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BECKETT, POSTHUMANISM, AND THE ART OF LESSNESS

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Post-humanism, a comprehensive critique of the demands of humanism, especially the centrality of cognitive and biological structures, offers a new understanding of the realm of language, the role of subject, and the environment. The post-cataclysmic subject in Beckett's writing uses words that arrive from nowhere, to no purpose, without direction, and without telos. It is therefore in the failure of language that we realize our predicament as prisoners of this symbolic void. Approaching, or interpreting, the work of Beckett may remain at the level of an "attempt"; fulfillment or capturing an absolute meaning will be a mirage, an illusion. Drawing on Jonathan Boulter's ideas, this article aims at showing what the meaning and relationship of the posthuman and existence in the world is, because the posthuman subject seems to be always within a space; it is situated. This space could be post-apocalyptic; however, the trace of being and existence is there. In other words, it is space and spatiality that define and determine the borderlines of the idea of the posthuman in Beckett's works. Boulter further argues that the posthuman *a la* Beckett challenges the borderlines and the binaries.

Keywords: Beckett, *Murphy*, *Endgame*, Posthumanism, Language, Void, Epoché

1. Introduction

Beckett's acquaintance with James Joyce in late 1928 marked a turning point in his life. Beckett was one of the young writers that Joyce had recruited in France. What Beckett learned from Joyce was sensitivity to language and its intrinsic ambiguity. As Beckett later says in *Murphy*: "What but an imperfect sense of humor could have made such a mess of chaos. In the beginning was the pun. And so on"[1]. Similar to Joyce, Beckett could squeeze words and extract the maximum meaning from them. Both Joyce's and Beckett's writings belong to the "minor literature", which is "more able to work over its material", because

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[1] Beckett, S. *Murphy*. London, 1938, p. 70.

both Joyce and Beckett know that "[s]ince the language is arid, make it vibrate with a new intensity. Oppose a purely intensive usage of language to all symbolic or even significant or simply signifying usages of it"[2]. Beckett's minor literature shows us how language shapes a net-like structure which imposes its rules and regulations on each and every person who enters its realm. Language exploits and molds reality and deprives subjects of their subjectivity and autonomy.

Beckett is one of the most philosophical of twentieth-century writers. Beckett's works contain playful *bricolage* of philosophical ideas.[3] They are, in other words, "resistant to philosophy"[4]. And as for characters, Beckett has managed to portray impotent characters, nay apparitions, who are no longer at home in the world; they are lost in a void of inanity. Thus, "void" becomes a keyword in Beckettian thought, as he says:

Void. Nothing else. Contemplate that. Not another word.[5]

The overwhelming sense of aimlessness and impotency shows the predicament of an existence reduced to its bareness. So, if this is the bleak house of Beckettian worldview, how is this view conveyed to the world? The question, in its accessible appearance, has haunted the minds of many thinkers and critics over the years, Theodor Adorno (1903–1969) being one of them. In his "Trying to Understand *Endgame*" (1961), Adorno underlines the primacy of 'form' in Beckett's work and the way it 'overtakes' the content.[6] There is no 'inherent' meaning; representation has failed; what we are left with are clichés and fragmented utterances[7] "signifying nothing" (in morbid Macbeth's words). Thus, in Beckett's work, words are not composed but juxtaposed.[8]

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[2] Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Minneapolis, 1986. p. 19.

[3] Beckett was quite familiar with major philosophical trends and ideas, especially the ideas of Rene Descartes, the father of French philosophy. Beckett was particularly interested in the Cartesian divorce of body from mind. Beckett's *disembodied* characters (e.g. *Not I*) aptly parody this idea. So, Beckett's sporadic allusions to philosophers and their ideas are mostly parodic and playful. In *Murphy*, for instance, there are misplaced references to Leibniz and Pythagorean *apmonia*. The immediate effect of such a playful view of philosophy is that it shows even philosophy cannot account for the plight of being in the absurd world. That is why Gilles Deleuze speaks of an "aesthetic of exhaustion" when he discusses Beckett.

[4] In *Very Little… Almost Nothing: Death, Philosophy, Literature* Critchley says, "the peculiar resistance of Beckett's to philosophical interpretation lies, I think, in the fact that his texts continually seem to pull the rug from under the feet of the philosopher by showing themselves to be conscious of the possibility of such interpretations; or, better, such interpretations seem to lag behind the text which they are trying to interpret" (Critchley, S. *Very Little… Almost Nothing: Death, Philosophy, Literature*, 2nd ed. London, 2004, p. 165). And that is the subtle point; philosophy or any other method of interpretation will find itself at the end of its rope down in the void of Beckett's aporetics.

[5] Beckett, S. *Company, Ill Seen Ill Said, Worstward Ho, Stirrings Still*. London, 2009, p. 12.

[6] Adorno, T.W. "Trying to Understand Endgame", *New German Critique*, 1982, No. 26, p. 119.

[7] Notice that I have distinguished 'utterance' from 'enunciation'. The subject of utterance has no meaning; to make sense of what has been said one should look at the context provided by enunciation.

[8] Therefore, words cannot be reduced to any function of mediation or communication. Language cannot be an instrument. It cannot express feelings of any form. Language makes us a passive subject, not an active agent who is in power and control.

Posthumanism and the Pathless Path of Language

Many have written on the characteristics of Beckett's language: fragmented utterances, reiterations, curt monologues, stichomythia, contradictions, clichés and pratfalls, and silence. But what is the idea behind such a unique use of language? Shall we reduce Beckett's oeuvre to just one label ("absurd") and end the debate?

Some thinkers such as Jonathan Boulter in *Posthuman Space in Samuel Beckett's Short Prose* (2020) argue that Beckett's approach towards language and being should be viewed in light of the category of the posthuman whose forceful presence in Beckett's writing urges the reader to view the subject as a complexity, challenging the conventional views of the subject.

Post-humanism emerged with fundamental changes in the philosophical and linguistic foundations, and unlike the previous theories, instead of basing the main foundations on physics, it turned to experimental sciences, because the human-centered way of thinking in humanism, which was created on the basis of profit and pleasure, caused negligence towards the home and place of man, i.e. the earth, disturbed the order of the ecosystem, and thus propelled us to the era of the Anthropocene.

The major changes caused by the stunning development of information and communication technologies have had consequences including the loss of distinction between reality and the virtual world, the blurring of the distinctions between man, machine and nature, and a rapid movement from lack of information to abundance of information.

If we agree that the distinctions between man, machine and nature are blurred, we are faced with a host of other important questions. How does this fading happen? Is it only about the development of information and communication technologies or does it include other technologies as well? The combination of technologies has created developments that blur the boundaries between physical, digital and biological domains, but these are not limited to information and communication technologies.

This blurring, especially between humans and nature, presents a threat to the human distinction and differentiation. Does this mean the instability of human being as a part of the material world and subject to the same physical processes in the stable and dynamic states of ontological becoming?

In humanistic thinking, man is at the center of the universe and his pure essence makes him superior to any other being. Unlike humanist thinking, posthumanism has a dual approach, which is rooted in the inherent hatred of humans towards themselves on the one hand, and on the other hand, refers to the cultural potential of the human race. With the removal of transcendental views and communication with other beings, monopolistic boundaries are gradually removed.

Post-humanism, a comprehensive critique of the demands of humanism, especially the centrality of cognitive and biological structures, offers a new understanding of the realm of language. Jonathan Boulter tries to show what is the meaning and relationship of the posthuman and existence in the world, because the posthuman subject seems to be always within a space; it is situated. This space could be post-apocalyptic; however, the trace of being and existence is there. In other words, it is space and spatiality that define and determine the borderlines of the idea of the posthuman in Beckett's works. Boulter further argues that the posthuman *a la* Beckett challenges the borderlines and the binaries.

Accordingly, we all know that approaching, or interpreting, the work of Beckett may remain at the level of an "attempt"; fulfillment or capturing an absolute

meaning will be a mirage, an illusion. For instance, "Lessness" (1970) defies the conventions of writing as we know them, for as its original French title denotes, it is *Sans* (without) grammatical obstacles; it is pure flow – not of words or meanings – but of *imagination*. We may say that writing for Beckett is a sort of "limit experience", where the writer is not in control of (but is subjected to) the flow of words: "Having nothing to say, no words but the words of others, I have to speak"[9]. So, for Beckett, it is the experience of *im*possibility,[10] because he has to annihilate his self in writing. "Whatever he would like to say, it is nothing. And he himself is already reduced to nothing"[11]. If one is asked to describe Beckett's writing in, for example, "Lessness", an answer could contain only one word: poetry. Because the word *poetry* is defined as a flow of imagination unharnessed by any rule of thought or logic (otherwise known as the grammar). The organized absence of meaning is thus a kind of meaning in its own way.

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Referring to the work the Dutch painter Bram van Velde (1895–1981),[12] Samuel Beckett illustrates his opinion on contemporary art. Beckett expresses his admiration for van Velde's work, claiming that more painters should strive towards "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"[13]. Though ostensibly paradoxical, this statement is not devoid of wisdom. It seeks to convey that art is not dependent upon meaning; that art can well exist independently of an inherent meaning; that expression of something – meaningful content – is not a prerequisite for artistic expression.

Beckett suggests a lack of power over language as a whole. We – as users of language – cannot pin down a linguistic expression to mean (or not mean) exactly one precise meaning. The *locus classicus* of this idea appears in Beckett's *Endgame*:

> HAMM. We're not beginning to… to… mean something?
> CLOV. Mean something? You and I mean something?
> Ah, that's a good one!

Sometimes, in Beckett's work, conversations work by "defeating the implications of ordinary language"[14], as in the following passage:

> 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?

9   Beckett, S. *Three Novels: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. New York, 1958, p. 314.
10 Blanchot, M. *The Infinite Conversation*. Minneapolis, 1993, p. 207.
11 Blanchot, M. *Faux Pas*. Stanford, CA, 2001, p. 3.
12 Bram van Velde first met Samuel Beckett in 1937. They had much in common. Both were foreigners in Paris, with French as their second language, they had few acquaintances and little hope for the future in the dire conditions of post-world-war world. Van Velde lived in utter poverty and soon after seeing his work Beckett purchased a canvas with his own scant resources – probably in sympathy with such miserable circumstances. His art represents "failure as success in painting," the same as Beckett's art of failure.
13 Beckett, S. *Proust and Three Dialogues*. London, 1965, p. 103.
14 Cavell, S. *Must We Mean What We Say? A Book of Essays*. Cambridge, 2002, p. 124.

CLOV. Yes!
HAMM. (Relieved.) Ah! You gave me a fright!
(Pause.)
Forget me!
(Pause. Louder)
I said forgive me.
CLOV. I heard you.

How can we command forgiveness?! Also, consider the dialogue between Hamm and Clov; Hamm's second statement is actually the interrogative form of his first one, but Clov's answer is totally different. Possibly, to every question that Hamm asks, Clov might haphazardly say something different. In the meaning-riven world of Hamm and Clov, one word is as good (or, as neutral) as another.

Beyond the social conventions which compose our everyday understanding of language, we have no governing power over language. Therefore, we are always at risk of misunderstanding, of being misunderstood, of creating ambiguities in and through our use of language.

Plato in his *Seventh Letter* spotted the weakness of language and said, "owing to the weakness inherent in language […] no one of intelligence will ever dare to commit to it that which is perceived by the mind"[15]. Language always fails to express truly the being of things.

Presence in Absence: Language as a Lack

In Beckett's texts, we see a presence which is constituted through an absence, a lack. In other words, Beckett's text is the expression of the lack which constitutes desire, the signifier for the present absence.

Also, we know that in Lacanian theory, it is desire that motivates language. But what is desire after all? Or, maybe it is more preferable to begin by clarifying how desire works. Lacan refers to desire as follows: "…in so far as [wo/man's] needs are subjected to demand, they return to him alienated. […] That which is thus alienated in needs constitutes […] an inability, it is supposed, to be articulated in demand, but it re-appears in something it gives rise to that presents itself in man as desire."[16] 'Desire' and 'lack' are indispensably tied to one another. Desire comes to pass as inexpression, it takes up the place of that precise lack in expression which itself constitutes desire. So, the characters in Beckett's work just talk for the sake of talking, not to convey meanings, but merely to fill (or, better said, to flee from) the menacing silence. They do not welcome silence, because silence makes them think about the trauma of their existence.

The indispensability of desire and lack can, I believe, be likened to the Freudian idea of "Fort-Da". Language gives us the *illusion* of control, much like the Freudian Fort-Da game. Freud observed his eighteen-month-old grandson who had a cotton reel with a piece of string tied to it. Holding the string, he would throw the reel over the edge of his cot and utter sounds that Freud interpreted as being an attempt at the German "Fort", meaning 'gone' or 'away.' He would then pull the reel back into his field of vision, greeting its reappearance with a joyful

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15 Pettersson, O. "Language, Search and Aporia in Plato's Seventh Letter", *Sophia Perennis*, 2010, Vol. 2, p. 33.
16 Lacan, J. *Écrits: A Selection*. London, 1966, pp. 316–317.

"Da" ('there'). The "Fort-Da" game gave him the illusion of control over her (desirable) presence and (undesirable) absence. This game teaches the kids to cope with the absence (of m/other).

The Fort-Da example, *a la* Lacan, demonstrates both the inevitable costs of entering language and the processes through which desire is produced as unfulfillable. Lacan also says there is no *anchor*, nothing that ultimately gives meaning or stability to the whole (signifying) system.[17] It seems only fitting to tie Freudian Fort-Da to Beckettian credo: "Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better"[18].

A View of *Murphy*

Murphy, Beckett's first published novel, is about a jobless young man who moves from Dublin to London, in fact, to the same area in which its author had just lived, and who struggles for the total separation and control of mind from body (in a mock-Cartesian manner).[19] Murphy works in a mental institution and hopes to attain a state like the patients' "self-immersed indifference to the contingencies of the contingent world"[20]. The setting is important because it is apt locale for the writer to reveal his characters' inner voices. Therefore, we see that madness is an important issue here.[21]

Madness is a human category; only human beings could cross the borderline between sanity and madness. So, madness is one of those features or concepts that may come to define human-ness. However, having emphasized on the human quality of madness, we should also mention its paradoxical reception through history. Though Nietzsche talked in favor of madness, Descartes banished madness out of the human realm. And since we now know Beckett was influenced by (or at least familiar with) the ideas of Descartes, I shall explain the Cartesian view of madness. As Shoshana Felman aptly summarizes, the "turning point occurs in the Cartesian *cogito*: in his first Meditation, Descartes expels madness

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[17] Lacan says that language is always about loss or absence; we only need words when the object we want is gone. If our world was all fullness, with no absence, then we would not need language. Therefore, "lack" is inscribed into language. There is no language without lack.

[18] Beckett, S. *Company, Ill Seen Ill Said, Worstward Ho, Stirrings Still*, p. 81.

[19] *Murphy* harbors numerous (parodic) allusions to Descartes' mind-body distinction. However, throughout the novel Beckett stops us from accepting Murphy's view with any confidence. And this is the *irony* – representing the narrator's ambivalence towards Murphy's philosophical stand. What we see is the divided cogito, the ever-increasing gap between the self and the ego. Let's see how masterfully Beckett undermines the Cartesian split in Murphy's speech: "They [a body and a mind] had intercourse apparently, otherwise he could not have known that they had anything in common. But he felt his mind to be bodytight and did not understand through what channel the intercourse was effected nor how the two experiences came to overlap. He was satisfied that neither followed from the other" (Beckett, S. *Murphy*, p. 109). Beckett goes beyond the limits of Cartesian dualism and ironically presents a tripartite structure of Murphy's mind, which includes Murphy's much-discussed "third zone." It is the state where the divisions disappear between the body and the mind, as well as the subject and the object, undermining the foundations of the Cartesian duality. The identity of Murphy is dissolved in this anti-cogito "matrix of surds" (Ibid.).

[20] Ibid., p. 46.

[21] Beckett himself was working as a psychiatric nurse for some period of time. Therefore, "Murphy's journey (or languid perambulation) seeks to explore the limits of the category of unreason" (Fish, P. "Murphy: That harmless Lunacy", *Journal of Literary Studies*, 1993, Vol. 9, No. 2, p. 156).

outside of the confines of culture and *robs it of its language*, condemning it to silence"[22]. Therefore, there appears a binary of thought/madness, reason/madness. For Descartes then the 'I' that think cannot be mad, so madness is relegated to the status of 'non-being'. In summary, the Cartesian cogito not only does rob madness of its language, of its discourse, it also equates madness to non-being.

Now, the basic question is how we can represent madness in language; in other words, the problem is that of finding a language, a language other than that of reason which represses madness – *a language of madness* that no longer mirrors a divine rational order. Into this category fall great names of Marquis de Sade, Georges Bataille, Friedrich Nietzsche, and – to my view in this paper – Samuel Beckett.

Through language Beckett satirizes the idea of normalcy – by presenting a *schizophrenic*[23] mode of expression (which reflects a non-rational state of mind). This fresh approach starts from *Murphy* (1938) and finds its *ne plus ultra* in *Endgame* (1957). *Murphy* contains a range of terms drawn from psychoanalytic and psychiatric discourse; however, it is undoubtedly the concept of schizophrenia that dominates that novel, because Murphy is described by Neary as a "schizoidal spasmophile", a patient in the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat being characterized as an "emaciated schizoid", and Mr. Endon (a Greek word for 'within') being identified by the narrator as a "schizophrenic of the most amiable variety", his voice a "schizoid voice" with which a certain Dr Killiecrankie ("Kill the Sick") has "some experience". The nature of this "schizoid voice" is described by the novel's narrator as follows: "It was not like a real voice, one minute it said one thing and the next minute something quite different". And of Mr. Endon's "inner voice" in particular the reader is told that it "did not harangue him, it was unobtrusive and melodious, a gentle continuo in the whole consort of his hallucinations"[24]. Beckett was surely familiar with the theory/ theoretization of schizophrenia; in October 1935, he attended Carl Gustav Jung's third Tavistock Lecture. In this lecture, Jung explains schizophrenia: "with schizophrenia it is a deep dissociation of personality; the fragments cannot come together anymore"[25]. Beckett tried in fact to capture this irreparable fragmentation in the "syntax of weakness" of his work.

All in all, *Murphy* is a turning point in Beckett's writing; he understands that language is weak and cannot be relied upon as a medium for authentic communication or as a genuine tool for representation. Therefore, Beckett had to come up with a particular language in order to "display an experimentation, a honing and destruction of the possibilities of language to arrive at a discourse that never is discarded, only endlessly arranged and repeated"[26]. Also, in *Murphy* we do not see the cliché Romantic veneration of madness as divine inspiration, containing a wisdom shadowed by surface folly; what we see instead is that

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[22]   Felman, S. *Language and Madness (Literature/Philosophy/Psychoanalysis)*. California, 2003, p. 38.

[23]   In their influential two-volume *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972 and 1980), Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari frequently turn to Beckett for examples of the "schizo" as a figure who escapes all Oedipal reference. Schizophrenic expression shows three key elements: (1) the sense that language is inadequate (that the essential is ineffable); (2) a tendency towards abstraction, repetition and fragmentation; and (3) a preoccupation with the materiality of words. See Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis, 2005.

[24]   Beckett, S. *Murphy*, pp. 185–186.

[25]   Jung, C.G. *Analytical Psychology: Its Theory and Practice (The Tavistock Lectures)*. London; New York, 1982, p. 112.

[26]   Fish, P. "Murphy: That harmless Lunacy", p. 158.

"[f]or the sane and mad alike, the threat is an internal one; the *self* becomes the criminal, the jury and the executioner"[27].

Language in *Endgame*

The term "endgame" is an expression which chess players use in the last stage of a match when the number of players left on the board has been reduced to a very few. This expression lends itself very well to Beckett's situation, and he has reduced his players to four miserable and doomed wretches. From the very beginning, we as readers cryptically sense that "something is taking its course", that an unnamed cataclysmic event has left the world in ruins, however, we can never be sure.

Hamm[28] – whose name reminds us of Noah's cursed son – passes days by composing and reading fragments of a morbid tale which deals with a catastrophe that caused the death of many people. He is constantly demanding that Clov look out of the window and relate what he sees. *Endgame* is quite often regarded as a sequel to *Waiting for Godot*. Here Beckett paints an even more bleak and desolate picture of dying and suffering humanity. In Godot there was still the prospect of hope that Godot might someday arrive; in Endgame the only waiting is for the end of the game, for all players to be removed from life's chessboard. Clov begins the play with a phrase spoken by the dying Christ:

> CLOV. (fixed gaze, tonelessly). Finished.
> It's finished, nearly finished.
> It must be nearly finished. (Pause)
> Thus, the beginning is really a sort of end, yet such an end never comes.
> HAMM. Do you believe in a life to come?
> CLOV. Mine was always that.

This is a peculiar example of language use. After hearing Hamm's question, we usually wait for a yes/no answer in order to find out something about the (religious) beliefs of the answerer, but Clov's answer does not lead us to anything beyond the physical words on the page. In other words, nothing is revealed. The signifiers of the old world no longer hold meaning in the new, post-apocalyptic world.[29] What we see is the mere physicality of the words on the page, a *veil* that conceals the *void*.

Post-apocalyptic works usually create an ambience in which an uncanny feeling of menace pervades. That is why the reference to the past becomes important.[30]

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27 Ibid., p. 157.
28 The name of Hamm might also allude to the Hebrew word "Ha-am" which means "people."
29 Etymologically, the word "apocalypse" is derived from the ancient Greek apokalupsis, and literally means a revelation or an unveiling; in the religious sphere, The Apocalypse refers to the story and images found in the Revelation of Saint John the Divine – a book added to the New Testament and containing futuristic glimpses of a time of pain and judgment. In the religious sense, apocalypse includes both the destruction of one world and the creation of another, but in the case of Beckett, no other world is going to be created anew.
30 Consider, for example, the madman in Endgame. Hamm describes a mad friend of his who "was a painter and engraver. I had a great fondness for him. I used to go and see him, in the asylum. I'd take him by the hand and drag him to the window. Look! There! All that rising corn! And there! Look! The sails of the herring fleet! All that loveliness! (Pause.) He'd snatch away his hand and go back into his corner. Appalled. All he had seen was ashes. (Pause.) He alone had been spared. (Pause.) Forgotten." Ironically, he was the only one spared. In *Murphy* there are also many references to the past – as if the stability of the real is always in the past, before the novel began and somewhere else.

And this effect is perfected through language. Beckett is shrewd enough to give us only tips not the whole story of what happened (in the past). And these tips are in bits and pieces as if in a puzzle. The reader should therefore be shrewd as well.

Another important point in post-apocalyptic literature is the mundane presence of death; death is no longer mighty and scary – it is prolonged and ever-present. In *Endgame* characters wish for it; in fact, one of the greatest fears that all the characters share is that of being reincarnated or resurrected after death. Thus they make an effort to kill all potential procreators such as the flea: "But humanity might start from there all over again! Catch him, for the love of God!" This is taken to the extreme in the form of trying to kill the rat and later trying to kill the little boy. Therefore, death is dethroned; characters here live in death, and *death is in their language*, for as the Bible famously says: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue"[31]. Here, language takes on a heavy parodic loading – it parodies death and any hope for the afterlife.[32]

Besides, Clov's vision of the outside world is a "zero", a vacuous territory. The repetition of the words "finished", "zero" along with the title imply that nothing new will ever happen. The word "can't" which occurs in most of their dialogues reveals impotency. *Language does not lead to action; language is disabled.*

Conclusion: "Words without Thoughts Ne'er to Heaven Go"

The development of narrative strategy and technique through the course of Samuel Beckett's literary oeuvre enacts a parody of the Cartesian method of doubt, in which the search for first principles, instead of providing grounds for certainty, is a hopeless, grotesque quest for a self which eludes any and every assertion. In fact, "The subject, for Beckett, is always already post-catastrophic, already inhabits spaces of ruin, always is in search of impossible sites of refuge; the subject, in other words, bears the marks of disaster even as the world he inhabits itself is disastrous"[33]. Beckett's works could indeed be defined by "posthumanism", that branch of philosophy which fundamentally critiques the idea that the individual subject is the center of all things.

For Beckett, the acting "I" no longer signifies except to the Other. Speaking invites or solicits the Other. Therefore, in Beckett we see *inter*-subjectivity that sustains the exteriority of the Other. For example, In *Murphy*, to be is to be heard.

Moreover, *Murphy* shows that sanity and madness are essential states of mind; rather, they are concepts formed by the closed system of language. Though Murphy tries not desire anything, he cannot escape language. Like Hamm and Clov in *Endgame*, Murphy is stuck in a pathless path [*la dispersion du present qui ne passé*]: "thus speaking not speaking… Speaking, not wanting to, wanting to, not being able to"[34].

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[31] *Proverbs* 18:21.

[32] For thinkers such as Georgio Agamben (1942), *Auschwitz* is where and when the essence of the human (its capacity for speech) had been fully stripped from him. "What the death camps thereby also revealed is that 'man' (the mortal speaking being) can *really* be separated from his 'essence' (speech) and consigned by the most extreme expressions of sovereign power (the camps, contemporary torture) to a kind of *undead subsistence*" (Murray, A. & Whyte, J. (eds.) *The Agamben Dictionary*. Edinburgh, 2011, pp. 118–119).

[33] Boulter, J. *Posthuman Space in Samuel Beckett's Short Prose*. Edinburgh, 2020, p. 2.

[34] Blanchot, M. *Awaiting Oblivion*. Lincoln, 1997, p. 48.

Due to the divided cogito, the ever-increasing gap between the self and the ego, Murphy by the end of the novel becomes imprisoned within his ego and loses true contact with his *self*. Murphy the delusional cannot get rid of the Symbolic, because as an individual, he is born into that pre-existing system. Hence, the unreliable narrator of the novel becomes a significant structural device, for it unravels Murphy's delusion. Here again what I emphasized at the very beginning of the paper becomes important: suspension of non-contradiction rule (*epoché*).[35] Many of the narrator's seemingly believable statements are in one way or another confusing or inconsistent. For example, he twice says that Murphy is a "strict non-reader"; but he also reveals that Murphy is familiar with works by Dante, Swift, Wordsworth, Campanella, and Bishop Bouvier, among others. Reading the novel, we come across many contradictions, one after another. So, we learn that Beckett's use of language is fueled by inconsistency and unreliability.

In Beckett's play *Endgame*, we also see that characters enter into a conversation in order to stop thinking; in fact, speaking is a retreat from thinking. Any search for *le mot juste* is absurd. In *Endgame*, both Hamm and Clov cause language to fragment, to hesitate, to stutter, to wait. Indeed, their feeble dialogues show that both Hamm and Clov tear language apart, forcing each other's words to break prematurely. The End of Man comes when subjects are no longer able to think about their *being*.

I would like to end this paper with reference to a poem by Beckett entitled "*Comment dire*" ("What is the word") written in October 1988,

> glimpse–
> seem to glimpse–
> need to seem to glimpse–
> afaint afar awayover there what–
> folly for to need to seem to glimpse afaint afar awayover there
> what–
> what–
> what is the word–
> what is the word–

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[35] Epokhē (ἐποχή) in Greek means suspension. Beckett's language is an experience of suspension (epoché) between speaking and not-speaking. It is in fact an experience of "not not-speaking." Beckett's unique use of an *experimentum linguae* allows a new experience of language.

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Беккет, постгуманизм и искусство уменьшения

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Постгуманизм, как всесторонняя критика требований гуманизма и в особенности центральной роли когнитивных и биологических структур, предлагает новое понимание царства языка, роли субъекта и окружающей среды. Посткатастрофический субъект в творчестве Беккета использует слова, которые приходят из ниоткуда, без всякой цели, без направления и без телоса. Таким образом, именно в несостоятельности языка мы осознаем наше затруднительное положение в качестве узников этой символической пустоты. Попытки подступиться к работам Беккета или проинтерпретировать их могут так и оставаться на уровне «попыток»; осуществление или улавливание абсолютного смысла будет миражом, иллюзией. С опорой на идеи Джонатана Боултера, в данной статье осуществляется демонстрация значения и взаимосвязи сути постчеловеческого и существования в мире, поскольку постчеловеческий субъект кажется всегда находящимся внутри некоего пространства; он оказывается так или иначе расположенным. Это пространство может быть постапокалиптическим; однако в нем всегда есть след бытия и существования. Иными словами, именно пространство и пространственность определяют и детерминируют границы представления о постчеловеческом в творчестве Беккета. Далее Боултер утверждает, что постчеловек а-ля Беккет бросает вызов границам и бинарностям.

Ключевые слова: Беккет, «Мёрфи», «Конец игры», постгуманизм, язык, пустота, эпохе