trap.

Earlier, as Pozzo had complained, Lucky had danced, sung, recited, and even 'thought'. But now his 'thought' was an example of Alfred Jarry's 'Pataphysics. It was full of cliches, appeared futile and a schizophrenic's word-salad!
The playwright's dramaturgy cashes on this also, and uses it in two ways. First, Lucky's speech is made to appear replete with cliches and is therefore apparently meaningless. It was repetitious and seemed just a heap of shouted though broken articulations. It was in fact a characteristic example of Beckett creatively using language-tension to show a whole language collapse. The second is such an original manipulation of the entire collapse that it helps shape the breakdown of a whole culture. Therefore, even a collapsed language, full of repetitious cliches, is so deftly manipulated and put to such creative artistic use,\textsuperscript{20} that it disintegrates the concepts of God, Grace, Heaven, Hell, Theology, Research, Scholarship, and, Nutrition and Sports, all in a page and a half. In fact, very early in the play, the dramatist had dismissed the prospect of 'thought' itself, by just two language beats 'I think/You think'. Not only that, try as Vladimir and Estragon may, no pigeon-truth could be got out, either of a hat, or a boot. Poor Vladimir had struck its crown, shaken it, felt inside and even peered in, but there was nothing at all to be dislodged! Consequently, on p. 64, Vladimir announces, 'What is terrible is to have thought', and on p. 73, when Vladimir and Estragon play at being Pozzo and Lucky, the following language game takes shape—

\begin{verbatim}
Vladimir: Tell me to think.
Estragon: What?
Vladimir: Say, Think pig!
Estragon: Think, pig! (Silence.) (Act II, p.73)
\end{verbatim}

The dramaturgy of the repetitions, the abuse and the Silence are obvious. All thought is innuendoed!
However, how contorted can thought become is best illustrated in Lucky’s excruciating and torturous effort at it. Very obviously it has a dramaturgical method in its madness. It is almost 'a Scape-goat’s Agony' and the scapegoat, is little better than a 'hard stool', trapped in 'The Net'. From the very beginning, the playwright had associated hat with 'thought'. Therefore, to make Lucky think, he had to be given his hat, and the thought dramatized, packed with the rhythm of repetitious cliches, apparently futile, and quite meaningless. However, as the almost shouted speech progresses, the imaginative manipulation of its language rhythms reveals creative effort in its method. The dramaturgy, to begin with, first dismisses the idea of a personal God by literally qua-qua-ing at it, and then ridiculing the thought of God as immortal and 'outside time'. The positive adjectives 'heights' and 'divine', carry negative implications when the nouns they qualify are apathia, athambia and aphasia. These nouns mean lack of feeling, insensitivity to suffering, and a loss of speech, respectively. Alfred Jarry's Ubu indeed! Thereafter, repetition of the platitude of 'calm, so calm, with a calm' followed by the qualified hope of 'which even though intermittent is better than nothing' destroys the solace of heaven, as 'plunged in torrent', and 'plunged in fire' demolishes the fear of hell. Repetition, modification, addition, variation, beat and rhythm are some of the ways in which language exists as a process. It is a creative dramaturgic use which enlivens a meaningless cliche and adds significance to a banal cross-talk. Thus Grace, 'with some exceptions' and 'for reasons unknown', 'but time will tell', and 'who can doubt it', leave little to the benefaction of any kind of Grace at all. These cliches are first just listed, and then are strung on to a 'thing held sacred, thus destroying its value-content through drama. For example, and to repeat, Western Scholarship and Research are debunked by
mouthing a profane 'aca-ca-ca-ca', followed by an irreverent 'anthro-po-po-po-po', because 'ca-ca' and 'po-po' have excrement associations. Next rhythmic cliches, piled one on top of the other, demolish the essential nature of all Scholarship, because this learning is shown to depend on wornout cliches like 'as a result of', 'established beyond doubt', 'labours of men', 'labours left unfinished', 'established as herein after', 'of the labours of Testew and Cunard', 'of Fartow and Belcher', 'man in short', 'man in brief', apparently repeated ad nauseam but not without artistic manouvre and plan. Set-articulations have just to be rhythmically repeated, at calculated intervals, and the entire edifice of Scholarship comes crumbling down. But what of Nourishment! Well, be what 'the strides of alimentation, 'man wastes and pines, wastes and pines', 'for reasons unknown', and 'inspite of' the 'strides of physical culture'. Thereafter, at one breath, and with no commas at all the Sports are named one after the other, 'tennis football running cycling swimming flying...'. There being no commas in between, even for respite, the sheer flow of the naming makes them redundant exercises. Consequently, Man continues to 'shrink and dwindle', 'namely, concurrently, simultaneously', and 'for reasons unknown' and 'inspite of', 'sports of all kinds'. It is word-salad alright, but only if looked at perfunctorily. It is in fact a deliberately creative use of language to announce both the collapse of thought, and its medium, the articulated or written, though over-used word. However, in the hands of a master artist, the disintegration and collapse, both of thought and language can be powerful and profoundly effective instruments of creative use. The broken rhythms and cliches through imaginative exploitation can render Western Religion, Thought and Culture, a futile play of sheer jargon. That worsens the Waiting!
Lucky’s unfinished speech trails off into a stumbling halt, visualizing the earth as a place of great cold, great dark, an abode of stones, tears, rocks and skulls. And these expressions are interspersed with cliches associated with the earlier part of Lucky’s ‘exercise think’. These cliches include ‘so calm so blue’, ‘for reasons unknown’, ‘the labours abandoned’, ‘left unfinished’, ‘alas alas’, ‘the tennis’, ‘in spite of’, all telescoped into one shouted performance. What the earlier Vladimir-Estragon-Pozzo-Lucky torso-actions, the Silences and Pauses, the language-sets, their beats and rhythms together had contextualized, bit by bit dramaturgic bit on stage, is brought to a horrendous whole phenomenon of a futile Waiting through the one-and-a-half page long, shouted word-salad of Lucky’s schizophrenia. Lucky’s hat is the temporary answer, or, so Pozzo thinks, to stop Lucky from thinking, and his hat is seized. There is Silence, and Lucky falls. There is yet another Silence, after which Vladimir examines Lucky’s hat and peers inside, but Pozzo seizes it and tramples upon it, announcing, ‘There’s an end to his thinking’. Pozzo also tightens his hold on Lucky, who totters, reels and sags. Finally, Pozzo leaves, along with Lucky, but not before repeatedly fumbling about for his watch. He had his regrets about beauty and the twilight, but he had to be sure about the tick-tick of his watch, because Pozzo could not afford to be uncertain about the certainty of Time, and, a time-table. Vladimir and Estragon lacked even that certainty. They could only wait for an uncertain Godot. Pozzo took time to lose his cool. Thus, the playwright could do just anything with language. He can repeat a cliche and make it stubbornly destructive. He manipulates the spoken word, or, a Silence, Pause, or, all three together, and wrecks the slightest effort at any kind of meaning. He subverts language, but cannot prevent himself from using the collapsed medium creatively. His drama is indeed logocentric and uses also banal torso-actions imaginatively to exploit
the drama of human corporeality. These two techniques together constitute this play's 'central experience'. They are the chief characteristics of his technique so far, helping him to shape his theme into intensely subtle drama. The following is one more example in which, through sheer single repetitions, Beckett makes Thought as well as Waiting two very traumatic experiences—

Pozzo: (normal voice) No matter! what was I saying (He ponders.) Wait. (Ponders). Well now isn't that...(He raises his head). Help me.

Estragon: Wait!

Vladimir: Wait!


Pozzo next tries concentration, because he wanted to think, ponder. He and the two tramps therefore remove their hats simultaneously, take their hands to their foreheads, and posture as if to concentrate. A little while later, a Silence also ensues. After this bit of dramaturgy, all three doff their hats, and the Waiting gets a fresh permutation when Estragon says, 'Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful'. It was after this that Lucky's speech, discussed earlier, followed, but not before the word rhythm of 'Give him his hat./ His hat?/He can't think without his hat/Give him his hat', was emphasized to profound advantage followed by Pozzo's single word commands, 'Stand./Back./Think pig!/Stop!'. And as Lucky is about to begin, Pozzo's shouts, 'Back!/Stop!/Turn!/Think!'. Meanwhile the Wait had remained perpetual; and so had Thought remained futile, the Obligation to express a nagging bane.

While Pozzo stays, more single-word rhythmic exchanges occur. It all begins as usual after a Silence, and Estragon initiates the first 'Adieu' rhythm, which Pozzo and Vladimir repeat, the adieus coming one after the other as almost a
beat. But there is a Silence and nobody moves. Then the second, three Adieu-rhythm starts. It ends in 'Thank yous' and 'Not at alls' and one new beat of a 'Yes, yes/No,no./Yes,yes/No,no'. Another Silence follows. The ceremonies were complete, the trap of Waiting for an absent-presence could not be escaped! For the moment, the Adieus notwithstanding, Pozzo just appears unable to leave. He says so and the piece is rounded off with Estragon's very apt---

Such is life (Act I, p. 47)

The implication is clear. Even the self-conscious, over confident Pozzo is unable to depart, and will come back in any case, despite his single-word commands to Lucky to move on. The two tramps shout their Adieus again to Pozzo, and, the latter finally leaves hurling commands at Lucky and Adieus at the tramps. In any case Pozzo and Lucky would return later, one blind, the other dumb! That much for a master-servant relationship, and as much for a Creator-creature rapport! As for Pozzo's godly posturing, and Lucky's voluntary slavery, the less said the better, for, on their return both fell in a heap and the tramps, while helping them get up, fell on them and piled the futile heap higher!

After Pozzo and Lucky had left there was a Long Silence. In the prolonged quiet, spectator-participation, now as Vladimir, now as Estragon, now Pozzo, now Lucky, should be the foregone effect of the dramaturgy practised so far on the Beckettian stage.

Meanwhile, the Vladimir-Estragon two-some are unable to leave. For, such indeed 'was life'. They wait the arrival of the uncertain absent-presence, of whom they know very little, and whose name itself sounds strange to them. Pozzo and Lucky had helped pass the time, for when one waits, time is often
the precipitating key factor, and the already over-bearing silence becomes eerie and overwhelming.

The Long Silence was almost immediately followed by the famous rhythmic refrain, repeated twice in Act I, and four times in Act II. It is always at the most crucial dramatic junctures. Right now, Pozzo had left, the Silence had ensued, and a little after, is the second use of this reputed refrain, 'Let's go./We can't/Why not?/We're waiting for Godot/Ah!'. With this, another poignant beat was added to the Waiting trap-situation. Earlier too, the first use of this refrain was effective. It had come after the three-beat strike of 'nothing-to be-done' and, after the dramaturgically worked implication, that there was no Absolute either. It had followed after the specific truths of Christianity, had had 'anvil, or, sieve dramaturgy' question their veracity. It was after Time, Object, and Thought had also been demolished in similar fashion. The play was then ripe for voicing its most important refrain which along with 'Nothing to be done', toll add accretions to the phenomenal Waiting being staged as a grotesque existential condition 'there' on stage. Similarly, for the second use of the 'Let's go...' refrain, the situation also appeared ripe enough, and the spectator was also included. It is after Estragon is brought centre-stage, and, with his back to the audience, made to say, 'Charming spot', and then made to turn around, face the spectator, and say, 'Inspiring prospects'. Immediately after follows this refrain 'Let's go/We can't/why not?/We're waiting for Godot/Ah!'. Quite plainly it was not the sad plight of a Vladimir-Estragon existential quandary only! The spectator had been made a participant too. Such is the playwrights' strategy.
And so the Waiting continues. To pass time the tramps try to play language-games, and put up a little conversation. It is a part of the ‘that’s the idea series’—

that’s the idea let’s contradict each other

that’s the idea let’s abuse each other;

that’s the idea let’s make-up— (All in Act II)

However, these are futile efforts to pass time, for, the tramps may contradict, abuse, or make-up, futility sat like a burdensome pall on their shoulders, nay, indeed over all existence. This futility of existence bereft of illusions was overwhelming. Meanwhile, Estragon’s foot hurts, he hobbles. But then a messenger arrives. It is a boy, and he is from Godot. One striking feature of this episode is its series of seven Silences, that occur after very brief exchanges. The other feature is the Boy’s rhythmic, ‘Yes, sir/Yes, sir/No, sir/Yes, sir.’ answer. The boy had been there while Pozzo and Lucky were on stage. What is worse is that a boy had come the previous day too, and had brought the same message: that Godot would not come that day. The Waiting was indeed perpetual! This was the implication. Man had waited in the past. He shall even wait in the future. Therefore, this day also yet another ‘Boy’ had arrived to excuse Godot’s absence. Two ‘Yes, sir/Yes, sir/No, sir/Yes, sir’ rhythms, that are the Boy’s answers to Valdimir’s impatient, queries are each followed by a Silence. The second rhythm runs thus—-

Vladimir: I’ve seen you before haven’t I?

Boy : I don’t know sir.

Vladimir: You don’t know me?

Boy : No, sir.
Vladimir: It wasn’t you who came yesterday?
Boy : No, sir.
Vladimir: This is your first time?
Boy : Yes, sir. (Silence.) (Act I, p.50)

The exasperated Vladimir moved by the ‘Yes, sir’ beat puts the blame on language---

Boy : (In a rush). Mr. Godot told me to tell you he won’t come this evening but surely tomorrow. (Silence.)

Vladimir: Is that all?
Boy : Yes, sir. (Silence.) (Act I. pp. 50-51)

This is not only grotesque. It is also heart-breaking. But did the Boy have a brother? More anxious enquiries are made. However, the Boy has recourse only to the ‘Yes, sir./No, sir’ answer. After the interview, the Boy leaves.

Night comes on. The moon sheds a pale light on stage. The Wait had been day-long, excruciating and illusionless, and, nothing had come of it. Vladimir’s ‘It wasn’t you who came yesterday?’ to the Boy implies that this wasn’t the first day of the tramps’ Wait. They had waited in the past too. Act II shall show them wait yet another day. Therefore the Wait shall continue, endlessly, in the future also. And when, at the end of each Act, they want to go, and donot move, it becomes the repetitive culmination each time of a trap-situation. Human corporeality was then the characteristic feature of a basically pathetic and irrational ontological condition, the being ‘there’, a presence merely, with the ‘talking I’, keeping up a thankless obligation. Nobody came. Nobody went. It was all a perpetual Wait, that
had gone on for generations, all history included. To be born appeared itself a guilt to Estragon. And Vladimir had even pondered the idea that Man should have committed suicide long ago; it now being too late, even for a suicide!

Estragon wants to leave barefoot; however though Christ had done it, Estragon could not ---

Vladimir: Christ! What’s Christ got to do with it? You’re not going to compare yourself to Christ!

Estragon: All my life I’ve compared myself to him.

Vladimir: But where he lived, it was warm, it was dry!

Estragon: Yes, And they crucified quick. (Silence.) (ActI, p. 52)

The uncertainty was excruciating. The two tramps decide to part. That too invites dramaturgy, for they donot leave, 'It’s not worthwhile now'; and, after this a Silence ensues to lend emphasis. Vladimir repeats 'No, it’s not worth while now'. Another Silence follows, it is the last of the fifty Silences in Act I. The Silence is an appropriate dramaturgical culmination, though temporary, to the perpetual Waiting, and while the Silences of this particular piece last, the echo is that it was not worthwhile at all -- the Waiting, that is, for an absent-presence that always failed to arrive.

The stage is now set for the drama of the metaphysical anguish to reinforce itself because Act II is almost similar to Act I. This gives the impression of a persistent cycle. It is a Waiting, day afterday, with Godot never ever fulfilling his preceding day’s promise, on which, like the day previous to that, he only sent a Boy to inform, that unable to come that day, he will come on the next. Act II very
appropriately begins with a dog-song and a lot of kinaesthetics on stage, both contributing thematically as well as dramatically, to shape the discomfitting Non-ent experience of an excruciating impasse. It is a condition of just being 'there', doing nothing, indulging in banal corporeal action and small-talk, only to ward off an eerie Silence. Such is the pathetically grotesque existential plight of Man, and he was entrapped in it history deep! In Act II, Vladimir enters very agitated. There is nothing on stage except Estragon’s boots and Lucky’s hat. The tree on the country-road had sprouted a few leaves. Human corporeality with pathetic torso-actions, now controls the drama. Vladimir’s restlessness ends in a long halt near the tree, and then all of a sudden, feverish movement takes hold of him. He halts before Estragon’s boots, picks up one, examines it, sniffs inside and is disgusted. However, he puts the boot down carefully. Next, he walks across the stage thrice; each time he comes and goes, and halts, shades his eyes and gazes into the distance, both extreme left and extreme right. While in Act I, the exercise of a futile Waiting, was built up, on stage, piece by piece, in Act II, it appears accentuated right from the start. Vladimir halts at the end of the third movement across the stage and bursts into a loud song. Apt as drama, and thematically proper also, it is a dog-song, with a refrain that Vladimir repeats five times---

And dug the dog a tomb-(Act II, pp. 57-58).

But that is not all, because drama enters into the way the song is sung. Vladimir begins loudly with, ‘A dog came in --’ but having begun too high he stops, clears his throat, and resumes. Thrice in the course of the song, he stops, broods and then resumes making the ritual a part of the dog-
song theme. The song has a couplet repeated four times also---

Then all dogs came running
And dug the dog a tomb. (Act II, p. 57).

In this song, a cook had killed a dog because it had stolen bread from the kitchen. Ritual repetitions from the dog-song reinforce the theme of a futile existential predicament trapped in the Time-flux. Time’s treadmill went on like a meaningless song, and dogs ate out of turn, and were killed, and were buried endlessly. ‘Such is life,’ Estragon would have concluded. Similarly faceless humanity slogged on, in a dreary landscape, living out the ritual that keeps repeating itself endlessly also.

After the song, Vladimir becomes silent and even motionless, but then follow physical movements on stage, which are even more furious than those that preceded the dog-song. As mentioned earlier, the kinaesthetics too is a part of Beckettian dramaturgy, because the ontology of the human being is ultimately the body. Existence precedes essence, but this also tantamounts to eliminating essence altogether. Body movements on stage, in Beckettian theatre, have been known to be deliberate, calculated and even graceful. And so, Vladimir halts before the tree, moves and halts before the boots. He walks across the stage repeatedly from end to end. And at each end he halts and gazes into the distance, eyes shaded. The idle Waiting-phenomenon takes on more accretion in this theatric exercise. Vladimir’s feverish body movement, is contrasted with Estragon’s, who is made to enter slowly, head bowed. The stage-business of a meeting ensues, initiated by Vladimir’s ‘You again’, and, Estragon’s ‘Don’t touch me’. Calls of Gogo donot impress Estragon who ritually repeats ‘Don’t touch me’, and, follows it up by, ‘Don’t question me
Don’t speak to me! Stay with me’. All, the while, he stays head bowed. Vladimir asks Estragon to look at him, and is violent. However, Estragon does not respond. He only regrets the day, and is relieved that another day was done with. He ends with a final ‘For me it’s over and done with, no matter what happens’. Be it Vladimir’s quick, across the stage movements, each ending in a gaze into the distance, or, be it Estragons bowed-head regrets, the Waiting predicament picks up on-stage concretions. And after this ensues the ‘there’ dramaturgy itself, accentuating once more the human torso’s corporeal stage presence. However, the reaction is graded as joyous, indifferent, and then gloomy—

Vladimir: Now... (Joyous.) There you are again.  
(Indifferent.) There we are again...  
(Gloomy.) There I am again. (Act II, p.59)

Time is now ripe for the sabotage of the word ‘happy’ through sheer repetition. Or, it is not that it may be called a creative dramatization of a language collapse. However, the fact of the matter is that repetition, beat and rhythm constitute a ritual, and Beckett’s use of ritual to demolish, puts a question mark on the nature of ritual also---

Vladimir: You must be happy, too, deep down, if you only knew it.

Estragon: Happy about what?

Vladimir: To be back with me again.

Estragon: Would you say so?

Vladimir: Say you are, even if it’s not true.

Estragon: What am I to say?

Vladimir: Say, I am happy.

Estragon: I am happy.
Vladimir: So am I.

Estragon: So am I.

Vladimir: We are happy.

Estragon: We’re happy. (Silence.) (Act II, p.60)

This debunk of the meaning content of ‘happy’ is also linked to the torturous trauma of the futile Waiting, because Beckett appears to be under some kind of a compulsion to let an initiated language rhythm run its full dramaturgic course, and culminate it at a Wait for Godot, and, in a groan—

Estragon: (Silence). What do we do now, now that we are happy.

Vladimir: Wait for Godot. (Estragon groans) (Silence) (Act II, p.60)

One striking feature of what ensues is that Beckett is found using Vladimir as a convenient platitudinizer, his scepticism notwithstanding! It gives Estragon, and therefore Beckett, the opportunity to destroy what little remained of smug complacency. Examples from pp. 60-62 of the play (Act II,) would suffice to illustrate the point, more so, if all Vladimir platitudes, spoken one after the other are put together, and opposed individually to the demolition that Estragon subjects each to. The over-all technique is to peel off conceited self-confidence piece by piece, to accentuate the meaningless and futility of the existential Non-ent, and intensify the experience of a perpetual Waiting. Here are some examples of Vladimir’s platitudes followed immediately by Estragon’s demolitions, his, attacks on his companion’s platitudes being in serial order—

i) Vladimir: Things have changed since yesterday.

ii) Vladimir: We’ll see when the time comes.
iii) Vladimir: Do you not remember?

iv) Vladimir: The tree, look at the tree.

v) Vladimir: Do you not recognize the place?

vi) Vladimir: Yes of course it was yesterday.

vii) Vladimir: Calm yourself, calm yourself.

viii) Vladimir: But we were there together, I could swear to it! Picking grapes for a man called (he snaps his fingers)...

Change, memory, recognition, and reminder, are of no avail and Estragon drubs away against each Vladimir platitude. His sceptical attacks are given below in serial order also--

i) Estragon: And if he doesn’t come?

ii) Estragon: Everything oozes.

iii) Estragon: You dreamt it.

iv) Estragon: Was it not there yesterday?

v) Estragon: Recognize! what is there to recognize. All my lousy life I’ve crawled about in the mud! And you talk to me about scenery!

vi) Estragon: And here where we are now?

vii) Estragon: You and your landscape. Tell me about the worms!

viii) Estragon: It is possible... I didn’t notice anything.

A Silence follows after the long exchange and with Vladimir’s platitudes demolished by Estragon’s scepticisms, the Waiting becomes more and more agonizing. Vladimir complains that Estragon was a hard man to talk to. But then they are incapable of suppressing their ‘talking I-s’, being
under a constant urge to keep expressing, though there was nothing to express, and no medium of expression either. They succumb to the urge, if only to put away an eerie and dreadful silence. What ensues is the lyricism of which Beckettian language, even in its state of 'collapse' is often capable; it also contributes its own dramaturgic bit to the play's theme and shape. The theme now is 'dead voices', and the way they are oppressed to converse. The 'talking I' whispers even after death! The Estragon-Vladimir exchange has five movements, each punctuated by a Silence, and at the conclusion of the rhythm generated, is a Long Silence. Beckett could even work common-place language and make it perform at the level of music. It appears that the 'dead voices' also need to keep up a whisper, and may be, a Wait too, because even death may bring no respite and the existential quandary could continue even after life—

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.
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.
(Silence)
Vladimir: They make a noise like feathers.
Estragon: Like leaves.
Vladimir: Like ashes.
Estragon: Like leaves. (Long Silence.)

After each lyrical piece is spaced a Silence, and after the whole comes a Long Silence. Just two exchanges are allowed in between this Long Silence, and, the one that follows immediately after. The exchange being significant both for theme and drama, Long Silences at either end need to cup it. The exchange is very short but extremely poignant and profoundly close to the tramps' existential plight---

Vladimir: Say something.
Estragon: I'm trying. (Long Silence) (Act II, p.63)

Vladimir's anguish after this prolonged Silence is almost at a burst---

Say anything at all!

Whereupon Estragon, no less desperate asks---

What do we do now?
And Vladimir's answer comes as the lone alternative---

Wait for Godot. (Act II, p.63)

To this Estragon's reply can only be an 'Ah!'. And there is Silence. The entire exercise is a part of a language game---

Vladimir: (in anguish) Say anything at all! (Long Silence)

Estragon: What do we do now?

Vladimir: Wait for Godot

Estragon: Ah! (Silence) (Act II, p.63)

After this Silence, the fact that they cannot even sing out of a fear of starting all over again receives dramaturgic treatment. A song would mean joy, which in an existential strait, is out of place, and even alarming---

Vladimir: This is awful.

Estragon: Sing something.

Vladimir: No no! (He reflects) We could start all over again perhaps. (Act II, p.63)

Yes, a song would begin it all over again and given the trauma of existence, why take the risk. Also, it is always the start that is difficult. Where to begin from, is never an easy decision. The language-game ends with Estragon saying 'True'. A Silence ensues. Then Vladimir asks for help and gets the answer 'I am trying'. And, there is yet another Silence. Beckettian dramaturgy appears to leave nothing to chance. The ritual of the repeated Silences institutes a disquiet, which becomes all the more alarming because two human beings appear under a terrible pressure to keep up an inane conversation. They cannot afford to sing, to think, to
say or even to help, and yet the ‘talking I’ is kept at constant speech.

To pass time the tramps agree to contradict each other, ask questions, talk of nature, and say that the most terrible thing ever was ‘to have thought!’ Long Silences ensue and the Waiting goes on. Each Silence is deafening and the Waiting becomes a torturous trauma. Dramatic technique had shorn existence of all illusions, and had made it an empty void. It was reduced to a Non-ent, and the reduction positioned on stage, as an intense condition ‘there’. Infact, Estragon had gone on blathering, about nothing in particular, for the last half century! The Waiting was therefore perpetual and the two tramps were not a strange stage phenomenon. Man had waited for generations, all through history, and Being was an idle, purposeless Waiting!

Trouser-and-boot stage-business ensues, and as usual, the trite exchange of words that precedes it, has its anguished twinge because there is a complete breakdown of meaning---

Vladimir: ....Where are your boots?

Estragon  I must have thrown them away.

Vladimir: When?

Estragon: I don’t know.

Vladimir: Why?

Estragon: (exasperated). I don’t know why I don’t know!  
(Act II, p.67)

After this, is the first of the four repetitions of the famous Waiting for Godot refrain in Act II, ‘Let’s go/We can’t./Why not?/We’re waiting for Godot/Ah!’ However, as usual they donot leave. Next the raddish, turnip and carrot
stage-business follows, adding its own concretization of a futility to the Being-theme. Bored to death, Estragon goes to sleep. He lies in a foetal posture which adds to the prolonged Waiting, the idea that existence from its birth was an aborted condition. Earlier, the 'dead voices' too were supposed at a whisper. Estragon wakes up with a start. He had dreamt himself falling. Time is ripe for Beckettian dramaturgy to make a quick repetition of the Waiting refrain once more. It is the second in this Act. 'Let's go./We can't./Why not?/We're waiting for Godot/Ah!' and yet again, they donot move.

Now comes the turn of the stage-business of Lucky's hat, which, along with Estragon and Vladimir's, makes the hats three in number. The hats are exchanged rhythmically, after adjusting one on the head, and passing the extra one to the next partner. This is comic. But the fact that the hat had been associated till now, time out of number, with human thought, what physically transpires as movement, for all spectators to see and empathise with, is the positioning on-stage of an Alfred Jarry ridicule, 'Pataphysics. That is, thought was futile, and therefore, metaphysics, a redundancy. The movement of the three hats is calculately rhythmic, and the rhythm can be gauged from the stage-directions and then followed-up as a display on stage. Each time, it is a matter of adjusting the third hat on one's own head, be the hat one's own, or, belong to one of the other two. Of course, the tramps do it in right earnest, like circus artistes, yet the theme of the occasion is that hats fit differently, and, for Beckettian purposes of the moment, Lucky's hat is more important as a presentational correlative to the dramaturgy of thought. Lucky's hat sat over the head of the schizophrenic, whose word-salad was creatively exploited to disintegrate the traditional mores of Western thought, religion, research and sports culture.
This is quite in order, thematically as well as dramaturgically, because if thought itself was futile how could even your own hat, or for that matter, any hat adjust. At the end of it all, Vladimir moves his head coquettishly and stands like a mannequin. Hugh Kenner considers Beckettian dramatis personae a kind of a Cartesian Centaur, where the Body and the Mind just donot adjust with each other.\textsuperscript{22} In any case, Vladimir is as yet not sure about hats, particularly Lucky's and peers into it, shakes it, knocks on the crown and puts it on again. However, he was not as appalled as he was earlier, just because nothing whatever had even now fallen out. Infact, he had taken a liking for Lucky's hat, or, was it for its schizophrenic's word-salad, which was the only kind of thought and language possible in a Being-impasse, and in any case, and to Beckett's advantage, contributed effective drama to the already accentuated Waiting exercise!.

To continue to pass time, the two tramps next play the roles of Pozzo and Lucky, the most important exchange out of which is the sequence which is a short permutation on the regular dramaturgic debunk of the human effort at thought, after which only a Silence could ensue---

Vladimir: Tell me to think.
Estragon: What?
Vladimir: Say, Think, pig?
Estragon: Think pig. (Silence) (Act II, p. 73)

The Silence that ensues makes the Waiting more and more excruciating. Estragon is soon taken up by a 'They're coming'-syndrome, and desperately wants to hide. He writhes, pants, and falls. That over, Vladimir again positions himself extreme right and scans the horizon once more. Similarly,
Estragon positions himself extreme left, screens his eyes, and, scans the horizon. And together, they display an actual act of a Waiting. It is grotesque as well as pathetic. There is a Long Silence and the Waiting goes on. The language-game is still Beckett’s forte, as is the display of a sheer, on-stage corporeal presence, ‘there’, Waiting. Scanning of horizons is thus followed by a language-set which has the rhythmic finish of a ‘No./Nor I’ finale, and at its completion ends in a Silence---

Estragon: Do you see anything coming?
Vladimir: (Turning his head) What?
Estragon: (louder) Do you see anything coming?
Vladimir: No.
Estragon: Nor I. (Silence.) (Act II, pp.74-75)

Now, since time had to be passed, a conversation on standing-at-ceremony is the next game played by the tramps. It is a grotesquely futile effort, and is also poignant for the same reason. Ceremony is thoroughly demolished by the time the game ends, when one tramp calls the other a ‘Punctilious pig’. Next the comfortable illusion of a Vision is destroyed, even as earlier, the content of Dream, and Story, and Nature, were dramaturgically bereft of their meaning. Likewise, Belief, Place, Truth and Object were literally rinsed as if through a dramaturgic sieve. In the process, a Waiting; an absent-presence Godot; abject corporeality ‘there’, on stage, in futile idleness; Silence; and, ‘talking I-s’ apparently at constant conversation, were the only accretions left on an otherwise empty stage. The exercise-demolish, had always the same strategy. An exchange, or, two, activated some part of the meaning-content of each illusion, and the ensuing dramaturgy then literally sucked and shrivelled the illusion of its entire meaning, reducing
it to a mere voiced-sound. An illustration will not be out of order. There is the example of 'vision' on the anvil of dramaturgy wrecked of its meaning---

Vladimir: You must have had a vision.
Estragon: (turning his head) What?
Vladimir: (louder) You must have had a vision!
Estragon: No need to shout! (Silence) (Act II, p. 75).

Similarly 'nature' is shorn of its solace, and, also destroyed is determined resolution, as the erasure takes its course---

Estragon: We should turn resolutely towards Nature.
Vladimir: We've tried that.
Estragon: True. (Act II, pp. 64-65)

Or, consider how the platitude of avoiding a look is disintegrated---

Vladimir: A charnel house! A charnel house!
Estragon: You don't have to look
Vladimir: You can't help looking.
Estragon: True. (Act I, p. 64)

Or, to have thought is itself rendered a trauma---

Estragon: Well? If we gave thanks for our mercies?
Vladimir: What is terrible is to have thought. (Act II, p. 64)

Or again, while still at the thought dramaturgy, what is re-iterated as a significant part of the existential bind,
is that though thought is idle and ineffective, there is no escape from it either. This becomes obvious from the three dramaturgic repetitions of a French phrase, which means 'What would you?'

Vladimir: Oh, it's not the worst, I know.
Estragon: What?
Vladimir: To have thought.
Estragon: Obviously.
Vladimir: But we could have done without it.
Estragon: Que voulez-vous?
Vladimir: I beg your pardon
Estragon: Que voulez-vous?
Vladimir: Ah! que voulez-vous. Exactly. (Act II, p.65)

Time still sits on the tramps as a heavy burden, and therefore to somehow pass it away, physical exercises are tried. But Estragon stops, because he is 'tired breathing', which, given the context, is a very significant remark. The tramps do the tree and stagger. Then before Pozzo and Lucky enter again, the tramps scream for God's pity, literally hurling dramaturgy at the notion of a benevolent creator. Estragon's 'On me! On me! Pity!, On me'! is a calculatedly shouted rhythm; it is a deliberate re-iteration that leaves little sanctity to the notion of a divinity and its grace. A deity or creator is an obsession with Beckett, who appears always ready to destroy or ridicule the idea and invents various situations to discomfit the meaning out of the notion.

When Pozzo and Lucky enter a second time, one is blind, and the other dumb. They stagger and fall, and, lie in a heap
on stage. The Pozzo-Godot confusion is capitalized on once again. The rhythm starts with a Vladimir platitude—-

Vladimir: Time flows again already. The sun will sit, the moon will rise, and we away...from here.

Pozzo: Pity!
Vladimir: Poor Pozzo!
Estragon: I knew it was him.
Vladimir: Who
Estragon: Godot.
Vladimir: But it's not Godot
Estragon: It's not Godot?
Vladimir: It's not Godot.
Estragon: Then who is it?
Vladimir: It's Pozzo. (Act II. p. 78)

And still later, there is the surprise at the star-performer’s blindness. Pozzo, sure and self assured, and very much Man-in-God’s Image, is, of all things a blind wreck—-

Vladimir: ... (Silence) I wonder is he really blind.
Estragon: Blind? Who?
Vladimir: Pozzo.
Estragon: Blind?
Vladimir: He told us he was blind.
Estragon: Well what about it?
Vladimir: It seemed to me he saw us.
Estragon: You dreamt it.
Later, the confusion about Pozzo, as was the uncertainty about Godot, is manipulated dramaturgically and is shown to be under mounting pressure—

Estragon: ...Are you sure it wasn’t him.

Vladimir: Who?

Estragon: Godot.

Vladimir: But who?

Estragon: Pozzo.

Vladimir: Not at all! (less sure) Not at all! (Still less sure) Not at all. (Act II, p.90)

A little earlier Lucky, the blind star performer’s schizophrenic, is shown dumb, silencing even the word-salad of his thought, the ritual of ‘dumb/Dumb!/Dumb/Dumb’ culminating in the beat ‘since/when’ has already been pointed out—

Vladimir: Before you go tell him to sing!

Pozzo : Who?

Vladimir: Lucky.

Pozzo : To sing?

Vladimir: Yes. Or to think. Or to recite.

Pozzo : But he is dumb.

Vladimir: Dumb!

Pozzo : Dumb. He can’t even groan.

Vladimir: Dumb since when? (Act II, p.89)

This makes Pozzo furious, but Beckett had found it effective drama, both as theme and as technique. Vladimir had doffed Lucky’s hat aspiring to the latter’s schizophrenia.
However, the dumb silence of a schizophrenic adds a cummulation to the theme of a Being-trap where schizophrenics loose the power even to groan. This is put into the play in characteristic Beckettian fashion to express a predicament, 'dumb/Dumb!/Dumb.... Dumb since when'.

Now, the self-conscious star-performer that Pozzo was, had become blind and must repeat his call for help as many as thirteen times. Also, the Waiting-refrain, 'Let's go./We can't./Why not?/We're waiting for Godot./Ah!', is given its third re-iteration in Act II, though as usual, the two tramps still donot leave. Pozzo is now sheer corporeality, and his torso is made to writhe and groan, and beat the ground, and call for help. Helped up, he leaves along with the dumb Lucky but not before he and Lucky, and the two tramps, fall into a dull heap on each other. Vladimir's famous epiphany is of significance next, with its overtones of a Shakespearean soliloquy. Was he sleeping when the others had suffered? Or, was he sleeping now? What will he say tomorrow, of today? Will it be that together, they had waited for Godot till the fall of night!? And, that Pozzo had passed. But then, what of its truth? Vladimir echoes Pozzo in 'astride of a grave and a difficult birth' and 'put down in a hole, lingeringly'. Hamlet-like he goes on. 'We have time to grow old', he says, and then, 'The air is full of cries...', and that 'habit was a great deadener'. He speaks of somebody seeing him, of thinking that Vladimir too sleeps like Estragon at that moment, and, therefore too knows nothing. Vladimir can bear it no longer, and after a Pause complains the he 'can't go on'. Next, after yet another Pause, the two Pauses accentuating his plight, he says that he doesnot know what he has said! It is indeed a Being-impasse of a Nothing-is, a Non-ent, where there can be no certainty, much less any illusion. Modern tragedy as Raymond Williams visualizes has its own flavour, and this is one example indeed of its tragic pathos. Within a created context
language 'dramaturgy', or, the drama inherent in work-a-day speech, whether voiced, or, as Pause or Silence, or, as repetition, beat or rhythm, can be given power and profundity, even though made bereft of all metaphor. Language still has the potential, if exploited creatively, to institute high quality drama.

To get back to the play which is now almost near its end, we find Vladimir moving feverishly on stage. He comes to halt, extreme left, and broods. The Boy of the second Act enters, as Godot's next messenger, because it is obvious by now, though tragic also, that Godot himself will never arrive and will remain content sending messengers only. The range and throw of the implication can be frighteningly sacrilegious: messengers were all that Godot had ever sent! He had never himself cared to put in an appearance. Fundamental queries had gone unanswered. What was existence all about? What was death? What happened after death? Why were body and mind made into the disjunct of a Cartesian Centaur? Why could not reason explain, faith answer and language communicate? What was Truth? Why the deafening Silence? Why the perpetual murmur of a 'talking I'? Why, in any case, the need to express? The sweep covers history, religion and what not! From grotesque comedy, the play transforms itself to a pathetic tragedy.

And then the Boy of Act II enters. He halts, and there is silence. Pathos was by now already writ large on the stage, and the grotesque also superbly incorporated. Ten Silences punctuate the drama of the Boy's presence on stage, till Vladimir's sudden lunge at him. As at the close of Act I, the dominating language rhythms are once again of, 'No, sir./No, sir./Yes, sir.', or 'Yes, sir./No, sir./Yes, sir., yes, sir'. Vladimir's questions give direction to these rhythms. Did the Boy recognize Vladimir? Did he come yesterday? Did he
have a message? Will Godot come tomorrow? What does Godot do? Does he have a beard? Did the Boy have a brother? Amidst repeatedly spaced Silences the Boy answers. He can at best say that Godot will definitely come the next day. Therefore, the Wait has to continue, and the Boy's arrival was just one other ritual. Vladimir's lunge at the Boy is both comic and desperate. It ends the 'No, sir./No, sir./Yes, sir.', and a 'Yes, sir/No, sir/Yes, sir/Yes sir' rhythm, each of which was supported by a conclusive Silence. However, while the rhythms last, entire human existence, past, present and future is accentuated, as at stake, and Vladimir's desperate call of 'Christ have mercy', once again an apportune moment for Beckettian irony, heightens the drama, preceded and succeeded as it is, by Silences. Earlier, the only message that Vladimir could send to Godot, was to ask the Boy, to tell Godot, that he had seen Vladimir. But then, was the Boy sure that he had seen Vladimir! And, in sheer desperation, Vladimir lunges at the Boy, who escapes and a Silence ensues.

The play is about to end. Its refrain of 'Let's go./We can't./Why not?/We're waiting for Godot/Ah!', was repeated for the last time when the blind Pozzo lay on the ground calling for help. After the Boy messenger leaves, six more Silences, spaced to intensify the drama end the play. They accentuate the spectator's new awareness of a prolonged Waiting, with no questions answered to satisfaction. Being was an aborted disjunct, a mentality-corporeality conglomerate!

Estragon, who has been asleep while the Boy was there, wakes up. Language dynamic is again exploited, to emphasize, that Vladimir could not tell Estragon, for sure, if he had been asleep. The uncertainty and confusion are oppressing. It is a poignant human plight. Mentality had lost axis completely, not that it was ever of anyworth. A Silence
ensues. The tramps talk again of leaving. However, they cannot afford to go far, for the next day again, they must return to wait for Godot. Another Silence ensues. The poignancy was becoming pathetic. The tramps have to continue their conversation. Godot had not come, and night having arrived, it was too late. Should not they drop Godot altogether? But this they could not do, for then Godot would punish them. It was a trap situation. Man waited and Godot never came. If Man had walked away, he would have been punished! The overtones are obvious. Drama was now-keyed to an intensity. There is yet another Silence. The play is being rounded off and Waiting could be carried away by the spectators to their homes, and, to their individual existential predicaments also! The tramps look at the tree, and, one calls it a willow, the symbol of grief, but neither tramp is sure. Still another Silence follows. The situation was almost agonizing. Should not they commit suicide? And yet, how could they, because they did not even have a rope! The next Silence becomes traumatic. Could not Estragon's belt serve as a rope? It is rejected, as too short. Could not Vladimir hang on to Estragon's legs? But who then, would hang on to Vladimir's? The innuendo is obvious. A serial suicide was visualized, however grotesquely, for all mankind. Or, was it, that the spectator was put into the smug category of the Pozzo of the first Act, and, the two tramps, were just two of the few, that felt terribly the irrationality of all human existence. Infact, everybody was in the Being-trap, though most still chose not to commit themselves. They stood apart, away and aloof. Some were even aggressive and beat up Estragon occasionally! The spectators now witness the trouser stage-business. Estragon's belt is anyhow tried. When it is removed Estragon's trousers fall. Trousers now take over from hats and boots. Or, was it done to reveal what a human being ultimately was-- a bare, two-forked animal! The tragic and the grotesque appear to co-
exist, because laughter, minus the throat-sound can be frighteningly bizarre. Vladimir had to stifle many laughs and contort his face several times; in the process, Estragon’s trousers must fall. The tramps try suicide with Estragon’s belt. It is actually a cord. It is short, and, when the tramps pull, it breaks. The two almost fall, and even the attempt at suicide is found ‘not worth a curse’. Vladimir says as much, and a Silence ensues to help sink that in. They decide to bring a rope the next day, which implies that Godot, as was his wont, may not come the next day either. But, would they be saved if Godot came? That too remained speculation. Meanwhile, Vladimir takes off his hat for the last time. Incidentally, it is Lucky’s. As earlier, he peers and feels inside, shakes it, knocks it, but still no pigeon-truth is forthcoming. Once more, neither appalled, nor surprised, he puts it on again. To repeat, Lucky’s hat, had with it, the association of schizophrenic thought, the only kind of thought that was possible under the circumstances. And, Estragon’s fallen trousers had revealed the bare two-forked animal, that Man was. Vladimir asks, ‘Well? Shall we go?’ and Estragon answers, ‘Yes. Let’s go’. However, the tramps donot move. But how could they; had not the dramaturgy of an entire play all along effectively convinced the spectators, that the tramps couldnot!

To conclude then, vaudeville, music-hall, and commedia dell’arte couldnot ever have been Beckett’s single or central interests, because his primary aim was to shape a Non-ent committed as the playwright was to his particular vision of life, bleak and dark though it may have been. It was a world-view in which all absolutes and all illusions had collapsed, including, those of Thought, Reason, Languages, Story, Dream, Vision, Truth, and even Nature, Faith, and Religion. The ‘integrated’ human being is actually found to be a disjunct mentality-corporeality conglomerate, because
pineals being absent, there was no link whatever, between Mind and Body. Therefore, to repeat, thought was futile, and, human corporeality a prime condition in an irrational existential situation. Again, mentality and corporeality being disjunct, there is no psychology, and no motivation, and hardly any character. Under the circumstances, stage-directions become very important. Also, because the Irrational is the dominant experience, Pauses and Silences acquire great significance. In fact, a Beckettian Silence is often deafening. Furthermore, the obligation to express being perpetual, a 'talking-I' must keep up a murmur, even if it be to ward-off a frightening quiet. Moreover, utterance or voiced-sound being unable to identify objective reality, the banal acquires a pathetic human tinge. With the banal becoming human, and the obligation to express perpetual, despite a language collapse, existence has to be logo-centric. Under these circumstances metaphor will be anathema, though trite and commonplace expression would acquire significant metaphysical slant as well as, become intense drama. The final discovery for the audience, would be that there is a tension inherent and innate in the language phenomenon itself, which helps creatively manipulate even its stereotypes to subtle quality drama. This, along with a disjunct mentality and torso-corporeality, help Beckett shape the play to suit his theme of a Nothing-is, making form and content so integral to each other that each is the other. Again, Beckettian drama being more presentational than representational, it situates on stage, an irrational corporeal presence 'there', which is not about something but the something itself. The stage, through its sparseness, assists the drama create the context of a near-void. On this empty stage, the playwright institutes, through deft dramatic stage-images, and, a live language dynamic, the abstract
notion of a Waiting, and along with it, the still more abstract phenomenon of an absent-presence, Godot. In this effort a sense of immediacy remains the hallmark of the entire strategy. Therefore, an almost empty stage, and significant stage-directions; Pauses, Silences and a two-act circular structure; sheer torso-corporeality as a presence 'there'; and, logo-centricity as rhythm, beat, cross-talk cliche epiphany and song despite a language collapse are the distinct features of Beckettian dramaturgy in Waiting for Godot.

However, after all is said and done, Waiting for Godot is a significant logo-centric exercise, so that language remains its ultimate forte. It is of course not a language of metaphor. It is a 'collapsed' language, but creatively used, tension and drama being inherent to the language dynamic itself or to its 'ontology', where 'ontology' is used loosely to describe the way in which a language has in its nature to exist, either as an absence, that is, as Silence, or, as communion, that is, as Articulation. Dramatic tension is an inherent, innate quality of language, and Beckett, aware of Artaud’s attitude, was more aware and alert to the dramaturgic subtleties intrinsic to lingual and gestural expression. In fact, the playwright has his fingers on the very pulse of this phenomenon used as a strategy to show that disruption too is often very communicative, even if it be only as absence of meaning. For, a word is a speech-sound and sound is dramatic. Again, words, spoken or written, come one after the other. They cannot be spoken or written all at once. They have sequence and movement, which have their own beat and rhythm. Therefore, Silence or Articulation is full of potential friction, and language is brimful with drama. Language has in it a drama,
upon which a metaphor is an artificial imposition. A cartload of metaphors can often smother language of its natural beat and rhythm, as well as of its proximity to existential experience. In any case, since metaphors implied metaphysical systems they were anathema to Beckettian themes. Alert even to the slightest hint of a beat or rhythm even in a cross-talk or other language banality, and, with the ability to creatively exploit these for profound dramaturgic strategies, Beckett often makes the trite sound lyrical. It is hardly surprising therefore that the playwright is reputed to have become a classic in his life time.
References:

4. Ibid., p.35.
5. Ibid., p.4.
17. Ibid., p.148.
18. Ibid., pp.35.
21. Ibid., p.2.
CHAPTER-II

ENDGAME

*Endgame* (1958), is a profound variation on the theme of the Absurd, earlier dramatized in *Waiting for Godot*, as an overwhelming, generations old Waiting for an absentee-presence, who fails ever to arrive. Added to the Wait is now an intensely cruel harshness that is indeed contagious and pervasive. The Non-ent, in this play is at a cataclysmic End. However, collapse is slow and torturous. Its advance was imperceptible and appeared to take a course to a final finish, which never seemed to arrive---

Clov: Why this farce, day after day?

Hamm: Routine. One never knows. (Pause.) (p.26)

Again,

Hamm: ... Clov!

Clov: Yes.

Hamm: Do you not think this has gone on long enough?

Clov: Yes! (Pause.) What?

Hamm: This... this... thing.

Clov: I've always thought so. (Pause.) You not?

Hamm: (Gloomily.) Then it's a day like any other day.

Clov: As long as it lasts. (Pause.) All life long the same inanities. (Pause.) (p.33)

The earlier abstract notion of a Waiting was contextualized through deft corporeal stage-presentations and, the creative exploitation of a language collapse, based primarily on the dramaturgy of banal, work-a-day, cross talk.
The Pozzo and Vladimir epiphanies, the Vladimir dog-song, and Lucky's extended profoundly creative schizophrenic word-salad were the only exceptions. The rest of the play was either corporeal grotesquerie, Pauses and Silences, or, almost single-word rhythmic repartees, described variously as circus-clown talk, vaudeville, or, music-hall, or, even commedia dell'arte examples. But these theatric conventions could never have been Beckett's single interests, for, the basic nature of his problematic was different. His theme was the bleak vision of an empty Non-ent, which his specific dramaturgy positioned on stage, as a meaningless presence 'there', aborted, and purposeless. Now, in Endgame also, a language dynamic inherent and innate to the language phenomenon is once again at play, but this time it is a different variety of de-construction. Not that cross-talk is totally absent. However, Endgame tends to have a penchant for the extended speech-delivery, and exploits the rhythms of these long speeches through a generous sprinkling of Pauses, and, a break into 'normal' and 'narrative' categorisations. A single voice is de-constructed strategically, and those tone-categories often alternate. Or, the same voice is once of a 'normal', and, once a 'rational being's'. Or, once it is a raconteur's, and, then a tailor's, and after that the tailor's customer's, and next Nagg's own. Or, once it is Hamm's, and subsequently the Hamm-narrator-demigod's, and following that the snivelling, serville, Man-ling's. This kind of language drama was totally new to Endgame, vis-a-vis the Godot-play. Again, the play has no Silences, much less Long Silences. Pauses, of shorter duration, are more, and serve to make points, at strategic places. In Endgame, the necessity to keep up a conversation, to put away an eerie Silence, is not the first effect sought, as is the phenomenon that a 'something' appeared to be taking its course. Earlier, it was the Non-ent dramatized as an overpowering illusionless Waiting. Now, it is the same Non-ent presented
on stage as an overwhelming, harsh and illusionless Ending. It was about to end, and yet had not ended. It was a crushing universal condition, which, having suffered an apocalyptic disintegration, was torturously inching very slowly on, to its finish. Once again, language drama and, human corporeality as a meaningless and cruel 'there' are the prime movers; however, it is a language drama and a human corporeality of their own kind and variety. Some points about the former have been made, and many illustrations are to follow. Of human corporeality, as a stage-presence, it would suffice for the moment to describe it as a keener cutting condition than either Vladimir's or Estragon's. For, the stiff-walking-unable-to-sit Clov, or, the blind, bandaged and bleeding Hamm-on-castors, who is unable to stand, or, the decrepits Nagg and Nell, constricted in dust-bins, could only have Lucky, or the later Pozzo as companions. Providing platitudes as strategy for attack is also not exploited. Pungent interrogatives, like the questioning 'What?' and 'Why?' are very few too. The situation being harsher, the conversation is often violent, and even abusive. There are two tableaux one to begin and the other to end with. There are extended stage-directions also for a long pantomime, the tableaux and the pantomime being two new variations in the dramaturgic technique.

The play is again appropriately begun with almost an empty stage, and a Non-ent is supplied to it using very little stage-property. What is opted out of is the open country-road with a bare tree alongside, and a mound near by. This time, it is a spare grey-lit interior, with high walls and two small curtained windows, also high, and way up near the ceiling. The Non-ent supplied, helps create the context of a brutal, harsh, and aborted 'something', at its Endgame. It is its tether too, that is now giving way to a finish. The stage interior, appears some kind of a temporary shelter,
that somehow survived the apocalyptic destruction, which struck outside. Four very human semblances, in as many versions of physical deformity, hurt and decrepitude, appear the only survivors. They are Hamm and Clov, Nagg and Nell. Of the four, Hamm occupies centre-stage. He is blind, bleeding and bandaged, with a gaff, dark glasses, a whistle, and, a handkerchief. The handkerchief often covers his face. Hamm is an invalid on a wheel chair. Clov is either Hamm’s adopted son, or, servant, and shares with him a love-hate relationship. Also, if Hamm cannot stand, Clov cannot sit. Two huge dustbins contain Nagg and Nell, Hamm’s legless parents, his father and mother. A picture with its face towards the wall hangs near the door to a kitchen. Outside the shelter, all is a ruin, having catastrophied to a zero. At close of play, Nagg and Nell are presumed dead, and Clov is about to leave, though he stands fixedly looking at Hamm, who has spoken his last speech. Hamm throws away his gaff, whistle and toy-dog and compliments the audience. He folds and unfolds his handkerchief, and then covers his blood-spattered head-bandage and red face, with his favourite ‘stancher’ and prepares to die. A brief tableau follows and the curtain falls. The play, in between, is logocentric all through, but first the abstract notion of an Ending is concretized, on-stage, in deathly stage-images, that help create a powerful impact of an End, which is just about to reach its finish. The human-sized dust-bins, and arm-chair-on-castors, that are covered with large white sheets, convey a morbid impression. The picture has its face towards the wall. A red-faced human form stands motionless, eyes fixated on the sheet-covered arm-chair-on-castors. Infact, all this is part of a brief tableau to the audience, some of whom may have brought into the hall, vague notions of an endgame, picked up from the bill-boards. The pantomime that follows with Clov’s stiff entries and exits, and his ladder-and-window stage-business, help supply more accretions to the
A notion of a trapped existential impasse, temporarily sheltered though it is, particularly when Clov climbs up the ladder to draw the window-curtains and looks outside. The ritual repetitions of these performances, the climb up, the climb down, the look out, and the ladder settings, as also the brief laughs at the calamitous convulsion outside, make this a remarkably effective beginning. This sufficiently situates, on stage, the interiority of a holed-up situation. And, after that, the ritual removal of the white sheets from over the dust-bins, and the rite each time of folding them, the lid-raising, the stooping and looking into the dust-bins, and the brief laughs after closing the lids, accumulate and pile up a grotesque 'irrational' context, that helps accrue the Non-ent to the sparsely inhabited stage. Again the removal of the sheet from the wheel-chair to reveal Hamm centre-stage, must be the most startling of the initial theatre experiences. For, Hamm’s red face, black glasses, bandaged head, the rug over his knees and thick socks, with Clov’s fixed gaze at him, as also, Clov’s brief laughs, add bit by bit to the stage situation.

This brings us again to the importance of stage-directions in a Beckett play, for the simple reason that they specifically concern themselves with action on stage. In fact, the beginnings of *Endgame* and *Krapp’s Last Tape* have far more stage directions than dialogue. This is because, as Iser concludes, in a Beckett play, external action is not ‘developed through relationship between characters’.

Further, the play does not progress beyond the initial framework that the stage-directions prescribe, and therefore, help establish a certain measure of coherence. Iser considers Beckett’s stage-directions to be more than ordinary for they are linked to the irrational existential condition, or, what Iser calls the ‘situation’ of the characters. At the beginning of *Endgame* they direct a pantomine, and a tableau,
which together suggest the dissolution of all co-ordination between intentions and action. Therefore experience ceases to be a guide, and each situation is always the first one, and an act has no precedent. Also, if a dissolution of co-ordination be the theme, only extensive stage-directions can be of help, because, this lack of co-ordination is to be independent of the characters themselves. Further, as Kenner would suggest, Descarte's pineal glands being absent, the Body and Mind become pronounced dichotomies, and Man becomes what he elsewhere calls a Centaur. To add to this, Jonathan Kalb considers Beckettian plays, more presentational, than representational pieces. Moreover, according to Kalb, Beckett as director, is reputed to have insisted on 'physical themes', where each gesture was thought to be significant and therefore had to be graceful and polished. Thus, Beckettian stage-directions acquire tremendous importance. What accentuates their necessity is the presentation, on stage, of a visual corporeal presence 'there', as a concrete stage-image of an irrational human predicament. This is the reason why the stage-directions in *Endgame* for its first tableau, and only pantomine, form part of a dramaturgy to situate a Non-ent on its stage.

Now, the Godot-play cuts down on all illusions to intensify the on-stage futile Waiting phenomenon. Truth, Faith, Grace, Reason, and Belief; the Logic of Redemption, the Evangelists and the Bible; Thought, Language, Dream, Story and Vision; and even Time, Place, and Object are each demolished at the dramaturgical anvil. This helped create that intense metaphysical anguish on stage which is supposed to be at the root of all Absurd Theatre experience. Thus, to repeat, an exchange or two activates the meaning-content of a concept, leaving the rest to the language drama itself, to bereft the concept of its very spirit and tenor. This is a dramaturgic compulsion in the play, which Beckett cannot
easily resist. It has been worked out in detail in the previous chapter. However, an example or two would not be out of order. Thus, the following is a case of sheer language drama deprecating the complacent comfort of a Dream, in *Waiting for Godot* ---

Estragon: (Despairingly). Why will you never let me sleep?

Vladimir: I felt lonely.

Estragon: I had a dream.

Vladimir: Don’t tell me.

Estragon: I dreamt that---

Vladimir: DON’T TELL ME!

Estragon: (gestures towards the universe). This one is enough for you? (Silence) (Act I, pp.15-16)

Or, here is an illustration of the destruction of the content of a Vision by a similar technique---

Vladimir: You must have had a vision.

Estragon: (turning his head) What?

Vladimir: (Louder) You must have had a vision.

Estragon: No need to shout. (Silence.) (Waiting for Godot, Act II, p.75)

Or, to repeat yet again, the example of the meaning-value of the word ‘happy’ being demolished, ritual fashion, through its repetition. This is also from *Waiting for Godot*:

Vladimir: You must be happy, too, deep down, if you only knew it?

Estragon: Happy about what?

Vladimir: To be back with me again.
Estragon: Would you say so?
Vladimir: Say you're even if it's not true.
Estragon: What am I to say?
Vladimir: Say, I am happy
Estragon: I am happy.
Vladimir: So am I.
Estragon: So am I.
Vladimir: We are happy.
Estragon: We are happy. (Silence.) (Act II, p.60)

And, as if to suggest, that because the playwright is aware that a language rhythm, once generated, could take an extra beat or two, he can not resist the compulsion of permitting the rhythm its propulsion, and, Estragon is made to continue even after the Silence—

What do we do now, now that we are happy?
Vladimir: Wait for Godot. (Silence). (Act II. p.60)

Such an erasure of illusions was absolutely necessary to support the excruciating phenomenon of just being 'there', an irrational presence, doing nothing but Waiting, perpetually and purposelessly, for a never-to-arrive absent-presence. However, the Ending game had to be different and is staged as a fresh dramaturgical experience of the Non-ent, which now is at its End, and the existential quandary in it more keen, unfeeling and brutal. In this play, the nomenclature of a Godot -presence is also given up, and yet there is a dramaturgical build-up that makes the abstract phenomenon of the ending of a beastly existence, dramaturgically live and pulsating. Not that Beckett spares
himself the exercise of an operation - debunk of comfortable illusions in *Endgame*, but, a drama with a similar technique and thrust is not repeated in the later play, because having done it once, and devastatingly too, the ruin is, as it were, subconsciously taken for granted. Again, in the Godot-play, the aim is to create pervasive uncertainty and confusion, whereas in the Ending-game, it is the brutal, hard and harsh that takes precedence, so that quite often the exchanges are violent, and there is hate, abuse, servility and fear, and a catastrophe engulfs the temporary shelter of hollow bricks. There is no uncertainty or ambiguity about that. It is the End to a brutality that is now concretized as an intense on-stage experience. That brutality afflicted Being itself, making it aborted and irrational and shorn of all illusions, including those of health and youth, sight and normal body-movement; heredity and age get restricted to dustbins. Therefore, *Endgame* does not demolish illusions as much as has them literally shouted and screamed at, abused and made grotesqueries of. Thus, a parent was either an 'accursed progenitor' or an 'accursed fornicator'.

Similarly the idea of divinity is insulted and abused, and is best left unquoted. It is on p. 38, after Hamm and Clov, Nagg and Nell decide to pray, and get sceptical about the prayer. Hamm in a violent outburst abuses God. Curses also seem to abound, as when the world outside the shelter is found corpsed (p. 25), or, again at p.33, when the Universe is discovered to stink, or, when it is sent to hell. Or, still later, when Clov brings the toy-dog to the sadist Hamm, and Hamm postures as 'the Actor-Man-God-King-the Blind'---

Hamm: (His hand on the dog's head). Is he gazing at me?

Clov: Yes.

Hamm: (Proudly). As if he were asking me to take him for a walk?
Clov: If you like.

Hamm: (As before.) Or as if he were begging me for a bone. (He withdraws his hand) leave him like that, standing there imploring me. (p.31)

Or, yet again, when Hamm, with an imprecation hurled at the day he was born, and with heredity already confined in dustbins, he readily rebukes Nell, his mother, as a ‘damn busy body’, and wants her ‘bottled up’ with the lids screwed down. Or, again, when in his story, as demi-god-narrator, Hamm enjoys the grovelling of a Man-ling at his feet, who had journeyed three days to beg of Hamm some bread for his small boy. Or, finally when Hamm and Clov are found to wallow in a love-hate relationship.

It was all as if an indifferent irrational existence had had its callous irrationality, permeate the human psyche also. But, could it be, just a Beckettian version of the Jarry-Artaud world-view? Be that as it may, it is a shocking state of affairs in which laughter too was forced and had very much to be ‘launched’, and that also ‘after some reflection’! What was worse was that laughter had to be graded first as ‘heartily’, then as ‘less heartily’, and finally as ‘still less heartily’. At one stage, Clov is pretty sure he ‘couldn’t guffaw again today’. In the Godot-play also, the hearty laugh had been stifled to a contorted face, and, the grotesquerie that followed as an ear-to-ear smile, was one of the striking stage-concretizations in the play. However, if the futility of an empty Non-ent was the theme in Waiting for Godot, in Endgame it is also a shocking harshness that startles and surprises. To Hamm and his company then, ‘a rational being’ would indeed be a ‘visitor’ (p.27), and, even the lovely green fields as appalling as ‘ashes’ to a mad man (p. 32); and, crying would need a trying; and a laugh become a matter of serious reflection
(p.16 and p.25); and, as for 'unhappiness', there was 'nothing funnier'.

Clov's is the first utterance of the play. It adds the language dimension to the tableau-pantomime sequence. It rounds off the tableau-cum-pantomime effect by its tonelessness, delivered with a fixed gaze at the audience, and adds to the Non-ent experience on-stage. And therefore, a harsh, holed-up, cruel predicament was at the end of its tether, or, was it the outside only, it is yet not sure, for Clov is at the moment speaking of the situation outside, at which he peers from a window---

Clov: (Fixed gaze, tonelessly.) Finished, it's finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished. (Pause.) (p.12).

This opening utterance of the play has four repetitions of 'Finished', first as a participle, then as a complement, then as modified by an adverb, and finally, the last use, made different, by the addition of an emphatic 'it must be' to the participle form. This iteration, helped by its language dramaturgy, adds to the tableau-pantomime stage sequence the experience that something was at its tether. Could it be trapped humanity, caught up in a brutal quandary? After the Pause, Clov continues---

Grain upon grain, one by one, and one day, suddenly, there's a heap, a little heap, the impossible heap. (Pause.) (p.12).

The imperceptibly slow advance towards the End is taken up in the variations of the participle 'Finished', and is continued after the Pause; each comma is the next advance in the torturous finish and brings it so many steps closer, the
technique becoming more pronounced, if the steps are written one after the other in a descending order—

Grain upon grain,
one by one,
and one day,
suddenly,
there’s a heap,
a little heap,
The impossible heap. (Pause.) (p.12)

The next movement in his utterance sounds a rebellion against his predicament. A Pause ensues. He decides to go to the kitchen but the dimensions of his kitchen, and his resolve to wait there for Hamm’s whistle, and till then, to stare at the wall, adds cummulations of a trapped condition and of futility, boredom and waste, to ‘the finish’ that was taking its course, and to the cruel on-stage condition—

I’ll go now to the kitchen, ten feet by ten feet by ten feet, and wait for him to whistle me. (Pause.) Nice dimensions, nice proportions. I’ll lean on the table, and look at the wall, and wait for him to whistle me. (p.12)

The last sentence draws attention to Hamm centre-stage, and, links him to the tableau, the pantomime, and the graduations of the ‘Finish’ in Clov’s speech. It also links Hamm to the accumulation of the ‘impossible heap’, that Clov visualized as piling up, grain by grain, day after day. It even has Hamm constricted in the grey lit interior, and interiorizes the devastated apocalypse outside. Hamm’s first speech comes immediately after the tableau, pantomime, and Clov’s opening utterance. Hamm speaks after his hurt,
invalid condition has been sufficiently positioned on stage. It is an oppressive condition at its terminal end. Also, Hamm is begun as a substantial on-stage torso-presence. He is literally 'there', bruised, bleeding and bandaged, in a characteristic Non-ent existential condition. Beginning with the first tableau itself, the white sheet covered arm-chair on-castors, is startling and mysterious. The red-faced Clov is motionless by the door, his eyes fixed on the arm-chair-on-castors. An old white sheet also covers the two large-sized dustbins, but they are not centre-stage. Then the pantomime starts, and accretions accumulate to situate on-stage, a harsh and constricted condition at its torturous tether. The disaster outside has Clov laugh at it repeatedly, from the perch of high curtained windows of the grey lit temporary shelter. The peer and brief laughs are at an apocalypse that would slowly, though imperceptibly strike the ramshackle protection also. All the while the wheel-chair is centre-stage and sheet-covered. The uncovering of Hamm is the sixth movement of Clov's pantomime. The sheet that covers Hamm is removed and folded almost as a ritual, as were the sheets that covered the dust-bins that housed Nagg and Nell. However, the 'stancher' still spreads over Hamm's face, and under this stancher Hamm stirs and yawns. He removes the handkerchief to reveal a very red face, a blood be-spattered, bandaged head, and, dark glasses. Clov's pantomime had not missed Hamm. Last to be uncovered by Clov, he is looked over, and briefly laughed at. Hamm is in dressing gown, with a rug over his knees, and thick socks on his feet, and, he is blind. Hamm was the person, whose whistle Clov had waited for, while he had stood staring at the kitchen-wall. As Hamm began he yawned--

Me---(he yawns)--to play. (p.12)
The yawn is a new device that adds more boredom and futility to Clov's stare at the kitchen-wall. *Endgame* has no Silences. It has Pauses and Yawns as its accentuators. 'Me' and 'to play' sound like Pozzo, with the first person emphasis, as also the posturing as Man, Actor, King, and the demi-god-Narrator. Now, Hamm could have woken up to his turn in some game he was playing. He could also be the self-conscious, Pozzo play-actor, launching on a new performance. He may also be announcing a choice and he chooses, as it later turns out to be the role of a cruel-demigod-actor-king, the role too of Man-in-God's image, who, being unable to escape the brutal existential bind is himself infected by its oppressive, irrational brutality. This brings us to the rest of his extended speech, almost a 20 line exercise in language drama, punctuated with Pauses and Yawns, and de-constructed to situate on stage its own kind of an intensely profound, Being-strait. Such an exercise stands in no need of metaphor or other figures of speech. For, its author, Beckett, is aware that language, the phenomenon, written or spoken is inherently dramatic. When spoken it is a voiced sound when written a scribble; when not spoken it is a silence. Its written or uttered forms cannot be written or uttered all at once. They are part of a process, a movement, a sequence, that can be de-constructed at will to create a sense of a profundity, or, even a sense of a lack of it. The slightest contextualization causes meaning to accrue, or, even cancel meaning out all together, so much so that the drama of a language of everyday conversation, can be creatively manipulated. It can contextualize and position a perpetual Waiting in an eerie Silence, or, an End at its last gasps, grinding imperceptibly to a halt. What more if a tableau, pantomime, and an empty and a grey lit sparsely propertied stage, have already supplied a sufficient Non-ent situation. Thereafter, sheer language dynamic, constructed, de-constructed, or re-constructed can itself be a tremendous
experience of an actually bestial existential bind. The Godot-play, primarily manipulates creatively, the language drama of a cross-talk. *Endgame* of course does not forswear this, but its primary interest to repeat, is in extended, speech-deliveries. These repeatedly deconstruct the beat and deep drama of an irrationally cruel situation which, bereft of all joy and all illusion, is at its apocalyptic End. This is what Beckett repeatedly does with the long Hamm speeches, the longest of which is two and half pages, with 6 directions for 'normal', and 7 for 'narrated' tone articulation. It also has as many as 39 Pauses.

But to get back to Hamm's opening speech, which in effect, has eight parts. It also has five Yawns, eleven Pauses, one sniff, a clearing of the throat, a joining of the finger-tips, and a whistle to summon Clov, all part of the dramatic technique. Added to this is the fact that Hamm is blind, hurt, bandaged, holed-up and an invalid in a wheelchair, for, he cannot stand. We shall presently see how his banal bodily actions, and, ordinary every day utterances take on dramatic colour as the speech unfolds. Thus, for Hamm to play, a ritual has to take effective shape. The old stancher is to be removed, dark-glasses taken off, the glasses, eyes, and, the face are then to be wiped; the glasses are again to be put on, the stancher folded and put away. That was a sequence constituted of sheer physical movement. From this Being-trap there was no escape, wish as Hamm might, for the game had to be played to the End, be it as actor, chess-pawn, story-teller, tyrant or a demi-god. That it was ending was also of no relief, for, the Ending itself was torturously slow, and maddeningly imperceptible. The parody of the tragic hero's lofty misery could just be dramatized by a yawn and a few language jabs---

Can there be misery—(he yawns)—Loftier than mine? No doubt. Formerly. But now? (Pause.) (p.12)
Deprived of illusions, the days of a tragic hero’s lofty misery were over. And the idea could now be yawned away, even that of any loftiness for that matter. A few language jabs therefore dismiss whatever there was left of loftiness. This can be seen literally done. For, as in the just quoted lines, ‘No doubt’, recalls, while ‘Formerly’ confirms, and ‘But now?’ questions as also wrecks loftiness altogether. Only the misery stays, and the yawns make it the more burdensome. A straddling yawn stays one, and, demolishes the other state of mind. The adverb-noun phrase, ‘No doubt’, the adverb ‘Formerly’, and the conjunction-adverb ‘But now?’ are all cliches. However, put in sequence and after the yawn-interrupted interrogative, the tragic comic effect of the entire piece is plainly apparent. Such an effect, is because of the inherent efficacy of language drama, once its rhythm is even minimally generated. After the Pause, and the carry forward of the idea of misery and suffering Hamm says—-

My father? (Pause.) My mother? (Pause.) My...dog? (Pause.). (p.12)

The first two interrogatives are innocuous, but the third is not. It acquires a dramaturgic sting. The sequence of the interrogatives and the slight delay after the third ‘My’, imprecates not only heredity, but also humanity. Of course Pauses control and regulate the entire theatric exercise.

Hamm is prepared to make allowance, but postures to show that he suffers more. What had parents and a pet-dog to do with what one really suffers existentially? Misery and suffering have become obsessions—-

Oh I am willing to believe they suffer as much as such creatures can suffer. But does that mean their sufferings equal mine? No doubt. (Pause.) (p.12).
Beckett's 'No doubt' operates both ways. Such is the ambiguity in language, that the doubt can question and absolve either protagonist.

The next de-constructed sequence is even more far-reaching. A mere yawn deprecates all thought of an absolute because it is positioned between absolute's 'a' and 'bsolute'. In the Godot-play, such imprecation were inherent in the drama of controlled cross-talk. In Endgame, the same effect is present in speech sequences, because, often drama is activated to destroy a traditionally held meaning-content---

No, all is a -- (he yawns) -bsolute, (proudly) the bigger a man is the fuller he is. (Pause.). And the emptier. (He sniffs). (p.12).

The wrench of the 'a' from the word 'absolute' by the strategically positioned Yawn disintegrates all illusion of an absolute. There are no absolutes. The pride of being a bigger and fuller man is also destroyed, because the theme and the language rhythm generated demolish the first two comparatives by the third; 'bigger' and 'fuller' are cancelled out by 'And the emptier'. That rhythm can come as a reflex too; a reflex innate to the drama inherent in language is also apparent. Beckett is hardly ever able to resist this dramaturgic reflex of a generated language rhythm, more particularly because the theme gets appropriate dramatic shape once the rhythm generated is allowed to run its course. The traces that linger are 'sniffed' away also. However, Hamm is nostalgic---

What dreams! Those forests! (Pause.) (p.12)
The next Hamm utterance echoes the earlier words of Clov, which to quote were---

Finish, its finished. nearly finished, it must be nearly finished. (Pause.).

While Hamm puts his trauma in the following words---

Enough, its time it ended, in the refuge too. (Pause.). (p.12)

Such permutations and combinations of an Ending are many in Endgame, and this has been noted earlier also by a critic. The present thesis would, as this analysis goes along, try to observe these permutations and combinations as they occur at their appropriate places. The master of language that Beckett is, he just does not care to lift himself higher than the drama inherent in banal speech, and with the context that he situates on stage, with each dramaturgic move, be it of torso-ritual, or, spoken-utterance, he is able to raze entire edifices of comfortable illusions, if need be, and, very casually permutate the slow advance of the End of 'a something' that is at its terminal tether. The Ending was already underway as a gradual, on-stage, intense experience, and Hamm reacts to it---

And yet I hesitate, I hesitate to...to end. yes, there it is, it's time it ended and yet I hesitate to --(he yawns)-to end (yawns). (p.12)

Earlier he had protested---

Enough it's time it ended in the refuge too. (Pause.) (p.12).
Immediately after the Pause, Hamm hesitates. Despite talk of a language collapse, the play of the Hamm hesitation is itself fascinating. Its drama and its shape if written down in descending order will take the following form---

- And yet I hesitate,
- I hesitate to...
- ...to end.
- Yes, there it is,
- it's time
- it ended
- and yet I hesitate to...
  (he yawns)
- to end (Yawns) (p.12)

There is, a rhythm in that movement, that is innate to, and inherent in, the way language could exist as a phenomenon and process. It adds accretions to the contextualized, on-stage experience of an Ending, already made situate there because of the tableau and pantomime. Waiting and Ending are abstractions, even as Time, Happiness, and After-death concepts are. And fond as Beckett is of positioning potent abstractions on stage, he has drama shape each of these abstractions, in relation to his theme of an existential Non-ent. Each is a fresh experience, and a different dramaturgic formulation. The Non-ent gets shaped in five separate successful plays; viz., Waiting for Godot, Endgame, Krapp’s Last Tape, Happy Days and Play.

To take stock then: so far dramaturgic compulsions had made the playwright decide on (i) a tableau, (ii) a pantomime (iii) human corporeality as a presence 'there' on stage, and (iv) on language-dynamic, to supply the Ending of a Non-ent as
an on-stage concrete experience. That having been sufficiently done, the next thrust of the play is to add thematic cummulations to the Ending experience, which deepens in intensity with each addition. Once again the exchange, or, the single extended speech, out of deliberate choice limits itself to sheer banality, be it in actions or in utterances. Also, that metaphor was not only taboo, but that it was not at all required will need just one example. After a Hamm and Clov exchange on 'time' and 'eyes', the apocalyptic outside is interiorized as a reminder that it was an End that was imperceptibly on its slow maddening course. Once again, a trite exchange acquires potency and pressure, because the presentational drama of an on-stage Ending has taken on intensity through its ritual accruals---

Hamm: (Gesture towards window right). Have you looked?
Clov: Yes.
Hamm: Well?
Clov: Zero.
Hamm: It'd need to rain.
Clov: It wont rain. (Pause.) (p.13).

The language is simple, even ordinary, but in its present context it is very ominously tragic also. An apocalypse had devastated the world outside this holed-in temporary refuge. What could be more profound and intense, than a simple question about it, with just a gesture towards the window. Each word is thereafter full of a poignant intensity---

Have you looked?
And what could be more profound than a simple affirmative---

Yes.

Next, the resignation, uncertain flicker and anticipation in---

Well?

After that the assessed pronouncement of---

Zero.

Finally, the maddening finale---

Hamm: It'd need to rain.

Clov: It won't rain (Pause.) (p.13)

In such a situation, metaphors and so-called figures of speech, or, tropes, or, deviation, call them what we will, are not only absolutely unnecessary, but also, perfectly out of order. Down-right simplicity is the only language of such a pathetically tragic situation. A catastrophe has struck. All is at an end. Would not a trope be an imposition and would it not be at some remove from the simple intensity of the occasion? In any case, metaphors are grounded in metaphysical systems, ideologies, philosophies, and illusions, when the situation in a Beckett play is entirely empty of illusion. This is brutal existence at its raw and most torso, the irrationality too, of a just being physically 'there', an ineffectual, idle presence without any purpose or justification. There is no possibility of a 'here after' solace, or, even a re-incarnation. The End is excruciatingly slow, and is itself therefore a trauma.

In fact, devoid as the existential quandary is of illusions, and also, as in this case of the chance even of
survival, it has to be drama at its profoundest simple. For, nothing is left of existence in *Endgame*, but this overwhelming simplicity. Or, is Being just drama and no more? Is it a meaningless irrationality that exists only as drama? All life long is it the same drama, of the same questions, and their same answers? Some with Hamm would have had enough of---

this......this..... thing (p.13).

But they may not be sure about others---

Not You ? (p.13).

Therefore, common-place actions and trite articulations pile implication upon implication, as just one more permutation, to a prolonged Ending, because there was 'a something' that appeared to be taking its course. But, why then did the two-some, Hamm and Clov, want to separate from each other? Two answers, rounded off by a Pause, help shape the situation as effective drama---

Hamm : There's no one else.

Clov : There's no where else. (Pause.) (p.14).

Just one exchange, given the sufficiently positioned stage context, helps the drama of the Non-ent surface compulsively. This is followed by another banal exchange, which too accumulates accruals, language-dynamic after language-dynamic. The technique is to set up a link, and the on-stage context being already there, the drama of an irrational existential condition, crass, cruel, and
corporeal, takes its own course through the next association. Thus---

Hamm: You're leaving me all the same.

Clov: I'm trying.

Hamm: You don't love me?

Clov: No.

Hamm: You loved me once.

Clov: Once!

Hamm: I've made you suffer too much. (Pause.) Haven't I?

Clov: It's not that.

Hamm: (shocked) I haven't made you suffer too much?

Clov: Yes!

Hamm: (Relieved). Ah you gave me a fright! (Pause. Coldly) forgive me. (Pause. Louder) I said forgive me.

Clove: I heard you. (Pause.) (p.14)

It is a love-hate relationship, tender and pathetic, and often, harsh, cold and indifferent. It is set apace as sheer language-dramatic, and therefore, as a context-related conversation, ordinary but at its simplest profound, the language rhythm being allowed to run its course. Infact, as drama, it is often only language-dynamic which the drama of plain corporeal actions compliment and reciprocate. And, even as the harrowing End is on its hapless course, a hurt and diseased physical predicament becomes the next subject of the tragically pathetic conversation---

Hamm: How are your eyes?

Clove: Bad.
Hamm: How are your legs?

Clov: Bad.

Hamm: But you can move.

Clov: Yes.

Hamm: (Violently) Then move! (Clov goes to back wall, leans against it with his forehead and hands.) (p.14).

This was one more violent end to a significant language rhythm. Clov had bad eyes and his legs were bad too for he could not sit. But Hamm's condition was worse. His eyes could not even see, and his legs could not even move. Clov's reaction to Hamm's violence travelled ambivalently, creating a striking on-stage context of helplessness, which was not only Clov's, but Hamm's also. The human body was a contraption, like a bicycle, operated by a complex set of levers,\textsuperscript{10} a corporeality 'there', on-stage, as the existential constriction itself. It was now part of some kind of an Ending, and the unobstrusive reference to it, is just one permutation more, to the End's relentless grind to a slow finish.

Furthermore, the aborted irrationality literally positioned on-stage, was a cruel phenomenon, and its brutality was infectious, and, Hamm and Clov in their own ways do not escape the infection. Heredity takes the first drubbing, so that while Job is supposed to have cursed only the day that he was born, Hamm is harsher, because for him, Nagg, his father was---

the accursed progenitor

and

the accursed fornicator
Hamm wants Nagg bottled, and with that the dustbins, on-stage, are brought into focus. Incidentally, this dramaturgic juncture, was led to, by successive previous exchanges about having had enough; about there always being the same questions, and, the same answers; about eyes that could not see, and legs that could not move. Being was aborted, harsh, and cruel and Hamm is infected. He asks Clov to bottle parent Nagg---

Hamm: Sit on him.
Clov: I can't sit.
Hamm: True. And I can't stand.
Clov: So it is.

Hamm: Everyman his own speciality. (Pause.) (p.16)

Even as the excruciatingly slow Ending gets repeated re-iteration, each time, by just one permutation more, so also, does the torso-irrationality of a just being 'there' in various states of physical decrepitude, get a dramaturgic pile-up, each time by just one variation more. The given quotation is abundant illustration. Such exchanges cannot be accounted for sufficiently under either 'banal', or, 'crass', or, 'ordinary' cross-talk. It is a pathetically tragic situation and the intense simplicity of its tragic grotesquerie cannot go unnoticed. Once again it is a language-dynamic at its profoundest simple. That there are 'No phone calls' reinforces the isolation of the trap-situation. The outside is already in the throes of a cataclysmic catastrophe, while inside, the situation is no less discomfitting, for, Hamm and Clov donot even want to laugh--

Hamm: ... (Pause.) Don't we laugh?
Clov: (after reflection) I don't feel like it.
Hamm: (after reflection) Nor I. (Pause.) (p.16)
Nature had also forgotten them, or at least, all of it had, that was in their vicinity. The only four left to breathe, change, lose hair and teeth were in this shelter. But was that not nature? So nature had not forgotten them after all! However, what was left of nature itself was, as Clov says, 'A smithreen'. After a Pause there is one more reminder that the End was on its course, and, at its last tether. 'This is slow work', says Hamm, and a Pause ensues. Clov goes to the kitchen because he has work to do, which turns out to be 'a look at the wall to see his light die' or, was it to see the writing on it as a foreboding! The situation was grim. Even Hamm's apology is harsh for he shouts at Clov to be forgiven. The request to be forgiven is almost graded in expression. First, there is a coldness, then a loudness sets in, and after that the call for forgiveness is literally shouted out. Where was the need for apology, the existential irrationality being so pervasive? And why then should seeds sprout? Enquiries about sprouting seeds generate a rhythm that ends in yet another violent finale---

Hamm: Did your seeds come up?
Clov: No.

Hamm: Did you scratch round them to see if they had sprouted?
Clov: They haven't sprouted.

Hamm: Perhaps it's still too early.

Clov: If they were going to sprout they would have sprouted. (Violently) They'll never sprout. (p.17).

It was Clov's turn to become violent. His violence helped the language rhythm generated, to specifically destroy, all hope about sprouting seeds.
The day was at an end, ‘like any other day’. A Pause ensues and an anguished Hamm enquires---

What’s happening, what’s happening? (p.17)

Clov ominously answers---

Something is taking its course (p.17)

Yet another Pause ensues, after which is another reminder that an End to a brutal existential impasse was on its way to a torturous close. It was an endless Ending, from which there was no getting away. Clov was tired of the slow approach of the relentless grind. That an Ending is in progress, is never allowed to go out of the audience’s mind. However, the playwright’s strategy is such, that each reminder comes as an unobtrusive mention, appropriately couched, and innocuous---

We’re getting on (p.18).

By now, ancestry and progeny are each mere cogs in the treadmill of the condition ‘there’. Ancestry is bottled up on-stage, in dustbins, and the slow trundle of the ruthless existential grind, even at its tether, takes three more generations of human beings as its parting prize. Hamm’s parents situate on-stage, the trauma of physical ageing, and more severe corporeal decrepitude, mortifying still further, the agony of a harsh existential bind not quick enough even at its termination. Old age is as accursed as heredity, because if death is not early, age takes its toll on the already aborted contraption of the corporeality that the purposeless human impasse is, in its accursed irrational strait. As age and senility come on, constriction to dustbins becomes the most natural, on-stage condition. It suits the Beckettian theme also. Decrepit and senile, old
Nagg and Nell nostalgically, and even, non-challantly talk of love; of sight and hearing; of their yesterdays; and, of laughter. The failed effort of either parent to re-enact youth is tragically pathetic, and a powerful accumulation to the terrifying on-stage existential context. Nagg knocks hard on the lid of Nell’s dustbin. The lid lifts. Nell’s hands appear gripping the lid; then her head emerges. She has a lace-cap and a very white face—-

Nell: What is it, my pet? (Pause.) Time for love?
Nagg: Were you asleep?
Nell: Oh no!
Nagg: Kiss me.
Nell: We can’t.
Nagg: Try.

(Their heads strain towards each other, fail to meet, fall apart again)

Nell: Why this farce day after day? Pause (p.18)

Nagg and Nell had lost teeth, as well as yesterdays. One deft dramaturgic manoeuvre makes the two losses pathetically poignant—-

Nagg: I’ve lost me tooth.
Nell: When?
Nagg: I had it yesterday.
Nell: (Elegiac.) Ah yesterday. (They turn painfully to each other). (p.18).

This can hardly be dismissed as either a language-game or ordinary cross-talk. It is profound tragedy where the drama of the simple spoken words is enough to intensify the
on-stage existential predicament. Similarly, 'eyes' and 'sight' are the theme of exchanges on different occasions in the play. These repetitions accumulate intensity, and, the on-stage, 'there' experience of a decrepit, corporeal presence becomes all the more over-whelming for that reason. On p.20, is a concrete accretion to the old-age predicament---

Nell: I am going to leave you.
Nagg: Could you give me a scratch before you go?
Nell: No. (Pause.) Where?
Nagg: In the back.
Nell: No (Pause.) Rub yourself against the rim.
Nagg: It's lower down. In the hollow.
Nell: What hollow?
Nagg: The hollow! (Pause.) Could you not? (Pause.) Yesterday you scratched me there.
Nell: (Elegiac) Ah yesterday!
Nagg: Could you not? (Pause.) Would you like me to scratch you? (Pause.) Are you crying again?
Nell: I was trying. (Pause.) (p.20).

The language-dynamic picks up from 'I am going to leave you', and, what is thought a customary conversation, takes on the colour of a constricted irrational condition already in context on-stage. There was no easy escape from the trap-situation. Even a friendly scratch was unthinkable. The Pauses accentuate the pathos of the simple tragedy. 'Where'?/In the back./No. (Pause.)' is a profoundly simple statement of a tragic fact. As always in Beckett, Pauses become part of the dramaturgic rhythm, which picks up again from 'Rub yourself against the rim', and the grotesquerie is
quite discomfiting with the ritual repeat of ‘In the hollow/What hollow?/ The hollow!’, which also terminates in yet another Pause. The ‘yesterday’ rhythm then picks up, terminates elegiacally, and resounds when a Pause ensues. Under the circumstances, the piece ‘Are you crying again/ I am trying.’, after which is another Pause, is the climatic conclusion to a language rhythm that dramatizes a hapless existential imbroglio. It is a presentational, on-stage exercise, the form and the content shaping each other, because Beckettian drama is not about something, but that something itself. In such a context the old could not remain the only victims, because even the young did not escape affliction, as a later exchange between Hamm and Clov varies ‘the yesterday’ theme---

Hamm: Go and get the oil can.
Clov: What for?
Hamm: To oil the castors.
Clov: I oiled them yesterday.
Hamm: Yesterday! What does that mean? Yesterday!
Clov: (Violently). That means that bloody awful day, long ago, before this bloody awful day. I use the words you taught me. If they don't mean anything any more, teach me be others. Or let me be silent. (Pause.) (p.32)

This was yet another violent end to an Endgame conversation. It is also one more rhythm that bestows on a small two-some exchange the shape, on-stage, of the cruel existential intensity of a time-situation. It is a harrowing ‘existential present’ in the context of a nostalgically labelled existential ‘yesterday’. The rhythm trails off, questioning articulation itself, and advocating silence, and is appropriately punctuated at its conclusion by a well positioned Pause.
To revert again to Nagg and Nell, two language rhythms underscore the old-age tragedy of deficient sight and hearing---

Nagg: Can you see me?
Nell: Hardly. And you?
Nagg: What?
Nell: Can you see me?
Nagg: Hardly.
Nell: So much the better, so much the better.
Nagg: Don’t say that? (Pause.) Our sight has failed.
Nell: Yes. (Pause.) (p.18).

The force of this rhythm is such, that though ‘hearing’ is as yet not a casualty, it loses importance because of the sheer beat generated---

Nagg: Can you hear me?
Nell: Yes. And you?
Nagg: Yes. (Pause.) Our hearing hasn’t failed.
Nell: Our what?
Nagg: Our hearing.
Nell: No. (Pause.) (p.18).

Beckett appears unable to resist the rhythm of ‘Our what?/ Our hearing/ No! (Pause.)’. Nagg and Nell could hear each other but the fresh rhythm initiated by ‘Our hearing hasn’t failed’ made that hearing matter little. The cumulative concretions that these so-called ‘banal’ exchanges
pile up, bit by dramaturgic bit, add depth and intensity to the on-stage experience and are each calculated pieces, be they ever so small as the following---

Nell: (Pause.) Have you anything else to say to me?

Nagg: Do you remember—

Nell: No. (p.18)

But who could dare laugh at this grotesquerie, though comic and often hilarious, for, it is also a very discomfitting and unsettling experience, devastating in its proximity to an existential condition, at its overwhelming simple. Three generations are positioned on-stage. It is a harsh, purposelessly 'there' pathetic human quandary. Three generations are at view, and, there is not one saving grace to retrieve the cruel situation, which is now itself, at the end of its own close. Therefore, a laugh is rare, and laughter has to be graded, as first heartily, then less heartily, and finally, still less heartily. In the Godot-play, laughter was also stifled into a grotesque smile, and this too had to disappear as quickly as it had appeared. Nagg and Nell talk about unhappiness---

Nell: Nothing is funnier than unhappiness, I grant you that. But--

Nagg: (Shocked.) Oh!

Nell: Yes, yes, it's the most comical thing in the world. And we laugh, we laugh, with a will, in the beginning. But it's always the same thing. Yes it's like the funny story we have heard too often, we still find it funny, but we don't laugh any more. (Pause.) (p.20)
Under the circumstances, a banal sentence or two, or, even a mere interrogative could take on, and, add, colour to the intense stage experience—

Nell: Have you anything else to say to me?
Nagg: No.
Nell: Are you quite sure? (Pause.). (p.20).

What need could such a dramaturgy have of metaphors, when the ordinary work-a-day exchange can be shown to have potent pressure, and, concrete on-stage contextualization lends to this simple exchange bewildering overtones. Word-articulations themselves, pile intensity upon dramaturgic intensity to the on-stage experience of a something taking its course to an extremely painful End. A practically empty stage, a tableau, a pantomine, language dramaturgy and human corporeality, the last two at their tritest banal, help position on-stage, a harsh existential condition harrowingly close to its End, and as yet not finished, the grind of its terminal close itself a nerve-racking existential phenomenon.

The human-dustbins contribute remarkably to the play's technique which is particularly conscious that it must keep theme and technique in tow, for the shape of the thought was of primary interest to Beckett. Variations on the same theme, and, to suit these variations, the corresponding change in dramaturgy, makes the on-stage Non-ent presentation appear original and fresh. Thus, if once, drama grades laughter as 'heartily, less heartily and still less heartily', It also has unhappiness non-challantly spoken of as funny. As in the Godot-play so in Endgame, repetitions of the word 'happy', decant the word of all its meaning. It is when Nagg mistakes that a story he had told Nell had made her
happy. Nell disagrees, and at the conclusion adds her requiem--

Nell: It was because I felt happy.

Nagg: (Indignant.) It was not, it was not, it was my story and nothing else. Happy! Don't you laugh at it still? Everytime I tell it. Happy!

Nell: It was deep, deep. And you could see down to the bottom. So white. So clean. (p.21)

The 'bottom' it was, that had knocked off, and, the waters had muddied. The meaning-content of the word 'happy' had got itself besmirched and had now taken on an exclamation mark! And therefore, Nell sounds the requiem. The Godot-play also had its share of stifled laughter, that ended in grimaces. However, the strategy in the previous play was different. Now, the three-generation, dustbin-wheelchair-stiff-walk hierarchy, in an insecure temporary shelter, holed-up against a cataclysmic outside, is itself, a variation on the theme of the Non-ent, vis-a-vis the Godot-play. It gives fresh dramaturgic shape and even variety to the on-stage Nothing-is, which now is grinding to its painful final halt. Add to the grotesque pathos of this, the many strategies for situating on-stage the purposeless corporeal presence, and the drama of the Absurd takes a novel dramaturgic shape. Thus, in Endgame, the language-dynamic also has different manifestations and comes as a refreshing encounter with articulation. Language in Endgame is worked under different compulsions quite distinct from its Godot variety. In Endgame, cross-talk is limited, though its contribution to the accumulating intensity of the Ending of a brutally irrational Non-ent remains quite significant. However, sheer language has now a different charge assigned to it. This potential in language-articulation was always there, yet it had each time to find its appropriate theme.
The theme found in this case is that of a Non-ent, and the specific potential inherent in the language dynamic is creatively exploited to give to the particular variation of the Beckettian theme its proper theatric shape. The way Nagg is made to tell the tailor's story is one example, though only the third till p.21. Hamm's own opening speech is its second on-stage demonstration, having even Pauses, Yawns, and a posturing, as well as a clearing of the throat, a joining of finger-tips, and, a whistle to help in the speech deconstruction. These are new ways of exploring utterance, so far, in Beckettian theatre. Much of it has been analysed extensively, earlier in this chapter. Clov's opening utterance was an early manifestation of the fact that language use in Endgame, would be different from its Godot-play variation. Also, visions, dreams, and stories which are taboo in the earlier play, get repeated mention. Waiting for Godot does have the shouted-out, Lucky language-fantasy, and Pozzo, and Vladimir, are also allowed an epiphany each. However, story-telling used as a dramatic device is an entirely new experiment in Endgame, and Hamm is permitted to indulge in it to the full. Drama does have its repertoire of psychic and emotional states, still sheer voice modulation, directed seven times as narrative, and six times as normal, with thirty-nine Pauses in between, is original in Beckett. Infact such extended speeches, fractured and re-structured as they go along are many in Endgame. The tailor's story told by Nagg to Nell is one such exercise. An Englishman wanted a pair of pants stitched and so went to a tailor. Nagg begins in his normal voice--

Let me tell it to you again (p.21)

He then adopts the raconteur's voice which takes the Englishman to the tailor. The next modulation makes Nagg speak in the tailor's voice, telling the customer to come
after four days. The raconteur again announces the Englishman at the tailors', and Nagg once more modulates his voice to speak like the tailor. In this way the voices of the raconteur and the tailor alternate about four times each, the tailor putting the customer away each time, with some excuse or the other. He had either messed up the seat, or, had spoilt the crutch; or it was the fly! Of course the customer's voice must be there as an added variation. Each time and all along, it is only the de-constructed speech of Nagg-in-the-dust-bin. After so many de-constructions of a single-voice, there is a Pause and we hear Nagg's normal voice once again--

I never told it worse (Pause.).

Nagg is gloomy--

I tell this story worse and worse' (Pause.) (p.21)

Nagg cuts the story short, and begins as the raconteur. The customer was loosing patience. He wanted the tailor damned to hell for having taken three months to stitch a pair of pants when God took just six days to create the World! This scandalized the tailor who was surprised at God's great hurry, and protested--

But my dear Sir, my dear Sir, look -- (disdainful gesture, disgustedly) - at the WORLD -- (Pause.) - and look (loving gesture, proudly) at my TROUSERS! (Pause.) (p.22).

Now, what could be the singular purpose of modulating a single voice in this way? Was it to emphasize that words are just voiced sounds and no more? That, as a consequence,
reality actually eludes the grasp of words considered as consecrated repositories of meaning. A single voice could be modulated to demonstrate this harsh reality abundantly as a very discomfiting, on-stage, comic work-out! It would be banal to the core, but at the same time frighteningly close in its presentation of the irrational existential condition. The other thrust of Nagg's was of course against divinity. It appeared in too great a hurry and cared less for its creation than did a tailor for the pair of trousers he was ordered to stitch. The existential bind, being an abortion was therefore, a tragic grotesquerie. What Nagg's story also does is to allow Beckett to situate the joke on divinity at an appropriate juncture in the play. Beckett uses technique, again and again, to shape his theme about existence being hapless, hopeless, aborted and irrational. The Christian God and conventional thinking about him, and his so-called Creation, are hardly ever out of Beckett's creative mind. However, at the slightest excuse Beckett gives divinity a severedrubbing. One may call his a nihilist, or, bend over backwards as some critics do, to show that the thought of God was forever in Beckett's mind. But to belittle the God-Idea was almost an obsession with the playwright. The fact of the matter is, that both Waiting for Godot, and Endgame, treat the God-Idea, and, the Man-in-God's-Image syndrome as ready material for theatric rebuke at all opportune moments. The tailor's story was one such opportunity, confirming, however grotesquely, and, with whatever hilarity, that the existential imbroglio was always in a sorry aborted state, illusion-ridden pigeon-truths notwithstanding! On the contrary, the tailor's delay, though propped up by lame excuses, was by far, a better act, care having gone into the production of the Englishman's pair of trousers! Drama is always geared to direct and shape Beckett's notion of the Absurd Non-ent which incidentally, he found all existence to be. Nagg's five voice-modulations, put God-the-Creator
notion, through the dramaturgic sieve anvil of these voice changes. The story told in this particular way had the added advantage of helping counter the high-sounding ‘WORLD’ with ‘TROUSERS’ as just one other voiced sound. What need had the playwright of a metaphor, or, other figurative device, when voice-modulation had enough dramaturgic potential, if properly appropriated, to heap accretions on-stage of a None-ent in the throes of a painful end. Add to Nagg’s story old Nell’s impassive response, eyes staring, followed by Nagg’s forced laugh, and the tragi-comic grotesquerie will be still more profound in its discomfiting simplicity. The discomfiture persists when Nagg is cut short by an order of ‘Silence’ shouted by the hammy Hamm.

Nagg and Nell, the human dust-bins of heredity and age are overwhelming presentational realities on the Endgame stage.¹⁴ Recourse to a King Hamm’s sudden exasperation, and furious frenzy helps link the heredity-and-age-predicament, to the Hamm-and-Clov-still-not-old situation, and the harsh existential impasse on-stage, becomes a general condition. Hamm’s exasperation deserves full quotation---

Hamm: (Exasperated.) Have you not finishehd? Will you never finish? (With sudden fury.) Will this never finish? (Nagg disappears into his bin, closes the lid behind him. Nell does not move. Frenziedly.) My kingdom for a nightman! (He whistles. Enter Clov.) Clear away this muck! Chuck it in the sea! (Clov goes to bins, halts.)

Nell: So white.

Hamm: What? What’s she blathering about? (Clov stoops, takes Nell’s hand, feels her pulse)

Nell: (To Clov.) Desert! (Clov lets go her hand, pushes her back in the bin, closes the lid.)

Clov: (Returning to his place beside the chair.) She has no pulse.
Hamm: What was she drivelling about?
Clov: She told me to go away, into the desert.
Hamm: Damn busybody! Is that all?
Clov: No.
Hamm: What else?
Clov: I didn’t understand.
Hamm: Have you bottled her?
Clov: Yes.
Hamm: Are they both bottled?
Clov: Yes.
Hamm: Screw down the lids. (Clov goes towards door.)
Time enough. (Clov halts.) My anger subsides, I’d like to pee.
Clov: (With alacrity.) I’ll go and get the catheter.
(He goes towards the door.)
Hamm: Time enough. (Clov halts.) Give me my pain-killer.
Clov: It’s too soon. (Pause.). It’s too soon on the top of your tonic, it wouldn’t act.
Hamm: In the morning they brace you up and in the evening they calm you down. Unless it’s the other way round. (Pause.)(pp.22-23)

That needed to be quoted entire, because once again it is a rhythm generated to shape the theme which the Beckettian ouevre is committed to. Of course, it is one of a piece and accrues its share to the already profound concretion, on-stage, of a bestial and meaningless existence, taking a slow course, to its cataclysmic End. The start of the rhythm restores Hamm to centre-stage as Man, the Actor-King, in God’s Image. However it is an angry and furious Actor-King Hamm, exasperated with heredity and weary of existence. From-
'have you not finished?' it is an easy language transition to---

Will this never finish?

And what a King to want to wish away his kingdom? The overtone of 'nightmare' in 'nightman' lurks leeringly. Beckett could not resist the fact, that 'nightmare' and 'nightman' are just one sound different. There is gain in this slight change. For, Hamm's kingdom was indeed a nightmare. What with old age, and an invalid, irrational, corporeal presence, all part of a harsh existential constriction, Hamm calls heredity, 'muck'. He wants it thrown away into the sea; the 'busybodies' that parents were in procreating such aborted phenomenon as human beings! He orders them bottled and screwed. That was an aborted progeny's revulsion of heredity. But, was not Man, a King, in God's Image? However, the theme being of an empty Non-ent, Beckettian drama does not spare even that. He makes it an exhausted Man, infected to the core with existential cruelty! But then, the progeny's violent reaction to heredity is impotent to say the least, because King Hamm is weary and powerless, and can only keep repeating 'Time enough'. Also, the Actor-King's posture, 'My anger subsides--' is god-like, but the part of the sentence left unquoted, demolishes the tragic hero, the Actor-King-Deity, because the whole piece reads---

My anger subsides, I'd like to pee (p.23)

The tragic-hero was in a pathetic strait indeed, for he needed a pain-killer, and even a catheter. He was time-weary too. Drama deprecates the concept of a Man-King-Tragic-Hero, as well as the Deity-in-Man illusions. The generated rhythm
culminates when Hamm is heard to express the disgust at a repetitious brace-up, and, calm down---

In the morning they brace you up and in the evening they calm you down. Unless it's the other way round. (Pause.) (p.23).

The idea that Man was at the centre of creation, and also, the travesty of this idea, were never far from Hamm's mind because the playwright himself appeared extra-ordinarily obsessed with both the idea and its travesty. Infact, an entire quotation is given below as a characteristic example of Beckettian drama shaping an empty Non-ent through sheer erasure. The quotation also accentuates though its drama, a trapped interior, and, a cataclysmic outside. It once again dramatizes a torturous End at its tether, and, destroys the notion of Man's centrality in the universe---

Hamm: Take me for a little turn. (Clov goes behind the chair and pushes it forward). Not too fast! (Clov pushes chair). Right round the world. (Clov pushes chair). Hug the walls, then back to the centre again. (Clov pushes chair). I was right in the centre, wasn't I?

Clov: (Pushing.) Yes.

Hamm: We'd need a proper wheel-chair. With big wheels. Bicycle wheels! (Pause.) Are you hugging?

Clov: (Pushing.) Yes.

Hamm: (Groping for wall.) It's a lie! Why do you lie to me?

Clov: (Bearing closer to wall.) There! There!

Hamm: Stop. (Clov stops chair close to back wall. Hamm lays his hand against wall). Old wall! (Pause.) Beyond is the --- other hell. (Pause.Violently.) Closer! Closer! Up against!

Clov: Take away your hand. (Hamm withdraws his hand. Clov rams chair against wall.) There! (Hamm leans towards wall, applies his ear to it.)
Hamm: Do you hear? (He strikes the wall with his knuckles.) Do you hear? Hollow bricks! (He strikes again). All that’s Hollow! (Pause. He straightens up. Violently.) That’s enough. Back!

Clov: We haven’t done the round.

Hamm: Back to my place! (Clov pushes chair back to centre.) Is that my place?

Clov: Yes, that’s your place.

Hamm: Am I right in the centre?

Clov: I’ll measure it.

Hamm: More or less! More or less!

Clov: (Moving chair slightly.) There!

Hamm: I’m more or less in the centre?

Clov: I’d say so.

Hamm: You’d say so! Put me right in the centre!

Clov: I’ll go and get the tape.

Hamm: Roughly! Roughly! (Clov moves chair slightly.) Bang in the centre!

Clov: There! (Pause.)

Hamm: I feel a little too far to the left. (Clov moves chair slightly.) Now I feel a little too far to the right. (Clov moves chair slightly.) I feel a little too far forward. (Clov moves chair slightly.) Now I feel a little too far back. (Clov moves chair slightly.) Don’t stay there (i.e. behind the chair), you give me the shivers. (Clov returns to his place beside the chair)

Clov: If I could kill him I’d die happy. (Pause.) (pp.23-24).

Drama, is in fact, always, an opportunity for the playwright to further his theme and shape either theme or dramaturgy according to each other’s needs, even as the play proceeds. We have just had one example of how Beckett
exploits these dramaturgic and thematic opportunities. With Nagg and Nell, the earlier generation, ageing, legless and constricted inside dustbins, the next generation, also of invalids decides to do a round of 'the world'. The on-stage situation is already dense with heaped up accumulations of the gradual grind of a halt to a harsh, irrational condition. Of course, all that Hamm can do is to order Clov to take him around the shelter moving along its walls. But, with the outside completely devastated, was not the ram-shackle shelter all that was left of the 'WORLD'. In anycase, the catastrophe needed Hamm's inspection, and with Hamm and Clov on a 'round', a pathetic drama is set a going. The movement is from centre-stage to the periphery and back. This helps literally act out on-stage, the notion of Man's centrality in the Universe. Remaining transfixed to the centre, and then, going away from it; talking of a return, and then actually returning to it; and, adjusting and re-adjusting, now to the left, now to the right, in order to achieve and acquire centrality, all put the entire notion of centrality up for profound comic exploitation. The move, away from the centre, and after this, the attempt to recover that central position, is made to look ridiculous. The notion of a universal human centrality is rendered a comic grotesquerie, to be uncomfortably laughed at. It situates on-stage, a never-at-the-centre image of Man. This is one more discomforting reality. For, try as one may, the holed-up interiority, even in a shelter made of hollow bricks, cannot be escaped from. And where would the escape be to in any case, the outside being in complete ruins.

Here is the ridicule of the entire effort to regain the centre in dramaturgic detail---

Hamm: Am I right in the centre?.

Clov: I'll measure it, I'll get the tape.
Hamm: I feel a little too far to the left. Now, feel a little too far forward, Bang in the centre.

Clov: There! (pp.23-24)

This is one of the several instances of drama in which the dramatist appears to revel at an operation-demolish. A notion is activated into a little drama, and before, it is time out, the anvil, or, sieve of the playwright's technique leaves little of the notion that could be held sacred, or, dear. Indeed, the five Beckett plays textually-analysed in this thesis are full of such teasing dramaturgic experiments. They help shape the playwright's theme of the Absurd, even as each play proceeds in its own way to shape the Non-ent that the universal predicament according to Beckett is.

*Endgame* next directs audience attention to the catastrophe outside the hollow-brick-walled shelter. The excruciating painful End was indeed close, though it was too slow in coming, and this, like Hamlet's delay is what allows *Endgame* to last its full length. The End, as it comes to its slow grind, is kept alive as a traumatic trundle till the very close, and is contextualized on-stage as a torture. Audience attention is made to rivet to the outside, in whatever manner their imaginations complied. Clov is again asked by Hamm to report on the weather around the shelter, and once more it is the simplicity of the exchange that is terrifying---

Hamm: What's the weather like?

Clov: The same as usual.

Hamm: Look at the earth.

Clov: I've looked.
Hamm: With the glass?

Clov: No need of the glass.

Hamm: Look at it with the glass.

Clov: I'll go and get the glass.
(Exit Clov)

Hamm: No need of the glass!
(Enter Clov with telescope.)

Clov: I'm back again with the glass. (He goes to window right, looks up at it.) I need the steps.


The outside is completely devastated, and therefore, the simplicity of the language rhythm is as close as can be to the simple though intense experience of it. And the surprise of it is that it is a report merely, but still profoundly overwhelming in its apparent artless detail. It is ordinary every day expression which in the context on-stage, ceases to be banal, and acquires the colour of terrifying implication. Hamm's order that Clov look at the devastation outside and Clov's answer 'I've looked', followed by Hamm's insistence that Clov should look at it with the telescope, and Clov's reiteration that there was no need of that, are such simple statements, that the alignment of their rhythm with the ruin all around is immediate, and therefore, the rapport with it deep and intense.

After this follows the telescope and ladder stage-business, and the devastated outside is looked at a second-time from the high-walled windows. However, as Clov is about it, he turns the telescope from the catastrophe beyond to the auditorium inside. Earlier in Waiting for Godot, Estragon had on one occasion spoken to Vladimir, on-stage, first with his back to the audience, and had described
the place where they were waiting without any success for an absent presence, Godot, as a---

Charming spot (Act I, p.13)

Then he had turned to the audience and with nonchalance had concluded--

Inspiring prospects (Act I, p.14)

Beckett had made Estragon take the audience into the experience of the Absurd in one dramaturgic move. In similar fashion Clov is made to use his telescope, first to look at the ruin outside, and, then at the audience in the hall, inside--

Clov: Things are livening up. (He gets up on ladder, raises the telescope, lets it fall.) I did it on purpose. (He gets down picks up the telescope, turns it on auditorium.) I see --- a multitude --- in transports --- of Joy. (Pause.) That's what I call a magnifier. (p.25)

An exchange on 'laugh' follows; there are four such exchanges, being on pp.16, 19, 25 and 41, even as there are four exchanges on 'eyes', and, three on 'yesterday'. The exchange on p.25, repeats the exchange on p.16, but the order of the speaker is reversed. In the first, Hamm initiates as well as concludes, and, in the second, Clov concludes the theatric exercise, after having begun with a question himself---

: Well? ... Don't we laugh?

Hamm: (After reflection.) I don't.

Clov: (After reflection.) Nor I. (p.25)
The last such exchange on laugh or 'guffaw' is on p.41---

Clov: (After reflection). I couldn’t guffaw again today.

Hamm: (After reflection). Nor I. (Pause.)

Earlier, 'laughter' was also graded as hearty, less hearty, and still less hearty. Thus, the End of a cruelly harsh existential condition is also such a halting grind, that any kind of joy or its expression is unthinkable. Clov next looks out of the window, at the catastrophe that surrounds the ramshackle shelter and reports to Hamm below, who was on his ‘round’ of ‘the world’ in his wheel-chair---

Clov: Let’s see. (He looks, moving the telescope.) Zero --- (he looks) --- Zero --- (he looks) --- and Zero.

Hamm: Nothing stirs, All is --

Clov: Zer --

Hamm: (Violently). Wait till you’re spoken to! (Normal voice.) All is --- all is --- all is what? (Violently.) All is what?

Clov: What all is? In a word? Is that what you want to know? Just a moment. (He turns the telescope on the without, looks, lowers the telescope, turns towards Hamm.) Corpsed. (Pause.) Well? Content? (p.25).

The moment Clov looks outside and says ‘Let’s see’, a rhythm sets in, travelling through Clov’s ‘Zero --- zero --- and zero’. When it is Hamm’s turn to speak, the movement is still on, ‘Nothing stirs. All is ---’, which Clov takes up in his half uttered ‘zer---’. It becomes violent at Hamm’s ‘Wait till you’re spoken to!’, and normal when Hamm is haltingly at ‘All is --- all is --- all is what?’ then once again it becomes violent at the repeat of the impatient
query, 'All is what?', Clov is made to dally with the rhythm a bit. The aim of the exercise all along is to make Clov culminate the rhythmic beat at its 'finale' on the outside--

--- Corpsed. (Pause.) Well? Content? (p.25)

Could not have Clov spoken this 'finale' at the beginning! But then, this is what drama is all about. For, to make the drama of 'the finale' very effective, it had to be led to, as a strategy almost. The drama in 'Corpsed' is carried over into the beats of 'Well? Content', and by its close is well-nigh tapered. In a similar exercise, Clov's 'GREY' is led to, as a 'finale' to an initiated rhythm. Of course, a whole quotation will be needed to make this clear, the telescope and ladder stage - business being part of the entire exercise--

Hamm: Look at the sea.

Clov: It's the same.

Hamm: Look at the ocean!
(Clov gets down, takes a few steps toward window left, goes back for ladder, carries it over and sets it down under window left, gets up on it, turns the telescope on the without, looks at length. He starts, lowers the telescope, examines it, turns it again on the without.)

Clov: Never seen anything like that!

Hamm: (Anxious.) What? A sail? A fin? Smoke?

Clov: (Looking.) The light is sunk.
Hamm: (Relieved.) Pah! We all knew that.

Clov: (Looking.) There was a bit left.

Hamm: The base.

Clov: (Looking.) Yes.

Hamm: And now?

Clov: (Looking). All gone.

Hamm: No gulls?

Clov: (Looking.) Gulls!

Hamm: And the horizon? Nothing on the horizon?

Clov: (lowering the telescope, turning towards Hamm, exasperated.) What in God’s name could there be on the horizon? (Pause.)

Hamm: The waves, how are the waves?

Clov: The waves? (He turns the telescope on the waves.) Lead.

Hamm: And the sun?

Clov: (Looking.) Zero.

Hamm: But it should be sinking. Look again.

Clov: (Looking.) Damn the sun.

Hamm: Is it night already then?
Clov: (Looking.) No.

Hamm: Then what is it?

Clov: (Looking.) Grey. (Lowering the telescope, turning towards Hamm, louder.) Grey! (Pause. Still Louder) GREY! (Pause. He gets down, approaches Hamm from behind, whispers in his ear.)

Hamm: (Starting.) Grey! Did I hear you say grey?

Clov: Light black. From pole to pole.

Hamm: You exaggerate. (Pause.) Don't stay there, you give me the shivers. (pp.25-26).

_____

This is language-dynamic literally holding the pathos of tragedy at its profoundest simple. Whoever could treat this as a 'banal' conversation only? The rhythm of the piece has inner propulsion, almost inviting each time the next dramatic utterance. It has beat and rhythm, and even the feel of the tragedy of an existential predicament, minus the conventional trappings of the drama, trumpeted for centuries as 'tragedy'. There was a catastrophe outside, and the maddening grind to a close, of a something, that appeared taking its course felt inside. The End of the harsh existential irrationality was itself a disquieting farce and appeared routine. It was pathetic, awesome, and grotesque---

Hamm: Last night I saw inside my breast, there was a big sore.

Clov: Pah! You saw your heart.

Hamm: No, it was living. (Pause. Anguished.) Clov!
Clov: Yes.
Hamm: What's happening?
Clov: Something is taking its course. (Pause.) (p. 26)

Beckett can be overwhelming, because next is yet another exercise in language rhythm which sets on-stage 'there', the predicament of a Beckettian hero's desperate desire to mean something, and, the frustration of a choke off that dismisses the effort as a good joke---

Hamm: Clov!

Clov: (Impatiently.) What is it?

Hamm: We're not beginning to --- to --- mean something?

Clov: Mean something! You and I, mean something! (Brief laugh.) Ah that's a good one! (pp. 26-27).

This gives Beckett the opportunity to bring the voice of a 'rational being' into play, further concretizing the on-stage existential bind as irrational. It is done by deconstructing Hamm's voice into two: his own, and the voice of 'the rational being'. One small little sentence, interjected in between two normal articulations, is enough for the drama of the occasion, because with the already abundant context on-stage, the normal was not 'the rational', nor was 'the rational' normal either---

(voice of rational being.) Ah, good, now I see what it is, yes, now I understand what they're at! (p. 27).
At this Clov starts, drops the telescope and scratches his belly with both hands, whereafter Hamm resumes in his normal voice--

And without going so far as that, we ourselves... (with emotion)... We ourselves... at certain moments... (Vehemently.) To think perhaps it won’t all have been for nothing! (p.27)

This is the grotesque tragedy of the human effort ‘to mean something’, worked out live at the anvil of a sure and deft dramaturgy, committed to shape even the End of a harsh irrational existential condition, as itself, an on stage traumatic experience. But, what if under the circumstances, a probable source of re-production and procreation were discovered! That startling experience too, is given a drama with its anvil and sieve ready to shape the experience into a shocking trauma. This is because, what with a cataclysmic catastrophe outside, and, the harsh, constricted, existential condition of the four survivors inside, the remotest possibility of pro creation would be anathema! And therefore, Clov is horrified when he has to scratch himself, and drama makes him agonizingly discover that it is after all a flea! The tragedy is that the existential impasse is a profound grotesquie also--

Clov: (Anguished, scratching himself.) I have a flea!

Hamm: A flea! Are there still fleas?

Clov: On me there's one. (Scratching.) Unless it's a crablouse.

Hamm: (Very perturbed.) But humanity might start from there all over again! Catch him, for the love of God!

Clov: I’ll go and get the powder.
(Exit Clov.)
Hamm: A flea! This is awful! What a day! (Enter Clov with a sprinkling-tin.)

Clov: I'm back again, with the insecticide.

Hamm: Let him have it! (p.27).

The stage-business of sprinkling insecticide inside his trousers to kill the potential pro creator intruder is the next obvious step. Clov stops, looks, waits, starts, frenziedly shakes more powder into his trousers, stoops, looks, and waits. Then ensues the exchange on the startling possibility of the flea having laid life---

Clov: The bastard!

Hamm: Did you get him?

Clov: Looks like it. (He drops the tin and adjusts his trousers.) Unless he's laying doggo.

Hamm: Laying! Lying you mean? unless he's lying doggo.

Clov: Ah? One says lying? One doesn't say laying?

Hamm: Use your head, can't you. If he was laying we'd be bitched.

Clov: Ah-(Pause.) (p.27).

The same predicament, worked out in prose would be a different exercise altogether. The shock of a potential pro creator starting another aborted existence all over again comes on stage as a live trauma. That it is grotesque also, adds to the profoundness of the tragedy, because what with a Mind-Body mismatch, Being itself is a tragic grotesque. Some would call a human being a Cartesean Centaur. Others would dismiss him as plain abortion! Escape there was none, rafts or no rafts. The time for the pain killer was also not
ripe. It is a sad impasse indeed. However the blind invalid questions Clov---

Hamm: Wait! (Clov halts.) How are your eyes?
Clov: Bad.
Hamm: But you can see.
Clov: All I want.
Hamm: How are your legs?
Clov: Bad.
Hamm: But you can walk.
Clov: I come... and go. (p.28).

Now it is time in the play for the second extended Hamm speech delivery. It has almost 20 odd lines and about 240 words, a feature repeated only thrice in Waiting for Godot, in which Lucky's Speech is the longest delivery, and Pozzo and Vladimir are permitted an epiphany each. Otherwise, the Godot-play with its theme of Waiting is mostly shaped by the drama of cross-talk and human corporeality both at its subtlest simple. Endgame has a penchant for long extended deliveries, a new variety of which is successfully put into play-length experiment in Happy Days. In Endgame, such extended speeches are also many. In fact, Clov begins with an 8-line delivery of about 100 words, to be followed immediately by Hamm's first 20-line speech of about 240 words, de-structured with the help of Yawns and Pauses. Later, Nagg also speaks almost 25 lines at a stretch, while he tells the tailor's story. Of course Nagg's story is told as a different dramaturgic exercise altogether. It is broken up into five modulations of the same voice. The speech has already been analysed earlier. The break-up of a small Hamm delivery into a normal and a 'rational' being's voice has also already been considered. It was achieved by
interpolating a few words supposed to be the rational being's but spoken by Hamm in the midst of his normal speech delivery. The 20-line, second Hamm exercise, prophecies with relish, loss of sight, and, infinite emptiness for Clov. However, it is more the trauma of a blind Hamm that comes through, both as a personal, as well as, a general existential condition. Hamm was blind, while Clov, Nagg and Nell had at least eyes to see, though even 'normal vision' distorted reality, and therefore, was insufficient to get at the truth of anything, if that is, there were any such 'universals', or, 'ultimates' at all! The speech of Hamm has its 'One-day---' rhythms, that culminate in Pauses. The rhythmic beat in 'One day---'/'One-day---'/'Yes, one day---' has in it the ritual of a prophecy of an unpleasant future that will certainly befall Clov, and, from which, he never would escape, because that was in the nature of the Absurd itself. The dramaturgic variety, to which language-use can be put, is once again at display in this Hamm delivery. Language nuances in Waiting for Godot are far different from the language nuances in Endgame. For, Beckett, the playwright, is a master language-performer, at his creative best. It will be worth the effort to break up the prophetic Hamm speech on pp.28 and 29, Pause-wise, and feel the pathos of human existence, reduced more and more, to a mere harsh corporeality. It is a tragic rhythm, with each rhythmic chunk, deepening the utterance about an unassailable state of affairs, from which, there is no escape---

One day you'll be blind, like me, you'll be sitting there, a speck in the void, in the dark, forever, like me. (Pause.)

One day you'll say to yourself, I'm tired, I'll sit down, and you'll go and sit down. Then you'll say, I'm hungry, I'll get up and get something to eat. But you won't get up. You'll say, I shouldn't have sat down,
but since I have I’ll sit on a little longer, then I’ll
get up and get something to eat. But you won’t get up
and you won’t get anything to eat. (Pause.)

You’ll look at the wall a while, then you’ll say,
I’ll close my eyes, perhaps have a little sleep, after
that I’ll feel better, and you’ll close them. And when
you open them again there’ll be no wall any more.
(Pause.) (p.28).

The following part of this Hamm-delivery prophecies
infinite emptiness for Clov, though it does not
begin with a ritual ‘One Day--’;

Infinite emptiness will be all around you, all the
resurrected dead of all the ages wouldn’t fill it, and
there you’ll be like a little bit of grit in the middle
of the steppe. (Pause.) (pp.28-29).

In its last movement, the speech has a slight change of
beat, ‘Yes, one day--’

Yes, one day you’ll know what it is, you’ll be like me,
except that you won’t have anyone with you, because you
won’t have had pity on anyone and because there won’t
be anyone left to have pity on. (Pause.) (p.29)

A prophecy for Clov, it is a dreadful experience for
the audience. The blind Hamm’s centre-stage, wheel-chair
presence, at each utterance, reciprocates the blind invalid’s
tragic drone. There is nostalgia for the old questions and
old answers---

Ah, the old questions, the old answers, there’s
nothing like them. (p.29).
And for the green hill's---

--- here we're down in a hole. (Pause.) But beyond the hills? Eh? Perhaps it is still green Eh? (Pause.) Flora! Pomona! (Ecstatically.) Ceres! (Pause.) Perhaps you won't need to go very far. (p.30).

However, Hamm's madman would not have been impressed, drag¿ him as Hamm may to the window of the asylum-cell, to show him, the rising corn, or, the herring fleet, or, whatever it was, that Hamm at that time, had thought beautiful and lovely. The madman would snatch away his hand and go back into his corner, appalled; because for the madman all was just ash! Of course, the End that is forever approaching is never out of the playwright's mind, and, in sundry ways, he keeps it in the play's rhythm. Be it as a casual 'We're getting on', or, in the covert reminder that the toy-dog was yet 'unfinished', or, as an exchange between Hamm and Clov---

Hamm: Clov!

Clov: Yes.

Hamm: Do you not think this has gone on long enough?

Clov: Yes! (Pause.) What?

Hamm: This... this... thing.

Clov: I've always thought so. (Pause.) You not?

Hamm: (Gloomily.) Then it's a day like any other day.

Clov: As long as it lasts. (Pause.) All life long the same inanities. (Pause.) (p.33).

The tragedy is that each day it is the same, for each day has remained the same; the same inanities had persisted all life long, so that if earlier, the Universe is found corpsed, it now is at a stink---
Hamm: Yes, but how would I know, if you were merely dead in your kitchen?

Clov: Well... sooner or later I'd start to stink.

Hamm: You stink already. The whole place stinks of corpses.

Clov: The whole universe.

Hamm: (Angrily.) To hell with the universe! (Pause.) (p.33).

As repeatedly asserted, the fact of the matter is that ideas, words and actions are all worked dramaturgically at their simplest most common-place, and concretized as intense on-stage experience, being of the very stuff of the existential human condition. The entire dramaturgic exercise is geared to present the collapse of conventional, habit-ridden meaning, and, reinforce each time, the meaninglessness of existential irrationality. Be it the effort at having an idea (p.34), or, of the life to come (p.35), or, a question of honour (p.35), or, the attitude to God when at prayer (p.38), or, the problematic of a 'yesterday' (p.32), or, laughter (p.25), or, of Man being at the centre of creation (p.24), the existential condition is Absurd and Irrational.

The play, by now, is more than half-way through, and therefore a long speech spread over two and quarter pages was thought in order. As earlier pointed out, in Waiting for Godot, the extended Lucky delivery is re-constructed as a shouted rhythm of cliches, which are pronouncedly made defunct of meaning through sheer repetition, and yet, by that very ritualistic beat, are restored into a meaning-carrying potential. In any case, such a language collapse, regenerated into some semblance of meaning, is not repeated ever in Endgame, because this play has its own language rhythms to explore and discover. Only an artist, who had full control over the subtle nuances of language drama itself,
even in its most commonplace manifestations, could make the on-stage event such a profoundly intense experience. With that, we come to Hamm’s three long deliveries on pp. 35-37, 44-45 and, pp. 51-53; and also, to Clov’s long speech on pp. 46-47 with its ritual repeat of ‘Sometimes I wonder ---’, as well as to the slightly shorter piece on p. 51, which has the ‘Then one day ---’ rhythmic refrain.

Let us begin with the dramaturgy specific to the two and a quarter page long, 80-line Hamm exercise, which is the largest in the play, and, easily has 900 words in it. Its deconstruction is new, because it is a fresh and differently creative language exercise. It has 39 Pauses, 6 directions for ‘normal’ tone, and 7 for a ‘narrative’ speech delivery. It tells a story, which has no Estragon caveats against it, for indeed, quite a few stories are told in Endgame. In fact, it would not be out of place to say that ‘narration’ as dramaturgy is new to the Beckettian œuvre so far. Stories as illusions were taboo in the Godot-play, because they propped up deceitful illusions, and instituted metaphysical systems, with which the factual reality of a futile existence did not at all tally. Now, in Endgame, there are many stories, though they are not told to support illusions. On the contrary, a Hamm exercise is a typical Hamm performance. It begins with a Pozzo-like utterance, for Hamm re-capitulates---

Where was I? (Pause.) (p. 35).

This indeed is a posturing. Gloomily, Hamm speaks out one more permutation of the Ending game, reminding the audience of Clov’s first utterance, after the opening tableau and the pantomime--

(Gloomily) It’s finished, we’re finished (Pause.) Nearly finished’ (Pause.) There’ll be no more speech (Pause.) Something dripping in my head, ever since the
fontanelles. (Stiffled hilarity of Nagg) Splash, splash, always on the same spot. (Pause.) Perhaps its a little vein. (Pause.) A little artery (Pause.) (More animated.) Enough of that, its story time, where was I (Pause.) (p.35)

This piece is punctuated by Pauses and spoken in normal voice. It sets both the thematic and dramaturgic tone. Its recapitulating posture re-iterates the earlier permutations of Endgame's 'Ending' dramaturgy. All is finished. It re-asserts the debilitation Hamm's body suffers. Or, was it the pain of a Mind- that perpetual dripping in the head — unable to adjust itself to a sheer torso-condition, the Mind/Body disjunct being the prime affliction of Man, the Cartesean Centaur. This far, let it be called the first part of this Hamm utterance.

Next, the fact that it was story-time takes over, a situation the Godot-play could never visualize. Voice de-construction makes Hamm adopt a narrative tone, and, as narrator he begins--

The man came crawling towards me, on his belly. Pale, wonderfully pale and thin he seemed on the point of -- (Pause.) (p.35)

Here once again is the posturing of a Pozzo's Man-in-God's Image, and it can hardly be missed. Where cosmic range is the key-setter, the social relationship of Man with Man can hardly be the prime mover. Simply stated, it is the way God is supposed to behave with Man, and, a God being hard to come by, on-stage, the notional Man-in-God's Image, shapes the theme. Another Pause ensues. Hamm, the narrator, begins again, and in first person singular, goes on to deliver a full eight lines, punctuated by 4 Pauses. The re-constructed voice situates the God-image, on-stage, in typical Pozzo
style, for, Hamm calmly filled his pipe, puffed a bit, and began---

A ah (Pause.) 'Well, what is it you want? (Pause.) (p.36)

That day the cold was bitter. It was Christmas eve and the temperature zero, but that indeed was seasonable weather and nothing extraordinary. The posturing Hamm, Actor-King. Deity spoke to snivelling Man, after one more Pause in the narrator's voice---

Well, what ill wind blows you my way? He raised his face to me, black with mingled dirt and tears (Pause.) (p.36)

To comment on the theme and its drama, the normal voice of Hamm follows the earlier quoted narrative-piece---

That should do it (p.36)

Again, the narrator’s tone resumes, reinforcing the theme of a snivelling Man confronting an omnipotent god-head---

No, no, don’t look at me, don’t look at me. He dropped his eyes and mumbled something, apologies, I presume (Pause.) (p.36)

The eight line narrator’s tone continues---

I'm a busy man, you know, the final touches, before the festivities, you know what it is. (Pause.) (p.36).
The de-constructed Hamm voice fits easily into the narrator's tone posturing as the indifferent King-Diety—-

Come on now what is the object of this invasion? (Pause.) (p.36)

This is sheer creative manipulation of a single voice, to institute an on-stage image of a careless Diety or King, in the garb of a narrator. Also, since the narrator is presumed omnipresent as well as omniscient, season-change was no obstacle to the Deity-figure Hamm. The snivelling figure of Man, also persisted and did not appear to care for season-changes either—-

It was a glorious bright day, I remember, fifty by the heliometer, but already the sun was sinking down into the --- down among the dead. (p.36)

That ends the narrator's tone, and is followed by a three-word appreciation in Hamm's normal voice--

Nicely put, that.

But after the short intervention of the normal voice, the narrator's tone resumes again. The normal voice interjections are used as convenient foils to the narrator's tone, highlighting the de-structuring of Hamm’s speech. It also help convert the articulations of Hamm now into the Actor's, now the King's, now the Deity's, and back to the narrator's. And therefore, the narrative resumes again---

Come on now, come on, present your petition and let me resume my labours. (Pause.) (p.36)

Artaud's impatient cruel deity cannot be missed here. It appeared too busy, in fact, overbusy and indifferent to the
harsh, aborted, human predicament. Now, Hamm's behaviour could have two possible explanations. First, that he too is infected by the pervasively irrational bestiality all around, and therefore, postures as a narrator, Pozzo-like, or, Caligula-fashion, to do the act one better on the grovelling creature in his story. Also, that social relationships were not as important in Beckett, as was Man's brutal existential irrationality in relation to a Cosmic-situation, where the players were Man and the Universe; and Reason too, and Language; and Truth, Time, Place, and Object; and, an Absolute, the last available particularly, for perpetual Beckettian snicker, and rebuke. Posturing aborted Man was the theme. He was either an omnipotent god, in sorry on-stage manifestations, or, a narrator of naughty stories about such a freak creation, and its cruel and indifferent Creator-in-a-terrible-hurry. Drama could only shape the Beckettian Non-ent, or Nothing-is, if conventional truths were imprecated at the slightest hint or suggestion, be it the remote hint of a language rhythm, or, the least corporeal shift of the human frame or feature. And in this way the on-stage creator demi-god, or, the creature-deformity Man, kept taking various theatric shapes. It was either a demi-god cruelty, or, an aborted servility, Man. Be it in the debunking of the notions of a Saviour, the Logic of Redemption, the Bible, or the Evangelists, which Beckett achieves with effective drama in the Godot-play; or, the hurling of abuse at God, as in Endgame, and, actually situating the deity on-stage, embodied as the narrator in Hamm's story, or, for that matter, as Hamm himself, it is very clear that some kind of a divinity-up-for-ridicule is never out of the playwright's mind. Infact, Godot may be just anybody, but that Beckett takes advantage of the first three letters in that name can hardly be glossed over. And this Godot is made a lurking absent-presence, who fails to keep his promises. Beckett creates situations in which all illusions, particularly those
associated with an omnipotent deity, receive a sound lashing. Be it a Pozzo-posture, or, a Hamm play-acting, the slur on the notion of an absolute deity is forever present. Infact, when at it, the playwright just cannot resist the slightest theatrical manoeuvre to do so, even as he cannot resist the creative use of a language sound, beat, or rhythm. Of course the effort also shapes his theme. The condescending-deity-posture in Hamm becomes more prolonged each time; and, similarly, snivelling Man in the story, always does one better on his previous servility. Man is projected as an obdurate sniveller, before a cruel, indifferent god, an on stage manifestation, for all audience to see.

To return to the long Hamm speech, the next narrative tone extends over about 12 lines, and has just one Pause punctuate it, and that too after most of it has been spoken. Grovelling Man was at the feet of the cynical Hamm, the narrator-demigod. Cynical about the sex of the man's child, their trap-hole existence, and, the distance the man had had to travel, and, cynical also, that the place was still inhabited, Hamm continues---

My little boy, he said, as if the sex mattered, Where did he come from? He named the hole A good half-day, on horse. What are you insinuating? That the place is still inhabited? (p.36).

To this the answer comes, part direct, part indirect, but still in the narrator's tone, the language de-construction assisting the drama of the occasion---

No, no, not a soul, except him and the child-- assuming he existed (p.36).
The demigod made other inquiries and expressed satisfaction---

I inquired about the situation at Kov, beyond the gulf. Not a sinner. Good. (p.36).

The deity was indeed an all too hammy a Hamm. And Man had just been snivelling and grovelling, through history, before such a deity, which, to add to Man's woe did not ever even trust him---

And you expect me to believe you have left your little one back there, all alone, and alive into the bargain? Come now! (Pause.) (p.36)

Beckett exploits the potential in the de-structuring of a single human voice, by repeatedly converting it into a narrator's tone. This is made more effective, by contrasting large chunks of it with smaller normal voice pieces, and, by appropriately placed Pauses. These normal voice interjections come as chorus commentary also. They are quoted together for a better assessment of their theatrical function---

(Pause, Normal voice). Nicely put, that,

or, (Pause, Normal voice). A bit feeble that

or, (Pause, Normal voice). That should do it.

or, (Pause, Normal voice). No, I have done that bit.

or, (Pause, Normal voice). There's English for you, Ah well- (pp.35-36)
And so, as Beckett would have Hamm posture through the narration, the shape of the exercise itself takes the theme along as a profound and intense on-stage experience. Such Man-in-god, Man-god, or, god-man stage-contexts, in a grotesque, dark comedy, could only take Pozzo, Caligula, or Hamm-like stances. It is once again the compulsive Beckettian theme of a Non-ent, that determines the on-stage course and shape of this dramaturgic experience. It generates a traumatic metaphysical anguish, that is concretized, as a ‘there’, slow and prolonged Ending. It is to repeat, the dramatic shape of the last hiccup to a halt, of a cruel existential bind, at the very brink of its disastrous finish.

Now, the Man of this Hamm-story had also been to the narrator on a wild day, when the wind was hard and ferocious. However, the actor-demi-god was impatient and had said he had no time. The pleading and prayer was for bread, while the deity could only offer corn! Hamm, the demi-god narrator, was an active participant in the Man-and-god story. The prayer was for bread. The offer was of corn. The appeal was of a grovelling sniveller. The reply was that of complete hauteur and indifference. Man and god were two irreconciliables.

The condescension of the demi-god narrator continues, while the story’s Man-figure stands imploring and pleading, like Hamm’s three-legged toy-dog, begging for a bone. Man could have corn, for, the granaries were full! But then the demi-god was also sure that the Sniveller’s boy could not be nourished for long, on a pound and a half of porridge! It is a knowledgeable deity indeed, fully aware of Man’s helpless predicament. For, as Lucky would have shouted it, despite this nourishment, Man longs, dwindles and pines. Infact, there was no cure for being ‘holed-up’ on earth. The
drama makes it more effective. Suppose the boy did get his pound and a half of porridge, the demi-god narrator asks--

'And then? (Pause.)' (p.37)

Hamm, the well-aware narrator-deity loses patience---

I lost patience. (Violently.) Use your head, can't you, use your head, you're, on earth, there is no cure for that! (Pause.) (p.37)

This is effective strategy, what with Hamm's lost patience, violent expression and the ensuing Pause. For a moment, Hamm appeared more man than god. In fact, this is an occurrence in the de-structuring of this long speech which repeats several times. It was an existential posture made situate on stage, and no deux et machine of a Jupiter, descending from the heavens, was even thought necessary.

The Man of the story next came on a dry day, intruding on Hamm, the Actor-Narrator-Man-God's lumbago, and the demi-god Hamm became violent---

Zero by the hygrometer. Ideal weather, for my Lumbago. (Pause. Violently.) But what in God's name do you imagine? That the earth will awake in spring? That the rivers and seas will run with fish again? That there's manna in heaven still for imbeciles like you? (Pause.) (p.37)

Piece by piece, nuance by nuance, all that could hold together any kind of faith in a Creator-deity is destroyed through a carefully orchestrated operation demolish. This had to be, for, Pozzo and Hamm may have been posturing, but Beckett was not. If anything that is characteristic about the playwright, it is his commitment to his theme and integrity as an artist. For, Beckett did not posture at all; that is
for sure. He was not posing an affliction just to appear bitten by a 'Jarry-Artaud--Heidegger' bug. He literally lived his theme and lay for days in bed, in a dark room, with a severe cold, and like Renard would have chosen to soil himself rather than move over to the toilet, preferring it as an example of a 'cold, hard, exacting look at himself'.

To repeat for recapitulation, in Beckett, the human being was a Cartesean Centaur, there being no Mind and Body co-ordination, pineal glands being non-existent. Also, the Body was just a complex operation of levers, and therefore movement itself was anathema. Further, there was no getting away from Consciousness and from the persistently nagging obligation to express. Therefore, there was nothing vicarious either about the Beckettian theme, or the Beckettian ouevre. Infact, it is indeed difficult to be either a Beckett thinker, or, a Beckett artist. Ordinarily, feelings of impotence, meaninglessness, futility, or, boredom come in fleeting flashes. Seldom are they fixated obsessions. Beckettian drama makes these fleeting moments permanent fixtures in art, to be read, witnessed on stage, referred to, taught, critically analysed, affirmed, and literally swooned over. Early hostility having rubbed off, and, the so-called obscurities explained and annotated, the danger is that Vladimir - like conversions may yet become a flood. Beckett’s is a fringe experience no more. Quigley and then Duckworth are enough authority to counter that assertion. The playwright’s dramaturgy is powerful and overwhelming, and succeeded tremendously in concretizing, on stage, a profound experience of the Absurd, as a cruel existential Non-ent, totally bereft of meaning and purpose, the end of which was itself a trauma.

But to return to the final phases of Hamm’s extended speech on pp. 35-37, the analysis of which is almost at its
end. It is time for Beckett to allow Hamm the Actor-Narrator-King-Deity, a calm down--

Gradually I cooled down, sufficiently at least to ask him how long he had taken on the way. (p.37).

The audience can hardly miss the covert suggestion that though the existential impasse, on-stage, is that of Man, the supposed Creator-deity is also a presence in the deconstructed articulations of Hamm, the Actor-Narrator. His granaries! His Lumbago! His pipe! His labours! His busy schedule! His final touches! His enquiries! His holly! His hauteur! His calm down! The change of weather, which too he appeared to somehow take in his stride and even transcend! As for Man, the less said the better, low-down, dirty, and in tears; imploring, snivelling, and almost extinct; and, an imbecile that he always has been! There was no cure for Man's residence on earth! There was no escape either! He cannot transcend Need. Beg he must for an extra bit of bread! The Godot-play and Endgame are no social constructs, or, deconstructs either.

To return once again to the Hamm-story, the actor-narrator, posturing as demi-god-king, is found pitying the servile visitor, Man, and deciding to keep him as a servant. But then, the prospective servant had wanted to bring along a boy-child also! A child perpetuates the potential of the aborted existential irrationality and helps it drag on! That was the moment the over-bearing Hamm was waiting for. As Hamm he could not reconcile to that possibility--

It was the moment I was waiting for. Would I consent to take in the child... (Pause.) I can see him still, down on his knees, his hands flat on the ground, glaring at me with his mad eyes, in defiance of my wishes. (Pause.) (p.37)
Hamm's story halts abruptly. Of course he was not left a demi-god. In fact, before the last quotation, he is heard talking of dying which he says could be peaceful on this earth also, only if one was careful, that is, is not too anti-conformist!

The next long Hamm solo-performance is on pp. 44-45. This time the normal voice is not de-constructed to bring in a narrator's voice to tell a story. For, no story is to be told now. The speech dramaturgy instead works with Pauses, and, alternate expressions of calm and violence, vehemence and relief. Hamm also attempts to get off the wheel-chair but falls back. He even hesitates, and is full of recrimination. Head bowed, he speaks absently and to himself. The speech has pathos; the pathos, that is, of an irrational human condition, trapped as well as bruised, and also inside an insecure shelter. The provisional shelter itself was slowly being taken over by a cataclysmic catastrophe outside. Hamm absently repeats--

That's right. (p.44)

The ritual with the stancher follows, because there was little else the hapless invalid could do. He unfolds the stancher, and spreads it out before him. Then he folds it and puts it back in his pocket. The movement is repeated for want of any better occupation. Hamm is nostalgic---

That's right. (Pause.) Me to play -- We're getting on. (Pause.) You weep, and weep, for nothing, so as not to laugh, and little by little --- you begin to grieve. (p.44)

That restates the theme: a futile perpetually pathetic condition, and the repetitious cycle of a playing, a grieving and an Ending, that just went on. Each time, there
was the tragic reminder -- 'That's right' and each time again
the handkerchief was taken out, unfolded and spread, and then
folded and put back. Hamm reminiscences---

All those I might have helped. (Pause.) Helped! (Pause.) Saved. (Pause.) Saved! (Pause.) The place was
crawling with them. (Pause.) (p.44)

Beckett uses Pauses, and even exclamation marks, as
when the first 'Helped' has a fullstop and a Pause after it,
and, the second 'Helped', an exclamation mark, and a Pause
after it. The same is repeated with the word 'Saved'.

The absently reminescening Hamm becomes violent---

Use your head, can't you, use your head, you're on
earth, there's no cure for that! (Pause.) (p.44)

This was delivered in normal voice though in the speech
on pp.35-37, it was part of a narrator's delivery, spoken by
the Actor-Narrator-Demi-God-Man-King Hamm. He continues and
Beckett cannot resist a gibe at the Bible---

Get out of here and love one another! Lick your
neighbour as yourself! (Pause.) (p.44)

Hamm is calmer for the next utterance, but becomes
violent again at---

Out of my sight and back to your petting parties!
(Pause.) All that, all that! (Pause.) Not even a real
dog! (pp.44,45)

That was the pathetic tragic hero! Or, was it an
ensnared victim? Life began aborted and yet went on! Hamm
pauses and wants to resume narrating his story, but instead,
decides to throw himself on to the floor, and crawl! He
pushes himself to do so, but falls back. There is no escape,
straddled as the human being is, with futile thought and a
disjunct burdensome corporeality, which don't co-ordinate
ever! Like a blind invalid staring blankly at the wall, one
remains a hapless tragic victim, longing for death---

It will be the end and there I'll be, wondering what
can have brought it on and wondering what can have...
(he hesitates)... why it was so long coming. (Pause.)
(p.45)

This was one more tragic permutation of the Ending
torture that Hamm was frantically aware off, as a something
that appeared to be taking its course. The play is now three
quarters through, and this maddening awareness of the Ending
trauma, like the Waiting refrain, must again be repeated as a
ritual exercise---

There I'll be, in the old refuge, alone against the
silence and... (he hesitates)... the stillness. If I
can hold my peace, and sit quiet, it will be all over
with sound, and motion, all over and done with. (Pause.)
(p.45)

Fantasies there were, and Hamm is aware of them---

And then? (Pause.) And then? (Pause.) (p.45)

Hamm, like Winnie later, has a peculiar feeling of
being watched, or was it Bishop Berkeley drubbed at on the
dramaturgic anvil---

All kind of fantasies! That I'm being watched! A rat!
Steps! Breath held and then... (he breathes out.) Then
babble, babble words--- (Pause.) (p.45)

But that was a writer's existential trauma also,
because the harrowing consciousness and the obligation to
express were perpetual, and, heap moments as one may, pile
them upon pile all life long, neither heap, nor pile, nor moment, nor time, can be given the name and nomenclature of a life-constituted---

Moment upon moment, pattering down, like the millet grains of --- and --- all life long you wait for that to mount up to a life. (Pause.) (p.45)

The experience of the existential irrationality, minus all essences, is one thing, and, the drama to embody that intense experience into a shape is another. There is a Pause. Hamm has had enough---

Ah let's get it over! (p.45)

That brings us to the third and last of Hamm's extended speech deliveries which is on pp.51-53. These extended speeches take up a major portion of Endgame's second half. The strategies in two of these on pp.35-37, and pp.44-45 have just been noticed, one after the other. Needless to say, in each case the technique was found different and even original; and now it will be seen how the work-out in the last of Hamm's extended utterances, is also an entirely new excercise in dramaturgy. It is almost a 50-line delivery, in which, Hamm's single voice is once again de-constructed into 'normal' and 'narrative' tones, but for the first time in the play, however, we have a Long Pause. There are 2 such Long Pauses, and about 32 other Pauses, which altogether, are far too many, in a 50-line exercise. Almost half way through, the de-structuring into 'narrative' tone takes place; it lasts for about 8 lines, and the remainder of the speech is delivered in 'normal' tone. Clov is leaving Hamm, and is dressed-up to leave. He halts by the door and stands impassive and motionless, eyes fixed on Hamm. Hamm himself is weary. The End that had all along approached appeared still on its way. And, Hamm braces himself to die. Nagg and Nell
are presumably dead. As a last favour Clov had covered Hamm with a sheet. There is a Long Pause, and Hamm begins--

Me to play (p.51)

Hamm Pauses again, and then says---

Old endgame lost of old, play and lose and have done with losing. (Pause.) (p.51)

Critics may interpret the play as a chess-game lost, with the king about to be check-mated, and, carry the interpretation over to call it the drama of a human life braved and lost, and from there, go on to dubb it a play of destiny, with handicaps galore, and therefore lost also. Be that as it may, Hamm's existential condition is that of Man, a tragic victim, blind and hurt, and constricted to a wheel-chair. Such is the hapless impasse of all humanity bound to a harsh, futile, irrational existence. Tired and weary Hamm braces himself for an End that is no less Absurd in its harrowing, slow grind. The call is for a 'Discard', which sums up the profound longing to wrench himself away from Being. Unfortunately, all this touching pathos ends at the grotesque raise of a hat as the inevitable first step to initiate the ritual of a parting. But that also fails to co-ordinate, because, as the stage-directions show, what is raised instead is the toque---

Good (Pause.) Discard. (He throws away the gaff, makes to throw away the dog, thinks better of it). Take it easy. (Pause.) Raise hat. (He raises his toque) (p.52)

This is a tragic victim's End, and not the End of a tragic hero, and therefore, the grotesquerie of a prayer to peace to 'our arses' need not surprise. The existential quandary is pathetic. Hamm
calls for a ‘Deuce’. A Pause ensues. The blind invalid next removes his glasses, wipes them with his handkerchief, puts them on and appears to speak to somebody---

We’re coming. A few more squirms like that and I’ll call. (Pause.) (p.52)

A chess-game indeed, but what of the few squirms more as a pathetically tragic End, and what of the life that had been nothing but an old assortment of disjuncts and fragmentations, and a set of Pauses and Yawns.

The already on-stage, intense experience, gathers more intensity because after the ‘normal’ voice delivery, Hamm appears to act out a delirium---

A little poetry (Pause.) You prayed -- (Pause. He corrects himself) You CRIED for night; it comes -- (Pause. He corrects himself) It FALLS: now cry in darkness. (He repeats, chanting) You cried for night; it falls; now cry in darkness. (Pause.) (p.52)

Upon this Hamm himself comments---

Nicely put, that (Pause.) And Now? (p.52)

Hamm pauses, and then utters the famous Endgame words, which even in their disconnected state confirm the already profound context of a Non-ent, the play had made situate on-stage. The heaped up moments that are piled, pile after pile, to constitute a life, amount to nothing, because time itself as a basis of life, never existed. In any, case for Hamm, and the play Endgame, the reckoning was about to close and the play ended---

Moments for nothing, now as always, time was never and time is over, reckoning closed and story ended (Pause.) (p.52)
The next 8 lines are rendered once again in the 'narrative' tone, and Hamm appears at his last story again, the story of grovelling Man, begging the actor-narrator-king-deity, a piece of bread for his boy. Was Hamm dropping fast into a delirium indeed---

It was the moment I was waiting for. (Pause.) You don't want to abandon him? You want him to bloom while you're withering? Be there to solace your last million last moments? (Pause.) (p.52)

Hamm is delirious, but as hammy as ever, and Beckett makes it a theatric rendering of a thematic obsession: the fear that life may start all over again, and perpetuate an aborted existential irrationality. The obsession is made, an on-stage experience, by de-structuring the human voice, once more, into a narrator's, and, punctuating the resulting speech with appropriately spaced Pauses. The trauma that was no cure for being on earth, becomes more effective and Beckett is always aware that language as a phenomenon, is itself full of innate drama.

When Hamm resumes normal voice he is heard to say---

Well, there we are, there I am, that's enough (p.52)

Then he raises the whistle to his lips, hesitates and drops it. Clov may have left. One more Pause ensues after which he says---

Yes, truly! .
However, not sure about Clov, he whistles and a Pause ensues. He whistles louder and another Pause follows, whereafter, satisfied that Clov had left, Hamm says---

Good (Pause.) (p.52)

Then he calls for Nagg, but there is no answer also---

Father! (Pause. Louder) Father! (Pause.) Good. (Pause.) We’re coming. (Pause.) And to end up with? (Pause.) Discard. (He throws away the dog. He tears the whistle from his neck.) (p.52)

Nagg did not answer even the louder call, and appeared dead. The second ‘Discard’ sounded like a command to whatever it was that was ‘life’ in the body to leave forthwith. And, ‘We’re coming’ is no less a longing to somehow be away and done with, and get rid of a harsh, irrational condition. Language-dynamic is once more at its most simple, and, corporeality at its most banal and lends added pathos to the on-stage grotesquerie.

Hamm is shown throwing away the toy-dog and tearing away the whistle. The grotesque command ‘Discard’ is pathetic. The audience are roped in also because the whistle is actually thrown towards the auditorium and his compliments accompany it---

With my compliments .

A Pause ensues. Hamm sniffs and softly calls---

Clov !
There is a Long Pause. Getting no answer Hamm utters an ambivalent---

No? Good

Next comes the the handkerchief ritual once more, which was all through used as effective drama. Taking out the handkerchief, Hamm says---

Since that's the way we're playing it... (He unfolds handkerchief)... let's play it that way... (he unfolds)... and speak no more about it... (He finishes unfolding) --- speak no more. (He holds the handkerchief spread out before him)... Old Stancher! (Pause.) You... remain. (Pause.)

Even tragic victims have pathetic endings. Hamm covers his face with the handkerchief, lowers his arms to armrests and becomes still. A brief tableau follows, with Hamm postured as just described, and Clov standing impassively at the door, eyes fixed on Hamm. The play was an *Endgame*, in which the End was a slow grind, and imperceptible. That was the way its torture was being played, and that was the way Hamm had played it to the last; as did even Clov, Nagg and Nell. The drama had begun with a tableau, and a pantomime, positioning on stage, 'there', the concrete context of a decrepit existential constriction inside an insecure refuge, against a cataclysmic devastation outside. The opening utterances of Clov and Hamm added language-dynamic to the opening tableau and pantomime contexts of a 'Finish' and a 'Play', the latter at its very 'End'. And, now at the close too is the tableau, just commented upon; it appears the play's last and very conclusive and intense condition of humanity, made situate on stage. Tragic; grotesque; pathetic; and poignant. But, now to return to the other extended speech deliveries because Clov and even Nagg have a substantial share in this dramaturgic device found quite a significant characteristic
in this play’s dramatic technique. In one of Nagg’s extended deliveries, as has already been noticed earlier, the human voice is de-constructed into as many as five modulations to tell the tailor’s story. Clov also has three extended speeches almost at the play’s end. One is at p.47, the next on p.50-51, and the third at p.51. These are profound tragic moments too, because the play ends at p.53. Each extended speech in Endgame provides occasion to the dramatist’s ingenuity to play with language in different dramaturgic ways. This also contributes to the feeling that the drama is different and new, and is not primarily built upon banal cross-talk, as was the Godot-play.

In the two Clov speeches on pp.49 and 51, it will be noticed that the first of these is accompanied by the ladder and telescope stage-business and has two repetitions of ‘Sometimes I wonder...’

Sometimes I wonder if I’m in my right mind. Then it passes over and I’m as lucid as before. (He gets up on ladder, looks out of window.) (p.47)

And again---

Sometimes, I wonder if I’m in my right senses. Then it passes off and I’m as intelligent as ever. (He sets down ladder under window right and gets upon it---) (p.47).

The repetitions of ‘Sometimes I wonder...’, stage the rattle that Clov’s mind suffers in his thoroughly Absurd existential impasse. Also the ladder and telescope stage-business literally interiorizes the cataclysmic outside on-stage, when Clov is surprised to see the deluge the earth suffers all around---

Christ, she’s under water! (p.47)
Then, turning away from the window Clov asks Hamm, which part of the devastated outside he wants reported—

Any particular sector you fancy? Or merely the whole thing? (p.47)

That was direct and even cruel, and nerve-shaking in its simplicity. It is also comic and grotesque. It has no trapping whatever to distance the immediacy of the experience. There is no trumped-up ideology either to push the direct experience into many removes, and make it less intense and remote. Every articulated utterance in it, is very much the catastrophe outside. Consequently, it will be quite unfortunate if the language-dynamic is dismissed only as banal, and ordinary. Infact, meaning had elsewhere in literature, and for that matter, even all over, and everywhere, got so confounded, either in embellishment, or, cliche that for a change, the intense and immediate experience is far more refreshing, its deep discomfitures notwithstanding. It is a direct and profound statement of fact; the experience itself in all its devastating intensity. 'Any particular sector', is as disquieting as the word 'merely', which on its own, destroys and debunks 'the whole thing'. As pointed out earlier, this is language-dynamic at quite a subtle.

Clov's next extended delivery is at p.51. It has two very significant language refrains, and by way of change, 5 pauses. One of its refrains is, 'I say to myself sometimes--', and, the other has the rhythm, 'One day--', / 'One day--', / 'Then one day suddenly--'. Taken together these two refrains, by themselves produce the following rhythmic effect---

I say to myself -- sometimes -- one day--- I say to myself -- sometimes -- one day--- Then one day suddenly --- I say to myself--.
This language rhythm is poignant in its tragedy, and as close to the pathos of an irrational existential quandary as was, 'Sometimes I wonder ---'.

The Clov speech on pp.50-51 also has a refrain repeated 4 times. However, it has no Pauses. The refrain appears a carry over from an utterance immediately preceding the one considered above. The language-dynamic is exploited to expose love, friendship, beauty, order, clarity, and, simplicity as well. The carried-over part from the immediately preceding Clov utterance is delivered tonelessly, with a fixed gaze towards the audience---

They said to me that’s love, yes, yes, not a doubt, now you see how --- (p.50)

And this continues in the speech, on pp.50-51---

How easy it is. They said to me, that’s friendship, yes, yes, no question, you have found it (pp.50-51)

And again in---

They said to me. Here’s the place, stop, raise your head look at all that beauty. That order!’ (p.51)

And yet again in---

They said to me, come now, you’re not a brute beast, think upon these things and you’ll see how all becomes clear. And simple!

And still again in---

They said to me; what skilled attention they get, all these dying of their wounds . (p.51)

This speech delivered with a ‘fixed gaze, tonelessly’, has a dream-like quality in its re-iterations. Also, the
speech has its 'they' syndrome effect on Clov, who literally speaks out banal words of advice---

Come now, yes, yes, you see how, yes, yes, no question you have found it, and Here's the place, stop, raise your head and look. (p.51)

In fact, each time Beckett is at work, a new language-dynamic is manipulated, showing the variety possible in various language strategies. This can often shock and startle, and at times, even be refreshing. A different language strategy is each time concretized on stage with the playwright irresistibly drawn into it. A shouted 'Enough' by Hamm, between the two extended deliveries of Clov could also be clever strategy. The Clov speech gets an appropriate close, which gets a rationale. Hamm's 'Enough' is also a convenience to help divide the otherwise long Clov cogitation, and facilitate that the next speech be different and even more extended. Each utterance, each corporeal manifestation, each stage direction in Beckett is strategically significant, and contributes subtly to position potent concretizations on stage.

Let us now consider in some detail the break-up of the Clov speech on p.51. It has one refrain and 5 Pauses, and, a new rhythm by way of change. These have been considered together earlier. Now, let us treat them separately. It's refrain is---

I say to myself -- sometimes -- one day, which is deeply tragic in its pathos. It is Man at his uncomplicated simplest, confronting existence as an aborted trauma. Add to this the new rhythm 'One day---'/'One Day---'/'Then one day---', and the drama takes on the rhythm of
tragedy. If each segment of the speech is put separately this is what ensues---

I say to myself --- sometimes, Clov, you must learn to suffer better than that if you want them to weary of punishing you-- one day . (p.51)

And again---

I say to myself -- sometimes, Clov, you must be there better than that if you want them to let you go -- one day . (p.51)

But then, Clov says, he will never go and a Pause ensues, after which the last two words of each of the previous sentences is transferred to the head of the next utterance by Clov---

Then one day, suddenly, it ends, it changes, I don’t understand, it dies or it’s me, I don’t understand that either . (p.51)

Endgame, as a play is considered more overwhelming than Waiting for Godot. The play does do credit to the playwright’s thematic and artistic commitment alright. With variations on the same theme, Beckett gives it a different dramaturgic shape, so that it is the shift in strategy that brings to the effort a new freshness, and, even pathos and power. It makes Endgame a different on-stage experience of the Absurd, though the theme remains the same. It is a cruel meaningless existence. It is an empty void; a Non-ent; a Nothing is. It is one more overwhelming shape given to Beckett’s vision of the Absurd, and still a very discomfiting tragic grotesquerie. The dialogue needs no embellishment for the predicament is itself as close as possible to the simple ‘banality’ of the utterance---

I ask the words that remain sleeping, waking, morning, evening. They have nothing to say . (Pause.) (p.51)
Clov opens the door in an effort to leave, his utterance once again the simple existential experience itself---

I say to myself that the earth is extinguished, though I never saw it lit (Pause.) It's easy going (Pause.) When I fall I'll weep for happiness (Pause.) (p.51)

But then, Clov does not leave!

He does not move. He is the last of the three, on-stage, generations, a decrepit himself, determined to leave but finds it excruciatingly difficult to do so. So he stands, gazing fixedly at Hamm, who as usual is centre-stage. Hamm, the middle generation is the invalid on a wheel-chair, bruised, hurt and blind. His last utterance, itself a dramaturgic exercise to mount pathos, based on a creative language break-up and torso-drama, holds the audience glued to the intense, on-stage, Being context---

Old stancher! (Pause.) You... remain!

There is a Pause. Earlier, Clov had covered Hamm with a white sheet; and Hamm had spread the 'old stancher', over his face. Then dangling his arms he becomes still. The dustbins of heredity with Nagg and Nell in them, also stand prominent. And, the decrepit young Clov is at the door unable to leave. He stares fixedly at Hamm. There is this brief tableau, and the curtain falls.

To conclude, Endgame is begun with startling moribund stage-figures, a tableau and a pantomime. For this, extensive stage-directions become absolutely necessary which they indeed remain, throughout Beckettian drama. The stage is almost bare, being a ramshackle-shelter, for its four
debilitated refugees. Outside is a cataclysmic ruin. It is the slow End of a Something, moving imperceptibly to a grinding halt. The detailed stage-directions, the inanimated sheet-covered human forms, the tableau and the pantomime, position on the almost sparse stage, 'there', an unusually harsh and cruel, existential constriction. Unlike as in the Godot-play, the irrational existential quandary is interiorized in a provisional, though insecure shelter. It is as an asylum within a temporary refuge. For this, it first uses almost a vacant stage, with high-walled, curtained windows. It positions three very striking, sheet-covered, morbid-looking human forms on stage. One form is on a wheel-chair, centre-stage, and, the other two are in large, man-sized dust-bins. The drama uses a tableau, in which Clov stands motionless, staring fixedly at the deathly looking form of Hamm in the wheel-chair. It has a pantomime that follows immediately after, to interiorize the devastated outside, making the catastrophe that engulfs the distraught refugees, an equally intra-mural experience. The interior of the ramshackle refuge, and its surrounding convulsion outside, become thereby a single existential encounter. Therefore, the range and extension on-stage, as in Waiting for Godot, is Man and the Cosmos, each trapped in its own irrational impasse. It is positioned on-stage as a harshness, and futile bind. The Clov pantomime interiorizes the outside calamity through its window-and-ladder stage-business, and the repeated peers at the disaster beyond the high-curtained windows, as well as the ritual brief laughs, workout with rhythmic perfection. The context of a Cosmic Irrationality having been sufficiently concretized on the sparse stage, language dramaturgy takes over, with Clov's play on the variations of the word 'Finish', and, Hamm using a yawn for language de-construction. Infact, logo-centricity is a characteristic feature of the Beckettian ouevre, notwithstanding his awareness of Artaudian cynicisms about language, and,
because of the creative exploitation of what is termed a language collapse. But, in *Endgame*, it is the de-constructed extended speech delivery, which is the prominent linguistic, trait. Not that cross-talk ceases to be functional. However, the quick language-game, with a cross-talk base, often rounded off by a 'finale', and, many more times by a Silence is not in use at all. Instead, an entirely different language rhythm is in evidence. It is different from the rhythmic language banter that often becomes lyrical in *Waiting for Godot*. This is completely overshadowed in *Endgame*. A different language rhythm takes over, and as remarked earlier, it is that of the extended speech delivery, collapsed primarily through voice-modulation. Thus, there is a 2-1/2 page Hamm speech which has 7 directions for narrative tone, and 6 for normal speech delivery. It also has as many as 39 Pauses. Such a break-up of language rhythm is the staple feature of *Endgame*. This de-structuring is also not had through ritual repeats of cliches, creatively manipulated as earlier in Lucky's speech. It is neither a Pause--Silence-Longer Silence disintegration, though in *Endgame*, Pauses almost profilate, and far outnumber the 113 Silences of the Godot-play. Voice-modulation now becomes a dominant trait. One example of the 2-1/4 page speech has already been noted. Another speech, of half that spread, has five different voice-modulations, the earlier example having only two, the, normal and the narrative. The latter begins in the normal voice, but then, to tell its story changes to the narrator's, the tailor's, the raconteur's, the customer's, and finally becomes normal again. Even a small six or seven line ordinary delivery, is de-constructed by a slight, seven or eight-worded voice change, in between, into a rational being's. Further more, language refrain as an exchange like the famous 'Let's go/We can't./Why not/?We're waiting for Godot./Ah.' of the Godot-play does not recur. Instead, the refrain is built into the extended utterance itself, like the
Clov rhythmic refrains of ‘I say to myself-sometimes-‘or, ‘They said to me’, -or, ‘One day-/one day-/Then one day-‘. Again, the awareness of a something, slowly ‘taking its course’, is kept in perpetual perspective, in a variety of subtle ways, which though apparently innocuous, are actually permutations of an Ending phenomenon. Also, the simple language beat, going into several repetitions to become operative as a ritual, inorder to debunk the meaning-content of words like ‘happy’, are not in evidence either. Of course, a smaller exercise about ‘laugh’ is repeated with varied permutations to extract the joy out of the word. And, the offer of a Vladimir platitude so that Estragon could demolish it forthwith is also not a part of Endgame drama. Nor, are the ‘pungent interrogatives’ in the form of the question word-scepticisms of a ‘What?’ ‘Why?’ ‘How?’ in evidence, as they very abundantly are in the Godot-play. Further, stories are not at all taboo, as they were with Vladimir. Infact, the incorporation of the story-telling trait into Endgame required the voice-modulations already referred to. Of course, to repeat, stage-directions retain dramaturgic significance. And, distorted human corporeality, as the first, immediate, visual evidence of a meaningless existential bind, ‘there’, on-stage, as well as language logocentricity, to reinforce the irrational torso-plight, always remain the ultimate forte of Beckettian drama. Endgame does not have a two-act structure either. For, it is linear, having shaped a something ‘taking its course’, grinding, as it were, to an imperceptible slow halt. The Godot-play had a two-act structure, because Waiting is an on-going, generations-old, history-long phenomenon. Infact, the two Acts in Waiting for Godot, the second almost similar in content to the first, create the effect of a repetitive circularity. Finally, there is the closing tableau in Endgame, with Clov near the door, dressed to leave but not leaving, standing motionless, staring fixedly at the white sheet-covered Hamm, the harsh
invalid on a wheel chair, with Nagg and Nell dead inside dustbins. Hamm’s face is behind his favourite stancher, and his arms dangle helplessly. A tableau thus ended the play, even as a tableau, followed by a pantomime had opened it.

The Godot-play did not use either a tableau or pantomime. It did also begin on an almost empty stage. It is open country with a mound and a barren tree, along a lonely road. A tramp sits on the mound alone, struggling haplessly with his boots. This is Man in the context of a Cosmos. The prospect is bleak, and the human struggle grotesque and futile. It contextualizes the Irrational Non-ent, on-stage, with Estragon announcing ‘Nothing to be done’. Later, there is the striking figure of a two-some, when the lone tramp is joined by another with a strange walk, who enters admitting that he too had come around to the same opinion after a hard personal struggle that life was a futility and there was indeed nothing to be done. There being no tableau or pantomime in the Godot-play, language dynamic takes over immediately. Banal cross-talk dominates conversation, in which, starting with the debunk of Truth generally, the specifics of Christianity are bereft of meaning. The Evangelists, Bible, The Logic of Redemption, and Saviour, fall one after the other in and out of the dramaturgic anvil. Then Vision, Dream, Story, Place, Object and Time are rinsed of their meaning. Platitudes are offered, so that they be demolished by the ready and forthcoming pungent interrogatives ‘What?’, ‘Why?’, and ‘How?’ The stage-business is of hats, trousers, shoes, carrots and turnips. There is a dog song also. Endgame has no songs, and the existential predicament is harsher and more cruel. Its stage-business is of telescope and ladder, a toy-dog, a toque, a stancher white-sheets, a whistle and a wheel chair. In Waiting for Godot, it is the boring futility of a Waiting for an absent-presence that dominates. And, existence having been debunked
of meaning through cross-talk, an eerie Silence remains. To ward-off the frightening Silence a banal conversation has to be kept up. The Wait goes on but no Godot arrives and bereft of meaning, the drama of the metaphysical anguish dominates. Human corporeality, as just a torso 'there', a futile meaningless presence has great dramaturgic significance. Now, existence having already been bereft of meaning in Waiting for Godot, is shown harsher and more irrationally cruel in Endgame. Enough had been erazed of its meaning in the Godot-play. Therefore, Endgame starts from where the Godot-play had left off. The Waiting was overwhelmingly futile. The End is a grind harsh, irrational and torturously slow. It is of course the same existential quandary in both plays, therefore the themes remain just a shade different. Existence was a meaningless void, a Non-ent, a Nothing is. Man and the Universe were impotent failures, Absurd and Irrational. It was an existential impasse, a hapless futile condition, a confusion, a bind, an imbroglio, and a mess. However, the variations in the second play have demanded to be shaped with a different strategy. In fact each analysis of this thesis will be a study of the demands the thematic variations make, in each play on the technique, and the corresponding dramaturgic changes effected, in order to shape the drama to suit the particular thematic variation, because in a Beckettian play, form and content remain two very significant inseparable.
References:


4. Ibid., p.252.


8. Ibid., p.32.


Krapp’s Last Tape (1958), is again, one more variation on the theme of the Absurd or the Non-ent. In this play also, Beckett dramatizes in material stage-terms, the irrationality of an existential predicament, only that, it now shapes itself primarily as manifest corporeal change, the favourite Beckettian ‘physical theme’. Time dement, though habits linger. Also nostalgia haunts, and isolation bewilders, both being always at a nagging increase. The play is a fresh experience of the Absurd in the sense that its drama is different from Waiting for Godot, as well as, Endgame. It is in fact, yet another novel experiment. The playwright hazards a daring innovation by making the first ever use of a tape-recorder to institute a dark and bleak vision of Time as an on-stage experience of the Irrational. This experiment needed courage, for the vogue of the ‘tape’ was still not a firmly established practice even in public life. The machine helped the playwright situate on-stage, ‘there’ a different abstract notion altogether. For, if a Waiting and an Ending, were made tangible theatrical experiences in the earlier plays, Krapp’s Last Tape makes Time and its excruciating lapse another profoundly overwhelming stage-phenomenon. The dramatist appears in complete control of the concrete language of theatre. And, what is called ‘theatrical space’, undergoes, significant reduction, because, as in Waiting for Godot and Endgame, the stage is almost bare, save for a table, a chair, a tape-recorder and some spools. The table and immediately adjacent area is in strong white light, while the rest is in darkness. And there is just one human figure to perform before the audience. He is called Krapp, that is, excrement, because an
aborted and irrational condition is little more than excrement and defecation. Lucky's schizophrenia had deconstructed language to concretize an equally worse existential impasse. As the play proceeds, what first appears a monologue shapes itself into an intense dialogue between old Krapp and his former voice-personae, recorded on tape. In fact, there are as many Krapps as there are spools in Krapp's den, though only three suffice to stage an overwhelmingly profound vision, however bleak, of a Time-trapped, palpable, human bind.

The entire 'action' of the play takes place in Krapp's den. Like Engdame, Krapp's Last Tape also has a pantomime begin it to situate Krapp's Time-hurt quandary on stage, reducing him to a tragic grostequerie. Krapp at 69, is a clownish old figure seen sitting at his table. He is white-faced, purple-nosed and unshaven, with dishevelled hair. He wears extremely short trousers and dirty white boots. The pantomime has the aged Krapp pace the stage meditatively. He is eating bananas and even occasionally slipping over a peel. The pantomime has him leave the lighted stage and disappear in its darkened half. There, he is heard to have a peg or two of wine. The emphasis in the play is on sound. Infact, this play was written after the dramatist's experience with ALL THAT FALL a radio-play, broadcast on BBC. The play's concern with or fascination for sound gets Krapp only a tape-recorder and spools as campanions. Infact, the ritual re-play of his tapes appears his incorrigible habit. Therefore, after his return to the brightly lit part of the stage, and, as still a part of the pantomime, begins the stage-business with keys, drawers, ledger-entries and spools. It is a grotesque all through. Krapp is a shortsighted old man with a laborious walk, and lives in excruciating silence. This existential state is more presentational than a represented condition, and is
therefore a tragic spectacle. The pantomime contextualizes on the proscenium, a newer version of Beckett’s ‘physical theme’. Put on stage is a decrepit, old-age corporeality, as a terribly lonely, futile, human presence ‘there’. Krapp is a solitary old man. The stage-directions help contextualize the acute loneliness. Old Krapp next selects a spool recorded decades ago, for it was his habit to prepare a tape of his voice-personae at each birthday. These early tape-records are used by the playwright to de-construct one individual into different voice-personae, each distinct and separate from the forlorn old man, physically present near the speaking tape voices. One voice is of Krapp-at-27, and the other, when he was 39. But Krapp-at-27, is only heard by Krapp-at-39. The audience hears Krapp-at-39 and his commentary at his younger self at 27. Now, as old Krapp stands hearing his past voice, he utters choice epithets like ‘the little rascal’ or ‘the little scoundrel’ at the younger Krapp, at the early age-milestone. This is an original way to de-construct a single Self into three separate personae. The same technique also helped telescope or re-struct the three into one, when Krapp at 69 hears Krapp at 39 who supposedly hears a younger Krapp at 27/29. It is a mere matter of a switch-off and switch-on of the tape-recorder button. The recorded voice is recovered as quickly as it is silenced. The same button helped disjunct a person into two, while the third listened. Also, the same disjunction helped telescope the three into one, that is, the one actually ‘there’ as the old forlorn one at 69. He is now older, maturer, lonelier, hard of hearing, and of a cracked voice. This Krapp at 69, hears a youthful, ambitious and illusion-ridden version of himself, who had just heard a Krapp, ten or twelve years his younger, and a ‘rascal of a whelp’ at that age. The tapes were recorded over a 40 year period or more. They recover and recall, at will, earlier life-stations, only as voiced articulations though. The tape-recorder initiates a dialogue amongst the different versions
of a single Self at different age-milestones. It also achieves a contemporaneity with an articulated Self of the past, and, of that past with its future, which for the audience in the hall, is the Krapp-at-69. Furthermore, the taped articulations make the age-factor, at various life-milestones prominent. And, to repeat, against either of these disjunctions, or, telescoped reconstructions stands a lonely old man seen and heard as a stage-presence. This technique helps silence, or, recall, at will, earlier voiced articulations. Each recall sounds absurd and meaningless when juxtaposed to the physically live, though old Krapp-at-69, literally seen and actually heard on stage 'there' as a visual manifestation of the playwrights 'physical theme'. Therefore, the pantomime, the tape machine and a single actor, coarse of dress, old and decrepit and almost blind, together materialize an existential quandary that spreads over Time, and invite the audience to a participatory dialogue with it. The audience not only see and hear a lonely isolate, they also hear the voice that speaks to him, and to them too! The audience literally see and feel the disjunctions of a Self into its pasts and present. They also hear the existential impasse telescoped into a re-constructed collage, and the disjuncted Selves almost appear to hold conversation. Two pasts, at healthier stations are recovered as taped voice-personae, and juxtaposed to an on-stage aging bodily presence. The terrible counterpoints destroy and demolish all past and all present, and all future also, into an irrational condition, which is shorn of meaning and benumbed into a futility, or a Non-ent.  

While searching in the ledger for 'spool number five' old Krapp comes across a 'spool number seven' which prompts a chuckle, 'Ah! the little rascal!'. And once when he finds 'spool number five' he is equally pronounced with, 'Ah! the little scoundrel'. Spool number five, records the death of
his mother. It also mentions the 'black ball', 'the dark nurse', a 'memorable equinox', and, a 'farewell to love'. Some of these incidents appear lost to old Krapp, or at least, puzzle him quite. The past is of course somewhat recovered. However, that it cannot ever-afterwards, be the present, is shaped into drama by Krapp's peer at the ledger, his puzzled expression, the blank stare, his broodings, the shrugs of his shoulders, and, by the turn of the page too, and finally, through the totality of the dramaturgic concretization that accumulates as an on stage experience with---

Krapp: Ah! (He peers at ledger, reads entry at foot of page.) Mother at rest at last..... Hm ---- The black ball --- (He raises his head, stares blankly front puzzled.) Black ball? --- (He peers again at ledger, reads.) The dark nurse -- (He raises his head, broods, peers again at ledger, reads.) Slight improvement in bowel conditions. --- Hm --- Memorable --- what? (He peers closer.) Equinox, memorable equinox. (He raises his head stares blankly front. Puzzled.) Memorable equinox? (Pause. He shrugs his shoulders peers again at ledger, reads.) Farewell to -- (He turns page) - love. (p.11)

Old Krapp repeats 'memorable equinox' and the sheer repetition makes it sound grotesque and rinses its memorable quality. And, 'memory' and 'memorable' also get quite a drubbing---

Hm --- memorable --- what? (p.11)

The repetitions in the quotation continue, and get the company of a blank stare to add to the situation, the dimension of a tragic grotesquerie----

Equinox, memorable equinox. (He raises his head, stares blankly front. Puzzled.) Memorable equinox? (p.11)
Subsequently, the turn of a page, spaced between 'Farewell to --' and 'love' becomes yet another reconstructing to suck the emotion of love of its meaning-content---

Farewell to -- (He turns page) - love (p.11)

Krapp’s physical inadequacies are also given enough dramatic emphasis. Beckett capitalizes on Krapp’s short sight and cracked voice to make the simple act of reading a dramaturgic exercise. He is made to peer closer at the ledger. Again and again he is unable to see what his hand had written decades ago. With sight and memory both failing, he can only ‘stare blankly front’. Through just a simple act of reading, theatric in expression, the past and present are made palpable experiences. There was the youth who had made the ledger-entry and was sure to remember; and there is the old decrepit who is unable to read and no longer remembers. Was it Proustian vision treated as profound drama?® Krapp’s Last Tape exploits the different ‘voices’, a human being speaks in, at different age-milestones. Thus the tape dramaturgy contrasts on old cracked voice with the earlier Krapp’s youthful confident tone. The pantomime and the ledger reading stage-business had already contextualized the loneliness of an old addict. The creative use of the tape helps throw up his dissatisfaction with his youthful versions. He even sneers at them now. The illusion of a Time flow is disjuncted and then telescoped, and an entire life span is concluded to be meaningless. Having found ‘spool number five’, and managed somehow to read the key headings in the ledger, old Krapp switches on the tape-recorder, whereafter tape-dramaturgy takes full control of both theme and technique. It mischievously, as it were, juxtaposes the
forlorn and aged Krapp-at-69, to the younger more confident voice of a strong and middle-aged Krapp at 39---

Tape: Thirty-nine today, sound as a bell, apart from my old weakness, and intellectually I have now every reason to suspect at the --- (hesitates) --- crest of the wave -- or thereabouts. Celebrated the awful occasion, as in recent years, quietly at the Wine- house. Not a soul. Sat before the fire with closed eyes, separating the grains from the husks. Jotted down a few notes, on the back of an envelope. Good to be back in my den, in my old rugs. Have just eaten I regret to say three bananas and only with difficulty refrained from a fourth. Fatal things for a man with my conditions. (pp.11-12)

The juxtapose is a mixed fair, for there is, as should be, telescoping as well as disjunction. The first tape-play paragraph introduces us to a middle-aged Krapp whose voice is 'strong and rather pompous'; he is an addict of bananas. He celebrates 'the awful occasion' of his birthday alone in a wine-house. And he too had the incorrigible habit of recording and listening to his old tapes. At 39, Krapp is heard to say that he found the new light above his table 'a great improvement'. However, even at 39 he was aware of an extraordinary 'Silence' in his den; it was an awareness which by the age of 69 became excruciatingly overwhelming, for, it then appeared to literally envelop existence. Also, at 39, scepticism had already crept in, and so there was laugh both at past ambitions as well as past resolutions. The magnum-opus was now inverted sceptically into an 'opus --- magnum'. And each time, old Krapp is seen and heard to laugh with the 39 year old Krapp who at that moment was laughing at aspirations and behaviour of a Krapp, 10 or 12 years younger.

The young Krapp even chose to conclude with a 'Yelp to Providence'. He also referred to a certain old Miss MacGlom who always used to sing 'but not tonight', so much so that it
was hard for him now to believe that Miss MacGlom was ever young, which strangely made the middle-aged Krapp think whether he would sing when he was old. He was pretty sure that he would not, because he had never sung in a lifetime! To add to the drama of the situation, the 39 year old voice-personae of the tape is juxtaposed to the live and corporeal on-stage Krapp, old, lonely, and at 69. This is deconstruction of a single Self into a Being, and a voice-personae, testing the experience potential at 39, against the harsh 'physical' fact that was now at 69. The 'tape dramaturgy' capitalizes on the contrast between the visually seen and heard 'there', and a voice-personae that is merely heard, because along with this the existential predilections at 39, as well as those at 69, are also counterpointed, by a mere press of a tape button, that switches on a past, and switches it off too, disjuncting and telescoping at will, though never involuntarily. Infact, the recall or silence of the past was very deliberate. There was full control over this deliberate recall, and what did it achieve? Was it a disjunction merely? Or was it telescoping? Either was meaningless in the context of the Time-trap of an existential corporeal condition, so that even if there was control over the recall of an earlier experience, it was impossible to recover the whole experience because of the Time-flux and corporeal decay factors. And the tape helps situate on stage this profound existential quandary. Thus Krapp at 69, is a presence 'there' accessible to touch, sight and hearing, but lost to all the 68 years that have long since lapsed. He is lonely, and restless, and pacing the stage, often entering its dark half, and, coming out engulfed still by isolation and silence. Against this plight of age, the 'tape-dramaturgy' helps sound a mere voice-personae, more sure and confident and youthful at 39. However, it is a recorded voice version not accessible experientially at all to either touch or sight. Therefore it does not reassure at all. Infact it is
only a partial recovery and adds to the torment of nostalgia. This apart, the middle-aged Krapp also records some of these discomfitures and uncertainties. What is more, the 39 year old Krapp had himself been listening to a past tape, recorded when he was 10 or 12 years younger. In this way 'tape' helps recover two Pasts simultaneously. However, it is this same simultaneity that disjuncts one Self into three, though the telescoping helps achieve some perspective also. Thus at 27/29, Krapp was heard by Krapp at 39 to be still living 'on and off' with a girl named Bianca in Kedar street. At 69, a voice at 39 is heard to say that it was happy to get rid of 'her', for 'it' had realized by then, that it was a 'hopeless business'. Nevertheless, the middle-aged voice still remembers the incomparable eyes though the voice at 39 sneers at the Self at 27/29, and finds it hard to believe that it was ever that 'young whelp'. This is a 'telescoping dramaturgy' indeed: Krapp at 69, hearing his voice at 39, which is supposed to have just heard a voice-personae at a milestone, 10/12 years earlier. The chuckles of the 69 year old Krapp at 'the little rascal', and, 'the little scoundrel', while looking at 'spool numbers 5 and 7', had hinted at a future telescoping, which is put into operational drama only when Krapp-at-69, actually hears Krapp-at-39, while the latter recounts with commentary, the experiences of Krapp of 27/29. Beckett's primary interest was to give dramaturgic shape to his theme, for it was the shape of thought that attracted him most. His drama is, infact, a constant effort at shaping his theme of an Absurd existential condition. Therefore, it always has a metaphysical slant and profound metaphysical overtones. This helped him create tangible versions of three different Time-stations within a single life-span to throw up the tragic grotesquerie that existence as a Non-ent always was. Such a de-construction had earlier not been tried by Beckett. The two previous plays, Waiting for Godot and Endgame, had their Pauses, Silences,
Yawns and even Brief Laughs. They had their grimaces, and
mannequins; and, even grotesqueries of human corporeality.
They also had language de-constructions, as effective
devices. In *Endgame*, two tableaux, a pantomime, and several
voice modulations were also used. However, in *Krapp's Last
Tape*, it is the tape that helps pass different Time
concretions of a single Self through the dramaturgic sieve.
Two are on its spools and one is outside the spool. Both
operate as effective counter-points to each other for a
synchronous stage experience. And, in this way the
existential impasse for whatever it is worth, at these
different Time-stations, is permitted a simultaneity,
otherwise not possible, because Time and age are at a
perpetual flux. It is this simultaneity as well as
disjunction, this telescoping as well as triple perspective,
that is the primary technical achievement of Beckett's
*Krapp's Last Tape*. Of course, given a tape and spools who
would not have achieved it! However, it must be remembered
and it has been pointed earlier, that Beckett had the
temerity to experiment with the electronic gadget long before
it was the commonplace it is today. It is possible that
Proust's involuntary memory concept, which helped recover the
past, had prompted Beckett to ironically resort to such an
electronic device. Be that as it may, the fact of the matter
is, that in *Krapp's Last Tape*, the tape is employed
creatively, as a dramatic device, to make the Time-factor in
the existential predicament a palpable experience. Much
rather than a Proust, it was Beckett's own commitment to his
theme of the Non-ent or Absurd that made him creatively
exploit a tape to recall, silence, counterpoint, telescope,
structure and re-structure Time.
Now, Krapp at 39, upon hearing his own voice recorded ten or twelve years ago is heard by the old Krapp at 69 to say---

Hard to believe I was ever that young whelp. The voice! Jesus! And the aspirations! (Brief laugh in which Krapp joins.) And the resolutions! (Brief laugh in which Krapp joins.) To drink less, in particular. (Brief laugh of Krapp alone). (p.13)

The middle-aged Krapp, and old Krapp seem to agree on the first two issues and therefore laugh together. But when it comes to 'less drinking', old Krapp laughs alone. This is the point of departure between the two. With an imaginative use of telescoped tapes, Beckett creates the situation of a dialogue between old Krapp, and his mechanically summoned voice-personae. Also, the laughs at the resolutions and aspirations at 27, show that they were hard to digest at a later age. The telescoped tapes helped put simultaneity and time-lapse through the dramaturgic seive, to shape the existential imbroglio into an Irrational Non-ent. Time, and therefore age, take their toll, which no memories or tapes can restore. And a re-call recovers only partially, even if it be at the press of a button. Besides this, the re-call juxtaposes the past and the present, so that the past as well as the present, because of the Time and age factors become bereft of meaning. This is done on-stage by making an old isolate, hear just one tape record of his own voice put into the tape 30 years before, in which he is heard responding to a tape of his voice recorded 10/12 years earlier when he was just 27/29. Time, age, maturity would alter perspectives drastically. Therefore, the re-call would only be a partial recovery, and age-milestones, if counterpointed, would expose the existential irrationality and meaninglessness at every point of time, and at every age-station in any life-span.
Now, even as the voice-personae at 39 is speaking, old Krapp at 69 switches off the tape-recorder, gets up from his table and walks into the darkness back-stage for his habitual drink. That switch-off of the Krapp-at-39 is tremendously effective. The self-confident and ambitious middle-aged Krapp was just switched-off, out of countenance, as it were. But was it not a voice merely? What had it helped recover anyway? Did its confidence even at middle-age measure up to the disillusion of old age with its demented hearing and sight, cracked voice, and lonely isolation? What is more, the switch back to the ‘present’ of the lonely old man of 69, on stage, and to his audience in the hall, is because of the same stroke of a tape-button! The switch-off matches with the fast flux even of recorded time. The tape is worked creatively to get these effects in Krapp’s Last Tape.

With both time - present, and time-past debunked, and, a recall and recovery only partial, the disillusionment is enhanced manifold. And yet, old Krapp at 69, still sits, a slave to the incorrigible habit of hearing his old tapes, and of filling at each birthday, a fresh spool. He resumes listening again to a younger Krapp recounting his mother’s death. He sat that day, so the tape says, by the canal in the biting cold, on a bench outside, bored and impatient, waiting and watching his ill-mother’s window, wishing she were gone! His non-chalance brings Meursault of Camus’ The Outsider to mind, who also wished that his old mother should die, and received the news of her death without any regret. At the burial too, Meursault had found the sun intolerably hot, and had not failed to notice the bright new screws in the coffin, and the colour of the nurses clothes, as well as the large stomachs of his late mother’s closest friends! On his return, Meursault had even met one of his old girlfriends, and had spent the night with her; she had proposed marriage and he had agreed! Time made manifest as heredity
was thus given short shrift! Earlier, *Endgame* also had given heredity severe treatment and the attitude was similar, or even worse! As the source of procreation, heredity only unnecessarily prolonged the traumatic torture of an aborted irrational bind!

Now, from his bench, the young Krapp could see nurse maids, infants, old men, and dogs, and as the taped-voice announced—

One dark young beauty I recollect particularly, all white and starch, incomparable bosom, with a big black hooded perambulator, most funeral thing. Whenever I looked in her direction she had her eyes on me. And yet when I was bold enough to speak to her — not having been introduced — she threatened to call a police man. As if I had designs on her virtue! (p.14-15)

The non-chalance at the filial bond with heredity directly comes through because of this dramaturgic counterpointing. Krapp's attitude towards his dying mother is shocking. But so is the switch off of the middle-aged Krapp, by the Krapp-at-69. Life, youth, aspiration, and death are all allowed a simultaneity, as it were, and ultimately it is the Absurd that gets materialized as a 'there', on the proscenium, Beckettian drama, to repeat, being more presentational than representational.10

The young Krapp had always wanted to be a great writer. He was also pedantic, and used the word 'viduity' to describe his mother's state of widowhood. By contrast, old Krapp had forgotten the exact meaning of this word and therefore had to consult a dictionary. That strikes at the root of old Krapp's past pedantry and ambition. It makes insignificant even the perpetual human struggle to arrive at some kind of meaning at the least. At 69, the experiences and dreams at 39 would definitely need dictionaries, because at 69, with isolation,
loneliness and physical decrepitude to bear, many would find it hard to keep life and meaning together. The consequent dramaturgy on-stage would then have to be of the Absurd, a Non-ent, or a Nothing is, with the flux of Time, as in Krapp’s Last Tape doing most damage. It not only caused radical corporeal change but also created the incorrigibles of habit, nostalgia and memory!

The incident of the death of Krapp’s mother is mingled with the memory of a ‘black ball’ which the middle-aged Krapp was throwing to a little white dog while waiting for his mother to die. In fact, Krapp speaks more about the ‘white dog’ and the ‘black ball’, than about his mother. The mother’s death is announced by just saying that the blind went down. And, even after he knew that his mother had passed away, he sat for some more time on the bench, thinking about the ‘black ball’, which he ultimately gave to the ‘little white dog’. The juxtapositions as counterpoints are grostesquely tragic-

Tape: I was there when -- (Krapp switches off, broods, switches on again)—the blind went down, one of those dirty brown roller affairs, throwing a ball for a little white dog as chance would have it. I happened to look up and there it was, All over and done with, at last. I sat on for a few moments with the ball in my hand and the dog yelping and pawing at me. (Pause.) Moments. Her moments, my moments. (Pause.) The dog’s moments (Pause.) In the end I held it out to him and he took it in his mouth, gently, gently. A small, old, black, hard, solid rubber ball. (Pause.) I shall feel it in my hand, until my dying day. (Pause.) I might have kept it. (Pause) But I gave it to the dog. (p.15)

Juxtaposing Krapp’s moments and his mother’s with the dog’s moments, Beckett bestows on all three, equal
insignificance, and, this link among the three is had through just one dramaturgic Pause---

Her moments, my moments. (Pause.) The dog’s moments. (p.15)

Earlier, in *Endgame*, Hamm also had his parents and his dog treated on similar egalitarian principles, only the number of Pauses was raised to three, and there was a slighter delay in articulating the word ‘dog’ after the pronoun ‘My---’. The entire quotation from *Endgame* is---

My father? (Pause.) My mother? (Pause.) My --- dog? (Pause.) (p.12)

However, the pathos also does not escape attention. For, there is tenderness in the way the ball is put into the grasp of the dog’s mouth, ‘gently, gently. A small, old, black, hard, solid rubber ball. (Pause.)’ The tenderness with which the dog is gently given grasp of the ball, and , the feel of the ball at that moment in Krapp’s own hand, deepens the pathos, which appears strange because of young Krapp’s non-chalance at heredity. But for the older Krapp who actually sits hearing the Spool, ‘there’, in the present, neither heredity, nor the dog is remembered and therefore it is hardly a memorable moment! Is it Proust once more at Beckett’s dramaturgical anvil, exposed for what ever his concept of ‘involuntary memory’ was worth?¹² The memory of ‘the black ball’, about which Krapp-at-39 says ‘I shall feel it in my hand, until my dying day’, is also a non-starter for the older Krapp. Infact, when he reads it in the ledger he is puzzled, and dramaturgy has pathos, at hand in---

Hm --- The black ball --- (He raises his head stares blankly front. Puzzled) Black ball? (p.11).
Quite plainly, a tragic change had come over old Krapp, for he forgets even to remember the tender, memorable moments in his past. The irrationality of an existential condition is overwhelming, and memory or no memory, tenderness or no tenderness, the Absurd overawes human existence. As for Time, therefore, the less said the better! What may be human and memorable now, may not be human and memorable later! With the passage of Time, both meaning and worth are undermined. Old Krapp preserved his birth-day tapes out of sheer, incorrigible habit. Imaginative use of the tapes helped expose even the notion of 'a deeper interest', and whatever were ambitions, aspirations, tenderness, and even love! Were not they KRAPP! An aborted existential quandary could only permit a schizophrenic's cliche-ridden 'word-salad'. And Lucky's schizophrenia would call this existential condition EXCREMENT and DEFECATION! The playwright gives to a human being an appropriate name therefore. Man is labelled KRAPP!? He is krapp-at-27, krapp-at-39 and krapp-at-69. Man is just krapp and little more. It is a futile, worthless existence. Therefore, nothing can be sacred, eminent, or even unforgettable. That was potently palpable on-stage, and the playwright has the old Krapp share it with his audience at that particular dramaturgic moment. The ability to present it as a profound experience by creatively manipulating an electronic device is a milestone in Beckettian dramaturgy. It was an entirely new experiment, because the year was 1958, and to repeat, the tape-recorder was as yet not a popular public gadget either. The experiment was entirely new, innovative, and even daring. Beckett was extremely successful with the machine in Krapp's Last Tape. Of course, it suited his theme, helping him recall and recover even a past and lost time, and play with notions of memory, time, age, and nostalgia. Through conjunction, disjunction and telescoping he got distance, contemporaneity and even simultaneity. This was all to the benefit and advantage of shaping what Beckett
committedly felt to be an existential Non-ent, and concretize it as an overwhelmingly intense stage experience.

The lonely isolate Krapp, had only his tape-recorder and its spools as companions. Of course he returned to them out of sheer incorrigible custom too. Therefore, once more we find old Krapp return to the spools and tape-recorder to hear himself again when he was 39. The record was crucial. It evidenced the memorable night when the middle-aged Krapp had had a vision. However, the ecstasy in the middle-aged Krapp voice is switched off thrice by the impatient old man, who is too sceptical to share the young man's visionary experience. 'Tape-dramaturgy' helps recover not only the visionary's ecstasy, it also counterpoints it to the older man's impatience to such visions and has drama demean it by making the lonely old man fast-forward the tape, till it is well past its recorded inspirations. The Godot-play had dreams and visions soured through the sheer rhythm and beat, inherent in banal cross-talk. In Krapp's Last Tape, each switch-off by an old and impatient Krapp has the tape literally strike a vision into a dustful heap. Each impatient fast-forward, and the curses that accompany it, create a situation of pronounced conflict between his younger voice-versions and himself, and therefore gives to Krapp's tape-exercise a dialogic content. These two dramaturgic uses of the 'tape' could hardly be lost upon an audience. One helps debunk vision, the other initiates a temporary dialogue between the younger and the older Krapp. Krapp at 69 is angry with himself for having been a young fool, and the fooler too, to record a so-called vision, the thought of which, he, now at 69, could not even bear! The 'krapp audience' also travel along with old Krapp, now to the past, now to the present, and now to the present but looking into the future, and share the on-stage rinse of visionary experience. Furthermore, the tape-device, contrasts the vision of the
young Krapp with 'the terrible darkness' within, which Krapp had always struggled to keep under. At 69, it is experienced as the more immediate and terrifying existential quandary. It is this that Krapp had forever coped with. The audience, by now deeply involved, can hardly miss the poignant pathos of the lonely old man. Of what consequence, in any case were light and darkness to an Absurd, and an Irrational existence! The lines already considered earlier are quoted below to show how effective is Beckett's manipulation of the language of theatre. It is 'tape dramaturgy' without doubt. However, the tape-device is exploited to create a situation of conflict and dialogue, with only one visible dramatis personae on-stage! Memory and vision topple; ecstasy gets debunked. There is recall or silence at the mere press of a button! Time-flux is jettisoned; disjunction and counterpoint, as well as, contemporaneity and simultaneity are had, and yet, nothing is got thereby. The quotation has already been considered in the previous pages, but is quoted entire for its aptness of example---

Tape: The vision at last. This I fancy is what I have chiefly to record this evening, against the day when my work will be done and perhaps no place left in my memory, warm or cold, for the miracle that --- (hesitates) --- for the fire that set it alight. What I suddenly saw then was this, that the belief I had been going on all my life, namely - (Krapp switches off impatiently, winds tape forward, switches on again)- great granite rocks the foam flying up in the light of the lighthouse and the wind-gauge spinning like a propeller, clear to me at last that the dark I have always struggled to keep under is in reality my most-(Krapp curses, switches off, winds tape forward, switches on again) - unshatterable association until my dissolution of storm and night with the light of the understanding and the fire -- (Krapp curses louder, switches off, winds tape forward, switches on again). (pp.15-16)
Krapp's 'I' must have taken a severe beating. Was the 'I' consistent enough to be called 'character', or, had it taken on Pirandello's 'conglomerate' colour? Could Krapp-at-69 have said of either Krapp-at-39, or, Krapp-at-27, 'That is me?' Or, would old Krapp have preferred instead, 'That was me?' What in any case does memory recall? How much does it recover of the past? Does a voice-recall always satisfy? Is it sufficient? And, suppose, if the entire was recalled, how much of it would a Krapp, at 69, be prepared to accept and own as his? There is no guarantee that a past recall would create less nostalgia or solve problems? How much would old Krapp be prepared to affirm and how much would he reject? Beckett's commitment to his theme of an Irrational Non-ent made him see the dramaturgic potential in an electronic device, fresh in the market, that would help give one more, and, a new shape to his theme of a Non-ent or the Absurd. Like Waiting, or, Ending, or an Absent presence, or Happiness, Time too, particularly its change and flux was an excruciating element in an Irrational existence. Would a tape's potential ability to recall and silence, at will, change the basic nature of a purposeless existential condition by the kind of control it would have over the lost past? What would actually happen if the lost past is brought into the present? Thus, there is old Krapp, with his cracked voice, who has forgotten even the meaning of words used by him earlier, and, who now enjoys only their articulations like the sound of 'spooool'. Moreover, he cannot even bear to listen to what he had recorded earlier. Perhaps the tape-recorder itself was a folly, because it could only preserve tin and can,\(^1\) name, date, label and ledger, voice articulations and little more! But then, there is more of this creative use of the tape-device yet to come to help shape and make palpable the intense experience that a Non-ent could be.
Now, to repeat, a tape records only a voice-personae, be it of a 'vision', or, of 'lyrical love'. For, meanwhile old age sets in. And therefore, the tape that recorded and later reported a 'vision', would at 69, lose all its ecstasy. But then, libido could still search vicarious pleasure, and, therefore, old Krapp re-plays thrice the record of his youthful experiences with the girl in the punt, although trapped in physical decay, and bound by time, heredity, habit, memory and nostalgia---

Tape: Picking gooseberries, she said, I said again I thought it was hopeless and no good going on and she agreed, without opening her eyes. (Pause.) I asked her to look at me and after a few moments --(Pause) -- after a few moments she did, but the eyes just slits, because of the glare. I bent over her to get them in the shadow and they opened. (Pause. Low) Let me in. (Pause.) We drifted in among the flags and stuck. The way they went down, sighing, before the stem! (Pause.) I lay down a cross her with my face in her breasts and my hand on her. We lay there without moving. But under us all moved, and moved us, gently, up and down, and from side to side. (p.16-17).

The above passage is supposed to be highly lyrical, and, catches the fancy of the reader, audience, and critic alike. But once again, the re-play of this lyrical detail, be it repeated umpteen number of times, is at such a remove from the immediacy of the original experience, that the thrice evoked facility of the press-button-recall, is always an exercise in helpless futility! And, what would better emphasize this, than the juxtapose of the later switch-off from that past to this present, after which follows another short pantomime by the lonely man.

The pantomime is a preparation for old Krapp's record of his own tape, now at 69. He could not even cure himself of the past habit of the last 40 years or more. It has the
hapless creature afumble in his pockets. He fishes out a banana and an envelope. This time he does not eat the banana. After consulting his watch he goes back-stage for a drink and a brief siphon is heard; perhaps he suffered from constipation too! Then he returns, reads the jottings on the envelope, loads a new reel in the tape-recorder, and switching it on, begins to record his mentality, now at 69. It was a new exercise in futility, and prolongs through many disjunctions. Since it is considered in some detail some repetitions will occur even as this analysis proceeds, particularly because each disjunction has some dramaturgic point or the other to make.

Old Krapp, it is to be presumed, records his last tape on his 69th birthday, and affords yet another counterpoint to all the previous tapes of his youthful days. The short pantomime, had just defined the old man’s die-hard habits on stage, one of which was to prepare a fresh spool at each birthday, by reading into it the significant events of his life of the past year, previously jotted on an envelope. In this way, he supposedly preserved the memories of a lifetime on machine. The spool-number would be entered in a ledger, under key-headings, for ready reference later. Beckett creatively manipulates the spools, and, with the facility of the juxtapose is able to literally rub in the irrational existential quandary in dramatic detail. And, with Krapp still in his habit-trap of ‘operation spool’, the playwright’s technique also takes up the challenge. But with the proscenium already littered with the debris of Time, the Self, Youth, Ambition, Memory and Habit, whatever was there that old Krapp could preserve! Furthermore, what was there that needed to be kept away as sacred! In any case, could he preserve at all, despite all the spools, the ledger and the tape-recorder! Therefore, the fact that old Krapp re-acts to
the youthful tapes is evident in the very first lines of his sixty-ninth year recording---

Krapp: 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. (p.17)

By now, it is abundantly clear that the action of the play actually turns out to be a repetition of a ritual that Krapp has mechanically performed for the last forty five years. And once a ritual loses meaning, it often ends up in a purposeless exercise, which would apply to all such recordings Krapp had ever made and listed, and all the effort therefore ever made by Man to preserve, recall and recover past experience. Fond excess had age lurking furtively at its heels, and the past could at best be only partially preserved. A throw back, therefore rendered even ecstatic visions terribly grotesque redundancies. Vis-a-vis the magnum opus, or the vision, old Krapp now neither had anything to say, nor even to squeak---

Krapp: Nothing to say, not a squeak. What's a year now? The sour cud and the iron stool. (Pause.) Revelled in the word spool. (With relish.) Spooool! Happiest moment of the past half million. (Pause.) Seventeen copies sold, of which eleven at trade price to free circulating libraries beyond the seas. (p.18)

At 27, and 39, Krapp had had much to say, being the 'rascal' and 'scoundrel' that he was! Now, at 69, Time had taken its toll, body had shed its youth, and shades of scepticism at 39 had become shadows. The irrationality of the existential bind had now spread over an entire life span. Therefore, the lonely old man has little to say and finds life over. The voice-personae of the earlier recordings, played a short-while ago, counterpointed with the present
existential strait, create ripples that devastate the meaning of life, branding it a purposeless futility. To achieve his ambition young Krapp had even bid farewell to love. The ambition not achieved, Krapp, at 69 has to make do with Fanny, 'the old ghost of a whore', with whom he 'could not do much'. He is now full of regret, but the crucial factor was not the wrong choice made, nor even a fond option preferred, at the earlier stages of his life-span. The regret is excruciating, because all along, it was a meaningless exercise, the irrational existential trap never quite permitting any respite or escape, neither then, nor now. Consequently, right choices or wise options were not ever the point. Right, wise, youthful, strong, ambitious and aspiring were always empty adjectives, absolutely irrelevant in the context of a Non-ent; and, illusions were worse! Death was the only reality, and a rising inner darkness, the harsher truth. That nullified every achievement. To be dead is now old Krapp's only hankering. He asks himself if he could have been happy had he stayed with his beloved on the Baltic, and not just cut himself off from the rest of the world to write his magnum opus.

Recorded voice-memories of his youth, whether of ambition, vision, or lyrical love were a travesty of the lonely life he now lived, at 69. For, it seems that at his age, his 'day is over'. Like the evening shadows he will soon pass away, unnoticed. Therefore, how does, either a beloved, or, even loneliness matter. In a letter for the working plan of San Quintine's production of the play, Beckett explains the agony of Krapp thus---

The fire filling the younger Krapp was the fire of the vision, the magnum opus. The 69-year old Krapp feels a fire burning in him too, but it is a different one, the old Krapp is burning to be gone.
The old man of 69, is utterly disillusioned, with no future plans; his whole life has been a 'misery'. It is 'the fire to be gone' that now makes him contemplate his lost past, imagining himself lying in the dark, when Pause after Pause, and in 6 Pauses all, a life-span is incoherently covered. At that moment, no more tapes play. The nostalgia is in the refrain of a 'Be again----' till technique makes the hapless man utter only 'And so on'. Then after a Pause, he repeats 'Be again----' twice. As already remarked, this was life remembered without a tape, an incoherent babbling at a desire to express. It is significant dramaturgy---

Krapp: Lie propped up in the dark - and wonder. Be again in the dingle on the Christmas Eve, gathering holly, the red-berried. (Pause.) Be again on Croghan on a Sunday morning, in the haze with the bitch, stop and listen to the bells. (Pause.) And so on. (Pause.) Be again, be again. (Pause.) All that old misery. (Pause.) Once wasn't enough for you. (Pause.) Lie down across her. (p.19)

The entire spoken piece recalls Estragon, according to whom to be dead was not enough for the dead, because the 'talking I, keeps up a perpetual articulation under an obligation to express, and, a compulsion to do so that is acute, and for that very reason tragically grotesque---

Vladimir: What do they say?

Estragon: They talk about their lives.

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. (Silence.) (Act.II, p.63)
Krapp realizes only when it is too late that he has nothing to say. He removes the tape, loads on the first spool, searches for his favourite passage with the unnamed girl in the punt, and plays this part of the recording till the finish, while he himself sits silent and motionless before it. Lyricism and erotica apart, the dramaturgic deconstruction is between the youth, that Krapp could still boast of at 39, and, the lonely decrepit that Krapp was, at 69. His pleasure was only vicarious at this moment, though aged Krapp may have had more than fulsome sex in mind. The dramaturgic counters of two Krapp-times, the Krapp-at-39 with his fulsome sex, and, his counter at 69, who now coughed away the life left to him, puts the existential plight of a human being into profound perspective. Permit a vision, allow a mangnum opus, let love in the punt be at its lyrical ecstatic, and even let Krapp-times be three, still Time, age, and physical decay demean life into an excrement. Life remains krapp, however loud-mouthed, sex-hungry and knowledge-loving one ever is! Man just 'wastes and pines' as Lucky's shouted schizophrenia would have us believe.

Like most Beckettian 'protagonists', Krapp is also aged and afflicted with painful disease; one more, on-stage manifestation of the playwright's 'physical theme'. He is almost deaf and nearly blind, and suffers from perpetual constipation. Hard of hearing, he hugs his recording-machine and makes the act of listening highly dramatic. This also demonstrates Krapp's unique relationship with his tape. The old man has developed some kind of emotional rapport with it. It is, after all, his sole companion and acts as a mediator, however incompetent, between him and his past. Perhaps, that is why, when the recorded voice gives the account of the unnamed girl in the punt, Krapp bends over and almost embraces his surrogate friend, the tape-recorder! But his enthusiasm for it notwithstanding, the gadget is susceptible
to creative exploitation, to situate on stage, a profound
dramatic experience of Time and the existential Non-ent.
However, switches have constantly to be manipulated to get
the choice-pieces throw up their voice-personae. The past
can at best be vicariously re-experienced, and, at great
remove. The machine de-constructs a life-span, and lends
three such de-constructs a crass and mechanical
simultaneity. It bestows on time-past and time-present, a
contemporaneity that facilitates a collage type re-
construction. However, the re-construction on-stage
concretizes a profound existential futility, which is the
playwright's favourite theme. The contemporaneity achieved,
need not be purposeful, because it also lends a surprising
perspective to the life-milestones under drama's scrutiny.
The switch-ons and the switch-offs, from one milestone to
another, by themselves offer tell-tale commentary, because no
two milestones can ever agree, the Time-flux in between
becoming a formidable obstruction. This time-gap prevents
complete recall. In any case all Time can never be within
the ambit of human experience, and therefore, complete
simultaneity or contemporaneity is humanly impossible. Tapes
achieve only apparent and partial juxtaposition or
counterpoint. Infact, the juxtapose is at times so full of
potential conflict that creative manipulations of switch-ons,
switch-offs and fast-forwards, radically alter a life-time
perspective. Time therefore, becomes an Irrational, Absurd
condition, and, whether at a flux or standstill, is an on-
stage anathema. However, like memory and nostalgia,
incorrigible habit is also part of the existential trap. It
is because of this that old Krapp is still found at his tape,
recording the events of his sixty-ninth year. But then
habit, memory, and nostalgia are all traps indeed. To repeat,
therefore, tin and can Time, if one will, in a recorded tape,
but all that is retrieved is a voice-personae to which though
reaction is instinctive, experience and bodily health are at
a complete disjunct. This is more particularly so when the
desire is only to be away and gone! Therefore, the old man
is set abrood, till he realizes that the tape records only
Silence. This is dramaturgy in full play. The tape could
record a Silence also! It is switched-off, but now for that
very reason old Krapp’s voice goes unrecorded into ions of
Time and History, and, not even into the tape! For it did not
record what the old man was saying---

Everything there, everything all the--- (p.18)

The tape is switched-on again, and old Krapp repeats---

Everything there, everything on this muckball, all the
light and dark and famine, and feasting of ---
(hesitates) --- the ages! (p.18)

Old Krapp is a ‘stupid bastard’ no more. Of course he
does have fits of memory and nostalgia, but age has set on,
and Time has taken its toll. The earth, the silence of which,
at 39 also, he had found extremely disturbing, was a
‘muckball’ after all, full of the contradiction of all the
ages! Old Krapp is now desperate. He shouts a loud and
hopeless ‘yes!’ However, escape out of this irrational Time-
trap is impossible. The come-down from the desperation is
graded even as the work-up was. Krapp becomes tired and
weary. Existence as a task was taxing and traumatic. It was
like homework, from which the mind could not ever be taken
off. He speaks into the last tape again his uncertainty about
Christ---

Ah well, may be he was right (Pause.) May be he was
right (Pause.). (p.18)

Krapp pauses and the tape continues its wind once more
recording only the Silence that engulfs him. Realizing this
he switches off, and consults the jottings on his envelope and is disgusted---

'Pah!' (p.18)

The jottings are dismissed, the envelope crumpled and thrown away. He again broods, and then switches on the tape and says--

Nothing to say, not a squeak. What’s a year now! The sour cud and the iron stool. (Pause.) (p.18)

Cursed Time had seen him a whelp, a scoundrel and then a stupid bastard; these were three Time-milestones. There had been writing, dining, drinking, sex, ambitions, aspirations; even a vision, lyricism and thoughts of a magnum opus; there was splutter, bother, rant and confidence; there was scepticism, indifference, and non-chalance also. However, stealthily, age had set on, and with that came loneliness and Silence. Each time-station had its reservations about the earlier milestones. The tape spools could record only a voice and not a whole life. The voice reproduced did not recover even an iota of the ions of Time that had sped by. It is poignant and tragic. Time was once at 27 and then at 39. That had made two voice-spool merely. In any case, it was life taken at an artificially set time-station: an year; a birthday! Now he was 69, and had little to say! Time as flux, as duration, as memory had lost significance. The krapp and defecation that life forever was, has now become an 'iron stool', a 'sour cud'. The happiest moment was therefore also the most grotesque; not that, earlier ones, long ago, were any better, or any worse! In any case there were no happy moments left now; if any there were it could only count one in half a million, and that too in the grotesque sound of the word 'spooool'. The magnum opus had sold just 17 copies; the
farthest that his reputation could travel was not very far. But then old Krapp’s last tape was atwirl, and after a Pause the decrepit again spoke into it—

Crawled out once or twice, before the summer was cold. Sat shivering in the park, drowned in dreams and burning to be gone. Not a soul. (Pause.) Last fancies. (Vehemently.) Keep’em under . (Pause.) (p.18 )

At the 69-milestone, old Krapp felt himself at a crawl, cold and shivering. Memory and nostalgia were now a bane and a curse. Krapp was alone and very lonely now, conscious of an inner darkness and a ‘burning to be gone’. It was pathetic. Between two Pauses, and, a vehement Krapp effort, drama exposes his attempt to keep his memories reined. These are stage-concretizations of the abstract concept of Time. The human being is shown ‘to do and suffer’ through its lapse and flux, retrieving minimally and losing all. Tapes and memories, nostalgia, habit and heredity are desperately hugged, but what is lost to Time cannot ever be retrieved as a full-blooded life experience. And therefore, as a profound theatrical experiment, the playwright situates a late age-milestone, corporeally stationed ‘there’,\(^{15}\) as a ‘physical theme’, on a practically empty, half-lit-half-dark stage, and past milestones are recovered as taped voice-personae. Just one of them, of the right age-station is played to narrate, comment, or counter, a past, present or ‘future’. What was ‘future’ to a past at 39 or 27, is made a tangible existential bind at 69. In this way, an abstract phenomenon like a past, or a future, are contextualized as on-stage palpable experiences. And, in the process, life in the context of Time, and Time in the context of a lived life, are shown as lived irrationalities. It is a hard, harsh, and cruel condition, but crueler, far more are nostalgia, habit, and memory, for these, prod and instigate. Recorded spools do not help recover the life that has sieved through the
sands of Time. But still, out of incurable habit, old Krapp keeps speaking into his last tape. The aspirant to a magnum opus could now barely struggle through a page. Memory rushes in and with it enters Fanny, as a ghost from the past. Dramaturgy is in full control---

(Pause.) Could I? (Pause.) And she? (Pause.) Pah! (p.18)

Old Krapp repeated into the gadget a song he had partly sung earlier discontinuing it then, because of a coughing fit---

Now the day is over,
Night is drawing nigh-igh,
Shadows -- (Coughing, then almost inaudible) of evening
Steal across the sky. (p.19)

The theme of the song, and the coughing, as well as the Silence, and the imaginative play of spools, together define Time, as an on-stage, intense irrational condition. Old Krapp now gasps. He wonders about last efforts. He becomes delirious, almost lost in bits and pieces of memory. He is repetitious. The refrain is 'Be again ---', and 'Be again ---' has already been noted. To reconsider its language dramaturgy, the refrain spaced between Pauses and culminates in a Long Pause---

(Pause.) And so on. (Pause.) Be again, be again. (Pause.) All that old misery. (Pause.) Once wasn't enough for you. (Pause.) Lie down across her. (Long Pause.) (p.19)

The Long Pause ensues and the play is now about to end. Old Krapp is still at his last tape. Just then, and very appropriately too, grotesque melodrama takes over. Old Krapp bends over the machine, switches it off and takes out the
tape he was recording on, crumbles it and throws it away. Time had had him graded a whelp, a rascal, a scoundrel, and then a stupid bastard. But now he had had enough of Time. However, escape there could be none, and memory, habit and nostalgia also took their heavy toll. Krapp is shown on stage, literally struggling to keep dreams and fancies repressed and under. The re-play of the punt scene was yet to come, with its lyricism, but it hardly recovered anything but memory, and its nostalgic re-play was now little more than a habit. The re-play is however, an appropriate counterpoint. The tape is adjusted at the re-play of the punt scene, but the playwright does not have the re-play stop. It plays on silently even after the two Krapps at 39 and 69 have finally stopped speaking.

Now, Time having been zeroed into a futility, the play must end in a Silence, and of Silence, Krapp's Last Tape has a new drama, with its specific sound-contour. The Godot-play had made maximum use of Silences. There were Longer Silences too. In the excruciating back-drop of these Silences the tramps were at a dramaturgic pressure to keep up a banal conversation, to ward off the eerie meaninglessness of an irrational existential bind. Endgame did not use Silences at all. It preferred the shorter duration Pauses, and also voice modulation to disjunct and de-construct extended speech deliveries. In neither the Godot-play, nor Endgame is any dramatis personae directly aware of a Silence, much less does it speak of, or, mention it as a conscious awareness. On the contrary, Krapp's Last Tape has it mentioned as a consciously felt, profound experience. In fact, the close of the play is witness to a new kind of drama so far in Beckett, that treats Silence differently as a concretized, on-stage, overwhelming phenomenon. Of Silence, the lonely old man appears intensely aware. Now at 69, he only hankered for death and felt the inner darkness of which he had always been conscious, take
greater possession of him. He had sat at his last tape and felt he had nothing to record; not even as, much as a squeak! Silence had ultimately to take over, and it is built up dramaturgically as a strategy. When the end of the play approaches, there are two situations of very profound Silence. It is the middle-aged Krapp at 39. His voice-personae speaks over the tape as old Krapp sits alone and listens. The younger man is heard between 2 Pauses—

(Pause.) Past mid night. Never knew such Silence. The earth might be uninhabited. (Pause.) (p.16).

Earlier at p.12 also, the middle aged Krapp has his sceptical awareness —-

Extraordinary silence this evening! I strain my ears and do not hear a sound... (p.12)

And so, Krapp's Last Tape has the first direct mention of Silence by a dramatic personae so far. Quite plainly this is a new 'Silence dramaturgy' and requires consideration, even at the cost of repetition. In Waiting for Godot, Silence was used almost as rhythm and ritual, and so also was Pause -orchestration. But no one spoke about it, though it was felt to overwhelm the cross-talk, which was rhythmically stopped at umpteen dramaturgic points to sink in the metaphysical burden, which the banal conversation each time underscored. Now Endgame and Krapp's Last Tape have Pauses only except that, in the latter there is this new 'Silence dramaturgy', when Krapp-at-39, just quoted, specifically refers to a kind of Silence he found extraordinary. He just speaks three short sentences, placed between three Pauses. It is past midnight, the earth appeared uninhabited. Never did he know such silence. This is Beckettian drama making the audience feel anew an excruciating quiet indeed. Or was it a Disquiet!? The pause-hedging, the evoked midnight, the earth
pronounced as uninhabited, together add to the on-stage experience of a Silence which now keenly hurts the old and lonely Krapp. The three extra words spoken by the younger Krapp before he is switched off accrue to the 'silence dramaturgy' a fresh dimension, providing it a different sound contour altogether--

Here I end--- (p.16)

At this point, as we remember, old Krapp had switched off for a re-wind, because he had wanted to get the punt scene again on the sound track. He locates it and enjoys entire, the lyricism of the love-scene. It was a re-count of the punt-episode in the voice of the middle-aged Krapp. After this re-count there is a Pause in the tape. In the play it is on p.17. The third variation of the sound contour of Silence follows, for, after the Pause referred to, it repeats just 4 words out of the 3 sentences that had noted the extraordinary Silence earlier---

past midnight. Never knew -- (p.17 )

However, as we already know the younger man was switched off; cut off in mid-speech. He was not allowed to repeat the 3 short sentences that had earlier evoked the Silence. Yet, the contour variation on Silence introduces the theme and the switch-off actually re-habilitates Silence, initially activated by the switched-off speech. The old man had stopped the tape, because, as pointed out earlier, he had wanted to prepare a new spool at his sixty-ninth birthday. Let us linger a little longer at the contour variations Beckett plays on the 'dramaturgy of Silence'. For, later, old Krapp wrenches off the new reel, crumples it, and throws it away. It is replaced by the punt-scene spool. The lyricism of the love-scene is once again voiced by the
middle-aged Krapp. However, old Krapp only stares and sits motionless. The play is about to end, so is the re-play of the punt-scene tape. The spoken reference to the pervasive Silence on earth arrives. And, as still more effective drama, the playwright makes just one slight variation on his 'dramaturgy of Silence'. This variation is in the shape of a small stage-direction. After the Pause, and before the middle-aged Krapp's reference to the strange Silence, the stage-direction has only old Krapp's lips move. There is no speech however, and there is no sound either. This is at p.20. After this, the audience hear on tape, the middle-aged Krapp repeat the entire 'Silence ritual' of 3 sentences—-

Past midnight. Never knew such silence. The earth might be uninhabited. (Pause.) Here I end this reel ---- (p.20)

That evokes Silence again and immediately after old Krapp speaks his and the play's last speech 'Box-- (Pause) --three, spool --- (Pause) --- five. (Pause.)’. That spool was made 30 years ago, when the old man was at the prime of life, but now that no fire was left in him anymore, he did not want Time unwound at all. He sat motionless, staring, while the tape having re-worked the last Silence on-stage, and, exhausted its voice-content, ran on silently. Such are the playwright's variations in strategy that contextualize Time, on-stage, into a dramaturgic Silence. Towards the play's end this excruciating Silence was shaped into a fresh and intense experience.16

The Silence was there. It is there. Three moves on its devastating scale were sufficient. A Pause; a reference to midnight; and a reminder of its obviousness, 'Never knew --'. At 39, Krapp had become aware of the Silence. Now, at 69, he was in lonely isolation and had in fact found himself enveloped by its agonizing presence. All that the old man
could now do was to switch-off his 39-year-old voice and brood, possibly at the life left far behind in lost ions of time, of which a mere voice-record remained---

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. (Pause.) The eyes she had! (Broods, realizes he is recording silence, switches off, broods) (pp.17-18)

The earlier 'whelp' and the later 'scoundrel' is now become a 'stupid bastard'. This was a fine way to grade Time, on an affectionately adverse scale of degradation and abuse. And ofcourse, as pointed out earlier, it also de-constructs one Self into as many Krapps as the spools. And, a perspective is set up on the past, which became graded on some kind of a scale. The play adds the lapse of Time to the irrationality of existence, taking away all its certitude and compelling each successive age--milestone to reject its predecessor. This was a trap-situation, but what of the touching nostalgia---

The eyes she had (p.18)

To conclude, in Krapp's Last Tape, the playwright made a daring innovation by making the first ever use of a tape-recorder to concretize a dark and bleak vision of Time as an on-stage experience of the irrational. The machine helped the playwright contextualize Time, yet one more abstract notion on-stage, like a Waiting and an Ending in the earlier plays.

As usual in Beckett's theatre, the stage undergoes a significant reduction. The stage as always is almost bare, save for a table, a chair, a tape-recorder and some spools. The proscenium holds only one human figure during the entire action. He is called Krapp aged 69 years. What seems to be a
monologue shapes itself into an intense dialogue between old Krapp and his former voice-personae, recorded on tapes at different birthdays.

The entire 'action' of the play takes place in Krapp's den, which is divided into two halves, one is brilliant and the other is dark. Like Endgame, Krapp’s Last Tape, too has a pantomime begun it to situate Krapp's Time-hurt quandary on-stage, reducing him to a tragic grotesquie 'there', an irrational meaningless physical presence, Beckett's favorite 'physical theme'. A ritual re-play of his tapes appears to be Krapp’s incorrigible habit. Old Krapp is short-sighted and hard of hearing, and has a laborous walk. He is a solitary and lives in excruciating silence, a very effective positioning on stage of an existential state as presentational rather than a representational condition. It is a decrepit human corporeality, and a terribly lonely human presence 'there' in all its tragic grotesquie.

The tape-recorder recovers and recalls, at will, earlier life-stations only as voiced-articulations though. It initiates a dialogue amongst the different versions of a single Self at different stages in life. The tape recorder also achieves a contemporaneity with an articulated Self of the past, and of that past with its future, which for the audience in the hall is Krapp-at-69. Furthermore, the taped articulations make the age-factor, at various life-milestones prominent. And, against either of these disjunctions, or, telescoped re-constructions, stands a lonely old man, seen and heard as a stage presence. The terrible counterpoints dramaturgically debunk, past, present and future. Beckett was extremely successful with the machine in Krapp’s Last Tape, of course, it suited his theme, helping him recall and recover a past and lost time and play with notions of memory, age and nostalgia. Through conjunction, disjunction and telescoping
he got distance, contemporaneity and even simultaneity. This was all to the benefit and advantage of dramatically shaping what Beckett committedly felt to be an existential Non-ent, and concretize it, as an overwhelming, intense, stage experience.

Like all Beckett's protagonists, Krapp too is aged and afflicted with disease. His physical inadequacies are of great dramatic significance. Beckett capitalizes on Krapp's short sight and cracked voice to make a simple act of reading poignant dramaturgic exercise. As the old man peers closer at the register the past and present are counterpointed as palpable experiences. And when old Krapp hugs the tape it is as if he desperately wishes to hold on to Time, and memory.

With just one pantomime, a counterpointed voice-personae through the tape-recorder, and, a single actor who is coarse of dress, old, decrepit, hard of hearing and almost blind, Beckett is able to situate on the proscenium an existential predicament that spreads over Time, and invite the audience to a participatory dialogue with it.

In Waiting for Godot, a set of illusions like dream, vision, story, belief, place, object, and nature are literally shorn of meaning by the sheer beat and rhythm inherent in banal cross-talk, one variety of the playwright's favorite 'language theme'. In Krapp's Last Tape, another set of illusions like youth, memory, and ambition are dramatically shrivelled into the Time-trap of age by just the creative switch ons and switch-offs of a tape-recorder. The same technique also helped create conflict and dialogue between old Krapp and his youthful, ambitious past. Furthermore in Krapp's Last Tape, a new kind of Silence-dramaturgy is introduced. Waiting for Godot makes a good dramatic use of Pauses and Silences but as stage-directions
to institute on stage the existential phenomenon of an overwhelming eerie Silence. *Endgame* prefers the shorter duration Pause and voice modulation to disjunct and deconstruct extended speech deliveries. But in neither *Waiting for Godot*, nor in *Endgame*, is there any dramatis personae directly aware of Silence, much less does it speak directly of it. *Krapp's Last Tape*, like *Endgame*, has its share of Pauses, but it has Silence given a sound-contour through deconstructed permutations of a conscious actor-awareness that is new. The play ends in Silence, and old Krapp sits at his table and feels he had not as much as a squeak to record! Silence ultimately takes over, Silence, even as the Curtain dropped.
References:


5. Ibid. p.90.


11. Leventhal, op. cit., p.46.


An intense commitment to the theme of an aborted, irrational and purposeless existential impasse and the artistic integrity to embody it in concrete on-stage dramaturgic shapes; can hardly be expected to have any enthusiasm for life, much less consider it full of the ecstasies of joy, prayer and gratitude. In Waiting for Godot sheer repetition used almost as ritual, had bereft the word 'happy' of all its meaning, reducing it to a grotesque voice-sound---

Vladimir: You must be happy, too, deep down, if you only knew it.
Estragon: Happy about what?
Vladimir: To be back with me again.
Estragon: Would you say so?
Vladimir: Say you are, even if it's not true.
Estragon: What am I to say?
Vladimir: Say, I am happy.
Estragon: I am happy.
Vladimir: So am I.
Estragon: So am I.
Vladimir: We are happy.
Estragon: We are happy. (Silence.) (Act II, p.60)

Beckett does not stop after the stage-direction for Silence because there was an insistent pressure on the dramaturgic shape,¹ which the Non-ent theme² takes, and vice-
versa, that is, on the theme itself to add one more beat to the rhythm generated. It comes as a culmination and takes the form of a short Estragon-Vladimir exchange. This exchange dramatically sucks the articulation 'happy' of all its innocent joy, the play having sufficiently progressed to make both Godot and Waiting, already overwhelming on - stage concretizations---

Estragon: What do we do now, now that we are happy?

Vladimir: Wait for Godot. (Estragon groans). (Silence) (Act II, p.60)

At another place in the same play, Vladimir stifles a hearty laugh and substitutes it with the grotesquie of an ear to ear smile, as quick to vanish, as it was to appear. In Endgame also, laughter is graded, and, on three occasions comes after much reflection. At yet another place in the same play the stage-direction scales laughter down from hearty to less hearty, to still less hearty. There is talk too of the last time Hamm had had a hearty laugh! Therefore, the title of Happy Days may be a little intriguing, more so because the curtain rises on a half buried Winnie, aged 50 who is 'embedded to above her waist' in an 'expanse of scorched grass rising centre to a low mound'. This time, a whole play is made to act out the ritual of happiness. Like Waiting, Godot, Ending, and Time in the Godot-play, Endgame and Krapp's Last Tape respectively, one more abstraction is put into the dramaturgic sieve and is literally seen to disintegrate, even as the play's theatic exercise continues relentlessly till the very end. In Waiting for Godot, illusions of a Vision, Story, Dream and even Grace and Redemption are rinsed of their meaning. In Happy Days, an entire play with its own specific technique is set the task of an operation demolish, to destroy the illusion of
happiness, gratitude and prayer, and of an absent-presence constantly a-watch over its creatures and creation.

The play is also another fresh and original treatment of language and human corporeality. However, the language used is just not a Vladimir -- Estragon 'banal' cross-talk. Neither is it a schizophrenic's word - salad like Lucky's, with almost a method in its madness. Nor, is it either a telescoping of tapes recorded at earlier birth-days and heard by the old decrepit at the late age of 69. Once again it is a new experience of the phenomenon that is language with a fresh dramaturgy of its own. Its dramaturgic de-structurings are more in the Endgame tradition of extended speech deliveries, particularly of Hamm's page-length or more soliloquies, though Winnie's pages-spread long speeches always have a dialogic content, because of the constant though silent Willie-presence in the background. Also, even as in Endgame, the same human voice is very often modulated and even fragmented repeatedly into normal or narrative tones, and very often with the help of dramatically appropriate Pause-punctuations. Of course, there is variety here also, in the sense that the voice modulations may be many but they are not as various as in Endgame. Thus, in the latter play, Nagg's tailor's story required five different voice-modulations, and one very small Hamm speech was de-constructed to accommodate a rational being's voice also. Not that all this was not done in drama ever before, but if anything, it evidences Beckett's interest in the potentiality inherent in the creative manipulation of even a metaphor-bereft work-a-day language. It is this that makes his entire oeuvre logo-centric and the playwright himself, a classic long before his death. For sure, it was just not because he often used what is generally described as 'banal, work-a-day cross-talk'. His plays are logo-centric, and his language of cliche and collapse, carries very lightly the
heavy burden of the profound simplicity that an aborted existential plight reduces itself to. Pauses, Long Pauses, Maximum Pauses, and, Silences and Long Silences are also used to dramaturgically break-up human speech. Of course, the dramatist does not limit himself to only these, because often a yawn, or a blow of the nose, or, the turn of a newspaper-page proves a sufficient dramaturgic device. In fact, a 'language-dynamic' and the drama inherent in human existence as a 'physical theme' were his technique's two primary characteristics. Therefore, it would not be far wrong to suggest that his imagination was fine-tuned to the vagaries of drama generally, and the existential drama in particular. Beckett had control over both English and French as mother-tongues, although he was Irish. The obligation to express was his bane. It was indeed an obsession, for he also knew that there was nothing to express and nothing in which to do so. It was while he was at his novels that he really discovered language, and the possibility of cancelling out a preceding statement by words that immediately succeeded it, erasing a verb by another verb and a noun by yet another noun, inventing profound language games that eliminated meaning out all together. Happy Days is one new, and very successful experiment in exploring the drama inherent in language as well as in existence, even when each is reduced to the basic banalities and shows that the human predicament was completely shorn of meaning. Now, no Beckett play repeats the technique of an earlier drama by the play-wright in its entirety, because each play has its own fresh and original dramaturgic experience to offer. In fact, it is this dramaturgic variety consequent to the constant thematic variations in each play of the theme of a Non-ent which keeps interest in Beckett drama alive. Ultimately the theme is always that of an empty and meaningless existential irrationality, with only enough variation to make it appear different and by changing the technique to suit the thematic change.
Happy Days is a play in two Acts covering 38 pages. Of this, Act I extends over about 27, and Act II over 11 pages. Viewed perfunctorily, the two Acts would appear to contain only an extended monologue of the 50-year old, half-embedded Winnie, because her speech deliveries take-up almost 34, of the 38 pages, of the play. However, Beckettian control over the play's dramaturgy not only subtly converts what would otherwise be monotonous soliloquy not only into a veritable dialogue between Winnie and her partner Willie, but also, between the stage and its audience. This is because the human being is actually 'there', on-stage in both her and his constricted existential bind. And, the wonder of it all is, that Willie is scarcely ever wholly present, on stage, as a visible performer. But that, Willie is the other, in this characteristic Beckettian two-some, is never in doubt. Earlier, in Waiting for Godot, Beckett had successfully concretized, on stage, an absent-presence, Godot, and along with Godot, yet another abstraction, Waiting. Therefore, it would have been a lot easier for the playwright to contextualize a Willie-presence, while actually keeping him almost always away, and out of sight. However, in Happy Days, the change is that Beckett chooses to keep Willie out of sight behind Winnie's mound. Therefore though Willie is not on stage, there is never any doubt that he is not there, and his presence is manipulated dramatically. Of this, a minor example would be the rarely-speaking Willie's important 'It', sounded all alone between two very extended Winnie's speech-deliveries. Willie's 'It' is sandwiched between Winnie's Second and Third Speeches, the former about 5 pages long and the latter extending over 3 page lengths. Willie's 'It' is an answer to a Winnie question about the pronoun to be used for 'hair'. Was the pronoun to be 'it' or 'them'? And the play being in English, Willie lends authority to the first of the two, by just saying 'It', whereafter the 3-page Third Speech by
Winnie immediately starts. Of course this may sound both unusual and comic, yet in the context in which it is spoken, it does not, because the Second and Third Winnie Speeches carry a heavy burden of the usual Beckettian themes. Looked at from this perspective the sounded 'It', could be tragic as well as grotesque, and also, a dramaturgic device to create an appropriate interval between two long Winnie utterances. This also evidences the dramatist's particular fondness for the dramatic potential of single-worded articulations, particularly pronouns, and how these voice-sounds can construct, as well as de-construct speech dramaturgically. This fondness to deal with pronouns to create subtle, dramatic nuances, as part of his 'language theme' will also be considered in the analysis of Play.

Out of deliberate choice then, Willie is put behind the low mound, at the epi-centre of which 50 year-old Winnie is shown buried waist high. Beckett-technique concerns itself with 'physical theme'9. Willie is not only out of sight, though always a presence in Winnie’s mind, he is also supposed to speak rarely or almost not at all. Through out the play, and more particularly, through Winnie’s constant address or allusion to Willie, in her first three speeches, Beckett transforms the otherwise long Winnie monologues, which on occasion cover 9 and even 10 pages, into profound exchanges between a typical Beckettian two-some, in this case Winnie and Willie. But of this a little later, because let us now look at the play's dramaturgy from the very beginning.

The curtain rises on an expanse of scorched grass rising centre to a low mound. Behind the mound extends a plain, with the sky receding, to meet it in the distance. It is once more a sparse stage. The range and spread is again from Man to the Cosmos. Embedded to above the waist, and
in the exact centre of the mound, under blazing light is Winnie, a 50 year old blonde, plump of arms, with bare shoulders, and a big bosom. She wears a pearl necklace. To her left is a capacious black bag. To her right is a collapsible parasol. Lying asleep on the ground, but hidden by the mound is Willie. Winnie is also discovered sleeping, with her head on her arms, and her arms on the ground before her. This is the first concrete stage - image in the play. It is of a trapped and constricted human condition in a Universe, reduced to its simplicities of a scorched earth, sky, plain, a receding horizon and blazing light. Soon, sound-effects take over. After a Long Pause, a bell rings piercingly for 10 seconds. However, Winnie does not move. After a Pause the bell rings more piercingly, this time only for 5 seconds. Winnie raises her head and ‘gazes front’. There is a second Long Pause, and also the second concrete stage - image to hold the audience and the reader’s attention alike. Winnie straightens up, lays her hands flat on the ground, throws back her head and gazes at the zenith. The third Long Pause ensues, and without question, the audience receive the third striking stage - image to hold their imaginations by. But who trapped Winnie there? Who rang the piercing bells? Who cast the blazing light? These remain mysteries. There is only this intense, strangely constricted, on stage, ‘there’ human presence, between earth and sky, under a blazing light, and controlled by a piercing bell. Shorn of the woolly trappings of defunct illusions, such is the supposed nature of an existential Non-ent just physically ‘there’, entrapped, and perpetually confined. However, very unusually, Winnie appears happy! Infact, she begins with a prayer, and, follows it up with an addendum, which, because of the sharp contrast with her constricted condition, beget irony. Beckettian technique is particular about the relevant dramaturgic detail ---
Winnie: (gazing at zenith). Another heavenly day. (Pause.) (Act I, p.9)

Her head is back-level. She clasps hands to breasts and closes her eyes. Her lips move in inaudible prayer for about 10 seconds. Then her lips become still, hands remaining clasped. And she is heard to say---

For Jesus Christ sake. Amen. (Act I, pp.9-10)

Winnie’s eyes open, hands unclasp and return to the mound. A Pause ensues. Then she clasps hands to breasts again, and her eyes close, and lips move once more in an inaudible addendum, this time for five seconds, and she is heard to say---

World without end Amen. (Act I, p.10)

Winnie’s eyes open again, hands unclasp and return to the mound. There is a Pause. The prayer and its addendum in the context of the three successive stage - images, contextualized as on - stage grotesqueries, throw up the manifest incongruity of the situation with the play’s title. The theatric detail underscores the sham that the devotion could be. Or, was it simple obduracy, or, even plain naivete, an obvious example of Man, the Simpleton. In either case, the situation was tragically grotesque. It is a Beckettian personae, embedded till her waist in scorched - grass earth, and yet gazing devotedly at the heavens, mumbling an inaudible prayer, and pleading it to be granted for the sake of Christ, and, adding an addendum also, and concluding with a low---

World without end. Amen. (Act I p.10)
Krapp when at middle-age would have called it a yelping to providence. A Hamm would have blurted down-right abuse. A Pozzo would have seen in the decrepit, a God; for Man, Pozzo said, was in the image of God. Beckett's dramaturgy appears obsessed with the idea of a divinity, and does not ever miss the least opportunity to let all its haloed associations have a sound dramatic drubbing. Winnie's existential state, is too incongruous with her ecstasy of prayer, and therefore engenders from the very start the irony that is the perpetual undercurrent in what ever she later says, does or believes. Add to this the prayer for a world without end! And add also the irony of visualizing another happy day! The technique contextualizes on stage, the Beckettian theme of a meaningless and constricted existential bind, trying unsuccessfully to prop itself up through the drama of ecstatic devotion and prayer! That all is not quite well is plain, because very strangely, after so much religiosity, it is only a hesitant Winnie who prods herself to begin her day---

Begin, Winnie. (Pause.) Begin your day Winnie. (Pause.). (Act I p.10)

Woken up by a piercing bell and under blazing light, as also embedded till her waist in a scorched-earth mound, between an expanse of plain and sky, Winnie had to have her sceptic hic-cups. Beckett takes particular care to ensure that. Three Pauses and the addition of 'your day' to 'Begin Winnie' makes the cajole more manifest. This apart, there are at least 30 stage-directions in the play for 'Smile-on/Smile off' and 'Smile/ Smile broader/ Smile off' and quite a few for 'gaze front' and 'arrested gestures'. Also, 44 Long Pauses and 460 odd Pauses, situate, on-stage a profoundly intense existential condition, with stubborn returns to blessful enthusiasms and joyous exultation. Quite
a few times, the head is put down in despair to be propped up either by a self-prod, cliche, or, blatant recalcitrance. The predicament is bad. To sing also is soon thought fatal, and Winnie even remembers the sadness after a song. Later, when Willie does sing, the delivery is hoarse, and he refuses to respond to Winnie's encore. And despite Winnie's umpteen repetitions of it being a happy and wonderful day, and therefore a matter of great mercy, the Winnie - Willie condition is sad and pathetic. The stage-directions help dramatically situate on stage, accretion after accretion which expose the irrationality of human existence. As always in Beckett, the drama of a predicament is reduced to its least modicum, be it as the dramaturgy of a 'collapsed' language, or, as sheer banal torso activity, which remains the 'physical theme'.

The first Act has 6 extended Winnie speeches that cover almost 24 of the play's 27 pages. The speech-lengths vary; the First and Second Speeches are of almost 4 pages each, while the Third covers about 2. The Fourth and Fifth are 2-1/2 pages each, and the Sixth Speech which is also the last of Act I, spreads over 9 pages almost. The 12 pages of Act II also have Winnie speaking most of the time. It is a single speech and spans about 10 pages. Thus, a play that is only 39 pages long, has Winnie speaking in it for about 34 pages. The play also has 4 Winnie - Willie Conversations. Each Willie Speech and each Winnie - Willie Conversation is a different exercise in characteristic Beckettian dramaturgy.

Now, how could a performer, who keeps speaking alone most of the time for almost the entire length of the play, hold audience attention! Dramatic de-construction of speech characteristic to the play helps do this, as does the constant awareness of a Willie-presence behind Winnie's mound. The impression that the long speeches are not extended
monologues is checked from the very start, because the Beckettian two-some is established as a pair from the First Winnie Speech, giving it an implied dialogic thrust, though Willie is prone to speaking very rarely.

An out-of-sight, or behind-the-mound Willie-presence, a physical theme as body corporeality, and, dramatic de-constructions of spoken speech, are the preliminary characteristics of the first three extended Winnie deliveries. But, to repeat, each speech is a different dramatic exercise and carries the burden of its own Beckettian themes.

Let us begin with the drama of the out-of-sight Willie-presence, as also the use of Winnie’s corporeal movements and language de-constructions in the First Winnie Speech. During the entire 4 page delivery, Willie puts in no physical appearance. Only parts of his body participate in the dramaturgic exercise. However, the entire speech is Willie-aware, in the sense that it keeps referring or alluding to him. Beginning her day after a rummage into her big black bag for a tooth brush and paste, Winnie cranes her neck, further and further right, to call out to Willie--

Hoo-oo! (Pause. Louder) Hoo-oo (Act. I, p.10)

Winnie smiles, but it is soon ‘off’, though it was indeed tender. She herself is in the Beckettian tradition; half her human form was in earth’s grip. She was under blazing light, between sky and plain. She was woken up by a piercing bell to prod and cajole herself to begin a new day! But her words, as the speech starts again betray awareness of an absent Willie-presence--

Poor Willie - (examines tube, smile off) - running out - (Looks for cap) - ah well - (finds cap) - can’t be
helped - (screws on cap) - just one of those old things - (lays down tube) - another of those old things - (turns towards bag) - just can't be cured - (rummages in the bag) - cannot be cured - (brings out small mirror, turns back front) - ah yes - (inspects teeth in mirror) - poor dear Willie (Act I, p.10)

And later again, a little below Willie is still not out of her mind---

--- ah yes - (turns towards bag) - poor Willie - (rummages in bag) - no zest - (rummages) - for anything - (brings out spectacles in case) - no interest - (turns back front) - in life - (takes spectacles from case) - poor dear Willie - (lays down case) - sleep for ever - (open spectacles) - marvelous gift - (put on spectacles) - nothing to touch it - (looks for toothbrush) - in my opinion - (takes up toothbrush) - always said so - examines handle of brush - wish I had it (Act I, p.11).

Winnie repeatedly reminisces in disjuncted speech Willie's marvellous gift for sleep and wishes she had it. As her monodrone prolongs, addressed more often to Willie, and, in spite of her smiles, which too are soon off, and, despite the fact that she finds the day 'wonderful', and herself 'happy', it being 'great mercies', the situation gradually concretizes, as it should, into a fresh Beckettian grotesque.

The truth of the human being is an embedded, entrapped existential condition. Winnie's predicament, her front gazes and arrested gestures the ridicule of a 'smile off', and the regret at Willie's marvellous gift of perpetual sleep, together contextualize a discomfiting situation. The existential truth, after all, was not as happy as it was projected to be either through 'wonderful lines', or in 'the old style', or, through the cliche - ridden expression of content and joy, or, even as an ecstasy of prayer and its addendum. The dramaturgy of the First Winnie Speech establishes this beyond doubt, for it is in fact, an unhappy,
irrational, trapped human predicament which is propped up by
cliche-ridden dramaturgic abuse. It is altogether
discomfiting, for 'complacent' states of mind, and could
shock and startle them into a dialogue with the stage.

Descartean pineals being absent\textsuperscript{11} all that exists of a
human being is a meaningless corporeality 'there', that must
wake up, and, go to sleep, and in between indulge in banal,
torso movements.\textsuperscript{12} The stage directions in the very first
Winnie 'monologue - dialogue', abundantly underscore such an
effective corporeal drama. Whether Winnie is at prayer; or,
while she is rummaging in the big black bag for a cap, mirror, or spectacles; or, brushing teeth; or, craning her
neck for Willie; or, extinguishing a tender smile; or,
clasping or unclasping hands at her breasts; or, closing and
opening eyes in ecstasies of prayer; or, gazing at the zenith
head back; or, inspecting teeth and gums by putting away a
corner of the mouth; or, plucking fingers on grass; or,
examining a tooth - brush handle to read what was written on
it, and, putting it down to rummage for spectacles; or,
taking up spectacles, turning back front, or laying the
spectacles down, opening them, putting them on, and looking
again for the tooth - brush to read the writing on its handle, the constricted physical condition is the theme. This
is corporeal drama and much more. To continue to enumerate
her action which the stage-directions situate on stage,\textsuperscript{13} she
lays down the spectacles to take out a handkerchief, with
which she first wipes one eye and then the other; then she
looks for the spectacles, and polishes one lens with the
handkerchief, and, then the other, all in an effort to better
her vision the better to 'see', and be 'sure'. And what could
be more corporeal than human breath! For, Winnie even
breathes on her lenses and polishes them with her
handkerchief, first one lens, and then the other, again, the
better able to 'see'. Accompanying the physical gesture is the vital statement of having 'seen' enough---

Genuine ---pure --- what ? --- blind next --- ah well --- seen enough --- I suppose --- by now ---
(Act I, p.11)

An irony is added to this direct statement, for she just cannot get out of her trap - habit of---

what are those wonderful lines (Act I, p.11)

The greater irony is in the words---

--- Woe woe is me --- to see what I see --- ah yes --- wouldn't miss it --- or would I ? (Act I, p.11)

The topsy-turvy of her wandering mind continues for she stops polishing the spectacle lens to mutter -

Holy light (Act I, p.11)

Yet again, the harsh dramaturgic mental fluctuation is there when she resumes polishing the spectacles, and stops again and says---

blaze of hellish light (Act I, p.11)

Next, Winnie cranes her neck right, to call Willie again. Again, the Beckettian thrust is on the physical theme, for it is body corporeality all through, the half-buried torso 'there' exerting itself to its maximum. Descartean pineals being non-existent, the Mind and body do not link at any state of consistency. It is at best a Cartesean Centaur, disjunct, aborted and futile. Winnie could not even sleep
away existence, for that was a marvellous gift which only Willie had. However, the turmoil of her mind when at one extreme, makes her take-up the position that she could not complain, because there was so much to be thankful for! There was no pain, for example, in fact Winnie shocks when half-embedded though she is, she insists that there was hardly any pain. And so it was wonderful, there being nothing like it. Yet, the disjuncted pathos of a terrible Mind-Body mismatch is reflected because she cannot help mention a slight head-ache! And yet, again, the pathetically uncertain mind settles on the brush handle guarantee which intervenes dramatically:

Guaranteed --- genuine --- pure --- what? (Act I, p.12)

But the re-iterated guarantee cannot prevent an undercurrent of scepticism from interfering---

It comes --- then goes --- (Act I, p.12)

Still once again, her mind swings to the gratitude of 'great mercies' though she cannot stop herself from looking at the audience with a fixed gaze, but once more, brokenly utters that a prayer should be the 'first thing... last thing'.

It is dramatic technique all through, with repeated assertions, alternately, of the habit - traps of guarantee, hope, prayer, as well as those of scepticisms, hopelessness, and despair, the latter more effective because they are punctuated with the appropriate drama pauses, front gazes, arrested-gestures, voice breaks, and two piercing screams. Beckett, as usual is at the 'physical theme' once more. However, the disjunct mentality compulsively intervenes also. And once again the thought is of a 'holy light' though it is
immediately countered by the utterance, 'hellish light'. The wonder of the 'wonderful line' was its mention of the word 'Woe'. Would that, Winnie had Willie's marvellous gift of sleep! However, the dramaturgic disjunction of thought and speech is pathetic and is at its extreme. She remembers again that she could not complain. In fact, to repeat, she must not complain, for there was no pain, 'hardly any', and it was 'so wonderful'. There was 'nothing like it'. But yet again, the reverse swing had in it the caveat of the 'slight head-ache' and 'the occasional migrain'. And yet still, were not there the guarantees of genuineness and purity? It is in this fashion that the dramatic technique makes the drama fluctuate between the cliches of hope, guarantee, gratitude and prayer, on the one hand, and the forthright expression of absolute despair and hopelessness on the other. And, to repeat, the Pauses and Long Pauses, the voice-breaks, and, the gazes-front and arrested gestures, further intensify and concretize, on stage, Beckett’s profound commitment to a Being 'there' as a Non-ent, or Nothing-is. The commedia dell'arte traditions were very well there, and so were there the music halls and vaudevilles. However, Beckett’s themes and dramaturgic technique, because of his deep commitment to them were characteristically his own. It would therefore not be out of place to repeat the earlier hazard that thematically and dramatically, Beckett had little to benefit from these extant dramaturgic conventions. Beckettian themes could afford to take no other dramaturgic forms than were singularly Beckett’s own. The dramaturgy of each play is different because the theme is always only a slight variation of typical Beckettian concerns. Thus, though corporeality is a constant thematic concern, each play displays it as a fresh dramaturgic grotesquerie of that 'gross' manifestation. Infact, Happy Days literally goes in for lips, palms, necks, teeth, gums, fingers, heads, breasts, noses, and even breath. Such a specific use of individual parts of the human anatomy
was not at all there in the dramaturgy of the three plays considered so far in this thesis.

Two particular dramatic thrusts in Winnie's First Speech still remain, because some ordinary articles of everyday use are also theatrically exploited for profound discomfitting effect. To begin with, there is the writing on the tooth-brush handle. Winnie attempts to read it four times in the First Speech. The first time, only the word 'pure' is picked up and the twice repeated pungent interrogative takes dramaturgic care of its sanctity---

...pure... what? .... what? (Act I, p.11)  

Thereafter, there is a repeat approval, through set de-structured speech of Willie's marvellous gift of sleep---

poor dear Willie - sleep for ever - a marvellous gift - nothing to touch it - in my opinion - always said so - wish I had it -- (Act I, p.11)  

Of course, as usual, a caveat had immediately before qualified this approval---

-- ah yes - poor Willie - no zest - for any thing - no interest - in life. (Act I, p.11)  

Next follows the second dramatic reading of the writing on the tooth-brush handle---

genuine --- pure --- what? (Act I, p.11)  

The pungent interrogative 'what' had first questioned 'purity' and now it counter's the word 'genuine'. After
this, a variation in the language drama turns 'genuine ---
pure --- what?' into---

guaranteed --- genuine --- pure --- what? ---
genuine pure --- ah yes --- (Act I, p.12)

Later, in the same speech there is one more dramaturgic
variation on the same theme, with language de-construction
shaping the thought as it proceeds---

fully guaranteed --- genuine pure --- genuine pure
(Act I, p.12)

Every time the earth-trapped Winnie voices disjunctions
of the writing on the tooth brush handle, there is theatrical
corporeal accompaniment, either of a fixed gaze, or, a look
closer, or, a wipe of the eyes, or, even a whole series of
dramatic actions with the spectacles. And also, there is that
perpetual irony of a tooth-brush handle as a medium of 'the
pure, the genuine and the guaranteed'. Pauses and Long Pauses
add to this dramaturgic exercise. All this reflects on the
repetitive use of Winnie's habit-trap expressions, like
'happy', 'wonderful', 'great mercies'. In short, a kind of
senility takes hold of Winnie's mind again, and again, and
compels her to mouth repetitiously, cliches of assurance and
hope! To counter this, next, there is that bottle of tonic
from which the half-embedded Winnie needs to gulp down even
the last dregs, because she notices her palms slightly off-
colour. The label on the bottle had announced it a remedy for
infants, children and adults alike. It was a tonic for---

Loss of spirits - lack of keenness - want of appetite--
(Act I, p.13)
Just a few table spoons daily, before and after meals, and the improvement was to be instantaneous! Winnie heeds the much needed advice and in satisfaction announces:

- Ah! that's better (Act I, p.13)

How happy and wonderful indeed, if there was this perpetual need of a tonic! Of course this was a statement in prose, while Beckett chooses to give dramatic shape to the same theme as a Non-ent.

The First Winnie Speech, to acquire dialogic content, concludes with a Willie 'presence', once again dramatically brought to the fore, although he himself remains behind the low mound and out of sight! But before that, the half-embedded Winnie again re-iterates a language of wonderful lines about life, though she does her lips while recaptulating them:

Oh fleeting joys - (lips) - Oh some thing lasting woe - (Lips) - (Act I, p.13)

Just then Willie interrupts, though only his bold skull shows. Blood trickles from it. Winnie cranes her neck to look. There is yet another Pause. This not only re-inforces a Willie-presence to help the long Winnie speech maintain its dialogic nature, but also to sustain the entrapped Winnie that she was not, after all alone. Infact, she becomes happy---

Oh this is going to be another happy day! (Pause.) (Act I, p.14)
However, very soon, and as usual, the happy expression is off. Winnie does her lips and inspects herself in a mirror and says—

Ensign crimson. (Act 1, p.14)

Just then Willie turns a page of his newspaper, and repeats the movement each time Winnie does or says anything significant. She rummages in the bag for a hat, puts it on and gazes front, whereupon Willie turns another page of his newspaper. This concludes the first speech of the half-encrusted Winnie. To fragment speech, or Being, into deconstruction, Hamm's Yawn, or the Godot-play Silences have the turn of a newspaper page, the show of a post-card or of the hand, or the blow of his nose, as Willie's own theatric replacements.

The remaining Six Winnie Speeches in Act I, vary in length as well as in dramaturgy, and bear the burden of the Beckettian themes they shape and dramatically carry. Thus the themes in the Second Winnie speech are Truth, Guarantee, Purity, Sight, Loneliness, Silence, Knowledge, and the Futility of action, as also of Man the brute beast. The constant affirmations of happiness and the undercurrent of irony that reduce them to habit-traps are also abundant. The Third Speech is shorter and covers only about 2-1/2 pages. Its primary Beckettian concerns include the Collapse of Language, and Human Mobility manifested in Willie's Crawl. The 'legend' of Loneliness is repeated again with the last guest gone; and so is that of 'happiness' and the 'old style' in which it was expressed. Both the Second and Third Winnie Speeches have a noticeable Willie-presence, though the half-encrusted Winnie does all the talking. The Fourth Winnie Speech has the Quiviva theme with a re-iteration of Sight as 'see' and 'seeing'; it also finds Winnie noticing the Earth's
grip was lighter. Finally, there is its scare at Life manifested as an Emmet, which in French is the word for truth! This Speech also has a pronounced Willie-presence which as usual extends to the disjuncted mono - deliveries of the earth-gripped Winnie, a dialogic colour. The Fifth Winnie Speech becomes quite long. It starts with a 'laugh - dramaturgy', and has in it the Beckettian obsession with 'a faulted divinity'. The other themes of this Speech include that of 'a singing too soon'; and, of being overwhelmed by 'things', like the big black bag; and, again, of the 'failure of words'; and also, whether the now entrapped Winnie, was ever lovable! The Sixth Winnie Speech is the longest, and extends over 8 pages almost. Its Beckettian commitments, and the dramaturgic shapes they take will be considered in detail later. For the moment, let us treat en bloc the dramaturgy of the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Winnie Speeches.

The dramaturgy of the Second Winnie Speech has no Long Pause, no gazes-front and no arrested gestures either. It does have its Pauses though. It has one 'Smile on' and 'Smile off' sequence, and a single reference to 'old style'. It does have a 'hand dramaturgy' and a theatric play of eyes. This Speech begins with the brush-handle writing, read out in newer disjuncted dramaturgy. To this is added the drama of Willie's newspaper fanning. The newspaper is just visible behind the mound, and its fanning stops and resumes at appropriate dramatic junctures. Also, Winnie takes a closer look at the brush-handle, and even uses a magnifying glass to ensure that she reads correctly---

Fully guaranteed.... (Act I, p.15)
The newspaper that had started fanning at the Pause indicated above stops movement, and the earth-gripped Winnie reads, again---

Genuine pure.... (Act I, p.15)

Then, Winnie pauses and Willie resumes fanning. Winnie puts the magnifying glass down and taking a handkerchief out of her bodice polishes her spectacles. Putting on the spectacles she looks for the magnifying glass. She polishes the glass and looks for the brush to wipe its handle. The brush is now put down and the handkerchief is put away. Next, the glass is looked for, and then the brush. After all this prolonged and seemingly wasteful work-a-day banal procedure the guarantee announcement is again read out. Possibly sheer corporeality as the existential condition, and as a re-iteration of the playwright’s commitment to ‘physical themes’ needed encouragement and support---

Fully guaranteed --- (Act I, p.15)

However, Beckettian scepticism comes in tow also, and once more Willie stops fanning the newspaper as the half embedded Winnie starts reading---

...genuine pure... (Act I, p.15)

She pauses again and again Willie resumes the fanning. When Winnie starts to read again she is puzzled at the word--

... hog... (Act I, p.16)
She pauses and Willie stops fanning too. Next the dramatic situation on stage, the theme, and the language technique makes Winnie read only---

... setae.... (Act I, p.16)

She pauses again, and this time lays down the glass and brush. The newspaper too disappears, and then Winnie removes her spectacles and gazes front. That was grotesquerie alright but as part of an overwhelming tragic - comedy it also drama debunks the complacent comforts of a guarantee, as also of purity. It leaves little that can be given the appellation 'genuine', and, through the very dramaturgy of the effort at polishing spectacles and magnifying glasses, and, wiping the tooth-brush handle, demolishes the meaning - content of all Truth, and all Guarantee, and, all Purity, and Genuineness! That the announcement was on a tooth - brush handle, and that it turned out to be about hog's setae, adds to the success of the dramatic erasure of these haloed and sacred illusions. This was an example from the Second Winnie Speech illustrating Beckett's effective control over the dramaturgic projection and shaping, on stage, of his characteristic concerns.\textsuperscript{16} However, the example will not be complete without mentioning the dramaturgic state of Winnie's mind and words that follow. For, notwithstanding the obvious discomfiture that results in witnessing so effective a dramatic on-slaught on illusions of Guarantee and Truth, the half-embedded Winnie chooses to be happy! And if nothing, she is now happy at the addition of the piece of of information about 'hog's setae' to her knowledge. And yet, once again, Beckettian dramaturgy will not leave Winnie to all the 'joy' of her new found 'happiness', and both with its overt and covert ironic shifts leads to significant audience discomfiture. This is because the way the 'joy' is dramatically concretized, on stage. It is, of course always, part of the Beckettian theme
in Happy Days. Thus, just after destroying the comforts of Guarantee and Truth as 'hog's setae', Winnie expresses her satisfaction about this addition to her knowledge---

That is what I find so wonderful, that not a day goes by - (Smile) - to speak in the old style - (Smile off) - hardly a day, without some addition to one's knowledge however, trifling, the addition I mean, provided one takes the pains (Act I, p.16)

The trifling, or, was it an overwhelmingly discomfiting addition to Winnie’s knowledge! Beckettian technique often takes care to rub discomfiture in, because immediately after Willie’s hand re-appears with a post card which he seems to be reading very closely, putting a temporary end to Winnie’s enthusiasm about her new found knowledge. Not that the knowledge was very pleasant! But then, Winnie’s speech is not deterred by her enthusiasm reversals, because ‘if for some strange reasons no further pains are possible, why then,’ one could ‘just close the eyes’?!

Therefore, happiness is not only at so many removes from the irrational existential predicament, it has to be ‘in despite of’! And what is found still more discomfiting is Winnie’s obdurate assertion, each time, of comfort, wonder, joy, and also gratitude! But that is the dramaturgic scheme of Happy Days. It is almost a nauseating repetition of contentment and prayer in the face of the acute despair at the sorry and constricted human condition! At such excruciating odds, to lose heart would amount to, not being the brute beast that the human being was, because only brute beasts could remain complacently confident and content, even in a state of utter futility and meaninglessness! And, Beckett does not stop there. Against Winnie’s optimism, Willie’s hand flutters a post-card with filth written on
it. Even the entrapped Winnie is shocked, but while she reads the post-card, Willie's fingers flutter impatiently. A Long Pause ensues. Winnie gives a last long look after a shocked pronouncement:

Oh, no really! (Act I, p.17)

Winnie recoils at the filth in the post-card. 'Pah!' she says and asks Willie to take the post-card away. Would this have ended Beckettian relish at the deprecations of an obdurate enthusiasm for life! But it does not, for the playwright takes Winnie back to 'Hog's setae', and makes her question what a hog was? The thematic point theatrically scored, is when Winnie says what does it matter if she was not certain what a hog was. For it was this that she found so wonderful! And as to certainty, it would always come! She could become sure later! There is a Pause, and she even becomes ecstatic. 'All?', that is, 'all' would come back! However, the question mark on 'All', is obvious and she says 'No, not all', and smiles, to realize immediately after that 'all' will not be certain ever, and therefore the smile is very soon off. She degenerates to a 'Not quite' and falls still further to 'A part', though that too has undercurrents of her obdurate enthusiasms.

But this time, the entire dramatic exercise has taken enough out of the comfort of a certainty, and, the confidence of a recall. But for Winnie the fact that even a part could be recalled replaces the temporary onslaughts of scepticism by---

Floats up, one fine day, out of the blue--- (Pause.) (Act I, p.17)
And happily, or, is it obstinately, Winnie is back to square one---

That is what I find so wonderful  (Act I, p.17)

There is a Pause. The half-embedded Winnie rummages in the bag and an arrested gesture ensues, and in an effort to recover she says---

No (she turns back. Smile) No, no (Smile off) Gently Winnie . (Act I, p.17)

Winnie, already in earth till her waist, prods herself, and gazes front at the audience. Meanwhile Willie is made to contribute his share to the pathetic grotesquerie. His hand appears and takes off his hat, but Winnie keeps talking on, for she is not as sure, and says---

What then? (Act I, p.17)

Willie’s hand re-appears. It covers his skull with a handkerchief. That was dramatic commentary on Winnie’s mental condition. However, Winnie is too engrossed, and remonstrates herself sharply---

Winnie! (Act I, p.17)

At this Willie’s head bows out though Winnie continues---

What is the alternative? (Act I, p.17)

There is a Pause and she repeats---

What is the al--- (Act I, p.17)
At this, Willie blows his nose loud and long, and all alternatives are blown off and away. Such characteristic Beckettian dramaturgy often becomes ruthless in its through, and all the optimims get-qualified. Consequently, the Beckettian repertory of 'physical' and 'language' themes hardly seems to exhaust itself. In the example just given, before the literal erasure of optimisms and alternatives finally sets in, let us consider the journey of certitude on the language scale and follow it also as body-expression. It begins with an uncertain 'No' and travels to an ambiguous 'No, no'. From there it picks up encouragement from 'Gently Winnie' and reaches out to a climax of a shouted 'Winnie'. The uncertainty having taken firmer hold, the head gets bowed to the despair of 'What is the alternative?' A Pause accentuated the uncertainty, till alternatives get sacrificed at the wrench of the word 'alternative' itself in Winnie's 'What is the al---'. The blow of Willie's nose brings this entire dramaturgic exercise to a final close both thematically as well as theatrically.

Now, a little more about the awareness of Willie's presence behind the grass-scorched mound as a permanent feature of the earth - entrapped Winnie's long drawn language de-constructions and the waist-above corporeal gestures. Infact, though sucked up in the earth upto her waist, it is the awareness of the Willie-presence that sustains life in her. For, as she is made to state with the help of Pause-punctuations, she could not bear to be alone. Willie should be there. He may remain asleep, and need not hear or answer, or even understand or disagree with her, but he should be there. The half-embedded Winnie, who repeatedly pushed herself into alternating dramaturgic states of scepticisms, and even of cynicism on the one hand, and, of prayer, gratitude, happiness, joy, enthusiasm, and optimism on the other, could not at all afford to keep herself talking in the
wilderness. She also needed somebody's presence to sustain her obdurate enthusiasms, even for the least length of time. Were Willie to die or to go away, just what would happen to her, between the bell for wakening and the bell for sleep; she dreaded even to imagine she would then simply gaze and stare——

Simply gaze before me with compressed lips. (Long Silence) (Act I, p.18)

For, she would even refuse to speak another word as long she drew breath——

Save possibly, now and then, every now and then, a sigh into my looking glass. (Pause.) Or a brief.... gale of laughter, should I happen to see the old joke again. (Pause.) (Act I, p.18)

However, the mercurial swings of her mentality make a smile appear on Winnie's face, though it is immediately replaced by an anxious expression and she exclaims——

My hair! (Act I, p.18)

Beckett next has the 'hair-care' theatrics show on stage 'there', the futility of all actions——

My hair! (Pause.) Did I brush and comb my hair? (Pause.) I may have done. (Pause.) Normally I do. (Pause.) There is so little one can do. (Pause.) One does it all. (Pause.) All one can. (Pause.) 'Tis only human. (Pause.) Human nature. (Act I, p. ).

Human activity is at first called a human weakness, and then, a natural weakness; that is, 'to do all one can', which is then scaled-down to 'so little that one can do!' And this is made the crux of the entire hair-related drama. It is turned into a matter of a 'Do? What? Your hair?' But once more, her obstinate enthusiasm just cannot be got over,
and she must smile, though the smile being soon off, offers its own commentary. However, as usual her mental-pendulum has its swings, and the 'old style' was next remembered as 'sweet'. She gets into that frame of mind in which one opts to a solace of, 'What does it matter?' How would it matter? For, it was just a question of combing hair, which, in any case could be combed and brushed later. However, the catch was that this was all she could do. She soon gets caught up in the problem of an 'it' or 'them' to use for hair, giving way to the dramatist's tendency to play with common-place words, particularly the pronouns. Also Willie's 'It' is a handy interval between two long Winnie Speeches. Besides, it also gives opportunity to Willie to 'throw in' the 'It', and announce that he was present. Consequently, after the dramatic 'It', Winnie goes to the Beckettian themes that are the subject of her Third Speech, which is the shortest delivery of Winnie, half-buried at the centre of the grass-scorched mound. The Beckettian themes, to repeat, include the Collapse of Language, and, the Human Crawl. It also has the legend of Loneliness with the party over, and, the last guest gone. For its theme of Futility of action, there is a hat-and-hair-drama. However, the Third Speech has no front gazes, arrested gestures, or, Long Pauses. There is just one voice-break, from normal to narrator's, and back to the normal. The 'Smile on', and 'Smile off' posturing is also only one. Hands, eyes, hair and hat, play important dramatic roles. The obdurate flow of her words, and a disposition not to distinguish between a stump and a large-pole, inspite of her own scepticism and entrapped strait, has Winnie once again start by calling the day 'happy'. Combing and brushing hair and doffing a hat may appear banal and work-a-day futile actions. However, as the drama of existence as a work-a-day banality they are potent dramaturgic concretizations. The half-entrapped Winnie, in
complete grip of the scorched earth had therefore work to do---

... I have my --- (raises hands to hat)-- Yes, on, my hat on (lowers hands) -- I cannot take it off now (Pause.). To think there are times one cannot take off one's hat, not if one's life were at stake. Times one cannot put it on, times one cannot take it off (Pause.). How often I have said, put on your hat now, Winnie, there is nothing else for it, take off your hat now, Winnie, like a good girl, it will do you good and did not (Pause.). Could not. (Pause.) (Act I, p.20)

Being was just a put-on and take-off of hats! Did this do Winnie any good? It did not, because it just could not. However, the playwright's technique is able to dramatize these prose statements with more intensity. One consequence is that Winnie's voice breaks. For, the hat led Winnie to think of her hair, which Willie had once called golden, when a party was over, and the last guest had left. The situation is discomfitingly grotesque. When was the party?. The answer to this is, 'That day?' to which the question put is 'What day?', and the possibility that words also fail, and language even collapses. Being and actions then become banal. But why then even brush and comb hair, or, doff a hat, or, file nails! A trapped condition entraps corporeal actions also, which become few, limited, and even futile, because nothing that 'can be done' can release the entrapped from the irrational impasse. When the earth did loosen its grip, Winnie was not released, but, infact, was sucked in further! In Act II she is shown buried neck-deep inside the earth-scorched mound. However, the swing of mentality restored her obduracy of enthusiasm about life? Very quickly Winnie resorts to 'the old style' once again. The smile is on, but it is soon off and gone. The being-sucked-in Winnie would have 'trimming' and 'filing' nails help her 'tide over things'. That was the wonder of it; indeed both for Winnie and her audience, though in different
ways. The climax to the Third Winnie Speech comes when, herself half-embedded in the earth scorched mound, she directs Willie's crawl back into his hole---

Not head first, stupid, how are you going to turn? (Act I, p.21)

Winnie lacked mobility. She was trapped in earth's grip, though it was loose that day, and for that very reason, had sucked her in. On the other hand Willie lived inside a hole, which he could only enter backwards! He spoke very little and was most of the time asleep. These were two, on-stage, constricted human states, and yet Winnie displayed the enthusiasm of one more happy day! That was the wonder of it, and that was what Beckett found incongruous about human attitudes. It was a terrible mis-match and was deeply tragic. It was also pathetically grotesque to its core, and helped shape the theme of a Non-ent all the more.

The Fourth Winnie Speech, to repeat, has for its Qui viva drama, three voice-breaks, a gnawing doubt and an Emmet. The big black bag, that was thoroughly rummaged by now, has its presence given significance also. In this Speech, Winnie realizes that if Willie was leaving, she must learn to talk alone and to herself! Winnie must learn 'to see' also. This was her traumatic tragic existential condition. She clung to the Willie presence, as a to a last straw. An awareness, even in theory, that Willie was within earshot was sufficiently satisfying---

...Just to feel you there within earshot and conceivably on the qui viva is all I ask. (Act I, p.22)

It is pathetic. Willie need not even hear Winnie, but he must be there giving the impression that he is a party to
all her babble. It is once again the grotesquie of a two-
some, one out of which exists only to transform an otherwise
lonesome, disjuncted narrative into a dialogue. Being one of
a couple was what sustained her. It saved her from a life-
long monologue of a ‘talking I’ with something perpetually
‘gnawing’ at her. The gnawing is made a live on-stage
experience through use of speech sound and rhythm,
characteristic feature of the playwright’s dramatic
technique. In this case it is of Doubt/Here/Abouts---

Doubt. (Places index and second finger on heart area,
moves them about, brings them to rest). Here. (Moves
them slightly) Abouts. (Act I, p.22)

Therefore, the half-in-earth Winnie must make sure that
Willie, on the other side of the mound heard her, though the
tragedy remains that ‘Come another time’, she must learn to
talk to herself---

... I must learn to talk to myself a thing I could
never bear to do such wilderness (Pause.). Or gaze
before me with compressed lips. (Act I, p.22)

As she compresses her lips and gazes in the distance,
the stage accumulates concretizations on to the already
profound, on stage, experience of an existential Non-ent. However, Winnie’s mentality, perpetually at a swing, falls
again and again into the inveterate habit-trap of a smile.
The stage-directions call it a ‘Smile-on’, and quickly
announce a ‘Smile off’, because Winnie’s scepticism
repeatedly set in also. Consequently, despite the obstinate
habit-trap returns to conventional grooves of solace, peace,
happiness, and joy, they fail to satisfy the questioning
hanker grounded in on perpetual scepticisms.
As the Speech proceeds, Winne’s disenchantments prod her to imagine the prospect of Willie leaving her. She calls out to him ‘can you see me from there I wonder, I still wonder’, which takes us to the problematic of ‘seeing’, including the Berkeleyian surveillance by a watchful divinity17 ---

... Oh I know it does not follow when two are gathered together -- (faltering) -- in this way --- (normal) -- that because one sees the other, the other sees the one, life has taught me that .... too. (Pause.) (Act I, pp.22-23)

Winnie feels the earth’s grip rather tight that day. Could it be that she had put on flesh? It is a pathetically grotesque situation. Absently she lowers her eyes. She thinks it to be the heat possibly. Heat makes all things expand; some more, some less. At this point the beckoning to Willie is all the more touching---

Oh I can well imagine what is passing through your mind, it is not enough to have to listen to the woman, now I must look at her as well . (Act I, p.23)

And she pauses, all the time patting and stroking the scroched-grass ground that holds her evermore tightly that day. Language and physical ‘themes’ intensify the situation further, because the desire to have somebody to talk to, has one more wish accompany it: that, there must be a companion to look at your condition, whatever be your existential predicament. Therefore, the entrapped Winnie, with the earth felt firmer around her waist very apologetically would have Willie see it. The way she speaks it is pathetic, for all the while she keeps stroking and patting the scorched ground around her---

Well it is very understandable. (Pause. Do.) Most understandable. (Pause. Do.) One does not appear to be
asking a great deal, indeed at times it would seem
hardly possible - (Voice breaks, falls to a murmer) --
to ask less -- of a fellow -- creature -- to put it
mildly -- whereas actually -- when you think about it -
look into your heart -- see the other -- what he
needs -- peace -- to be left in peace -- then perhaps
the moon -- all this time -- asking for the moon.
(Pause.) (Act I, p.23)

However, as was her vogue, the drama of her mentality
swayed her immediately to the other extreme. She became
lively, and even put on her spectacles for closer look,
because, as if by coincidence and as is the wont in Beckett’s
plays, there is a shrill recoil at evidence of life on this
planet! The occasion for the Winnie recoil is an emmet, the
French word for ‘truth’--

An emmet! (Recoils. ShriII) Willie, an emmet, a live,
emmet! (Seizes magnifying glass, bends to ground
again, inspects through glass). Where’s it gone?
(Inspects) Ah! (Follows sits progress through grass).
Has like a little white ball in its arms. (Follows
progress. Hand still. (Pause.) It’s gone in . (Act I,
pp.23-24)

Startled, Winnie continues to gaze at the spot through
a magnifying glass, and then slowly straightens up. Then she
removes her spectacles and gazes before her, spectacles in
hand, and mutters--

Like a little white ball . (Act I, p.24)

A Long Pause ensues. There is a gesture to lay down
spectacles. The playwright cannot resist yet another
opportunity, similarly exploited in Endgame, to hurl
ridicule at pro creation and heredity. If Nagg was once an
‘accursed progenitor’, and immediately after an ‘accursed
fornicator’, the emmet’s egg also had all the potential of
re-starting the irrational process of an aborted creation.
And therefore, the rarely articulating Willie must first identify the ‘white ball’ as an egg, and, answer Winnie’s repeated pungent interrogative, ‘What?’ by a single word, ‘Formication’, which rhymes readily with ‘Fornication’.

That brings us to the Fifth Winnie Speech, in which also Beckettian concerns are shaped into the Speech’s own specific drama. It begins with a ‘laugh dramaturgy’, at divinity. In Endgame the disparage had taken the form of an abuse. In the present context, the half-buried, terribly disturbed Winnie, desperately trying to fall back into the habit-trap of traditional cliches of joys and gratitude murmurs--

God (Act I, p.24)

There is a Pause. After which Willie laughs quietly, and a little later Winnie also joins in. At first they laugh quietly together, and then, Willie stops, and for a moment the entrapped Winnie laughs alone. Willie again joins in, and the two then laugh together once more. This time Winnie stops and Willie laughs alone for sometime and then stops. The laughter was Beckett’s, at the creator of a World, who cared less for his creation than a tailor did for a pair of pants he was ordered to stitch. In a hurry, an aborted Universe was all that could be created.

As if to say that the playwright did not find this debunk of divinity debunk enough, he has Winnie approve the operation-glee--

Ah well what a joy in any case to hear your laugh again, Willie, I was convinced that I never would, you never would. (Pause.) (Act I, p.24)
In a state of despair, a hearty laugh must indeed be rare, but then when the occasion was abegging, Beckett's seizure of it was prompt, and he had the duo literally laugh divinity off its divine, with Winnie expressing little regret about it---

I suppose some people might think us trifle irreverent, but I doubt it. (Pause.) (Act I, p.24)

She continues immediately after--

How can one better magnify the Almighty than by sniggering with him at his little jokes, particularly the poorer ones. (Pause.) (Act I, p.24)

Alfred Jarry and Antonin Artaud would not have done one better. The Almighty sniggers. Let us snigger with him. The Diety is poor at jokes also. Winnie was sure Willie would back her on this score. Beckett is relentless.

The religiously disposed would call that worse and worse. However, the playwright was strongly committed to his theme of an existential Non-ent, and equally committed to give it theatric shape. Infact, it was the 'shape of thought' that fascinated him. He quoted Angustine once to show how thought could take attractive shape. But then, Beckett appears obsessed with the idea of the Divine, and did not lose the least occasion to hurl imprecation at it. He had the middle-aged Krapp yelp at providence and Hamm even abuse it. Vladimir and Estragon do it in meticulous detail when their banal conversation demolishes Christianity, and its Logic of Redemption, the Bible, Saviour and the Evangelists. *Happy Days* is itself an extended version of the playwright's attitude to a divine, all-seeing, and all-knowing absent-presence, and, response to which is repeatedly shown a matter of falling into a habit-trap of ecstasy, prayer and gratitude. Winnie's irreverence to divinity, therefore is quite in Beckettian tradition, be it as a
snigger, or, an off-hand dismissal, not worth serious attention---

'Oh well, what does it matter, that is what I always say...' (Act I, p.24)

Matter it did not, for the existential impasse was so meaningless that one literally starved for a laugh, because Being for Beckett, was a grotesque tragedy. To extend the lines just quoted---

Oh well, what does it matter, that is what, I always say, so long as... you know.... what is that wonderful line... laughing wild.... something something... laughing wild amidst severest woe. (Pause.) And now? (Long Pause.) (Act I, pp.24-25).

The laugh infact was 'a laughing wild: amidst severest woe'. It was pathetic, to say the least, and the drama of Happy Days shapes the pathos of this tragedy. Human existence is constricted, irrational and meaningless. It is grotesque to the core. And the terrible woe that it is, it deserves the wildest of all wild laughs. That is how Winnie responded, because the fact of the matter was that her mind was in a state of hopelessness despair and trauma. This is Absurd Theatre suffering its metaphysical anguish, shorn as it is of all illusions.

The constricted-up-to-the-waist Winnie now asks Willie if he remembers that she was ever lovable! The question was a teaser. No? Willie could not remember. But then, that was not the point, because Willie had done his bit after all, and had now only to be within hearing, at 'semi-alert'. Even that would be 'paradise enow'. Winnie falls once again into the conventional grotesquerie of a 'Smile on' which soon enough becomes a 'Smile off' posture. She speaks too of 'the old
To sing too soon is a great mistake, I find. (Act I, p.25)

However, as usual, the despair is only temporarily put away. And, irony has the combing and brushing of hair, and, the doffing of a hat, as well as rummages in the big black bag projected as life's comforting features. The bag in particular had such a treasure in it that its contents could hardly ever be enumerated. And, therefore, it was such a comfort always to rummage its depths! Pauses, placed appropriately, offer their own commentary, and very soon scepticism about the bag sets in--

But something tells me, Do not overdo the bag, Winnie, make use of it of course, let it help you... along, when stuck, by all means, but cast your mind forward, something tells me, cast your mind forward, Winnie, to the time when words must fail -- (she closes eyes, pauses, opens eyes)-- and do not overdo the bag -- (Pause.) (Act I, p.25)

The existential imbroglio could be tidied over by just 'doing the bag'! It was very much like combing and brushing hair, or doffing a hat. But what if words fail? To meet that eventuality, Winnie fetches her Brownie out of the big black bag. The revolver makes manifest the undercurrent that the aborted existential quandary could be quite suicide prone. However, the coincidence was that Brownie, and Browning were almost similar sounding, though Browning was reputed for his optimism and enthusiasm for life, and Brownie was a weapon that could be lethal! But was Browning right? The
half-embedded Winnie remembers how Willie had the Brownie always kept away from him---

Take it away, Winnie, take it away, before I put myself out of my misery? (Act I, p.26)

But, what exactly was 'misery' for Willie? In any case, it often is a mere matter of change and emphasis. Winnie places the Brownie close by, for the sight of the Brownie was a comfort to her even as was the thought that Willie was within ear shot! An uncanny coincidence that was! And once more Winnie smiled and was in the habit-trap and yet again thought also of the 'old style', though, the smile as usual was soon off. The 'happy' Winnie often desired a release from the earth's grip and is poignant about the float to the blue---

Yet the feeling more and more that if I were not held -- (gesture) -- in this way, I would simply float up in the blue. (Pause.) (Act I, p.26)

However, that wish was not ever to be fulfilled, for never is there to be a release from the trapped and constricted human condition. Infact, that the half-embedded Winnie even dreamt of a release is pathetic---

And that perhaps someday the earth will yield and let me go, the pull is so great, yes, crack all around me and let me out. (Pause.) (Act I, p.26)

Winnie longed for freedom but felt sucked in by the earth. She enquires how Willie felt. His answer too is a---

Sucked up (Act I, p.26)

That concludes the drama of the Fifth Speech, the call to Willie to answer her question giving Beckett, four
opportunities: first, is to conclusively end the extended delivery; second, to announce the Willie-presence; third, to provide an iteration to the Winnie feeling of being sucked up; and, finally, by extending the Winnie predicament to Willie, transform the existential condition, from the two-some, to a generally felt trapped situation of being 'sucked up' too. In any case, Willie's terse phrasal-verb, is so final, that it not only concludes Winnie Fifth Speech, it also gives free rein to Winnie's Sixth Speech, to run its full course covering almost the nine remaining pages of Act I.

But, before we consider this last Winnie Speech of Act I, let us turn our attention temporarily to the drama of the few very short conversations that Winnie has with the rarely-articulate Willie. Of course, each Winnie speech has its drama manipulated to a full Willie-presence throughout, and thereby colours the extended Winnie-monologues with profound dialogic content. However, Beckett chooses to have a few small Winnie-Willie exchanges also. Of these, three have already been considered. Two being single articulations, in between two, long, Winnie speech deliveries. The case of 'Sucked up', a phrasal verb, has just been considered. A similar instance, earlier, was the use of the pronoun 'It', between the Second and Third Winnie Speeches. Once again, it had come by way of an answer to Winnie's persistent question on whether she should use 'It' or 'Them' for hair. Like Shakespeare, who is nothing if not serious even in the most hilarious of his plays, Beckett is also always scoring thematic and dramatic points, shaping the theme through the drama and directing drama to take the course of his thematic concerns. 'It' is a singular, 'them' a plural, and 'hair', a singular, is used as plural. That much for just a pass at grammar. Of course, the break at 'It' concludes the Second Speech, and is final. A small two-lettered articulation,
lends, end and finality, to a two-and-a-half page long Winnie Speech! Not only that, it also becomes sufficient reason for Winnie's Third Speech to run its full dramatic course! The small Willie-Winnie Conversation on the white ball an emmet carried has also been considered earlier. It provides an effective opportunity to Beckett to draw attention to Willie's presence and along with this to Beckett's own dismay at a potential source of procreation, that is, an emmet's egg, re-starting the aborted cycle of life, to perpetuate the ignominy of an irrational Non-ent. Winnie's shrill recoil at sight of the 'White ball', the emmet carried, adds drama. She is made to spot it through her magnifying glass, and a Long Pause follows, after which she puts down her spectacles and Willie interjects---

Eggs (Act I, p.24)

The dramatic challenge comes as an arrested Winnie gesture, a pungent interrogative, and a Pause. That is Beckettian drama expressing dismay at a perpetual source of procreation, along the line of evolution, given what the aborted human condition turned out to be! Willie repeats 'Eggs' and after a Pause adds, 'Formication' which rhymes well with 'fornication'. Another arrested Winnie gesture, one more pungent interrogative 'What?', and a Pause confirm that re-production is fornication and little else. Willie re-iterates with single-worded repetitions of 'Formication', which is answered by Winnie with a dramatic put down of her spectacles, and a gaze in front. That completes the little exchange between Willie and Winnie.

Three more conversations between Winnie and Willie remain, one at p.14 in Act I, between the First and the Second Winnie Speeches; the next on p.21, between the Third
and Fifth Winnie Speeches; and, the last at the very conclusion of Act I, on p.36. All three as usual, have both thematic as well as dramatic relevance. The Winnie-Willie Conversation on p.14 has Beckettian drama play with the half-embedded Winnie's reminiscences and score thematic points through its well-co-ordinated drama. Willie first reads three small news-items out of his newspaper. Each item sets off Winnie on a memory-spree. When Willie reads the first news-item, Winnie arrests gesture with her hat half-way to her head. The news-item reads---

His Grace and Most Reverend Father in God Dr. Carolus Hunter dead in tub . (Pause.) (Act I, p.14)

The phrasing of the report itself suits the playwright's thematic concerns. 'Father in God' and 'dead in tub' go together and are commentary on each other for the Beckettian remonstrance on ideas associating Man and God. In Waiting for Godot, Pozzo saw Vladimir and Estragon as Man in the Image of God. In Happy Days, the priest is 'Father in God', and unfortunately he dies in a tub. As repeatedly asserted through this thesis, Beckett out-does Jarry and Artaud in the slights at a diety, in his divinity-related drama, be it in Waiting for Godot, Endgame, Krapp's Last Tape, or as now, in Happy Days, or, later, in Play which is to be analysed immediately after.

Now, the Dr Hunter - related news-item had the priest, God, and death, treated with irreverence. It also put Winnie into a memory-ferment---

She gazed in front, hat in hand--

Charlie Hunter. (Act I, p.14)
She imagined herself sitting on his knees in the back garden at Borough Green---

Oh the happy memories. (Act I, p.14)

However, as Winnie reminisces, Willie turns a page, which is Beckett's theatrical comment on the past and its memories. For, what could be the past of a meaningless, aborted existence, apart from a grotesquerie of hopeless tragedy and despair. Anyway, there comes a teaser and Willie reads out another bit of news from his newspaper, while once again Winnie is about to doff her hat and arrests gesture as Willie reads--

Opening for smart youth. (Act I, p.14)

This sets Winnie's memories off at another gallop, and with hat in one hand and spectacles in another she remembers---


That is tender nostalgia, put through the sieve of drama, and getting itself, as well as youth, thoroughly imprecated, the dismissal got done by just a turn of Willie's newspaper page. The dramatist could be ruthless, once he gets started. Was the young man of Winnie's earliest youthful dreams a Johnson, Johnston or a Johnstone. She settles for the Johnstone name, emphasising its 'stone' part. The tool-shed detail follows, with its drama carried along by 3 Pauses; once again Winnie has her hat half-way to
her head, and arrests gesture when Willie reads one more small news-item from his newspaper---

Wanted a bright boy  (Act I, p.15)

Beckettian interest in 'physical themes' takes over and corporeal drama ensues. Winnie hurriedly doffs her hat and looks for a mirror, while as theatrical comment, Willie turns one more newspaper page. In the mirror, Winnie inspects her hat. Then, just when she lays down the mirror, and turns to the big black bag, Willie's newspaper disappears. The rummage in the bag was for a magnifying glass and tooth-brush. The newspaper re-appears. It is now folded and fans Willie's face, while Winnie examines the writing on the tooth-brush handle under her magnifying glass. The writing has already been considered in some detail earlier, and is about the guarantee that the brush had pure hog-setae, with which Winnie's Third Speech begins.

That leaves two more Winnie-Willie Conversations. One is on p.21 in Act I. Its main dramaturgic thrust is to assure a Willie-presence. It is spaced between the Third and Fourth Winnie Speeches, and is immediately after Winnie had almost literally directed Willie's backward crawl into his hole---

I tell you! (Pause.) More to the right. (Pause.)  (Act I, p.21)

If this puts, on stage, the holed-up nature of the existential human predicament, it also contains what Winnie will later comment on as the curse of mobility. Of course, Winnie was waist-deep in earth's grip and had no mobility, while Willie stayed constricted in a holed abode, which he entered backwards, needing direction at each movement of his
torso, in his effort to fit in. To add to this was the comment of the small Winnie-Willie Conversation, which for convenience, let us call the 'Can you hear me?'-piece. The Conversation shows how words are only voiced articulations, and little more, which people invest with a halo of meaning. This Conversation picks up from where Winnie's Third Speech ends, because the end of this speech and the small Conversation that follows, are both on the theme of a word as only a voiced sound---

Can you hear me? (Pause.) I beseech you, Willie, just yes or no, can you hear me, just yes or nothing. (Act I, p. 21)

Willie's repeated single-word affirmations get only a low-sounded query from Winnie---

--- And now:/Yes
--- (less loud) And now./Yes.
--- (still less loud) And now/(violently.) Yes. (Act I, p.21)

Each time Willie's irritation mounts, till once he becomes violent in his answers. Just then, Winnie makes sheer utterance carry a heavy load of meaning --- 'Fear no more the heat O'the sun', and challenges it herself with repeated variations on the pungent interrogative, 'What?'---

Winnie: (same voice) What? (Pause.) What?
Willie: (more irritated) Fear no more! (Pause.)
Winnie: (same voice) No more what? (Pause.) Fear no more what?
Willie: (Violently) Fear no more! (Act I, p.21)
But of course, the 'loud/less loud/still less loud' Winnie queries were also made to restore her confidence that when she spoke she did not speak in a wilderness; that at least, she had human company; that, even if Willie did not in fact hear her, in theory at least he could! This has already been touched upon earlier while considering the themes and dramaturgy of the Fourth Speech of Winnie.

That brings us to the last Winnie-Willie Conversation which is at the very end of Act I. However, before its themes and their drama are analysed as an appropriate conclusion to Act I, let us consider Winnie's Sixth Speech which is the last Speech in Act I. Some of the more significant Beckettian concerns which control and shape the drama in it are the Curse that Mobility Was, and, the Strange Feeling of being Watched. Also, that there was Little to Say, and 'still less to be done', and, that it was a Blessing that Nothing Grew; that Man adapts; that Winnie was 'in tongue' that day; that Things, like the big black bag, the parasol, the comb, hair, hat, mirror, took more attention. The trapped Winnie also remembers her Last Visitors, and mentions the Blazing Sun, Natural Laws, the Bell, the Dream, and also Thought, the Old Style, and, the Hog. The drama of the Sixth Speech of the earth-gripped Winnie, is noticeable for its 7 'Smile on/off' postures, 3 front gazes, 6 Long Pauses, 5 voice changes, and, its 2 references to 'old style'. It also has back-fronts, and innumerable head-ups and head-downs, hiccups, and a filing of nails, first of the right hand and then the left. It has the filing done both in silence, as well as in speech. It has claps, sniffs, and a hoarse song. The speech has ample arms gestures, repeated bells, and numerous Pauses, including a new kind called the Maximum Pause. Patently, its set of 'physical themes' has dramaturgic variety.
The following is a quotation on 'natural laws' from this speech---

Ah well, natural laws, natural laws, I suppose it's like everything else, it all depends on the creature you happen to be. All I can say is for my part is that for me they are not what they were when I was young and... foolish and... (faltering, head down).... beautiful... possibly,... lovely... in a way... to look at. (Pause. Head up) (Act I, pp.26-27)

This is not prose statement. It is drama and effectively demolishes 'natural laws', or, whatever they are. The faltering, and the Pause, and, Winnie's apology to Willie for not being able to keep sorrow out, are enough comment on so-called 'natural laws'---

Forgive me, Willie, sorrow keeps breaking in. (Act I, p.27)

However, as usual, she recovers her normal voice, and from the sorrow to the joy of the realization that Willie was there and therefore it is a happy day for Winnie. But then, the conjecture in the future perfect and the caution of a 'so far' keep undercurrents active---

...it will have been. (Pause.) So far (Pause.) (Act I, p.27)

This cautious undercurrent takes possession of her mentality repeatedly, and once that happens, growth itself is almost dreaded. She cannot even imagine it taking place---

What a blessing nothing grows, imagine if all this stuff were to start growing (Pause.) Imagine. (Pause.) (Act I, p.27)
The swing of her tormented mentality never stops, and she is more often than not at extremes. The shift from 'dread' to 'great mercies' is easy and unpredictable. Therefore the Long Pause that ensues or the posture of 'Smile on/off', and, the fact that she 'could say no more', are each a question mark on the assertion or action that immediately precede the three dramaturgic movements. Thus, the Long Pause is commentary on 'great mercies', even as 'Smile on' is on the Long Pause, and, 'Smile off' is on 'Smile on'. Of course, the comment that she 'could say no more' is pathetic and a sum up of the futility of the existential exercise. And this futility is concretized on stage as a failure to put the parasol up, at all, that day---

...the day goes by -- quite by --- without one's having put up --- at all. (Parasol now fully open...) (Act I, p.27)

The playwright drubs in staccato fashion. The dramatic movement begins with 'the day goes by--', and is mounted up to 'So little to say--', and re-worked in with 'little or nothing to do--'. To pick this up from the middle, the fact of the matter was that there was---

...so little to say, so little to do, and the fear so great, certain days, of finding oneself... left, with hours still to run before the bell for sleep, and nothing more to say, nothing more to do... (Act I, p.27)

With 'nothing more to say' and 'nothing more to do', the day went 'quite by' and the bell too rang for sleep, and still there was---

Little or nothing said, little or nothing done (Raising parasol). This is the danger. (Act I, p.27)
A Maximum Pause puts the seal of perpetuity on this existential futility. This Maximum Pause is a new kind of duration in Beckettian drama, for till now, there were Pauses, Long Pauses and Silences only. After the Pause the mentality of the half-encrusted Winnie is restored to its obstinacy of 'the wonderful'. There was a time when Winnie would perspire but now she did not, the 'wonderful' part of which was how human beings adapt themselves, though the counter to this optimism is the 'parasol' dramaturgy that follows---

I am weary, holding it up, and I cannot put it down. (Pause.) I am worse off with it up than with it down, and I cannot put it down. (Act I, p.28)

The ritual of the work-a-day could be grotesquely pathetic, and Winnie's deep involvement with the parasol, as example of one such ritual, can as well be tragic grotesquerie, and deserves quoted entire to show its effectiveness---

Reason says, Put it down, Winnie, it is not helping you, put the thing down and get on with something else. (Pause.) (Act I, p.28)

Winnie felt that a desperate change was necessary---

No, something must happen, in the world, take place, some change, I cannot, if I am to move again. (Act I, p.28)

Her desire to move was a fitful dream, because the earth's grip was getting tighter and she was already in it till her waist. Infact she needed help---

Willie - (Mildly.) Help. (Pause.) No? (Pause.) (Act I, p.28)
The tragic trauma was that she thought that she needed Willie to bid her put her parasol down—

Bid me put this down, Willie, I would obey you instantly, as I have always done, honoured and obeyed. (Pause.) Please, Willie. (Mildly). For pity's sake. (Pause.) No? (Pause.) You can't? (Pause.)

(Act I, p.28)

It is a grotesque existential condition because Willie just could not help! He could not even so much as bid her put the parasol down, for he spoke only rarely—

Well I don't blame you, no, it would ill become me, who cannot move, to blame, my Willie because he cannot speak. (Pause.) (Act I, p.28)

Beckett is however relentless, and, if with Willie, speech was scarce, Winnie found herself in tongue again—

Fortunately I am in tongue again. (Act I, p.28)

And this, once again she found 'wonderful', and indeed a matter of 'great mercies'. It becomes obvious by now that, she kept up 'being in tongue' in order to ward-off the eerie silence of an irrational existential impasse, she being immobile and restricted to her waist, in the earth, and, he practically dumb, and constricted to stay in a hole, into which he could just about crawl backwards! It was 'the something itself', the No-ent, because a Beckett play is never about something.19

Just then, the parasol Winnie could not put down catches fire. She throws it behind the mound, and cranes her neck to watch it burn, commenting—

Ah earth you old extinguisher. (Act I, p.28)
Indeed the earth does extinguish multitudinous individual fires because a constricted irrationality is the ultimate state of the existential condition.

A Willie-presence is so very necessary for Winnie, and she is so apprehensive that the Sixth Speech also finds it quite in order to show her re-assure herself that Willie was, after all, still there, and had not 'gone off'. For, otherwise, the loneliness as well as the silence would be excruciating for her. It is pathetic indeed because to re-assure Winnie that he was still there, Willie need raise only a finger. Willie raises all five, and the tragic grotesquerie becomes cruelly manifest. By then, the sun above blazed excruciatingly hot, and was getting fiercer by the hour. Winnie felt herself melt---

Shall I myself not melt.... (Act I, p.29)

She would char, she thought---

Just little by little be charred to a black cinder, all this-- (ample gesture of arms) --- visible flesh. (Pause.) (Act I, p.29)

Infact, 'temperate times' and 'torrid times' were empty words---

It is no hotter today than yesterday, it will be no hotter tomorrow than today, how could it, and so on back into the far past, forward into the far future'. (Pause.) (Act I, pp.29-30)

Beckettian drama takes all Time in its range and sweep. It never was just an individual predicament. The aborted existential irrationality was forever there, and the
desperately needed change, had never occurred because no one could ever do anything---

No, one can do nothing. (Pause.) (Act I, p.30)

The topsy-turvy of Winnie's 'mentality' now takes the other extreme. That 'No, one can do nothing', she found 'wonderful'. However, in the process, drama has her voice break and her head is down. She turns to rummage for the umpteenth time in her big black bag, and brings out unidentifiable odds and ends, and stuffs them back. Then she fumbles deeper, and finally brings out a musical-box. It is wound, and Winnie listens huddled over the box, and gradually takes on a happy expression. She even sways to the rhythm. When the music stops, there is a Pause, and Willie is heard to burst into a brief hoarse song. The happy expression on Winnie's face increases. It would be a happy day she exclaims and even claps her hands. But, as usual, the comment makes Willie refuse to respond to an encore and the happy expression on Winnie's face is off. Obviously, it is not always easy to sing, particularly when the trapped and constricted human quandary is a burden on the heart. Winnie knew it, and thought it very understandable---

Well it is very understandable, very understandable. One cannot sing just to please someone, however much one loves them, no, song must come from the heart, that is what I always say, pour out from the inmost, like a thrush. (Pause.) (Act I, p.31)

She had often prodded herself to sing, and even despite the prevailing burden-some futility---

How often I have, said, in evil hours, Sing now, Winnie, sing your song, there is nothing else for it. (Pause.) (Act I, p.31)
But to have sung like the carefree thrush, who sang with no thought of benefit whatever, was impossible not only for Winnie, but for all human species—

Could not. (Pause.) No, like the thrush, or the bird of dawning, with no thought of benefit, to oneself or anyone else. (Pause.) (Act I, p. 31)

In any case, for Winnie, it was different now, now that the irrationality of a futile condition held her in its firm grip, even as did the earth's trap. She was 'there' as a predicament, the existential Non-ent itself—

'And now? (Long Pause.) (Act I, p. 31)

The playwright is again relentless. He now takes up that strange feeling of being watched by a divinity. This is always a strange feeling, though religion has had it as a staple feature of divine experience even without the good Bishop's graceful nod. Beckett has drama make mince-meat out of this time-old religious norm about an Omniscient deity. Consequently, after a Long Pause Winnie says in a low voice—

Strange feeling that someone is looking at me. I am clear, then dim, then gone, then dim again, then clear again, and so on, back and forth, in and out of someone's eye. (Act I, p. 31)

Omniscience is transformed into a grotesque. A Pause ensues and Winnie continues in a low voice—

Strange. (Pause. Dq) No, here all is strange. (Pause.) (Act I, p. 31)
Next there is that urge to act and Winnie tells herself—

Do something! (Act I, p.31)

But she recoils when after the urge to act she looks at her hands and reacts at sight of the parts of the human torso, that are traditionally first instruments of action—

What claws! (Act I, p.31)

That was a dramatic comment on the futility of action in an irrational world, as well as on the ungainly and inefficient nature of the human body. There is a recoil at the long nails which need to be regularly filed. Winnie files her nails in silence for sometime, and, one more banal, work-a-day action is added to the earlier repertory of brushing and combing hair, doing lips, doffing a hat, rummaging a bag, or holding up a parasol. While Winnie is filing nails, memory reminds her of the Showers, or, was it the Cooker-couple who happened to be her last chance visitors! The fact that they were a Showers or Cookers, renders who they were immaterial, though what they did, as also the fact that they were the last, strikes the troubled mind of the entrapped Winnie. Memory and filing of nails, between them, end the dramaturgy of Winnie’s Sixth Speech, with the Willie-presence helping to make the Beckettian themes more dramatically manipulable. Did the names mean anything to Willie? Did they evoke any reality for him? Such questions and her comment on the brittleness of nails that day, add to the pathos of the fact, that the visitors, whoever they were, were the ‘last’ and ‘chance’ passers by! Did Cooker strike a chord? Did Cooker ring a bell for Willie? Cooker! Or, was it Shower! To pathos is added poignancy, when along with the filing of nails, Willie’s
personal hygiene is also attended to with a craned neck. Did Willie have no hankerchief? Had he no delicacy? Earlier, she had to caution herself also---

Keep yourself nice, Winnie, that's what, I always say, come what may, keep yourself nice. (Pause.) (Act I, p.32)

However, the situation was hopeless. Winnie's voice breaks. What was one to do? All day long, day after day, the predicament was the same. She calms herself, talks of the 'old style', and resumes filing nails. Memory again brings the last chance visitors to the fore of her tormented 'mentality', though the reminiscence is punctuated by Pauses, nail filing, and addresses to Willie. The visitors are remembered gaping at her, half-embedded as she was in earth's crust. The male of the couple had many queries addressed to his female partner. He was coarse, and also full of amazement, asking, 'What's the idea?', 'What does it mean?' 'What's it meant to mean?'; Winnie calls it the 'usual drivel'. The female of the two was not at all pleased at her male partner's enquiries. Did he have so many questions to ask of her, about the half-embedded woman there in front, because he was still 'on his two flat feet', 'with his old ditty full of muck and changes of under-wear'? What business had he to drag his protesting partner up and down that 'fornicating wilderness?'. And, with this, the female partner had violently drawn away her hand from her partner's. As, on-stage drama, this was severe enough to discomfit even the most complacent member of the Happy Days audience! Of course Winnie continues filing her nails as she recalls the male of the two visitors, persist with his questions. Why does not Winnie's man dig Winnie out? What good is she to him like that? What good is he to her like that? And so went his 'usual tosh'. At this, the female partner would have her male dig Winnie out, to which the answer was what was she
to be dug out with, though there was no sense in her 'like that'. The female insists that she would have dug Winnie out with her bare hands. The male thinks Winnie and Willie to have been man and wife. Those then were Winnie's last, chance visitors, and that was their comment on her entrapped condition. For a while Winnie kept at the file on her nails in silence. The Cookers and the Showers among the audience also would not have imagined why Winnie was 'there', half-embedded in the grass-scorched mound. Nor would the reader! Infact the mystery is allowed to remain a mystery even by Beckett. It adds accretion to the concretization on stage, 'there' of the human predicament itself, irrational, absurd, futile, constricted, and meaningless! The visitors' intrusion also adds spice to that existential quandary and satisfies the general desire to question it. Such an existential torment ultimately involves the 'chance' on-lookers also. The tension and pressure is intense, and Winnie can only gaze front after reiterating its strangeness---

Strange thing, time like this, drift up into the mind. (Pause.) Strange? (Pause.) No, here all is strange. (Pause.) (Act I, p.33)

However, with equal strangeness Winnie is restored to her state of gratitude though her voice breaks nevertheless---

Thankful for it in any case. (Voice breaks.) Most thankful. (Head down. Pause. Head up. Calm.) Bow and raise the head, bow and raise, always that. (Pause.) (Act I, p.33)

After a Long Pause. Winnie readies herself to end the day. She puts away the work-a-day banalities into her big black bag, each put-away punctuated by a dramatic Pause. But, perhaps it was too early for the bell. Therefore, she stops
tidying and with her head up smiles, and again talks of 'old style'. Once again, as usual, the smile is soon off. This fact of tidying-up too early is exploited dramatically to maintain the pathos of the situation---

---feeling it at hand --- the bell for sleep --- saying to myself --- Winnie --- it will not be long now, Winnie ---- until the bell for sleep. (Act I, p.34)

It is a tender situation when Winnie admits that she could be wrong sometimes, though the counter to this is always there, that often she is not, the adverb 'often' being the dramaturgic key---

.... Sometimes I am wrong --- (Smile) -- but not often. (Smile off. Resumes tiding) (Act I, p.34)

And, the pathos of Winnie's entrapped condition gets more intensified with---

I used to think --- I say I used to think --- that all these things --- put back into the bag --- if too soon --- put back too soon --- could be taken out again --- if necessary --- if needed-------- and so on ---- indefinitely --- back into the bag --- back out of the bag --- until the bell --- went. (Act I, p.34)

She restores herself temporarily, smiles, the smile gets broader, but as usual, soon it is off, and once again she picks up her Brownie, the revolver. She is about to put the revolver into her bag, but arrests gesture and turns back front. The revolver stays outside by her side. Then, for a second time she starts putting all her 'things' into her big black bag. Such banalities, 'things' as Winnie calls them ultimately overwhelm existence itself. Just then there is a disturbance from behind the mound. Willie, as it appeared, was finding it difficult to crawl back into his abode, which
was a hole. Therefore, Winnie, herself in a trapped constriction, has to direct Willie’s crawl back into his hole. Winnie is very tender in her directions to Willie, because he was not ‘the crawler Winnie had given her heart to’ ---

The hands and knees, love, try the hands and knees. (Pause). The knees! The knees! (Pause). What a curse mobility! (Act I, p.35)

Mobility was a curse according to the Beckettian theme of existence visualized as a Non-ent. For, as repeatedly pointed out in this thesis, there being no Descartian pineals,22 Mind and Body could only get together into a disjunct, Hugh Kenner’s Cartesian Centaur.23 As such, Mentality and Corporeality did not quite co-relate into an over-all consistency. Earlier, Jarry had dubbed thought futile. Now, Beckett reduces the body to a contraption, in which each movement was a complex phenomenon, operated by a complicated set of levers. Winnie, half constricted by a tightening earth-grip, was no worse, or, no better, than a Willie whose mobility was achieved as a crawl! Such in fact, is the mental, as well as, the corporeal human existential condition of a human being. ‘Happy’ indeed was such a situation, or, was it a terrible existential bind? There being no illusions, nor even any essences, harsh existence was the only brutal fact. Existence was an irrational condition of just being ‘there’, an aborted, meaningless, futile presence. Therefore Beckett’s penchant for ‘physical themes’,24 or sheer corporeality!

The situation on-stage becomes worse still when the half-constricted Winnie finds herself prone to dream! She dreams that some day Willie would come and live on her side of the mound, where the entrapped Winnie could at least see him.
She would be a different woman then! However, she knew that Willie—

Can't, I know. (Head down.) I know. (Pause.) (Act I, p.35)

However, the swing of her mentality makes inveterate optimism take hold, and her head looks up, and she waits for the bell that would end the day. The Sixth Speech is now at its close. The dramaturgy of the 'writing on the brush handle' is repeated. The reading de-constructs as it proceeds---

Fully guaranteed...what's this it was (Act I, p.35)

Willie's hand re-appears once again, and as Winnie reads, Willie's actions offer comment. Willie spreads a handkerchief on his skull. But Winnie continues---

Genuine pure -- fully guaranteed .... (Act I, p.35)

This time Willie's hand appears with a boater and settles it on the head at an angle and disappears. Winnie still continues reading de-constructedly the announcement on the brush handle. Dramatic technique razes to shreds once more, the illusions of whatever was 'pure', and 'guarantee'----

... genuine pure....ah! hog's setae. (Pause) What is a hog exactly? (Pause. Turns slightly towards Willie) what exactly is a hog, Willie, do you know. I can't remember. (Pause. Turning a little further, pleading) What is a hog, Willie, please! (Pause) (Act I, p.35)

That was just not an ordinary, banal, metaphor-bereft, collapsed language. It was a playwright shaping his Non-ent, and because of a firm commitment to theme and technique, the
effort is ruthless and devastating. It is frighteningly grotesque, and yet intense, with the poignant pathos of an intimately experienced tragedy!

That brings us to the last Winnie-Willie Conversation and also the last dramaturgic piece of the first Act. The conversation starts with Willie’s answer to Winnie about a hog. A hog was a castrated pig reared for slaughter, she is told. These bits of information make Winnie happy. But her increasing happy expression is countered dramatically by Willie’s newspaper. Only the tops of the yellow newspaper show, with Willie’s hand in between. When Winnie begins speech, language drama or dynamic takes over. It starts at---

This is a happy day!

And becomes---

This will have been another happy day! (Pause.)

A modification follows---

After all. (Pause)

The modification is further qualified---

So far. (Act I, p.36)

Beckettian drama does not stop there, for, a pause follows, and the happy expression is off. Willie turns a newspaper page. Another pause ensues. Willie reads out again the news-item he had read earlier---

Opening for smart youth. (Act I, p.36)
However, this time Winnie does not react with reminiscences. Instead, she takes off her hat and turns to put it back in the bag, but arrests gesture, turns back front, and, smiles. It is a composite dramaturgy made up of a 'smile on/off', pauses, gazes fronts, and de-constructed language, instead of a rehash of the past as memories. She says, 'No', and smiles broader. Then she says, 'No, no' and the smile is off. Next she puts on her hat, gazes front, pauses and says, 'And now?' She pauses and asks herself to sing. She even prods herself, 'Sing your song, Winnie'. But the song is not easily forth-coming, which makes her speak an uncertain, 'No'. After yet another pause she presents herself an alternative, 'Then pray'. She pauses once more, and even prods herself with 'pray your prayer, Winnie'. She could not sing because the song had to be from the heart as she had said earlier. She had been through the dramaturgy of six long speeches to enter the ecstasies of prayer once more. At this juncture, Willie with uncanny dramatic sense, turns another newspaper page! A Pause ensues, after which Willie reads the second news-item, he had read out earlier---

Wanted bright boy. (Act I, p.36)

But the half-entrapped Winnie does not react at all. She merely gazes front while Willie turns another newspaper page as dramaturgic commentary. There is one more Pause, and the newspaper disappears. This time a Long Pause ensues, the nineteenth of the 44 in the play. On stage, is a pathetic, no-win, ensnared situation. In the midst of this, out of habit and as a sheer last straw, Winnie quietly urges herself to pray her prayer, but she does not. There is a Long Pause and the first Act concludes.

This brings us to Act II. The mound with its grass-scorched earth is still there. Winnie is asleep, but she has
now sunk into the earth up to her neck. The hat is on, and
eyes are closed. Her head can no longer turn, nor bow, nor
be raised. The head faces front motionless throughout the
Act. There is increased eye movement. The big black bag, the
parasol and the revolver are conspicuous. After a Long pause,
the bell rings loudly. Winnie awakes at once. The bell stops,
Winnie gazes front and there is one more Long Pause.

In effect, Act II is just one long, almost eleven-page
Winnie speech. As already stated, it has 25 of the 44 Long
Pauses, and 273 of the 460 Pauses in the play. It has 7
'Smile on/off' postures and another 9 'Smile/smile
broader/smile off' stances. It has 3 directions for normal
voice and 2 for a narrative tone. Winnie’s head being unable
to turn, the Speech has directions aplenty for eye-movement.
It has two screams, one giggle, and a hummed song, and,
ofcourse front gazes and the bell. There is also a Willie on­
stage-appearance for the first and last time. He enters on
hands and knees. Winnie, who is now buried neck-deep,
tentatively hums a song. There is a Pause. Winnie’s happy
expression is off, and her eyes close. The bell rings loudly,
and her eyes open. She smiles and gazes front. Then she
smiles to Willie who is still on his hands and knees. The
smile is as usual soon off. They look at each other. Willie
tries to reach her, and cannot do so. He remains on hands and
knees. A long Pause ensues and the curtain falls. That was a
bare picture of the drama-structure of Act II, which strikes
first as salient and significant. It must be kept in mind
that the play is in 2 Acts, and Act I has six of the seven
Winnie speeches in the play and they span almost the entire
length of the Act. Also, that Act II is just one, single,
almost eleven-page Winnie speech. The Second Act effectively
rounds off the thematic and dramaturgic burdens of the entire
play. It also registers the change in Winnie’s corporeal
condition, which is a fresh manifestation of Beckett’s
'physical theme', for in Act II, Winnie is neck-deep in the mound. Of course, the theatrical features of each Winnie speech are distinct, though there are characteristic thematic as well as dramaturgic similarities also. The bare dramatic structure of the last Winnie speech that spans Act II, has just been given. It has variety also in as much its narrative tones tell a story. The screams, a giggle, and a tentatively sung song are more examples. Finally, as has just been said, it has Willie front-stage, on all fours, and unable to speak, perpetuating his crawl and his silence, and through contrast, Winnie’s sunk-and-earth-gripped-to-the-neck immobility. Willie spoke rarely, while the curse on Winnie appeared that day to be in a state of ‘tongue’. The Beckettian themes in the Seventh Speech are the ecstasy of prayer, and the feeling of being constantly under watch: also, that there was indeed little to speak of; and that the entrapped Winnie must learn to talk alone; that if Willie was, there, so was the bag, and therefore ‘What Willie?’, and even, ‘What Winnie?’; that the mind was in deep trouble, and, what if the mind were to go; that the earth appeared to have lost its atmosphere, and so there was an eternal cold; that time-wise, there was little difference between the fraction of one second and the next; that ‘things’ overwhelmed and took precedence over human beings; and, that Winnie’s head was full of cries. Of course Winnie’s mind in her existential bind is sheer ‘mentality’, and, it is also irrationally entrapped like Winnie’s body, her corporeality. The mind was in a state of turmoil, caught between the extremes of the habit-trap of hope on the one hand, and of mind-boggling despair on the other. The drama of the traumat. mental fluctuation is itself concretized as an on-stage, overwhelmingly intense experience, grotesque for all its worth, but profoundly tragic nevertheless. For, it is either human beings at a crawl, unable to speak, spending life in a hole, or, buried deep till the neck and
constricted by earth's grip, unable even to move the head, gazing in front, and, almost endlessly 'in tongue'.

Let us now see how some of the more important themes of the last Winnie Speech, her Seventh, take their characteristic dramatic shape. There is the extreme of prayer, gratitude, ecstasy even despite the adversity of an irrationally constricted human predicament---

Hail, holy light. (Long Pause.) (Act II, p.37)

A bell rings loudly. She opens her eyes immediately, gazes front and gives a long smile. But soon the smile is off, and yet another Long Pause ensues. She has the feeling of being constantly looked at still----

Some one is looking at me still. (Pause). Caring for me still. (Pause). That is what I find so wonderful. (Pause). Eyes on my eyes (Pause). (Act II, p.37)

This is when she is caught, neck deep in the earth, unable even to move her hat-covered head. It is a pathetically tragic condition, contextualized on stage, with the help of Long Pauses, and, the 'Smile on' and 'Smile off' postures, as also, the rhythm of the de-constructed speech, and the mis-match between the habit-trap of hope, and that of the despair of a restricted corporeal predicament. To repeat, Winnie's mentality is in deep turmoil. Once again, she speaks of the 'old style', but reverts to say, 'there is so little to speak of'. The repetition of 'I used to think...' is pitiful as also is the hope that she would someday be able to talk alone, talk 'to myself, in the wilderness'. The drama of coming away from the brink follows---

(Smile). But no (Smile broader). No, no, (Smile off) (Act II, pp.37-38)
The 'smile off' reveals the despair inherent in her 'No, no'. The fluctuation at one extreme brings the solace that at least Willie is there, but, for that matter so was the big black bag! She reminds Willie of a 'That day' and immediately questions it with a 'what day?' She, reiterates to herself that she used to pray but 'not now', 'No, no'---

I used to pray. (Pause.) I say I used to pray. (Pause.) Yes, I must confess I did. (Smile.) Not now. (Smile broader) No, no . (Smile off. Pause) (Act II, p.38)

Then' and 'now' created difficulties for the mind, because they disjuncted the Self all the more---

I am the one, I say the one, then the other (Pause) Now the one, then the other . (Pause) (Act II, p.38)

Further, existence being futile, there was, so little one could say, that 'one says it all'---

All one can. (Pause.). And no truth in it anywhere . (Pause.) (Act II, p.38)

. The sense of 'I' changes fast. Consequently---

My arms.(Pause.) My breasts . (Pause) (Act II, p.38)

becomes---

What arms? (Pause.) What breasts? (Pause.) (Act II, p.38)

After this it is the next dramaturgic step to---

Willie.(Pause.) What Willie? (Pause.) (Act II, p.38)
All this meant deep trouble for the mind. However, Winnie recovers quickly, because the topsy-turvey of sheer 'mentality' swings to the other extreme, and a smile re-appears as a habitual ritual, the pungent interrogative 'What?' that had immediately before questioned even her identity is cautioned to a 'no, no, not now'—

Not now. (Smile broader.) No, no.' (Smile off Long Pause) (Act II, p 38)

Constricted and almost buried, and yet 'in tongue' that day, was Winnie's on-stage existential condition. She speaks of the earth having lost its atmosphere. But, what would happen if the mind were to go too!? Once again Winnie's har assed mentality swings to the other extreme, and the smile re-appears, as of habit, to disappear again, and there is a Long Pause—

It won't of course (Pause). Not quite. (Pause) Not mine. (Smile) Not now. (Smile broader) No, no. (Smile off. Long pause) (Act II, p.39)

The dramaturgic de-construction of speech, the 'smile' punctuations, the Pause and then the Long Pause once again concretize on stage, an overwhelmingly tragic human situation. When at the opposite extreme, Winnie's mind visualizes the possibility of eternal perishing cold, once the earth-ball lost its atmosphere. Her thought, shorn of its moorings is hardly ever at stay, and therefore, the eternal cold visualized is put at a chance only, the thought of the 'chance' factor making Winnie think next of a 'happy chance'. This very easily becomes a matter of 'great mercies?'. The playwright keeps words at a meaning-fringe, that changes its meaning burden with change of context. Thus, 'just chance' restores some shade of hope that the earth after all may not disintegrate into a perishing cold. However, 'a happy chance'
has these under-currents, and more, because the expression can also imply that it will be a happy chance also, if this irrational phenomenon comes to an end because of the perishing cold! Theatric use of banal body actions as a 'physical theme' is a permanent feature of the playwright's dramatic technique. However, corporeality, or the 'physical theme' in *Happy Days*, takes on new variety and shape involving more torso-detail. For example, fingers, lips, teeth, gum, arms, the head, eyes and the neck, and, even the tip of nostrils, as well as the tongue, cheek, face, nose, eyebrow, as also human breath come into theatric use. The dramatic de-constructions of the Seventh Willie Speech that spans the entire second Act almost, for the moment end at---

That is all. (Act II, p.39)

There is a Pause. But then there was Willie and the big black bag, and of course the earth, sky, and the sun shade too. Such was human existence!

The confidence of a 'That day' is shaken by the interrogative of a 'What day?'. Winnie's eyes open and close and gaze front. Her head is unable to move, and is topped by a hat! This is grotesquerie all through, and yet pathetic also, as a terribly futile and painful existential bind in earth's grip. Hamm knew that there was no cure for being on earth! But the swing of Winnie's mind, in her entrapped predicament is perpetual. And, Willie was there for comfort and the Brownie too! There is an immediate shift from that position too, it being insufficient succour. And, language at a collapse is Winnie's next trauma because often words also failed! This has the entrapped Winnie badly
traumatized. What was she to do if words also fail, as, very often they did—

Gaze before me, with compressed lips. (Long Pause.)
(Act II, p 40)

And still once more, there is that constant shift or swing of mentality, and words, as articulated sound are considered a comfort, because that warded off the Silence at least. The sound of words helped through the day, which indeed was a great mercy. Winnie is once more reminded of the 'old style', but the trauma of her mind being perpetual, she remembers the sound she often heard. What did she think about that. The tragically pathetic in existence is once more re-iterated—

I used to think ... (Pause.)...I say I used to think they were in my head. (Smile). But no. (Smile broader). No, no. (Smile off.) That was just logic.(Pause.) Reason. (Pause.) I have not lost my reason. (Pause.) Not yet. (Pause). Not all (Pause). Some remains (Pause). Sounds ...(Pause). Like little... sunderings, little falls... apart . (Pause...) (Act II, p.40)

This re-iteration of 'I used to think,' punctuated each time by a Pause, particularly when there is the uncertainty of the sound-source, Winnie locates in her head is touching. The 'smile on/off' sequence renders Winnie's condition grotesque, though 'But no', and 'No, no' reinforce the piteous uncertainty of the earlier 'I used to think' rhythm. The situation becomes worse when the recourse to reason makes Winnie pause and become doubtful about her reason too. The dramatic gradation of the loss of reason as 'Not yet', 'Not all', 'Some remains' makes the entrapped Winnie appear extremely helpless and hapless. The sounds that linger, add trauma to Winnie's mental somersaults, and constricted corporeality renders her existential condition poignantly
tragic. And all this is contextualized on stage not with the help of tropes or metaphors but by the creative exploitation of the playwright’s language themes. The context, on-stage, adds profundity even to work-a-day banalities like, ‘But no’, ‘No, no’, ‘Not all’ and ‘Some reason remains’. Or, ‘It won’t of course’, ‘Not quite’, ‘Not mine’, ‘Not now’, ‘No, no’ add intensity to an on-stage mental collapse. Or, ‘All one can’, ‘And no truth in it anywhere’ make saying something dubious. Or, ‘Yes, I must confess I did’, ‘Not now’, ‘No, no’, debunk prayer and praying. And, all this, becomes more acute and intense by the dramatic use, in between, of Pauses, front gazes, arrested gestures, and ‘Smile on/off’ postures. This, in any case, is not a collapsed language. It is ‘the language theme’ itself, the creative use of which becomes an excruciating, on stage experience of a hopeless, irrational human condition. In this context, even articles of customary use overwhelm the already desperate mental and corporeal disjunct that all human beings are---

It’s things, Willie. (Pause. Normal voice). In the bag, outside the bag. (Pause.) Ah yes, things have their life, that is what I always say, things have a life . (Pause) (Act II, p.40) 

The looking-glass needled Winnie, and the bell hurt her like a knife. However, neither could be ignored. And, neither would the closing and opening of eyes would help---

Open and close the eyes, Winnie, open and close, always that. (Pause.) But no, (Smile) Not now. (Smile broader.) No, no. (Smile off. Pause.) What now? (Pause) What now, Willie? (Long Pause.) (Act II, p. 41)

But then, obduracy, or was it again a habit-trap, made her seek solace in her story of Mildred and her dressed-up
waxen doll, ‘when all else failed’, though it was a Mildred who had ‘memories of the womb’—

A life. (Smile.) A Long life. (Smile off). Beginning in the womb, where life used to begin, Mildred has memories, she will have memories, of the womb, before she dies, the mother’s womb. (Pause.) (Act II, p.41)

Such is Beckettian dramaturgy, carrying along, and, at the same time shaping Beckettian themes. ‘A life’ has a smile qualify it, and ‘A long life’ comes under dramaturgic scrutiny, when the smile is put off. The sacred notion of a mother’s womb is castigated by the modification ‘where life used to begin’. Life being a perennial absurdity can hardly have such romantic illusions as its base. Then ‘memories’, get modified by ‘will have’, and that too only before she dies. What is worse these memories will be of her mother’s womb. It is a harsh, horrid, aborted origination. Mildred it was, or, was it Winnie’s girl-hood, or the reader’s, or, of someone in the audience, or, of every one from the audience and of every reader! It was a cruelly aborted origin indeed! Possibly the buried-up-to-the-neck Winnie, with a stiff head still doffing a hat, and grotesque, and pathetic, has memories too! But, let us now see what Winnie has to say about Mildred and her waxen doll with china-blue eyes that opened and shut. It wore socks, shoes and gloves, a necklace and a straw hat. It was in frills and carried a picture-book, with legends in real print. It was taken out for walks also. Now, while at Mildred’s story Winnie gets into a narrative tone. One day Milly tiptoed to a silent passage in the nursery, crept under the table and began to undress her doll, scolding her the while. Suddenly a mouse appeared! Winnie went into a Long Pause, and even cautioned herself saying ‘Gently Winnie’. Another Long Pause followed. Just then the narration is broken, because Winnie becomes concerned about Willie. The playwright moves with ease from one dramatic mode into
another, opting next to show only Winnie's concern for Willie---

Strange!? (Pause) No. (Smile) Not here. (Smile broader.) Not now. (Smile off) And yet... (Suddenly anxious). I do hope nothing is amiss. (Act II, p.41)

Willie's crawl, referred to earlier, comes at this stage as part both of the dramatist's theme and technique. The grotesque tragedy of Man's mobility is made situate on stage as a curse that it was. Infact, both Winnie and Willie appeared accursed, for if Winnie was in an existential earth-grip and therefore immobile, Willie stayed holed up in a space he could enter only backwards. In any case, Willie's movement had to be a crawl, because he could not standup and had to move on hands and knees. Mind and Body were already disjunct into mentality and corporeality, and here was the constricted torso-movement itself, positioned on stage, as a crawl. Man was no different from a beast. Worse still, pineal glands being absent he was a Cartesian Centaur. Winnie sank deeper into the earth's grip. Willie moved, but only in a crawl! He had to crawl backwards into his hole, and while doing so was often stuck---

God grant he did not go in head foremost! (Eyes right, loud). You're not stuck, Willie? (Pause. Do) You're not jammed, Willie? (Pause.) (Act II, p.42)

Winnie imagined Willie crying out for help, but thinks the cries in her head only. She is depressed, and with a capped, immobile head, gazes, eyes in front---

Perhaps he is crying out for help all this time and I do not hear him! (Pause.) I do ofcourse hear cries. (Pause.) But they are in my head surely. (Pause.) Is it possible that... (Pause. With finality.) No no, my head was always full of cries. (Pause.) Faint confused
cries, (Pause.) They come. (Pause.) Then go. (Pause.)
As on a wind. (Pause.) (Act II, p.42)

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The cries are first thought to be Willie's. Perhaps he always cried for help and Winnie never even heard. But as for cries, did not Winnie always hear cries! Infact, her head was always full of them. Faint and confused they are. They come and then go as on a wind. That is the playwright's theme. As drama the very de-structuring of the hapless Winnie's train of thought is carried along by Pauses that have in between them conjecture, uncertainty, and finality. Tropes are indeed dispensable for profound and intense drama. This is part of the playwright's 'language theme', in which it becomes quite evident how commonplace utterances and even cliches can be creatively manipulated. Even bare and banal work-a-day words can have profound dramaturgic overtones in created contexts. In fact, drama is a fundamental feature of the phenomenon called language, being inherent in its very 'Being', that is, in the way it exists, both as a presence, as well as as an absence, that is, both as an articulation, as well as, a silence.

To return to the entrapped Winnie predicament, which has only a capped head, stiffly jut out of the earth's grip. This is human existence itself as a tragic grotesquie. Winnie's mentality, is still in its trauma. Its perpetual fluctuation is currently at the habit-trap extreme of finding the cries in the head a cause for wonder and gratitude! But, as usual, her distressed mentality does not find succour and Beckett has it glide to the theme of singing songs to discomfit the audience out of complacency. It is pathetic, trying to sing a song, when the heart is not in it, and therefore the bedevilled Winnie says--

To sing too soon is fatal, I always find. (Pause.) (Act II, p.42)
However, there is the other possibility also of leaving the song unsung for 'too late'. Winnie waits for the day's bell to ring, but the song remains un-sung---

The bell goes for sleep and one has not sung. (Pause.) The whole day has flown-(Smile, Smile off)-flown by, quite by, and no song of any class, kind or description. (Pause.) (Act II, p.42)

The pathos and drama of the situation both go hand in hand. The opening line verges on poetry, relating time to the human song. The dramaturgy of language is not only in the Pauses, but also in the general facility which Beckett enjoys over the medium of language, which is inherently dramatic to the core, 'flown by/quite by' is one example.

Winnie's day was then about to close and no song had yet been sung! This was the Winnie concern. However, the pathos of the human predicament was not yet fully gauged, as it were, for---

There is a problem here. (Pause.) One cannot sing... just like that, no. (Pause.) It bubbles up, for some unknown reason, the time is ill-choosen, one chokes it back. (Pause.) One says, Now is the time, it is now or never, and one cannot. (Pause.) Simply cannot sing. (Pause.) Not a note. (Pause.) Another thing, Willie, while we are on this subject. (Pause.) The sadness after song. (Pause.) Have you run across that, Willie? (Pause.) In the course of your experience. (Pause.) (Act II, p.42)

This dramatic piece has almost the overtones of a Hamlet soliloquy. Of course it is intense in its profound simplicity, being the experience itself, minus the trappings of trope or metaphor. Language bereft of the artificiality of trope, can still have profundity and depth, and this much more so, if it is in the control of an author who could become a classic in his life time, and, in
whose dramatic oeuvre logo-centricity was a characteristic feature. Therefore, it will be wrong to talk of his 'language themes' or intense dramatic language de-constructions as examples of a language collapse merely, because it is always a language creatively used and made to communicate its own collapse. It is a creative use of language to make its collapse show. Put into a context, de-constructed speech acquires tremendous overtones and overwhelms with its simplicity being close to existential experience itself. Thus, if after a Pause comes 'Simply cannot sing', and again a Pause, and after that, 'Not a note', and in the same context, the halting phrase, 'The sandness of the song', then these simple words within quotes gather overtones of a personally felt deep trauma which is what is being concretized, on stage, as a piled up, heap upon heap, profound experience of the depressing irrationality of a Non-ent.

However, the swing of the benumbed desperation of an unsettled Winnie mentality, to the other extreme, is immediate, because the same trauma of a song left unsung, is made the cause of happiness also, just because, the sadness after the song does not last! She even thinks it wonderful. It simply wears away! She prods herself to think of some exquisite lines which in their intensity fluctuate to the other extreme of her mentality, because human existence was nothing to be gloated over, and oblivion was a heart-felt deep longing. The lines below reflect Winnie's profound sorrow--

Go forget me why should something o'er that something shadow fling ... go forget me... why should sorrow... brightly smile... go forget me... never hear me... sweetly smile ... brightly sing... (Pause.) (Act II, p.43)
There is pain that the classic is lost, and also hope that some remains---

One loses one's classics. (Pause.) Oh not all. (Pause.) A part. (Pause.) A part remains. (Pause.) (Act II, p.43)

Now, Winnie was bereft that day of almost all action, except of the eyes, and was also tragically 'in tongue', and, burdened as she was with a traumatized mentality as well as an entrapped corporeality, the memory of the Cookers ushered itself in once again. Or, were they the Showers? She is still not sure. The couple, whoever they were, were the last stray visitors to Winnie in her trapped existential state because most Showers or Cookers, and, for that matter most readers, and members of the audience, hardly ever cared to look at their factual though very shocking and extremely discomfitting universal predicament. Beckett found himself honestly committed not only to look at human predicament in this way, but also to round and shape his dramaturgy to make it the very Non-ent that he found was the irrational human condition. The last visitors came hand in hand. They were not yet old. They too had their usual 'bag' in hand, and appeared getting on in life. They stood and gaped at her. The man began commenting on Winnie's bosom and shoulders. Did she feel her legs? Was there any life in them? Of course the entrapped Winnie was then embedded deep till her waist only. This was Beckett's idea of a human being's universal constricted condition. The stray visitors were people who just did not care to look at this universal condition a little more closely, out of fear of a terrible discomfiture! And the male partner had in fact got a little lewd and had wanted to ask about Winnie's under garments, and being shy, had prodded his female partner to do so. But she had compulsively retaliated. Ask her what? Why did not he himself ask? She had become violent and had even dropped his
hand. Now, while expressing the female visitor's violence, the entrapped Winnie herself got violent, so that when she spoke the visitor's reaction to her male partner, Winnie was in fact protesting against her own constricted existential bind---

(...With sudden violence.) Let go of me for Christ's sake and drop!' (Pause.) (Act II, p. 43)

After the Pause she still remained violent---

Drop dead! (Act II, p.43)

However, the obduracy of the habit-trap of happiness returned and the engripped and entrapped Winnie smiled---

But no. (Smile Broader.) No, no. (Smile off) (Act II, p.43)

She visualizes the last stray visitors to her predicament recede. Indeed, to feel Beckett's commitment to the theme of an existential Non-ent can be difficult, and so, the chance visitors to the constricted Winnie also left hand in hand, along with the 'bag' that they carried. Gradually they became dim, and were gone---

Last human kind---to stray this way, (Pause.) up to date. (Pause.) And now? (Pause.) (Act II, p.44)

In a low voice, the embedded Winnie calls for Willie's help, and after a Long Pause, with her 'mentality' in a trance, she drops into a narrative, beginning once more the Mildred story from where it was earlier disjuncted. It was left off when Mildred's waxen doll, fully accoutered as she was, was being undressed by Mildred in the passage to the nursery to which Mildred had tiptoed though forbidden. Just then a mouse had run in. Mildred wanted to satisfy her
curiosity, or, was it a grotesque substitute of a Learderobing to find out the essential-man!? Beckett's response to it is a tragic-grotesquerie in which a mouse climbs up Mildred's thigh, just while she was undressing the waxen doll. She screamed. Once again, it is a scream that Winnie actually screams, even as earlier, it was violent vehemence that Winnie herself expressed when the female of the last human two-some, that had chanced her way, had dropped her male's hand out of disgust at his lewd questions about the entrapped and constricted Winnie. It was a piercing scream for the audience as well, and it was screamed twice in dramatic re-iteration. Of course in Winnie's story of Mildred, the Papa, Mama, the nurse, and the whole house had rushed in, alarmed. However, by the time they arrived it was too late. It was too late, the dramaturgy repeats, and a Long Pause ensues. Then, a reminder to a Willie-presence follows, and Winnie's 'mentality' swings off to contemplate upon Time, and there comes on stage the pathos of a human being as a prisoner also of Time---

I used to think... (Pause.) ... I say I used to think there was no difference between one fraction of a second and the next. (Pause.) I used to say...(Pause.)... I say I used to say, Winnie you are changeless, there is never any difference between one fraction of a second and the next. (Pause.) (Act II, p.44)

As already been pointed out earlier, the pathos is in the refrain of the words 'I used to think', and, 'I say I used to think'. And then the Pauses and re-iteration of 'never any difference between one fraction of a second and the next' in relation to the concept of a Self. This quietly slips the ground from under the feet of a complacency that a human being is essentially, and very confidently only One. Winnie's words have the feel of the awareness that, after all, that confidence is misplaced. This is the intimate
experience itself, on stage, of a loss of identity, because of a disjuncted and disintegrated Self. Or, was it that way always, that is, the Self was never a consistent whole ever. Rather, pineals being absent, it was, to repeat, a Cartesean Centaur, a disjunct of mentality and corporeality, unwholesomely yoked together. Winnie's words have all the pathos of that awareness, and Beckettian drama makes it an intimate, on stage experience. But why broach the subject again? Was it not a hopeless situation---

Why bring that up again? (Pause.) There is so little one can bring up, one brings up all. (Pause.) All one can. (Pause.) (Act II, p.44)

Suddenly Winnie gets violent, because her neck was hurting her. That was one way to draw attention again to Winnie's embedded and constricted state, which was quite a universal, existential impasse. The irritation is made mild and Winnie's mentality made to think 'Everything within reason'. However, the Long Pause after this takes the quiet out of this posture and the disquiet shows itself in her words that follow immediately---

I can do no more (Pause.) Say no more. (Pause.) But I must say more. (Pause) Problem here. (Pause.) No, something must move, in the world, I can’t any more. (Pause.) A zephyr. (Pause.) A breath. (Pause.) (Act II, pp.44-45)

But, even as quickly, she is at the other extreme thinking again of some immortal lines, though yet again the swirl is at the other nerve end, when,'It might be the eternal dark. (Pause) Black night without end.' However, that this could be just chance and bring optimism to the fore, so that
from 'a happy chance' the drift to 'abounding mercies' is easy. Winnie is now almost in a delirium---

And now? (Pause.) And now, Willie? (Long Pause.) That day. (Pause.) The pink fizz. (Pause.) The flute glasses. (Pause.) The last guest gone. (Pause.) The last bumper with the bodies nearly touching. (Pause.) The look. (Long Pause.) What day? (Long Pause.) What look? (Long Pause.) I hear cries. (Pause.) Sing. (Pause.) Sing your old song, Winnie._(Act II, p.45)

Delirium indeed it is. It is punctuated by 4 Long Pauses after short eruptions of speech. There are 9 Pauses also, and together the Pauses that number 13, are each after a speech eruption. Winnie begins from the present and her mentality travels to the past. Its themes are the lapse of time; the last bumper, the last guest gone, cries in the head; a look; and the song left unsung. Winnie's existential bind thus extends itself to the audience also, because if nothing, then the last guest gone, the song left unsung, the remembered look, as well as Time are universal phenomenon. Add to that delirious Winnie's trapped condition and the Non-ent that existence is, comes through in all its frighteningly pathetic, tragic grotesquerie. The drama of the speech-eruptions is itself powerful. 'And now?' is followed by a Long Pause, after which 'and now Willie?', is the next articulation. This is also followed by a Long Pause. These Pauses that intervene after single noun-phrases help the sequence acquire dramatic power. 'That day', 'The pink fizz', 'The flute glasses', come after these short articulations, and a Pause ensues also after 'The last guest gone'. Then comes the memory of the last bumper, which is also only a phrase, and single noun-phrases resume the delirious rhythm, after each of which is once more the punctuation of a Pause. 'The look', 'The day', 'What day?', 'What look?' are troubled spurts of speech that have metaphysical overtones. The delirium intensifies the cries
in the head. Finally, there is the song that was left unsung. This is one work out of Beckett's 'language theme'. It is therefore not language bereft of metaphor. Of trope, or metaphor, it has little use, because the disjunctarticulation is the existential condition itself in all its profound simplicity. To further intensify the on-stage situation, there is a Long Pause after this also, and then to make matters worse Willie appears on all fours. He is dressed to kill, being in a top hat, and with gloves, a morning coat and striped trousers. He sports a 'Battle of Britain' moustache. On all fours, he halts, gazes front and smoothens his moustache. He turns left, halts and gazes up at the earth-gripped, buried-up-to-the-neck Winnie. Next he advances on all fours towards centre, turns head, gazes front and strokes moustache. He straightens his tie, adjusts his hat and advances a little further, where he halts, takes off his hat and looks up the grass-scorched mound at Winnie and even tries to reach up. Unable to sustain the effort of all this, he sinks his head. All this is done in silence. The entrapped and embedded Winnie calls it unexpected pleasure. It stoked her memory. She thought of Willie when he had come proposing to her, and had said that it was a mockery to be without her. Winnie now giggles at the man accoutered in complete the trappings of a formal dress, and yet, on all fours! Where were the flowers man? The entrapped Winnie giggles again. 'That smile' says Winnie, and Willie sinks his head again. There was an anthrax on his neck. But where was he, all this time, that Winnie had screamed? Was he dressing? Was he stuck in his hole? He was looking up at her now---

That's right, Willie, look at me. (Pause) Feast your old eyes Willie. (Pause.) Does anything remain? (Pause.) Any, remains? (Pause.) No? (Pause.) I haven't been able to look after it you know. (Act II, p.46)
Constricted by the earth, limited and defined by Time, unable to preserve youth; that was the factual nature of the existential imbroglio. The on-fours Willie had looked up at the entrapped Winnie, but after Winnie’s words his head had sunk! Winnie wants to start off a conversation. Was Willie as yet recognizable, in which, ‘as yet’ and ‘recognizable’ were damaging modifiers. Was he thinking of living this side of the mound now? No? Or, was it a brief call? Could not he hear? Why did not he speak? Was he dumb? Was he deaf too? Of course Willie was never a talker. A Pause ensues and Winnie resorts to her habit-trap obduracy of it after all being ‘another happy day’. But, Winnie heard cries. Did Willie also hear cries? Winnie asks Willie to look up once more. When he does so she is shocked. Something ailed Willie, because his face had an unusual expression. Winnie calls Willie up the mound. He drops his hat and gloves and gleefully reaches up to her. Was Willie after a kiss? Willie was always in need of a hand but Winnie could not help now. Then Willie slid down the mound and lay with his face to the ground. Winnie wants him to cheer up and try again. However, Willie disturbs the entrapped Winnie with a strange look, at which she is vehement—

Don’t look at me like that! (Pause vehement) Don’t look at me like that! (Pause. Low) Have you gone off your head Willie? (Pause. Do.) Out of your poor old wits, Willie? (Pause.) (Act II, p.47)

Happy Days is an over-whelming experience. There is no explanation why Winnie came to be constricted and earth-gripped, or, what ever happened to Willie. However the corpus of the play is an overpowering condition of an existential Non-ent. Ecstasy of prayer and gratitude were in fact only habit-traps to which an unstable mentality returned out of sheer wont and routine. Very feebly, and just about audibly,
Willie calls out at Winnie. 'Win', he calls. There is a Pause. Winnie's eyes gaze front. A happy expression appears. It grows. That slight call had made Winnie 'happy'. Equally quick is the immediate dramaturgic qualification which forces the word 'happy' to lose its joy. It is very often the 'language theme' all through and even the modifiers of the word 'happy' are 'After all' and 'So far', punctuated in between with a Pause---

Win! (Pause.) Oh this is a happy day, this will have been another happy day! (Pause.) After all (Pause.) So far. (Act II, p.47)

In fact, as if to say, that from 'is' to 'will have been' is not enough of a perception shift, the speech-eruptions of 'After all' and 'So far', with a Pause punctuation, actually suck the pleasure out of the word 'happy', reducing it to the condition of 'a perennial tentative'. Very appropriately too, the entrapped Winnie, tentatively hums the beginning of a popular song, at the end of which is a Pause. Her 'happy' expression is off. She closes her eyes. The bell rings loudly at which Winnie opens her eyes. She smiles and gazes front. She turns her eyes still smiling to Willie, who is as yet, on his hands, and knees, looking up at her. The smile is off. Winnie and Willie look at each other. A Long Pause ensues and the curtain falls.

Once more, in Happy Days, the Non-ent had been given a dramatic shape, new, original, and different from the Beckettian oeuvre till date.

To conclude, Happy Days situates on stage yet another variation on the theme of an Irrational Non-ent, and adjusts its dramaturgic strategy to suit the pressure the variation put on the playwright's technique. Once more, it is a
concretization on the proscenium of a conventionally accepted abstract condition called ‘happiness’, and, the ecstasy of prayer and gratitude that is supposed to accompany it. The play becomes a ritual for a persistent drubbing and debunk. The notions of joy, gratitude and prayer, either fall in and out of the dramatist’s dramaturgic anvil, or, collapse right through the pores of the sieve of his strategy. The play begins with a human body shown firmly in earth’s grip till the waist under a blazing light in Act I. The body sinks deep till the neck in Act II. This is the play’s ‘physical theme’. It is an entrapped corporeality, which Descartean pineals being absent, is made disjunct from its mentality. The latter is pit at a perpetual hapless swing between rapturous gratitude and tragic despair, expressed in a variety of ‘language themes’. Consequently, the stage acquires a profound context of an Absurd Non-ent, the shows of joy and prayer notwithstanding. ‘To be is to be perceived’ of Berkeleyan authority, gets a wry dramaturgic treatment, and is contextualized on stage as a helpless trauma. According to Beckett, there was little in existence to be happy about and still less to float the mind away in illusory rapture. Therefore, with its own specific dramaturgy, the drama is set the task of a play-length dramaturgic operation-debunk, against illusions of joy, gratitude and prayer and of purity, guarantee, knowledge and the classics, as well as, of an absent-presence, constantly a-watch over its creatures and creation.

Language and human corporeality get fresh dramaturgic attention. But the ‘language theme’ here is just not a Vladimir-Estragon ‘banal’ cross-talk. Neither is it a schizophrenic’s word-salad like Lucky’s, with almost a method in its madness. Nor is it a telescoping of tapes recorded at earlier birth-days and heard by Krapp, the old decrepit at the late age of 69. Rather, it is language as a new
experience, with a fresh dramaturgy of its own. Its deconstructions are in the *Endgame* tradition of extended speech deliveries, particularly of Hamm’s soliloquies with a 2/1/4 page-spread and more. Of course Winnie’s seven long speeches have also a permanent dialogic content because of a constant Willie-presence in the background though he speaks but very rarely. Also, each extended Winnie articulation has its own set of themes, and consequently each is an altogether different dramaturgic exercise. Again, voice de-constructions are many in *Happy Days*, and there is variety too, though they are not as various as in *Endgame*. In the latter, apart from the normal, there is a narrative tone also, as well as many voice modulations including a tailor’s voice, a rational being’s and a raconteur’s. *Happy Days* is a new, and very successful experiment in exploring the ‘language theme’ which has vast dramatic potential inherent in it, though if bereft of metaphor, it is generally considered banal and ordinary, and therefore at a collapse. Language is full of drama, be it in a Pause, Silence, or uttered de-construction. And, what of the support it gets from the drama inherent in what Kalb calls ‘physical themes’ as made manifest in work-a-day banal physical actions of the human body, particularly its vast gamut of gestures of the eye, hand, head, lip, or face generally. *Happy Days* makes maximum use of body-language. Of course, no Beckett play repeats in its entirety, the dramaturgy of an earlier drama by him. Therefore, each play by Beckett has a fresh and original dramaturgic experience to offer. And, to repeat, this dramaturgic variety is because of the variations in shape, that each dramatic effort gives, to each variation on his Non-ent vision of existence, for theme and technique in Beckett are always integral to each other. In fact, form and content are in such close co-ordination only because Beckett has an insatiable interest in the shape which thought can often take. The variation in thought, the vision remaining the same, compels each play to take on a new
dramaturgic shape. The variation is only enough to make it appear different and original, though the theme is always of an existential Non-ent. Thus, like the Godot-play, Happy Days has no banal cross talk, nor a single direction for a Silence, while the earlier play has 113 such stage-directions. Similarly, it does not, like Endgame have a tableau and pantomime begin it, nor also, a tableau end it. It does not have a prominent language refrain like the Godot-play’s 'Let’s go/We can’t... etc.' either. In fact, it has no language refrains at all. However, like the two previous plays it does have a sparsely inhabited stage, and its Winnie-Willie two-some, repeats the two-some cluster of earlier Beckett dramas. Waiting for Godot had all the Universe as its theatre, and its tramps waited alongside a road in open country. In Endgame also, Man and the Cosmos are the co-ordinates, though Man was temporarily housed in a ramshackle shelter, the outside of which was in the throes of a cataclysmic ruin. Krapp also needed a pantomime, but Time and Silence were the play's existential references, and the tape gave it dialogic content. Happy Days has Winnie half-buried in a mound, and the sun shines on her piercingly. The range is again Man and the Cosmos, an irrational existence being forever the theme.

Happy Days, has a 2-Act structure, the second being necessary to help Winnie sink in upto the neck. The unending stream of Winnie’s monologue gets a permanent dialogic content because of the constant Willie-presence behind the mound that impales Winnie, as do the timely Winnie’s reference to Willie, and the slender exchanges between them. And, the wonder of it all is, that Willie is scarcely ever wholly present on stage as a visible performer. Having already dramatized, on stage, an absent-presence, Godot, in an earlier play, it seemed an easy exercise for Beckett to contextualize a Willie-presence in Happy Days, while keeping him actually
almost away and out of sight behind Winnie's mound. His presence is never in doubt. Even the occasional turn of a newspaper page, as comment on something that Winnie was saying, served the purpose, as did the show of his hand, or head, or the long blow of his nose. Apart from this, the stage-audience rapport is perpetual, not only because of the permanent existential bind as a manifestation 'there', of a trapped human condition, but also because of Winnie's dishevelled mentality, which being constantly at a swing, nullified the recurrent postures of prayer and gratitude, and even of purity, guarantee, and knowledge. In order to demolish the meaning-content of the word 'happy' in Happy Days', whether the happiness was spiritual or otherwise, the playwright had to dramaturgically debunk illusions of prayer, joy and thanksgiving. Not only is the whole play involved in the exercise, even specific parts contribute to the cumulative effect. Thus, the tender human Smile is made mechanical by giving the play as many as 33 stage-directions for a 'Smile on/Smile off' or a 'Smile/Smile broader/Smile off'. Apart from this there are numerous 'gaze fronts' and 'arrested gestures' also.

Pauses, Long Pauses, Silences and Long Silences, were in the Godot-play quite a striking characteristic, and an integral part of Beckett's dramaturgy. He appears as careful about them as his words. Happy Days introduces a new kind of Pause. It is a stage-direction twice and is called a Maximum Pause. Unlike the Blackouts in Play, the duration of these different time-directions is not ever given, and was also never timed as an exact-time feature. Happy Days, has as many as 44 Long Pauses, and 460 odd directions for a Pause, besides the two already mentioned for a Maximum Pause. In Happy Days these Pauses play the important role of intensifying the situation on stage, as an experienced existential condition, with its stubborn returns from ritual
enthusiasms and joyous exultations to scepticism galore. Beckett's plays are in fact dramaturgy all through, each drama shaping the particular thematic variation of Beckett's commitment to an existential Non-ent. In *Happy Days*, the 'physical theme' also gets a fresh orientation, and eyes, lips, teeth, gum, fingers, nose, head, breasts, hands palm, tongue, the neck, nails, nostrils and even human breath are put to dramaturgic use. What is more, for the first time 'things' are felt to overwhelm a human's being existence, and the big black bag and its treasure full of banalities, like a hat, comb, mirror, tooth-brush, tooth-paste, lip-stick, parasol, nail-file, magnifying glass terribly dominate a life and severely effect its existential quality. Under the circumstances, enthusiasms are misplaced and the rapturous ecstasy of prayer and gratitude ill-conceived. The dramaturgy of the play effectively shapes this into an intense on-stage experience, giving to the new variety of the Absurd Non-ent a dramatic form different from the dramaturgies and forms of *Waiting for Godot, Endgame*, and *Krapp's Last Tape*.
References:


5. Ibid., p.162.

6. Ibid., p.32.


10. Ibid., p.32.


16. Ibid., p. 88


25. Ibid., p.162.

CHAPTER-V

PLAY

With *Play* (1963) Beckettian dramaturgy extends itself to an irrational existential condition visualized as possible even after death. It subtly manipulates the Spotlight, or, Spot-device, or, simple-spot, to dramatize the tragic perplexity that would possibly prevail even when earth-life is over. The play in fact, creates a no-Hell, no-Heaven kind of situation. The on-stage existential ordeal appears to be some kind of a permanent impasse in which souls, having expiated throughout their lives on earth, the sin of having been born, expiate in perpetuity, the sin of having lived. What is more, *Play* also confirms such an existential condition on earth.

Earlier, in *Waiting for Godot*, the aborted and irrational existential Non-ent\(^1\) was dramaturgically shaped\(^2\) into an endless futile Waiting, and in *Endgame*, as a cruel, harsh, and torturous Ending. In *Krapp's Last Tape*, drama was given form by telescoping time-past with time-present, and by ending the play in excruciating Silence. In *Happy days* it is 'a talking I', which, as ritual, literally plunders and lays waste, habit-ridden abstract notions of the ecstasy of prayer and gratitude, and, even the joy of living. But then, these were intense dramaturgic shapes of the existential plight on this woe-begone earth. *Play* with its repetitive circular movement, contextualizes on stage, a no less futile, irrational condition, which being timeless, shall last eternally. The dead too are unable to escape the stranglehold of the need to keep up speech. It is a state which is still entrapped in grotesque irrationality, and demise too, is not enough succour. The 'talking I'\(^3\) has still to keep up a murmur under a persistent compulsion to express.\(^4\) For one
'dead voice', it was 'strange, darkness best, and the darker the worse', and therefore, 'till all dark then all well' is a profound longing, when it will be 'all dark, all still, all over, wiped out--'. But till then, the torturous trauma is endless. For another 'dead voice', a wild laugh accompanies the idea that she was a 'shade gone, just a shade in the head', though she herself doubted it, and always wanted to do her best. The third 'dead voice', on stage, is also belied, for, it had assumed that after death would come peace, 'all pain, as if.. never been'. Ofcourse, the reader is at an advantage, catching each articulation of their babble separately, though the entire piece is lost to the arm-chair critic, when it is this chorus that actually begins, as well as, ends each cycle of the play in performance.

Now, it is no wonder that Play has this dramaturgy of an after-death situation. Eastman, in a *Modern Drama* article on *Happy Days* almost forecast *Play*, although he had thought it would be Beckett's 'ultimate tour de force'. Eastman's article was published in 1964, and a footnote to the article in the Journal says that it was written before 1963, the year *Play* appeared. Eastman wrote--

One wonders what he [Beckett] will attempt as his ultimate tour de force--- perhaps a dark stage in which the protagonist speaks up from his grave through a snorkel tube.5

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This critic was quite near the mark, for the genesis of *Play* was forever there, in the way the Beckettian oeuvre proceeded from play to play. Eastman finds Beckett dispensing increasingly 'with a definite setting, with particularity or immediacy of detail, with plot issues, with coherent character, with mobility of actor, with consecutive decline'.6 In *Waiting for Godot*, the two tramps pass quite
some time in a cross-talk about ‘dead voices’. The complexity and richness of Beckettian drama, and, also its deceptive simplicity has often made many critics consider this cross-talk very lyrical, even though it is a comic routine, and, even though, at this point in the play, it had different dramaturgic compulsions. For, what Beckett always committedly strived at, was to give dramaturgic shape to a dark and bleak vision of an irrational affliction which in Play persists even after death. Of this, the ‘dead voices’ of the Godot-play are sure harbingers. In Waiting for Godot, the playwright makes drama shape the tramps’ cross-talk so poetically, that in sheer description the ‘dead voices’ sounded lyrical. This lyrical cross-talk, descriptive of the ‘dead voices’ in conversation, is later made, as Eastman forecast the content of a full-blown dramaturgic exercise appropriately entitled Play. In this drama, voices speak out of urns, under the compulsive prod of a focused spotlight, or spot, as this analysis chooses to call it, of varying strength and quick arbitrary movement. The dead start with a babble under the spot’s pressure, and trail off into the same pathetic prattle followed by a Blackout, and the Curtain, ready for the perpetual ‘Repeats’ that may continuously follow. Of course, at one performance, one Repeat should be enough to evoke the others through sheer implication.

And so, in Play, Beckett extends his technical art to include in its sweep and range even the after-death ordeal. His drama shapes it into a no less powerful existential condition, purposeless and futile, that, worse still, keeps repeating itself timelessly. In Waiting for Godot, the tramps Vladimir and Estragon, had an inkling that the dead too were perpetual victims of the ‘talking I’, making sounds like sand, feathers, wings and leaves. These ‘dead voices’ do not only talk together, that is, all at once, in a chorus but even appear, each to speak to itself, as we shall see in
the ensuing analysis of Play’s technique. However, it will not be out of order to quote entire, for re-capitulation, the tramp’s cross-talk on the ‘dead voices’ from Waiting for Godot ----

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.
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.
(Silence.)
Vladimir: They make a noise like feathers.
Estragon: Like leaves.
Vladimir: Like ashes.

Estragon: Like leaves.

(Long Silence.) (Waiting for Godot Act II, p.62-63)

To come back to the play proper, we find a great reduction of the so-called 'theatrical space'. The stage, as usual in Beckett’s theatre is almost bare, save for three identical grey urns which are centre-stage. From the neck of each urn protrudes a head, that is, a man’s head in the middle, with two women’s on either side. Their faces according to the stage directions are 'so lost to age and aspect, as to seem almost part of urns'; they remain impassive throughout and their voices are toneless. Their speech is each time provoked by a compulsive spotlight, focused unrelentingly on each face, alone, while the other two heads stay in a dark haze on-stage. The light originates from the centre of the footlights. It switches on and off, and, plays over the three faces, allowing only one to speak at a time, except at those moments, when the spotlight is focused on all of them simultaneously. The response to the spotlight, or spot is immediate, so is the light transfer. In fact, there is no rationale in each spot-shift and its movement is quick and arbitrary. Seldom does it bring all three 'speaking' urns into focus. Such simultaneous focuses are only 5, and each is supposed to last 3 seconds. The play begins with a simultaneous faint focus on the three 'speaking heads' protruding out of urns, speaking together in a chorus. It also ends with one such synchronous faint focus, while the three heads, faintly and unintelligibly repeat the confused grotesque prattle that began the drama, whereafter, the drama is put into its 'Repeats'. The last 'Repeat' is followed by a 'Closing Repeat', which is different in content from the 'Repeats', which may be many.
There are 7 Blackouts in the play proper, which, if the drama is allowed only one 'Repeat', the circularity of 'Repeats' being left to implication, would make the Blackout number 14, followed by the 2 additional Blackouts of the 'Closing Repeat'. Therefore in a single performance, allowing only for one 'Repeat' there would be 14 Blackouts, of which 10 will be 5 seconds long, and, 4 of 3 seconds each. Quite plainly, the Pauses, Maximum Pauses, Long Pauses, and, Silences and Long Silences, which are the dramaturgic devices of the earlier four dramas considered in this thesis, have been replaced by longer and shorter Blackouts, by faint and stronger spot-focuses, and, by a feeble darkness, on stage, that is perpetually there in the background. Also, whereas the simultaneous spotlight-focus reduces the voiced articulations of the dead into a touching jabber and cackle, the quick shift of focus differentiates, and, identifies each voice, and converts what should be a dialogue into a prolonged narrative. These separate narrations become reciprocating episodic commentary on each other. As to how the narrations have overtones of dialogic content, will be considered later. The 'dead voices' are made to begin and close, in an unintelligible but sad chatter, though the 'Closing Repeat' has M, the man's head, make 2 four-worded short utterances, spaced between Blackouts. The 'dead voices' are of heads out of urns, and, no more. The spotlight unifies, separates, identifies, goads, pressurizes, shifts quickly and arbitrarily, becomes faint or strong, and even tires of its own non-chalance. The play goes into 'Repeats', and the movement of the play is timeless and circular. The Blackouts abolish, shock, and startle. The darkness engulfs and perpetuates. It pressurizes the imagination. All in all, the irrational pathetic, existential impasse 'there', on stage, is as much a dramaturgic of life, as it is a dramaturgic fact after death. It remains the Non-ent always. Further, even as Beckettian theme and dramaturgy
are obsessed with Silence, and Blackout and Darkness, so also are they almost always pre-occupied with the sense of an absent-presence. Vladimir and Estragon waited for a Godot who never arrived. Winnie felt herself watched. With characteristic Beckettian overtones lurking, Pozzo is made to see human beings in the image of God. In Endgame Hamm had both heredity and divinity cursed forthright, and without much ado put himself easily into the harsh and irrational Man-God-King-Star-performer posture. Nagg had his tailor's story debunk Creation as too hurried an effort, lasting only 6 days. The young Krapp had often yelped to Providence. And Play does it with its quick, arbitrary play of spotlight, that is repetitious; it brightens and vains, and is demanding, prodding and compulsive. It even tires and suffers blackouts but never ceases to pressurize, at will, the 'dead voices', either into an unintelligible babble, or, into a reveal of the timeless narrative of a 'talking I', even after death. Be it divinity or an absent presence is not named; it is just a callous spotlight.

And so, the curtain rises. There is a dark haze the urns being just discernible. After a few seconds, there is a faint spotlight simultaneously focused on three faces, which are of heads, protruding out of the urns. The spotlight appears to prod them to speak together. Their 'dead' voices are faint and hardly intelligible, and their utterances are different. They are supposed to come out as a chorus, but should sound more of a muddled prattle with a random articulation achieving clarity. This lasts for 3 seconds. The chorus or babble confirms that the pathetic irrationality of the sad existential condition shall be 'there', even after death. Thus, complete darkness never takes over. It is 'the darker' that sustains, which is worse, though the inordinate hope persists that 'time will come'. The profound wish to shake off a perpetual absent-presence is always
there too, and with it the much belied wish that all should be 'dark, all still, all over, all wiped out--'. But this wish is, however, cut off in mid-narrative, as are the other two, with the implication that the ordeal now being outside time, is timeless, and therefore so much the worse. There is apprehension that one 'dead voice' is a 'shade gone, just a shade, in the head, though the 'dead voice' itself doubts this, and the doubt too is left in mid-narration. Finally, there is the disillusionment about peace, when 'all the pain, all as if... never been--', though the hope persists still, but it is, as usual, accompanied by the dramaturgic commentary of a 'hiccup'. This opening Chorus or unintelligible though poignant cackle, is incidentally also the closing piece of the play, before a 'Repeat' of it sets in. This Chorus should be quoted entire---

[Together]

W1: Yes, strange, darkness best, and the darker the worse, till all dark, then all well, for the time, but it will come, the time will come, the thing is there, you'll see it, get off me, keep off me, all dark, all still, all over, wiped out--

W2: Some might say, poor thing, a shade gone, just a shade, in the head--- (Faint wild laugh)--- just a shade, but I doubt it, I doubt it, not really, I'm all right, still all right, do my best, all I can---

M: Yes, peace, one assumed, all out, all the pain, all as if.... never been, it will come... [Hiccup]-- Pardon, no sense in this, Oh I know... nonetheless, one assumed, peace... I mean... not merely all over, but as if... never been... (p.147,148)

There is a 5 second Blackout, after which, the spot focuses synchronously again on the three faces. They all speak together once more but this time their voices are at
normal strength, and the Chorus or babble has fewer words, and its dramaturgy introduces the adultery theme---

[Together]

W1:  I said to him, give her up---
W2:  One morning as I was sitting---
M:  We were not long together --- (p.148)

Now, Kenner begins his critical commentary on the assumption that there is no mistake about the adultery, though Laughlin prefers to arrive at the dialogic content of the episodic narratives through close critical analysis. Be that as it may, for the moment it shall suffice to state, that the stage directions, and, the 2 choruses help situate, on-stage, 'there', an irrational after death perplexity which the two tramps in Waiting for Godot had visualized as the rustle of wings, leaves, feathers, and the movements of sand---

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

(Silence.) (Waiting for Godot Act II, p.62)

With such an after-death tragic impasse dramaturgically contextualized on stage, the spot next focuses, singly on W1, one of the two women, and initiates the play's 'narrations', for, each of the three faces speaks only for
himself, or, herself, camouflaging the play's covert dialogic movement---

I said to him. Give her up. I swore by all I held most sacred --- (p.148)

This W1 utterance is the first intelligible line spoken in the play so far. It is a dead woman's voice, telling 'him', perhaps the husband, 'to give her up', a mistress perhaps. The spotlight shifts, and W1 is not allowed to complete her speech. The spot now arbitrarily switches on to W2, the other woman, who at once says---

One morning as I was sitting stitching by the open window she burst in and flew at me. Give him up, she screamed, he's mine. Her photographs were kind to her. Seeing her now for the first time full length in the flesh I understood, why he preferred me. (p.148)

This is probably the mistress W1 spoke of. W2 was aware of her physical beauty. However, she was now a 'dead voice' merely, and barely a face; and that too projects out of an urn. W2's toneless 'dead voice' makes her words about flesh and physical beauty sound absurd and meaningless. In the first part of the play, the 'narration' of each of the three voices, has more to speak about the other two. The third voice is that of M, the male in the adulterous triangle. W2 is not allowed further speech, for the spot shifts, this time to M, whose dead voice is heard saying---

We were not long together when she smelled the rat. Give up that whore, she said, or i'll cut my throat -- [Hiccup.] -- pardon -- so help me God. I knew she could have no proof. So, I told her I did not know what she was talking about. (p.148)

M's dead voice confirms an erstwhile adultery. The 'dead voices' appear to be out of a limbo and re-count, under
an existential compulsion to keep up speech,\textsuperscript{12} the
predicament they lived through on earth, only that now, a
spotlight appears to excercise overt and arbitrary
dramaturgic control, and the audience hear them, each
entrapped in his or her 'talking I'.\textsuperscript{13}

From the first sequence of the play, what manifests
itself, so far, on stage, is that there are three 'dead
voices' which are not aware of the presence of each other,
the individual focus of the spot keeping them dramaturgically
separate. There is no overt dialogue between them. Each
voice, therefore appears to speak as an immediate response
to the compulsive, arbitrary prod of the spot, which seems to
be playing the role of an 'inquisitor'. However, it is a
non-chalant 'inquisitor', who does not appear interested in
knowing the truth at all, for, it does not give the 'dead
voices' a full hearing, cutting them off in mid-narrative,
and, sometimes even in the middle of a word. Even the few
times that the focus is simultaneous, the 'dead voices' speak
only for themselves, but, because caught speaking together,
produce the effect of a chorus, or, babble. The first
sequence thus confirms the impression of the Godot tramps
that the 'dead voices', speak together and individually---

(Silence.)

Vladimir: They all speak together.

Estragon: Each one to itself.

(Silence.)' (Act II, pp.62-63)

The 'dead voices' speak from a limbo, as it were, about
their lives on earth. They talk of an adulterous
relationship, in which they were caught on earth, as in a
trap. It was an absurd irrationality, a poignant existential
condition and the torture suffered by each , is carried over
even to their after-death situation. Having been born was
sin enough, having lived was worse. Therefore, it was a cruel expiation all through. Vladimir and Estragon had had their inkling---

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

(Silence.) (Act II, p.63)

Now, the spotlight dramatically disjuncts dialogue into an apparent narration, though interpenetration of 'language themes' and context, resuscitates the strong dialogic content about which much will be said later. For the moment, let the utterances continue as 'narration'; each 'dead voice' telling the same story, but only from his or her own point of view. So, when the spot is next on W2, she immediately continues her story, the wife of her lover asking her to 'give him up', because, he belonged to her. However, there was no proof, and W2 denied the adulterous relationship. 'Someone yours? Give up whom?', she had said, while stitching away, sitting by an open window. The spot once again shifts arbitrarily and next switches on W1, whose 'narration' is heard saying that she hired a detective to find out the truth. And, since no proof was forthcoming she had wondered if the husband was not accused unjustly. However, the spot hardly appeared to care. It switched off, and focused itself on M who at his 'narration' is heard to have tried to convince and cajole his wife and had even been emotional and affectionate. He had also felt sorry for her.
However, he had taken care and left no proof, and had even bribed the detective. Spotlight is next on W2, who too therefore continues her story. The wife of her lover had come, asking her to leave her husband, and had horrified her by her violence. She ‘had her shown out’. When next, M is at the spot’s focus he is heard to say that his wife was not convinced, ‘I smell her off you’, she had kept telling him, and, M’s embraces and oaths were repulsed. The spotlight does not give M any more time and switches on W1, who is heard to express astonishment at her husband’s confession!

The shifts of spotlight disjunct each ‘dead voice’ from the next, and the impression is that each voice keeps up only his or her compulsive narration of a ‘talking I’ from the limbo, as a tragic grotesquie, quite the same as was kept up, as speech, when they had lived on earth, quarrelling over their own versions of the adultery trap. Of course, after death there was no dialogue. This is achieved by making the lighting device play the role of an ‘inquisitor’. Thus, when M was swearing that he had no relationship with another lady, spotlight prompted W1 to mention his confession. The spot exposes M also when he was saying how he had bribed the detective to silence, and, switches on to W2, when she was heard saying that M had moaned to her about his home life. Infact, spotlight, despite all its arbitrariness, establishes that M had little, or, no feeling at all for either W1, or, W2, and was inconsistent, absurd and irrational. Also, as W2 says, there was no danger of M being ‘the... spiritual thing’. He could have even loved his wife only for her money as W2’s ‘narration’ would have us believe. This narrative technique is quite a transformed dramaturgy. It disjuncts dialogue into a narration; shows the light device indifferent and arbitrary; and with the help of three human heads jutting out of urns, creates the stage impression of three ‘dead voices’ each trapped in his, or, her own compulsive ‘talking
Thus, 'spotlight dramaturgy' is exploited by the playwright to experiment quite a few theatrical effects and also give new variety to his 'language theme'. Firstly, it exploits 3 independent narrations to give the dramaturgic effect of a dialogue. To put it the other way, it converts the apparent dialogue of a drama into 3 separate, independent narrations. In this way, though the genre is drama, which on the face of it should have a dialogic content, the effect is at first that of 3 disjunct narrations in progress. This tantamounts to saying that even apparently separate narrations, if given a random mix can become dialogic, if the narrations have a common theme. Therefore, drama need not have an overt dialogue, and, a random mix of independent narratives, on a common theme, can very much become dialogic. This is one achievement of the play's dramaturgy and, a further extension of his 'language theme', that, narration and dialogue can both be ambivalent. Secondly, the narravatives being separate and independent, create the impression of the three 'dead voice' personae, being afflicted by a 'talking I' syndrome, and an on stage situation of 'dead voices'. The effect of converting dialogue into prolonged independent narrations is tremendous. The conversation of the Godot tramps on 'dead voices' stands vindicated. These were two gains of 'spot dramaturgy'. The third is that the random play of spot earns it the character
of an 'inquisitor', indifferent and callous, though very particular in har assing the three 'dead' into 'speech-revelations' their 'talking I' being compulsively perpetual. The Spot is shifting, repetitious, and uncertain, it is the typical version of a deity, from out of the Beckettian oeuvre. The present play is the better for this dramatic exploitation. When Spot sets up activity, the three 'dead voices', if under simultaneous focus, start off into a babble. After a Blackout, and one more simultaneous Spot there is a less worded chatter. The first babble, situates on stage the passive toneless voices as those of the 'dead'. The second babble, initiates the adultery theme. There is a Blackout, after which, Spot each 'dead voice', at an independent 'narration'. The Spot shifts at will, and the narrations, while remaining separate and independent, dwell on two common themes. At first it is the theme of adultery, and concretizes on stage the emotional crisis which entrapped the three on earth. Later, the theme is the after-death pathetic irrational perplexity which the three suffer together, timelessly!

The narrations continue the theme of adultery, till, the suggestion is that the three had died in different ways, and, were now the play's three 'dead voices'. For, as the individual narrations continue, and appear at the compulsive prod of the Spot, there comes a time in the play, when W2's 'dead voice' speaks of a plan that she and M, had made when alive on earth, to leave the town. However, instead, M had stopped coming, although W2 was 'prepared' for the journey. Of course, there being no story, there is no elaboration, and in any case, the Spot shifts were random and arbitrary. However, it is not long after, when the Spot being on M, he is heard saying---

Finally it was all too much, I simply could no longer--- (p.151)
But M is cut in mid-narrative, and the audience remain in the dark as to what he 'could no longer'? Was it that he could not go on living like that? Had he then committed suicide? Perhaps, yes! Kenner would have no critical qualms about such a conclusion, for he takes up the adultery theme directly.  

Next, the spot is focused on W1, and she is heard to say--

Before I could do anything he disappeared. That meant she had won. That slut! I couldn’t credit it. I lay stricken for weeks. Then I drove over to her place. It was all bolted and barred. All grey with frozen dew. On the way back by Ash and Snodland...(p.151).

M was already heard to have stopped visiting W2. And now W1 says ‘he disappeared’. It is a clear indication that the man had perhaps committed suicide. However, for W1 it meant that the other lady ‘had won’. And so, she had driven over to her place which she had found ‘bolted and barred!’ What had happened to her ‘on the way back by Ash and Snodland’. Was it a road accident?! About this conclusion also, Kenner would have had no critical qualms. After the man had stopped coming, W2 too is heard to say---

I made bundle of his things and burnt them. It was November and the bonfire was going. All night I smelt them smouldering. (p.151).

Here too, the audience are not told why she burnt his things. But she did smell the smoke all night! Had she suffocated to death!? There is no elaboration, for spotlight switches off, and there is a 5 second Blackout. Yet again, about this forthright conclusion, Kenner would not have any hesitation. The conflict was perhaps too severe, and M ‘could no longer—’ endure the situation, and so, perhaps, had
committed suicide. W1 had perhaps died heart-broken, realizing that she could not keep M away from W2. An accident had killed her 'on the way back by Ash and Snodland'. And, finally W2, who had 'smelt the smoke all night', was suffocated by the smoke from the fire she had set to M's belongings, when, despite a promise to elope with her, M had not returned. The three then had died, and were after death 'there' on stage, still entrapped in an existential predicament, heads jutting out of urns, engulfed by the haze that was as yet not fully dark.

Now, the theme of adultery, common to the three disjuncted recounts, helps give their apparently separate narrations a dialogic content or is it, that the narrations acquire ambivalence as remarked earlier. Merely a sentence like 'I said to him. Give her up' could give sufficient clue that the theme of the wrenched narration was adultery. Some lines quoted below illustrate clearly, that it is the simplicity of the theme selected that helps understand a situation, otherwise narrated in disjunct pieces, the same thrust imparting to the separate utterances a dialogic characteristic---

She burst in and flew at me, Give him up, she screamed, he is mine (p.148).  

Or---

We were not long together when she smelled the rat. Give up that whore, she said; or i'll cut my throat---' (p.148)

Or---

Or---

What have you to complain of? I said'. Have I been neglecting you? How could we be together in the way we are if there were someone else? Loving her as I did, with all my heart. I could not but feel sorry for her (pp.148-149).

To return to the play then the spot is suddenly focused simultaneously on the three faces, after a 5 second Blackout. Once again the three speak together. Their voices, though toneless, are now ‘proportionately lower’. And therefore, this time they produce a different kind of babble---

[Together]

W1: Mercy, mercy—
W2: To say I am—
M: When first this change—(p.152)

After the babble another 5 second Blackout ensues. The spotlight focuses on M's face who is prodded to immediately say---

When first this change I actually thanked God. I thought, it is done, it is said, now all is going out--- (p.152).

A change is supposed to have taken place, but it did not, and what is on stage remains an after-death tragic impasse. However, 'when first this change' remains vague. Was it the relaxation he got during the two Blackouts? And what did he, actually thank God for? What is it, that is 'said' and 'done'? Was he referring to his situation now, that is, after death?! It can be sensed however, that M is talking about an experience which is totally different from whatever that had preceded it. For, what M says does not continue the
adultery theme. M’s last words before the last two Blackouts were ‘I simply could no longer---’, and, it was a ‘change’ that he was now talking about. But the fact of the matter is that in their current existential condition Spotlight does not change! It still sticks to its habit of arbitrary focus in order to switch on, or, switch off the heard sound of human speech; because the tragedy is that the ‘talking I’ is persistent. The Spot only apparently silences M, and make him disappear into the darkness. It next has W1 in focus, who is heard to plead for mercy---

Mercy, mercy, tongue still hanging out for mercy. It will come. You haven’t seen me. But you’ll. Then it will come --- (p.152).

It should be noticed that W1’s words do not continue the theme of a faithless husband. Instead, she pleads for ‘mercy’. But from whom, from the Spot which hence forward may be given a capital ‘S’, for, could it be some version of divinity! Of course, there is no elaboration, but the suggestion is that it is shifting and hostile. The audience do not just know what does W1 expect to ‘come’, and whom she is addressing by ‘you haven’t seen me?’ Was she seen by somebody, if so, who? What was to come in any case? Was it some Truth, or, Peace, or, Darkness! The callous Spot which remains as careless as ever, switches her off, and as carelessly switches over to W2, who is heard to say---

To say I am not disappointed, no, I am, I had anticipated something better. More restful. (p.152).

Again, W2’s words also do not continue the adultery theme. The audience is still not sure about the cause of her ‘disappointment’. Nevertheless, after death, she perhaps anticipated a more restful life, perhaps a kind of no-life at all. Instead, she found herself in an urn, with only
the head out, and under the constant interrogation of a non-chalant Spotlight. She can neither switch the Spot off, nor, being at a perpetual 'talking I' can she be silent when it is projected on her face. It is a trapped condition.

What has been concretized on stage, so far, is an after death irrational existential condition which is now worse, because it is timeless; all the more uncertain, and, all the more confused. Incorrigible hope is at its usual worst; the hope is still prolonged; the end yet not anywhere near; and, the 'talking I' not ever quiet!

Spotlight next switches over to W1, who has already, in the first round, asked for mercy, and said that 'it will come'. Now she goes on to say -- 'Or you will weary of me'. It could be a reference to the Spotlight, which one day might weary of her and leave for ever as her husband did! However, just then the Spot shifts to M who once again thanks God for 'this change' in which all was going down 'into the dark'. He also had expected 'peace'; that the after-death plight would be better. But as usual, he too is cut in mid-narrative for the Spot transfers itself to W2, who also had anticipated 'something better' and 'more restful'. She appears now 'less confused and less confusing'. She also prefers 'this to --- the other thing' and finds her present predicament more preferable than the plight she was entrapped in on earth. This was one more version of the death wish on earth, though, death too is now found to be no softner! But then, W2 did have her after-death 'endurable moments'. Perhaps these were those moments in which the Spot was either off, or, on someone else's face. Because, given the harassing Spotlight, only such moments could be 'restful'. The Spot briefly shifts focus to M who manages only to say, 'I thought', after which it is again on W2 whose 'dead voice' thinks that when the Spot 'goes out', she will go out too. And, also that a
day will come when the Spot will tire of her, and after all, 'go out for good'. Just then the Spot shifts to W1 who is just then saying 'Hellish half-light'; but immediately after the Spot is again on M's face, who, had earlier, been only able to say 'I thought...'. Given more attention M is heard longer speaking of 'peace, yes, I suppose, a kind of peace and all that pain as if ... never been'. The three 'dead souls' seem to refer to their current existential situation, and it is felt that the dead souls' reaction to their after-death existential condition differs only slightly from their on-earth existential predicament. Death may have appeared some kind of relief from the irrationality of the on-earth plight, however, it had brought very little succour. Infact, W2 is desperate and says---

Give me up, as a bad job. Go away and start poking and pecking at some one else. (p.152)

And, W1 is also weary---

Get off me! Get off me. (p.153).

The 'dead female voices' appear tired of the arbitrarily willful Spotlight and want it to leave them in peace. However, the Spot also appears no less weary and even impatient, because its focus is made to appear no less weary and impatient, and is on now for shorter durations. Infact, was it not impatient even earlier, when it had arbitrarily cut them off in mid-narrative? As at the end of Sartre's The Flies, Zeus and Man are both forlorn and weary in their lonesome freedoms!

The 'dead voices' soon become particularly specific about their after-death existential quandary, trapped as they now were in a timeless eternity. Was the Spot looking for
some kind of truth? Once when its focus was on M he is heard to say---

It will come. Must come. There is no future in this. (p.153).

Was it a state of inordinate hope still persisting for all the four, including the Spotlight? The possibilities could be worse, because when once the Spot was at W1, she had said---

On the other hand things may disimprove, there is that danger (p.153).

Death was some kind of an improvement on the live existential impasse on earth. Yet the after-death condition was also a 'darker the worse' predicament. M understands somewhat---

Oh ofcourse I know now--- (p.153).

When the Spot is next on W1, she is heard weary and seems to want it off, or, was it that she did not tell the Spot the truth? It is a hapless and helpless Non-ent existential situation, either pre-death, or, after-death, and dramaturgy has it shaped well, with the 'inquisitor' Spotlight an over-night divinity, impatient, arbitrary, harsh and callous, and, itself getting tired and weary and yet caught in an irrational trap of its own, or, so it appears. No less weary are its victims, for would it leave focusing on W1, if she were to tell the truth! Ofcourse the Spot does not answer back and yet it persisted with its compulsive focuses. Its shifts are irrational, which is terrible, and shows up its utter indifference to the kept up compulsive narrative of each 'talking I', in death, as before death!
W2 is apprehensive of the Spot’s anger, because once she is heard to say---

You might get angry and blaze me clean out of my wits. Mightn’t you? (p.153).

Later, when the Spot chooses M as its focus, we have M having realized that life on earth, or, was it the play of the Spot after death, just ‘play’---

I know now, all that was just ... play. And all this? When will all this ... (p.153).

Was death no succour then, and only a matter of falling from the pan into the fire? ‘That’ was just play, meaningless and absurd. And ‘this’, the predicament of an after life! There is disillusion and pain in his ‘And all this. When will all this ...’ However he is cut off in mid-narrative. A little later another ‘just ... play’ from M gets a random, ‘Is it that?’ from W1 fixated by the changing narrative into a chance articulation. When next the arbitrary Spot is on W2, she is at her re-iteration of ‘Mightn’t you?’, that is, might not the Spot blast her out of her wits. Here also an outright single narration takes on the colour of a chance utterance, because W2 spoke ‘Mightn’t you’ just when a mention of being blasted out of wits was made by W1. As remarked earlier it is a hapless condition of a Non-ent and Beckettian dramaturg shapes it into just that as an on-stage, after-death existential quandary, ‘there’. The difference is that, these are some of the ‘dead voices’, the two tramps had visualized in Waiting for Godot, and already quoted earlier. By this time, the ‘dead voice’ of M has also started wearying and when focussed on by the Spot is heard to say---

All this when will all this have been ... Just play? (p.153).
Life on earth had earlier been realized as 'just......play'. Death took over, and yet an inordinate hope was as persistent as a 'talking I'. Though W2, had a lurking fear that the situation may 'disimprove', and the pre-death irrational existential bind may again set in, yet the disenchantment with the after-death existential condition is no less acute. Infact the condition is no better, and there is that weariness in it too, which hopelessly wishes it to become 'a have been', that is, 'just play'. However 'this is a timeless predicament, repetitious and circular, with no escape whatever from! There was no succour of a death either. And therefore, when will all be 'a have been.....just play?'

Now, the 'dead voice' of W1 also appears obsessed by the thought of the woman who tried to seduce her husband; 'I can hear her poor thing', W2 is saying, when next Spot gives her the opportunity to be heard. The Spot shifts immediately and alights on M whose 'dead voice' is still talking about Lipton tea; a tragic grotesquerie it becomes because an apparently 'dead voice' with its head out of an urn is speaking expressionlessly, its preference for a particular tea.

W2, is of the thinking kind, worried about herself being a 'shade gone', and, 'how the mind works still'. She speaks of 'all fallen from the beginning on empty air Nothing being asked at all. No one is asking me anything a all!' Hers too is a toneless voice, be-moaning an after-death existential imbroglio that being now outside time, was a timeless condition! However, W2 does not take kindly to others regret for her, as being an expressionless 'dead voice' merely, because being 'dead' she had at least escaped the pre-death, irrational, existential strait on earth. And therefore, those that are still embroiled in the aborted futile condition are the ones to be truly regretted for. Not that, the after-life existential perplexity would be any better, but at least the on-earth mess is got rid of, for it is
a thoroughly Absurd and Irrational condition, so that the living could be pitied even by the dead. The living still kiss their 'sour kisses'. The dead voices of W1, W2 and M are in a trans-life, trans-death state, concretized 'there' on-stage as a timeless trap, which in any case appears to have an over-view of the existential impasse of the living on earth. M also pities them and considers his condition, however worse, still blessed, for, at least the Absurd, on earth has been escaped from. Therefore, dramaturgic strategy has all humanity on stage, in both its after-life and pre-death existential state, neither predicament worth anybody's while at all, though the timeLess after-life condition, is just a jot better, in as much as the abortion that existence was on earth, was at least got away from.

The mentality of which W2 appears quite a protagonist, revolts even though it be a 'dead voice' that speaks. It revolts against the after-death situation, because the 'darker the worse' state still persists. The Spot, which with indifference switches the speakers off and on, as it were, also persists. A simultaneous focus, an individual Spot, a Blackout; stronger and, weaker Spots; as well as the Spot's irrational shifts; a cut-off in mid-narrative, even in mid-word, were all too whimsical and had no rationale whatever. The light device helps situate on-stage an existential affliction, which is haunted and harassed by the callous 'divinity' of a light, that keeps the 'dead voices' in a perpetual 'darker the worse' strait, and, the solace of Blackouts is of very short durations, at best of 5 seconds each. From the vantage point of an after-death predicament, the 'dead voices' could of course pity the aborted existence on earth. However, the non-chalance of the 'inquisitor' light is no less intriguing. It is indifferent; it just does not care, it shifts focus at will; its will is a whim; its movement is quick; its focus is a hurting, harsh, prod to continue speaking; it tires also; it vains; it is repetitious, always a-coming; circular. In short, it is an
appropriate dramaturgic device in Beckettian hands to situate on stage, 'there' a presentational\textsuperscript{18} compulsive 'talking I' predicament as an excruciatingly cruel phenomenon even after death. The toneless 'dead voice' of W2 insists that the Spot must let her know what does it do when it goes out

What do you do when you go out? Sift? (p.155)

Let us now observe the dramaturgy of the play a little more closely, for there is the stage-direction of 'Repeat play' and, at the end of the last 'Repeat' of the play, there is to be a 'Closing Repeat' also. Therefore, if one 'Repeat' of the play is thought dramatically sufficient to establish the timeless circularity of the on-stage, existential condition, the play will have had one 'Original' on-stage performance, the next, a 'Repeat' of it, and, this 'Repeat play' will be followed by a 'Closing Repeat'. Of course there may be two or more 'Repeat plays', but, as it appears from the stage-direction, only one 'Closing Repeat' will follow at the end of the last of the 'Repeat play'. Therefore, ordinarily there will be one 'Original' one 'Repeat', and one 'Closing Repeat' at any one performance of the play. In effect, therefore, the performance of the play will have these three broad divisions. Now, the Blackouts in the 'Original' are 5, five second events, and 2, three second events. Therefore, an 'Original' piece has 7 Blackouts, and if there is to be a 'Repeat', there will be 7 more, that is in all 14 Blackouts. To this, add the 3 five second Blackouts of the 'Closing Repeat'. And, in this way, one 'Original', one 'Repeat' and one 'Closing Repeat' will have in all 17 Blackouts, of which 13 will be of 5 second duration, and 4, of three second duration. The Blackouts and the Spot's simultaneous focuses go together. Therefore, before commenting on the dramaturgy of Blackouts let us consider the simultaneous focuses. There are 4 simultaneous Spot-focuses in the 'Original' part. That will make 8 simultaneous focuses in one 'Original' and a 'Repeat'. There is one simultaneous
focus in the 'Closing Repeat' also. Therefore, altogether there will be 9 simultaneous focuses, each of three second duration. Of these, the first and the last are of strong focus, the rest are faint, with the 'dead voices' getting lower and fainter also. A simultaneous focus has the three 'dead' speaking together. This has also been referred to earlier. Each performance starts with this confused babble and also ends with it. A textual analysis has the advantage of not only catching each word of the prattle distinctly, but also, of picking up the slant of each 'dead-utterance' individually. Of course, the reader misses the collective dramaturgic effect of these dead-utterances. The longer pieces, spoken as a chorus, have already been quoted earlier. However, since the dramaturgy of the 'Original', 'Repeat', and 'Closing Repeat' is being considered is one movement at a single performance, let us also look at the different choruses again, as distinct dramatic devices. In the choruses which repeat many times the first has W1 speak of the 'darker the worse' condition, and, her 'dead voice' wishes it all dark, 'all over, wiped out --'. It is weary of the Spot, and, wants it to get off and keep off. In her timeless existential quandary, she still speaks of a 'time will come', and the 'thing is there, you'll see it'. On the other hand, the 'dead voice' of W2 is obsessed with the idea that others may think her 'a shade gone', though her 'dead voice' doubts it. Finally, M speaks of 'a peace, one assumed, 'peace ...I mean ... not merely all over, but as if ... never been'. All in all, it is a sorry state of earnest after-death expectation that is belied. And this, to begin with is concretized on-stage very effectively. The second simultaneous exposure has a very small, almost, a word each chorus. This initiates the adultery theme, with each of the three 'dead' beginning with his or her own version of it inorder add to the existential after-life condition, the Being-on-earth bind. The third simultaneous exposure reverts to the predicament of the dead and finds them speaking lower, a lesser number of words. However, as in the second chorus,
they have the same 3 dramaturgic seconds to speak a lesser number of words. Thus, whereas W1 pleads for ‘Mercy’, W2 only says ‘To say that I am ---’, recounting her obsession of being a ‘shade gone’ in the mind. Of course M introduces the word ‘Change’, possibly, that was expected after death, and various versions of this expected ‘change’ find expression as part of Beckett’s ‘language theme’ over a whole page of differently directed W1-W2-M narratives. Of the spread of the word ‘change’ as a ‘language theme’ much will be said shortly. The fourth and last simultaneous Spot-exposure has the three ‘dead’ again participating in the babble that began the play, and re-institutes the death-theme, as a presentational,\(^\text{19}\) after-death existential condition ‘there’ on stage.\(^\text{20}\) The ‘Closing Repeat’ has its own simultaneous Spot focus, in which the 3 ‘dead’ repeat the second short babble, and each initiates his or her own version of the adultery theme. And as one Repeat goes into another, round and round, the movement of the play becomes a timeless spin almost. However, the three broad-divisions of a single performance remain an ‘Original’, a ‘Repeat’, and a ‘Closing Repeat’. Together the three position on the proscenium a timeless, repetitious, circularity, out of which there is no escape whatever, because W1, W2 and M being already dead, could not even think of dying in order to redeem themselves the more.

To return to the dramaturgy of the Blackouts in Play, they are found to replace the strategy of Pauses and Silences put to tremendous effect in the earlier plays. Blackouts generally follow the ‘dead voice’ babble after a simultaneous Spotlight focus. Thus a Blackout each precedes and succeeds the first chorus of the three ‘dead’. These are 5 second Blackouts, and cup the babble of the ‘dead’ trapped in an after-death quandary, in which to repeat, W1 is heard speaking of a ‘darker the worse’ predicament, and expressing an inordinate hope of ‘it will come’, the dark, that is, when all will be ‘over’ and ‘wiped out’. And the dead voice of W2
is to heard to doubt that she is 'a shade gone' in the mind. Finally, the deceased M also inordinately hopes for an after-death peace, when all will not only be over but will be 'as if ... never been'. Therefore the first 5 second-Blackout-couple, which hedges on either side the first dead cackle concretizes an after-death 'talking I' constriction of a Non-ent still. These 'dead voices' are faint, and so is the simultaneous Spot on them, that catches them in the midst of speech and leaves them in mid-narrative too. Each 'dead' begins with a 'Yes', as if he or she was already in speech and the compulsion to express continued even after-death, so that even an earthly demise would fail to silence the 'talking I' of the trapped existential strait. This chorus, has more words in it and is spoken faster, than the babble that immediately follows after a 3 second Blackout. Once again, two Blackouts hedge on either side the prattle of the deceased. It is a very short chorused articulation and dramatically initiates the adultery-theme of the three dead who appear to have been involved in an intrigue when on earth, a condition equally hopeless and hapless. Each 'dead' keeps to his or her own narrative, and, a personal version both of the adultery theme, as well as to the after-death existential ensnare. The dialogic content of the three independent narratives is caught only in situational or language overtones or language 'themes'. However, the two sets of Blackouts, that is, the 5 second-pair, as well as the 3-second pair, with the individual chorus contents within, help initiate the twin-themes of the play: that of a timeless, after-death existential constriction; and, that of a pre-death adulterous imbroglio, which is no less an existential entanglement. That is, the two sets of Blackouts help contextualize the 'there', after-death predicament, and, initiate the adultery theme. Thus one pair of Blackouts specifically marks-off the drama of the adultery-theme, spoken and staged as a persistent 'talking I' personal narration of each of the three 'dead'. Yet another set of Blackouts again hedges a dead voice's prattle, and each
Blackout is of 5 second duration. The chorus-content of the speech of the 'dead' spaced within this set of Blackouts is smaller but powerful, and is voiced because of a simultaneous 3 second Spot-focus. The significant call in this chorus is of 'Mercy', the dead W1 re-iterating it twice. The life-bereft head of W2 still speaks of her apprehension of being thought 'a shade' gone mentally, and the lifeless M inordinately hopes for a change. The Blackouts then emphasise not only the on-stage semi-dark, but also the glare or vain of the simultaneous Spot that is spaced in between. They also intensify the spoken themes, after providing an effective dramaturgy for their initiation. They help telescope the existential, on-earth, adulterous, Non-ent predicament with the constricted-in-urns after-death persistent 'talking I', Non-ent condition. This second set of 5 second Blackouts punctuates the tragedy with poignant calls of 'Mercy', with apprehension of insanity and with an unusually lingering hope of a peace, when all will be over 'as if never been'.

Now let us return to the play, and leave the other Blackouts to be commented upon as and when they occur. For the moment, the play has been picked up from the idea of 'change', which the dead M harbours as a condition, that should have followed the decease on earth, which takes the drama directly to the after-death existential ensnarement. And therefore, the three 'talking I' narratives now have overtones, not so much of their versions of adultery in which they were entrapped when they lived on earth, but, of the after-decease existential irrationality in which each voices individually, his or her own predilection not only towards change, but also Truth; and Play, Mind, Sorrow and Speech; and, Penitence and Atonement; as also Silence, Darkness, Drift, and Fantasies. The final dramaturgic concentration is on Spotlight itself, which M repeatedly admonishes as---

Mere eye. Just Looking. At my face. On and off. (p.157)
By then, W1 has too become weary and even obsessed about the shifting, and hurting Spotlight, and, wants it off; and, W2 is eerie with her wild laugh and her repeated speculation of 'a shade gone in the head'. The next pair of Blackouts, is at the end of the 'Original' part of a performance and before the 'Repeat' of it starts, when M heard to say---

Mere eye. No mind. Opening and shutting on me. Am I as much--- (p.157)

The Spot leaves M inconclusive. A Blackout of 3 seconds ensues. The Spot is again on M when he is saying---

Am I as much as... being seen? (p.157)

The Blackout-pair that follows, is once again at the border-edge of a speech content chorused by the dead W1, W2 and M. It is the same chorused prattle which had initiated the play in which W1 is heard wanting 'a dark' when 'all will be over and wiped out', and, W2 is apprehensive of insanity; and the dead M is inordinately waiting for peace, when all will be over 'as if... never been'. That 5 second each, Blackout pair, culminates the 'Original' part of a single performance. However, it also initiates the 'Repeat' of the play so far performed, whereafter the drama is all set to position on-stage once again, whatever had transpired on it in the 'Original', as part of a 3-Division drama beginning with the 'Original', and with as many 'Repeats' as directed, to establish, an on-stage timeless circularity, though the last 'Repeat' is followed by a 'Closing Repeat' to conclude the play.

Now, assuming that there is only one 'Repeat', the dramaturgy of the 'Closing Repeat' will begin where the first 'dead voice' chorus, which had began the play, ends the
'Repeat Play'. Thereafter the Spot would temporarily concentrate on M who would be found repeating---

Am I as much as .... being seen (p.157)

A 5 second Blackout would ensure, followed by a strong, 3 second, simultaneous focus when the there voices, in normal strength, would speak what is the second successive chorus at the play's beginning. This small chorus, initiates the overtones of the adultery theme. In this dramaturgic fashion the after-death and pre-death existential predicaments are again telescoped however summarily, as existential Non-ents, with death hardly helping to achieve any solace or succour. The escape from the first of the two irrational states, only led into a timeless trap of the after-death existential irrationality. The 'Closing Repeat' therefore re-states the after-death condition of an---

Am I as much as... being seen? (p.157)

and dramaturgically re-initiates the on-earth adultery trap--

[Together]

W1: I said to him. Give her up--

W2: One morning as I was sitting--

M: We were not long together--(p.158)

There is the second Blackout in the 'Closing Repeat' after which the Spot alights on M whose words hint again at the theme of adultery, about which the persistent 'talking I' narrations were so insistent in the 'Original' part of the 3-Division circular performance. This slight hint is dramatically sufficient to revive the irrational on-earth imbroglio which had entrapped the three dead. And so, in
between the last pair of Blackouts of the 'Closing Repeat', M is heard to say---

We were not long together--- (p.158)

There is the last Blackout and then the Curtain.

There is another dramaturgic movement that can be perceived to extend till the stage-direction for a 'Repeat play'. It is the 'Original' move of the drama and has 4 parts. The first part begins with the rise of the Curtain, when on the proscenium 'there' is a presentational, after-death, irrational, existential condition with 3 heads found protruding out of 3 urns, and just discernible on a semi-darkened stage. The first 'dead' prattle adds voiced-articulation to the after-death, 'existential' trauma and reminisces the 'dead voices' visualized by the Godot tramps. It is a 'time will come' when all will be dark 'all over, wiped out', though it weary of something that harasses it. It is also a state that appears to be apprehensive of 'perhaps, a shade gone, in the head'. Finally, it inordinately hopes of peace when all will not only be 'all over, but as if.. Never been'. That is the dramaturgic context of the first W1-W2-M chorus, hedged before and after for intense effect between two Blackouts. After this the Spot once more catches them at a babble, in which each dead voice is at his or her own version of the adultery theme. A Blackout ensues and when the Spot is again alight at is not simultaneous but individual, and Beckett is found at his 'language theme' once more, writing disjunct narration where there should be dialogue, and showing it as much capable of dialogic content. There only need be a common conceptual theme. Further, as yet another extension to his 'language theme', the playwright has the articulated words themselves, for example pronouns carry some of the burden of converting apparent narrations to dialogue. Of
this later; what are here shorn of boundaries are 'narration' and 'dialogue' as bearers of specific well-defined meaning's. Therefore, where there should be a dialogue, a narration will do, and even independent narratives can have dialogic character. And so, the 'dead' at first do not appear therefore to engage in a dialogue, and seem to be talking on their own, at a tangent to each other, so much so that Laughlin, in a Modern Drama article, sets out to locate the dialogic content of the three off-hand independent narrations. Laughlin opts out of the simple adultery theme, to concentrate more on semantic shifts and inter 'illocutionary force',22 and, in the process diminishes the outright commitment the playwright has to his Non-ent theme and is visualized by him as a persistent irrational condition even after death. Kenner chooses to take up the adultery theme directly.23 However, the fact that even separate narratives, can be creatively turned into dialogue, is a different matter altogether. Thus, individual narrations, being on the same theme, can have a tendency to telescope into each other because, if nothing, as remarked earlier the pronouns may overlap. For example, the 'him' and 'her' of the W1 opening line, extend into the 'him' and 'she' of the opening W2 lines---

W1:  I said to him, Give her up, I swore...

W2:  .... Give him up, she screamed... (p.148)

Therefore, apparently independent narratives can intertwine, through pronouns, so that the first 4 narrations of W1, and, the first 5 of W2 and, as also, the first 5 M narrations have a constant W1 dramaturgic presence made manifest through their many interlocking pronouns. This continues for two pages almost. For example, the first M narrations speak of 'she' smelled the rat, of 'Give up that whore 'she' said', of M telling 'her' that M did not know what 'she' meant. The 'she' pronouns in the quick succeeding narrations could all be for W1, particularly because they do
not appear to apply to W2. Then the 'your' and 'hers' pronouns take over, and once again, the quick succeeding narrative, the common theme of adultery, and, the fact that W2, in any case is not meant, make all the 'you' and 'her' pronouns, also appear to refer to W1. For example, 'you' as in, 'What have you to complain of?', after which the 'you' changes to 'her' in 'loving her as I did', and so feeling sorry for 'her'. These M narrations are each followed by a W2 narrative, which has its own W1-pronoun presences. Thus, 'Fearing she' was about to offer me violence', W2 had 'her' shown out. Again, W2 speaks of 'Her' parting words, and about being alarmed when W1 had said that 'she' would settle W2's hash. Similarly, the dramaturgic W1 pronoun-presentation continues when M takes over from W2 immediately after. For M speaks of 'she' was not convinced, and of 'she' kept saying, and of 'So I took 'her' into my arms', of telling W1 that he could not live without 'her'. And, immediately after, as if to confirm, W1 herself speaks, but when the Spot has the 'talking I' of M over, it is again a 'she' who had put a blood-hound on M. Quite similarly, there is a constant dramaturgic M-presence amid the adultery-theme disjunct narrations. Thus, after M has spoken of W1 having put a blood-hound after him, W2 takes over because the Spot arbitrarily alights on her, and quite independent of the immediately preceding M narration, W2 speaks of 'Why don't you get out', and, of how, 'he' had started moaning about 'his' home life, to which the immediately succeeding, though disjunct W1 narration adds---

I confess my first feeling was one of wonderment. What a male!--- (p.149).

This is not a lone example, for the constant M-dramaturgic - pronoun - presence is still there when W2 is heard to speak of 'he' said, and 'ofcourse with 'him' no danger of the .... spiritual thing', and 'why don't 'you' get out?'; and also when W2 wonders if 'he' was not living
with 'her' for 'her' money. The pronouns are put within quotes for convenience.

This dramaturgic inter-twining and telescoping of apparently disjunct narrations continues because the entire 'narration length' of the adultery-theme extends for two more pages, till the next Blackout, followed by a small chorus in which the 'dead voice' of W1 calls repeatedly for 'Mercy', while W2 doubts her loss of mental balance, and, M speaks of 'a change'. However, a little more about Beckett's pleasure in the use of certain voiced-sounds which grammar cares to call pronouns. Words are often mere meaningless articulations, arbitrarily fixated with dubious meanings. M's play with 'hers' and 'yours', is one very fine example, creating its own conflict, uncertainty, and, of course finales---

Not yours? she said. No, I aid hers.
We had fun trying to work this out . (p.150)

We can call it a 'pronoun dramaturgy' or, one more variation on the playwright's favourite 'language theme' or, whatever, but the point is that Beckett's dramaturgic imagination readily plays, as here on the facility available in the part of speech called 'pronoun', as he does elsewhere and all over his oeuvre with the language phenomenon or 'theme' generally, so much so, that on occasion it becomes the tragedy of a writer's perpetual obligation to keep up expression. Of course language and the drama inherent in it never ceases to fascinate Beckett. Apart from language drama, Beckett is very responsive and alert to the subtleties of drama and dramaturgy generally. As in Endgame, there is Hamm's memorable yawn---

Me - (he Yawns) - to play. (p.12)
Or, in *Happy Days*, the timely turn, of a newspaper page by Willie, just when Winnie is at some crucial point in her speech, or in the break-up of the word 'Pardon' in *Play*---

M: ... Par--
(Spot from M to W2)

W2: No.
(Spot from W2 to M)

M: -don-. (p.156)

These examples are the very warp of the playwright's dramaturgy, always at its quiet play with language, disjuncting mischievously, as in this case the very word a callous and indifferent authority may appear very fond of; the voiced-sound so long associated with condescending forgiveness.

To get back to the play, and to the second thrust of the dramaturgic movement in it that extends till the stage-direction for a 'Repeat Play'. It starts from the second simultaneous focus of Spotlight upon the three faces of W1, W2 and M, after which they go into a babble, which has W1's thrice repeated cries of 'Mercy' as its main dramatic component. There is a Blackout, and after it begin, the page-length, independent 'voice narrations' which are linked by the many overtones of the word 'change', as a 'language theme'. Where this ends begins the third thrust of the drama. This section has the play add concretions, on stage, 'there', to the already contextualized after-death, existential irrationality. This dramaturgic movement concentrates specifically on 'Absurd Themes', and itself has two submovements. The fourth part of this dramatic movement re-stages the first thrust of the play and then goes into a 'Repeat', which is followed by the 'Closing Repeat'. This is followed by the Curtain. This, four part, drama movement is different from the pattern, earlier broadly described as 'Original', a 'Repeat Play', and the 'Closing Repeat'.
The word 'change' needs particular attention. It is first mentioned by M in the chorus that precedes the page-length exercise, where W1 had repeatedly called for 'Mercy'. W1 echoes change in her 'it', that is, change, will come. W2 speaks of having 'anticipated' something better, 'more restful', and the implication is that the 'change' was a disappointment. W1 is next heard weary of the Spot-focus; and M visualizes that a 'peace is coming', and says 'I was right, after all, thank God, when first this change...'. For W2, change was a matter of becoming 'less confused ...', less confusing', and a preference for 'this to ... other thing'. M is of course still directly at his thought about 'the change'. Next, W2 is also heard weary of the Spot-focus, and wishes that someday the Spot 'will tire, go out, for good'. The change is now got dramaturgically identified with the detestable Spot-focus. W1 and W2 are already weary. M, however, still contemplates that change will usher in peace and 'all that pain as if ... never been'. But Spot-weary W2 wishes it away and have it 'poking and pecking at someone else'. The irrationality of an after-death existential predicament is thus concretized, as an on-stage plight, 'there', with the 'change' longed for not even a distant possibility. With heads sticking out of urns, and a callous, divinity of a Spotlight holding them at irrational bay, the dead too are prisoners of a timeless existential constriction. And yet, though W1 wishes the Spot to get off her, W2 still fears that the situation 'may disimprove'; her demise on earth being a possible improvement. W1 even thinks the Spot suspicious of her veracity. But then, did W1 at all know what the truth was? Beckett does not fail to exploit the opportunity to make this dramatically obvious, though as narrative only---

Is it that I do not tell the truth, is that it, that someday somehow I may tell the truth at last and then no more light at last, for the truth?. (p.153)
The rhetorical re-iteration of the word 'truth' with the conditional 'may' and the possibility 'someday somehow' are tell-tale. The play is now well on into the first part of its 'Absurd Themes' and its third dramaturgic thrust. The 'dead voices' of both W1 and W2 are absolutely weary of the 'inquisitor divinity' of an after-death Spotlight --

You might get angry and blaze me clean out of my wits. Mightn't you? (p.153)

Ofcourse M's 'dead voice' is still at his inordinate hopeful 'worst', though the first signs of discomfiture appear when he realizes it all to be just 'play'--

I know now, all that was just ... play. And all this? When will all this ... (p.153).

However, he is cut in mid narrative by the impotent Spot, which immediately after alights on W1, and we have almost a semi-dialogue. For, her 'Is that it?', comes like an answer to M, when he calls 'that' just 'play', and 'this' he expresses some weariness of; the 'that' and 'this' being pre-death and after-death irrational existential predicaments. Ofcourse M was stopped in mid-narrative and even he, the inordinately hopeful, is found weary--

All this, when will all this have been ... just play? (p.153).

The first half of the third dramaturgic movement of the play had made accretions to the Absurd, positioned on stage, an irrational 'something' itself, and had ended in a Blackout, immediately before which, W2 spoke of the timeless, existential impasse. It was like--

Like dragging a great roller, on a scorching day. The strain .. to get it moving ... (p.155).
While the third dramaturgic movement lasts, the 'dead voice' of W1 voices its existential plight in---

How the mind works still! (p.153).

And, when her mind had said all that it could---

But I have said all I can. All you let me. All I---. (p.153)

And still in the lines below when it cannot help but weep---

Is it something I should do with my face, other than utter? Weep? (p.154)

Or, when it wants the Spot to bite off her tongue and swallow it --

Bite off my tongue and swallow it? Spit it out. Would that placate you? How the mind works still to be sure! (p.154)

Similarly, when it discovers that there was no sense in it either---

If only I could think. There is no sense in this ... either, none whatsoever. I can't (p.154).

Or, it had felt as if falling on empty air, right from the beginning---

... that all is falling, all fallen, from the beginning on empty air. (p.154)

It had even felt that it was not being asked anything--

Nothing being asked at all. No one asking me for anything at all. (p.154)
Infact, W1 is insistent with her 'I can't---'

I can't. The mind won't have it. It would have to go. Yes. (p.155).

---

Such was the after-death existential irrationality, and it had been contextualized and shaped on stage, 'there', as a presentational dramaturgic experience.\textsuperscript{25} Ofcourse, W2 is also not way behind. Her 'dead voice' insists that she was 'doing her best'. She had been mistaken looking for sense---

Looking for sense where possibly there is none. (p.154).

---

And though reminiscent of Pozzo, the 'dead voice' of W2 longs to be heard, and seen, and bothered about, though its poignant questions remain unanswered---

Are you listening to me? Is anyone listening to me? Is anyone looking at me? Is anyone bothering about me at all? (p.154).

---

As the voice of a mistress, it felt itself taboo, though it thought this wrong. It even pitied its rival---

Am I taboo, I wonder. Not necessarily, now that all danger averted. That poor creature -- I can hear her -- that poor creature. (p.154).

---

Then comes an assertion from the 'dead voice' of W2 that takes in its sweep and range the audience also, as is often usual in Beckett. It pities those that pity it for its predicament, the existential condition on earth deserving more compassion---

They might even feel sorry for me, if they could see me. But never so sorry as I for them-- (p.155).
This was because the living, according to W2's dead voice kept on---

Kissing their sour kisses (p.155).

Finally, before her 'dragging a great roller' comment, W2 ridicules the perpetually focusing and shifting Spotlight, as if, questioning a veritable inquisitor divinity---

What do you do when you go out? Sift? (p.155).

Of course, the 'dead' M is as yet only at 'play'. Existence-on-earth as 'that' was just 'play', though it is uncertain still when will 'this', the after-death existential plight be just 'play' also. The 'dead voice' of M speaks of sorrow. Of course the overtones are of the on-earth adultery trap. It even reminiscences M's taste for Lipton tea. However, like W2, M also pitied the living. And yet, for all his inordinate optimism, the after-death bind being timeless, the dead M is found gradually becoming unsure and sceptical, wishing 'this' to be just the 'play' which 'that' was---

Am I hiding something? Have I lost.. (p.155).

The 'dead voice' of M finds itself lost and thinks the Spot questionable---

Have I lost ... the thing you want? Why go out? Why go --- (p.155).

The second set of 'Absurd themes' comes after the Blackout that follows W2 speaking of 'dragging a roller on a scorching day'. It has M's 'dead voice' losing its inordinate hope and devastatingly chastising the Spotlight as 'Mere eye' and 'No mind'. However, let us follow the apparently disjunct narrations of the three 'dead voices', who on earth were trapped in an adulterous imbroglio, but who were even now,
that is, after death, victims of a timeless, existential quandary. The on-earth adultery-trap still haunted. Neither atonement nor penitence was ever the relevant point. It was instead the existential Non-ent, be it before, or, after death, which was by now the obsession. And W2 was feeling herself a little 'unhinged already', a 'shade gone in the head', just a shade though, for, as yet she doubted it!

However, the strain of the tragic grotesquerie even on her 'dead voice' is severe, and therefore, she re-iterates her doubt about having lost her head, and after a pause goes into a peal of wild laughter, which the Spot smothers by its arbitrary shift; but the laughter resumes when the Spot again concentrates its last focus on her. Meanwhile the 'dead voice' of W1 is speaking of a---

Silence and darkness were all I craved. Well I get a certain amount of both. They being one. Perhaps it is more wickedness to pray for more. (p.156)

Therefore, for the dead W1 darker was a 'worse' predicament. She is convulsed at the Spot and retaliates calling it---

Hellish half-light! (p.156)

This is why W1 fervently longs for a complete dark, for though strange, 'the darker' was indeed a worse condition---

Dying for dark --- and the darker the worse. Strange? (p.157)

Be it W1, W2, or M, it is a tragic grotesquerie all through, an after-death, 'mere voice' existential bind, in a timeless 'talking I' condition. The craving was for peace, and even darkness; and the apprehension was of insanity. For, according to Beckettian surmise, a timeless existential irrationality will prevail even after death, from the trap of which, escape would be out of question. The three 'dead' are
weary of the Spot-play, and want the 'inquisitor divinity' off their faces.

The 'dead voice' of M had hopes of peace when his pain would be as if it had never been. Like Vladimir he comes around to it too, a veritable loser that he had forever been. 'That' was just play. Would that 'this' too would be 'just play' also. However, quite sometimes, M does have his fantasies, imagining little dinghies, oars, air-pillows and sheets, and drifting! But this was not for long, because very soon, even this becomes a matter of---

Such fantasies. Then. And now--- (p.157).

Earlier, it was 'that', the pre-death condition; and now, a 'this', the 'dead voice' state, but 'that' and 'this' become a 'then' and 'now'. The 'then' was just 'fantasies', and also 'play'! The problem was that the 'this' and 'now' was also proving itself a no less pitiless condition. M becomes severe at the Spotlight---

And now, that you are ... mere eye. Just looking, At my face. On and off (p.157).

And now, that you are ... mere eye. Just looking, At my face. On and off (p.157).

Like the weary W1 and W2, even the 'dead voice' of M finds itself in a timeless trap, looked upon by an eye, that kept itself arbitrarily focused on his face, and switched off and on wilfully, and, with callous indifference. It was not a Winnie of Happy Days who, however ironically, was often in ecstacies because she felt herself watched. Therefore, M is severe at the 'inquisitor divinity' that the Spotlight was---

Looking for something. In my face. Some truth. In my eyes. Not even --- (p.157).

And when the Spot focuses next on the face of M again, he actually retaliates---

Mere eye. No mind. Opening and shutting on me. Am I as much ---. (p.157)
But Spot hardly seems to care. It shifts. There is a Blackout after which it again alights on the 'dead' face of M, who is heard conjecture—

Am I as much as ... being seen? (p.157)

Another Blackout ensues, then Spot is again simultaneous but faint on the three faces whose 'dead voices', unintelligibly go into a babble that is identical with the opening chorus, in which W1 spoke of a 'darker the worse' condition, and, of a time that 'will come', when all will be dark 'all will be still, all over, wiped out—'. In this chorus also W2 was heard apprehensive of being a 'shade gone in the head', a 'little unhinged' as she had said later. And of course the 'dead voice' of M repeats its hope of a peace, a time, that is, when all pain will be as if it had never been. This ends both the fourth dramaturgic thrust of the play and also its 'Original' part of a single performance, and the stage direction calls for a 'Repeat Play'. This would perpetuate the on-stage, after-death, 'there' existential entrapment of the three 'dead'. as a timeless condition. Being out of Time, it will last eternally. The 'inquisitor divinity' that the Spot is, though itself weary, will keep the 'talking I-s' at the receiving end of its focussed 'prod'. One 'Repeat' of the 'Original' movement would suffice to reinforce the thrust of the play at situating on the proscenium an after death Non-ent condition. At the end of the 'Closing Repeat' M is heard saying—

Am I as much as... being seen? (p.157)

A Blackout ensues. Spot is then simultaneous and strong on the faces of the 'dead' W1, W2 and M. In normal voice the three repeat the second chorus, which had, at the play's beginning initiated the adultery theme. One more Blackout ensues, and the Spot resumes its focus on M, whose 'dead voice' is again heard tonelessly refer to the adulterous
imbroglio on earth, linking dramaturgically the grotesquely pathetic pre-death and after-death existential situations—

We were not long together. (p.158)

There is a 5 second Blackout and the Curtain drops.

To conclude, in Play, Beckett extends his technical art to include in its sweep and range even the after-death existential ordeal. His drama shapes it into a no less palpable condition, purposeless and futile. Worse still, it was timeless. In Waiting for Godot, the tramps Vladimir and Estragon had had this inkling; the dead too were perpetual victims of the 'talking I', making sounds like sand, feathers, wings and leaves.

The stage, as usual in Beckett's theatre is almost bare, save for three identical urns, which are centre-stage. It is semi-dark, and the protruding heads-out-of-urns condition situates on the proscenium an after-death predicament, which is intensified by a shifting Spot-light focus that is arbitrary and cruel. It is sometimes simultaneous, but on most occasions is unrelentingly on individual faces. It catches them at their 'talking I', which becomes a babble when the focus is on all three faces, and a personal, non-stop narration, when the Spot is only alone on a single face. The Spot originates from the centre of the foot-lights. It switches on and off at will. That is the immediate stage-context, the predicament of a limbo situation. The 'language theme' takes over from there, and operates between Blackouts, or when the Spot is at focus.

The response to the Spotlight appears as an immediate reaction to a compulsive prod, though the Spot could also be only catching the dead at their 'talking I', which in Beckett is an entrapped state of perpetual expression, in which, there being nothing to express, it is only the impossibility
of expression that gets expressed. This predicament is a condition as much before as after death.

The play uses the stage-direction of a 'Repeat Play' which can be many, and, ends at a 'Closing Repeat' which concludes in a Blackout and the Curtain. If the play is allowed only one 'Repeat', the drama will have had one 'Original', one 'Repeat Play', and a 'Closing Repeat'. This is the overt structure of the play.

Play uses choruses also. There are two choruses to begin with, the first much larger than the second. The first chorus states as a babble the after-death existential predicament, the second initiates the adultery theme. The 'talking I' of the three dead becomes a chorus when the Spot-focus is simultaneous, but when the focus is individual, the 'talking I' of each dead is heard as a personal narration. In between is a small chorus, in which the articulations that come through are appeals for mercy and the desire for change. Before the stage-direction for a 'Repeat Play', there is again a simultaneous focus and the three dead are heard at the words of their first babble which was in effect a statement of their irrational condition once more, and re-starts the 'Repeat Play'. However, if it is to be the last Repeat the words of this first babble about the existential limpo condition concludes it. The 'Closing Repeat' uses the chorus to re-state the adultery theme and briefly ends at M just heard at 'We were not long together' and there is a final Blackout and the Curtain.

Dramatic devices, such as Pauses and Silences used in the earlier plays considered in this thesis, have been replaced, in Play, by longer and shorter Blackouts, by faint and stronger Spot-focuses, and, by a feeble darkness that is perpetually there in the background. And, whereas the simultaneous Spotlight-focus reduces the voiced-articulations of the dead, into a touching jabber and cackle, the quick
shift of focus differentiates and identifies each voice, and converts what should be a dialogue into a prolonged narrative. These separate narrations become reciprocating episodic commentary on each of the other two, that are for the moment, either not focused, or if simultaneously focused, talk in a chorus.

There are 7 Blackouts in the play proper, which, if the play is allowed only one 'Repeat', the circularity of 'Repeats' being left to implication, would make the Blackouts 14, followed by 2 additional Blackouts of the 'Closing Repeat'. Therefore in a single performance, allowing for one 'Repeat' only, there would be 14 Blackouts, of which 10 will be 5 seconds long, and, 4 of 3 second each.

The Spot or Spotlight is also an altogether new theatrical device exploited to create powerful Non-ent effects. Its play is made quick and arbitrary. It is repetitious; it brightens and vains and appears demanding, prodding and compulsive. The Spot even tires and suffers blackouts, but though it catches the dead at their 'talking I', it seems to be pressuring them either into an unintelligible babble, or, an independent, personal narrative, even after death. Be the Spot a divinity or an absent-presence, for it is not given a name; its actions are callous, irreverent, and harsh.

Spotlight 'dramaturgy' it creates quite a few theatrical effects. First is an ambivalence, for its converts what should have been a dialogue into separate narrations, and, helped by the common adultery theme, and the ambiguous play of pronouns, makes the independent narrations take on dialogic character. In this way, the dividing line between a dialogic and an independent narration is made razor-thin. The final effect is of a dialogue as well as three disjunct narrations in progress. This tantamounts to saying that even apparently separate narrations, if given a random mix can become dialogic, if the narrations have some common themes.
Therefore, drama need not have an overt dialogue, for even separate narration would do, only some overflow of one into the other narration is sufficient to give the effort of a dialogue. This is one significant aspect of the new dramaturgy experimented in *Play*. Secondly, the narratives as narratives, communicate the effective feel of three 'dead voices' afflicted by a 'talking I' syndrome. And, if the contextualized, on-stage situation, is an after-death tragic existential plight, the effort at converting dialogue, into prolonged, independent narrations is a significant success.

Thirdly, the random and arbitrary play of Spot earns it the character of an 'inquisitor', with indifferent non-chalance, harassing the three 'dead' into 'heard speech'. Shifting, repetitious, selfish and uncertain, the Spot is a typical 'diety' from out of the Beckettian ouevre. The play is the better for this dramaturgic exploitation.

Finally, the narrations/dialogue are not banal cross-talk. Nor are they de-constructed speech deliveries. *Play* has made its own experiments with the 'language theme' even as it prefers Blackouts and choruses for Pauses and Silences, and, the tape-recorder to a Spot-light focus. Also, tableaux, pantomimes and songs are dispensed with and so are the play at 'games'.
References:

6. Ibid., p.422.
19. Ibid., p.35.
CONCLUSION

The salient features of Beckett’s dramatic technique that emerge out of this textual study of Waiting for Godot, Endgame, Krapp’s Last Tape, Happy Days and Play are the following:

1. The existential Non-ent is a commitment that takes form as each play proceeds; every move of the Beckettian Absurd on stage, adds concretization to its various shapes. Be it a futile generations old Waiting; or, a grind that is Ending; or, Time that carries habit, memory and nostalgia with its flux or disjunction into Silence; or, be they the ironic rituals of happiness and prayer at an irrational predicament; or, the timeless existential bind even after death! At any point in a play, the tragic grotesquerie of the Non-ent is its dramatized form as a presentational, meaningless ‘there’, made situate on the proscenium, as the Absurd itself.

2. Beckettian plays do not have plots; they rather have specific shapes or structures. Being innovative all through, no two dramatic techniques or forms in the playwright’s cannon are the same. Thus, Waiting for Godot has a two-Act cyclic structure, the second Act almost a replica of the first, because the Waiting-exercise is history old, boring, repetitive and even circular. Its six-times spoken refrain ‘Let’s go./We can’t./Why not?/We’re waiting for Godot./Ah.’ has forever held humanity to ransom. Illusions, dreams, visions and stories are out of question. Only cross-talk keeps the excruciating Silence away. However, Endgame, has a one Act linear structure. It is a cruel ‘something’ taking its slow course to a gradual halt, and the End is given
permutations. A tableau situates the predicament on stage, a pantomime initiates it, and one more tableau concludes it. Stories are no more taboo. Instead of cross-talk, long extended speeches and voice modulations are two primary features. *Krapp’s Last Tape* has a male solo use tape-technology to counterpoint, telescope, de-construct, and re-construct time-stations. Silence is an actually voiced feature and not a mere stage-direction. At the play’s close, as Krapp stares, the spool runs on in silence. *Happy Days* opts for a two-Act structure again, not to facilitate a repeat but to enable a constricted waist-deep condition become neck-deep. A female solo speaks practically for the whole length of the play. A permanently present-absence helps give the female solo dialogic character. The long extended speech, in various states of de-construction, is another characteristic feature of the play’s structure. Play has one of its movement, the first, end at the stage-direction ‘Repeat Play’. The Repeats can be many, though the finale is at a ‘Closing Repeat’. This run is also cyclic, the after-death predicament being an eternal timeless condition. The shifting and arbitrary Spot-focus catches the entrapped beings at their ‘talking I.’ This facilitates not only choruses, but also transforms what should be a dialogue into narration; but then, given the telescoping of pronouns and the adultery theme, the separate narrations acquire dialogic content. The Spot becomes a callous, disconsolate, weary divinity, and provides a new twist to Bishop Berkeley’s ‘To be is to be perceived’.

3. The stage or the theatre-space is always sparse. It is either a country-side road, a ramshackle shelter, an old decrepit’s den, an earth scorched mound, or an after-death urn-condition.
4. A torso-condition or, sheer corporeality, or, what a critic has called the playwright’s ‘physical theme’ is a persistent feature in the Beckettian cannon. Therefore, ‘character’ in the traditional sense or even ‘conglomerate’ in Pirandello’s vocabulary, does not help understand the playwright’s dramatic personae. The human being is in fact, an aborted disjunct, which has a Mentality and a Corporeality irrationally yoked together. There being no Descartean pineals, Mind and Body do not ever meet. It is rather the case of an animal, inflicted with a superior intelligence, which is a condition a critic has called a Cartesean Centaur. The contraption that the human body is, is operated by a complex set of levers at their most adhoc, and therefore, there can hardly be a motive. Further, a sheer corporeal condition, plagued by ‘perpetual consciousness’ can never be visualized ever ‘to think’, for ‘thought’ in that condition is futile. Psychological subtlety is out of question. The premise is an aborted existential predicament. The art is to show it as a presentational ‘there’, that is, the hapless condition itself. Little is there than banal work-a-day torso movement, which in any case has its own ‘thespian potential’, and of this the playwright with his acute sense of drama, was profoundly aware. The Beckettian ouevre is most often the intense drama of the human body in various states of physical constriction.

5. Beckettian ouevre was never only representational. The visual presentational ‘there’ with a piquant immediacy was the demand of the existential Non-ent that Beckett was committed to institute on stage. It was comic, and discomfitting, because mentality too was an affliction.
6. The playwright's stage-directions also have overwhelming significance, because the Mind-Body divide sets no precedents. Besides, Pauses, Silences, Blackouts, Spot-focuses, and spool-play require stage-directions. A Yawn, or, the turn of a page, or, the blow of a nose to destroy the meaning-content of an utterance; or, voice-modulation, into a narrative or normal tone, or, into a rational being's, or a tailor's, or, a raconteur's, need stage-directions. And so do the details of a tableau or a pantomime. Infact, the tableau positions the existential Non-ent on the proscenium in Endgame as a morbid, death-in-life, constriction. The pantomime through its ritual, reveals first, a condition of hurt, blindness, invalidity and age, inside the provisional shelter. Next, it interiorizes the catastrophe outside, as Clov repeatedly moves up and down a ladder, from one window to the other, to peer outside, and laugh 'briefly' at its devastation. That gives to the proscenium the Non-ent context of a harsh existential condition both in, and outside the provisional shelter. It is from there that the 'language theme' takes over. Krapp's Last Tape has more stage-directions than dialogue. Happy Days must have all its gestural energy directed through stage-directions, for the solo female voice is of a personae in a permanently constricted corporeal impasse, with only the head, hands, eyes, lips, the neck, teeth, gums and fingers do most of the physical movement. In Play, the Blackouts and Spot-focuses require to be directed, as do Estragon and Vladimir with Lucky's hat, or, the tramps' ritual of a stylized emotive embrace and the no-less stylized theatric recoil.
7. In the Beckettian cannon, a rational system is absent, yet the intellect has a powerful presence. The dramatis personae are no thinkers, but despite the overwhelming stasis of a Non-ent, the mind is acutely alert. Be it in Estragon, or Pozzo, or Hamm, or even the schizophrenic Lucky, or the occasional platitudinizer Vladimir, or, the decrepit old Krapp, the present-absence Willie, or, Winnie, whose very mentality is at a perpetual swing, or M, W,1, or W2 in after-death states, or Clov, or Nagg, or Nell, or, even in the games that the tramps play.

8. Pauses and Silences have been mentioned earlier only as supporting example. They need separate statement, because an eerie Silence is the crucial factor in the existential Non-ent entrapment. No answers are forthcoming as to why must Man be there as a contraption, burdened with consciousness. Therefore, desperate cross-talk, games, or solos help keep the Silence away. There is no direction as to the duration of a Pause or Silence in the plays. They are only categorized as Pause and Maximum Pause, Silence and Long Silence. However, the Pause would be the shortest of these durations. The Godot-play has the largest number of Silences. Together, the Pauses and Silences create a crucial Silence-presence. An individual Pause or Silence also helped accentuate the point of the dramaturgic score that either preceded it, or, was hedged in between Pauses or Silences. A Silence in particular, added the stamp of finality to a language finale. However, there is no direct mention of a Silence by either Estragon, Vladimir, Pozzo or Lucky. It is the dramatist’s own creation of a sound-absence or void-presence that envelopes the personae on the proscenium. Estragon and Vladimir must definitely have been aware of it; however, for the audience, Silence is built up through 113 stage-
directions, and still many more Pauses in a sparsely worded drama. This is specifically being pointed out because in *Krapp's Last Tape*, a spoken awareness of Silence is used, when Krapp-at-middle-age, is made exceptionally conscious of it. In fact, in the Krapp-play, Silence has a special dramaturgy. As a personae-awareness it makes a repeat of itself four times, in different de-constructed permutations of the same utterance, so much so, that it can be given the specific nomenclature of a 'Silence dramaturgy' with a sound-contour that is new. And, at close, as old Krapp stares, the empty spool itself trails off into Silence. *Endgame* has just one direction for Silence. However, the number of its Pauses are overwhelming. So are the Pauses in *Happy Days*, which are anywhere near 450, and, even more. *Play*, has no Pause or Silence stage-direction at all. Instead, there are Blackouts and Spot-focuses, and Repeat Plays and a Closing Repeat, a technique which intensifies its timeless disquiet.

9. Physical constriction is a feature distinct from the Mind-and-Body disjunct, and, is also an important characteristic of the playwright’s dramaturgy. Thus, if Hamm could not walk, Clov could not sit. Nagg and Nell were confined to man-sized dustbins for the entire length of the play. Again, Hamm is an invalid on wheelchair, and is also blind. His head is bandaged and the bandage has blood on it. Vladimir had a peculiar walk because of a urinary problem. Lucky had to carry Pozzo's luggage which was quite a burden. Lucky had a slouch, his mouth slobbered, and he was dragged with a rope around his neck. When Pozzo and Lucky entered a second time, the former is blind and the latter dumb. Both fell in a heap and the tramps, trying to help them up, also fell upon them to raise the human heap higher. Krapp was a decrepit
at 69, and dragged his feet as he walked. His eyes and ears were also failing him. Winnie was permanently buried waist-deep in earth and is found slipped to the neck when Act II begins. Willie enters on all fours. And in Play, M, W1, W2 are heads protruding out of urns.

10. Existence, in order to be a constricted, irrational impasse on the proscenium, is dramaturgically made bereft of illusions. Therefore, the playwright is forever at an exercise demolish. The Godot-play destroys its share of illusions first. After using drama to zero the idea of a general truth, it debunks the specific truths of Christianity, including the Logic of Redemption, the Evangelists, the Bible, Saviour, and Belief. Beckett does not stop at Christianity. Vision, dream and story, are shorn of their romance. Even, time, place, and object are dramatically sucked of their certainty. Just a small mention, or, question puts the concerned illusion into the dramaturgic anvil. The pungent interrogative ‘What’ activates the drama. One repeat of the initial utterance follows, and the comfort of the illusion is hammered out of shape by an opportune sceptical on-slaught. Thus, when Vladimir begins, ‘You must have had a vision’, ‘vision’ was in for a strategic debunk. Estragon’s ‘What?’, comes as the first destabilizer. A louder repeat had ‘vision’ lose countenance because of Estragon’s immediate admonition ‘No need to shout!’. Similarly, the exchange on the narration of a dream comes to an abrupt end at Vladimir’s ‘DON’T TELL ME!’ The de-constructed reading of the writing on the brush-handle that the brush was guaranteed, pure and genuine, is spread permutated over three pages, with much else in between, and shrivells the guarantee of all its surety. Such destruction of illusions creates an excruciating state of uncertainty and confusion about everything. Similar is
the playwright's treatment of smiles and laughter. Vladimir distorts his face out of shape in an attempt to rein-in a full-throated laugh. He replaces it with an ear-to-ear smile which is all the more grotesque. Hamm and Clov grade a laugh from 'heartily' to 'less heartily' to 'still less heartily'. In a state of an existential Non-ent, spontaneous joy was out of question. The word 'happy' is repeated ritual-fashion six times, and becomes meaningless. Later, a whole play has irony and drama treat the subject of happiness, prayer and gratitude. Similarly, the effort at 'thought', has dramatic manoeuvre literally paralyse all thinking activity. Failure, impotence, or void, as the 'occasion' of art, needed an all round destruction of illusions to situate the Non-ent as a 'presentational there' on stage. And, Beckett has dramaturgy overwhelm and defeat illusion. Existence was a tragic grotesquerie, whether made situate specifically on-stage, or covered up under folds of familial, social, philosophical, ideological, or, religious illusion. If, on stage, was a 'Charming spot', the audience-hall was no less an 'Inspiring prospect', the stage being just its extension. Those were Estragon's observations. Hamm throws his whistle at the audience when he prepares to die, for each in the gathering was a Hamm and would need to summon his Clov till he dies. The audience too was just 'there' on the world-stage, and its too was a purposeless futile predicament.

11. Repetition helps reinforce, though Beckett primaraly uses it to destroy meaning. He makes even a ritual meaningless. The games that the tramps play are in nature repeats of each other. The stage-business of Lucky's hat, reinforces the thought-salad of a schizophrenic. The Repeat Play, in Play, eliminates Time, and makes the on-stage predicament a timeless condition. Winnie's
nostalgia for 'the old style', or, ritual readings of the writing on the brush handle, or her, recurrent stances at ecstasy, gratitude or prayer, or even a smile are other examples.

12. Language rhythm is one thing the playwright can never resist. 'Dumb./Dumb!/Dumb./Dumb! Since when?' has its finale 'Since when?', come automatically after the beat of the four dumbs. Similarly 'Ti-ed' has to descend to a 'down'. There is the compulsive march of 'Who?/Godot/Pah!/The wind in the reeds'. Such beat and rhythm are many in the Godot-play, the best being in the refrain 'Let's go./We can't./Why not?/We're waiting for Godot./Ah!'

13. The pungent interrogative particularly 'What?' generally initiates a dramatic piece, or, the manoeuvre of an exercise-debunk. Infact, Vladimir is very prone to play the glib platitudinizer, so that Estragon's scepticism can attack with its unsettling interrogatives.

14. Beckett institutes several on stage absent-presences. Godot is one; the divinity awatch is another. The many Krapps are a third. And Willie is a present-absence lending to Winnie's solo dialogic colour. Act Without Words also concretizes, on stage, an absent-prescence.

15. Beckett's commitment to the Absurd was early. Therefore only his technique changes, or, develops, as the version of the Absurd varies. Infact, the point in a Beckett play is always, how the technique helps situate on the prosenium a new drama of the same bleak vision. The dramaturgic strategy immediately responds to the specific theatric demand of the particular Non-ent variety.
16. Language is also a persistent 'theme' in the playwright's oeuvre. This did not interfere with his commitment to an existential Non-ent. Infact, his experiments with language were very explorative. He would want to write without tense, without nominative, without even an authentic pronoun. In Beckett, the word is the hero. So is sound and a word is a voiced sound. Infact, the playwright could not resist a language beat or rhythm. He could make dialogue sound a narrative, and narrative appear to have dialogic content. His play with pronouns in Play is delectable. He could break up language and show it cliche-ridden, and use the same cliches creatively to imprecate hundreds of years of Western civilization. His puns are too numerous to select from; one example is when Watt set out in search of a Knott; and, it was not a coincidence that Watt was published by a Watt and Watt. 'Me--' began Hamm and yawned and concluded with the infinitive '---to play'. In Play, is a word break at 'Par--' which is completed at '---don' when the interference is over. A slight delay in articulation could play havoc with people, as does Hamm's, 'My---dog' in 'My father. (Pause.) My mother. (Pause.) My -- dog'. Language was sheer throat-sound and could be modulated any number of times, as in Nagg's story of a tailor. Language can be de-constructed and re-constructed. It can become cross-talk, a game, and end in a finale or non-sequitur. It can be a solo voice for pages, and yet dialogic also, because of the hint of a second presence. Language is articulation, silence, and gesture. It is inherently dramatic and its dramaturgic potential does not always need a metaphor or trope to become live. Language has the ingredients of the 'irreducible dramatic' in it. It needs only a classic and a master like Beckett to exploit it even if it be in the name of a failure of expression.
The playwright has in his reach 'the irreducible dramatic', be it in sheer Mentality or utter Corporeality, or, in language as a medium however defunct, chiche-ridden or recalcitrant. With this subtle sense of drama in full imaginative control, Beckett situates various versions of an existential Non-ent on the proscenium. Each is a concretized presentational 'there' and has such an immediacy of an irreducible dramatic shape, that form and content overlap. It becomes 'the something itself' and neither a metaphor nor symbol of, or 'about' it. Further, the expression 'anti-play' takes Aristotelean perceptions for granted, and 'play-as-metaphor' or 'symbolic-form' assumes much more. In any case, it denies to the dramatist his gift of the 'irreducible dramatic'. Also, the theme 'A is Not-A', gets attention diverted to 'Not-A', so that 'A' suffers neglect and is misunderstood for the same reason. Both 'A' and 'Not A' should be confronted directly, and on their own terms. Either, singly, tends to define the other negatively. The drama of the Absurd, as an aborted existential Non-ent has its own subtle potential for being of high quality. Of these finer dramatic nuances the playwright's oeuvre is a classic example.
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