Narrative Performance of the Word in Beckett's Early Theatre

Beckett'in İlk Oyunlarında Sözün Anlatımsal Temsili

Rosana HERRERO-MARTÍN

Abstract

The preference for narrative rather than life is a distinctly common evasive hobby of most, if not all, Beckett's stage characters. Their narratives are likewise propelled by a short list of common semiconscious life concerns, such as inexorable ageing, impending death, loneliness, and sexual frustrations of various types – including sterility and aborted maternity. The discursive characteristics of their narratives, as well as their idiosyncratic narrative performances, together with the implied thick bond between story and narrator will be the analytical crux of this paper, which proposes a close examination of the narrative event within the following early Beckettian theatrical repertoire: Waiting for Godot (English version[1], 1955), All That Fall: A Play for Radio (1957), Endgame (1958) and Happy Days (1961).

Özet

Hepsi için geçerli değilse de çoğu Beckett sahne figürü için anlatıyı yaşamın kendisine tercih etme alışkanlığı söz konusudur. Anlatıları ortak yarı-bilinçli yaşamsal meselelerle ilintilidir, engellenemez yaşlanma, yaklaşan ölüm ve düşükle sonuçlanan gebelikler ve kısırlıkları da içeren çeşitli cinsel düşkırıklıklar. Anlatılarının gidimli niteliği ve tuhaf anlatı performansları bir arada düşünüldüğünde öykü ile anlatıcı arasında kalın bir bağ oluşur ve bu da anlatı olayına yakından bakmayı hedefleyen bu bildirinin temel meselesine işaret eder. Anlatılar özellikle de ilk dönem Beckettyen repertuvarını oluşturan oyunlardan takip edilecektir: Bütün Düşenler (1957), Godot'yu Beklerken (1952), Oyun Sonu (1957) ve Mutlu Günler (1961).

[1] Beckett wrote Waiting for Godot in French (En Attendant Godot) in 1952. It was first performed in Paris in 1953. The English version of the play was first performed in London in 1955, and published in 1956 by Faber and Faber.

Beckettian Gallery of Narratives

Beckett's characters on stage resort to a great variety of narratives in order to give coherent shape to their private memories, fragmented identities and insidious frustrations. Kristin Morrison describes the significant evolution from Waiting for Godot to Endgame – Beckett's first two produced plays and also two of his most widely acknowledged – on the grounds of the "narrative presence" in each play: "Vladimir and Estragon have their little canters, and Hamm his chronicle" (Morrison 1983: 13). Whereas in Waiting for Godot Beckett starts his exploration of narrative techniques on stage through "a mere suggestion of story" (Morrison 1983: 13), he will develop it much more thoroughly in Endgame and even in more refined and effective ways in his later drama.

Their little "verbal excursions" help Vladimir and Estragon to pass the time while waiting for Godot. These may take the form of untold jokes ("The Englishman in the brothel"); biblical and mythological references (the two thieves by the cross, the parable of the sheep and the goats, the parable of the wise and the foolish virgins); briefly mentioned anecdotes from the past; Estragon's dreams that Vladimir cannot bear to have recounted; the circular song opening Act II – an endless narrative about dogs; as well as a number of rhetorical parodies – the chief example of the latter kind of narrative being Lucky's bewildering philosophical disquisition in Act I .[2]

Endgame is, according to Kristin Morrison, "one of the best examples of extended narrative as an essential part of drama" (1983: 27). In Endgame there is a pivotal presence of narrative on stage, to the point that Hamm's so-called "chronicle" – a twisted version of divine, fatherly providence – is intimately intertwined with the words, actions and paternal-filial relationships shaping the dramatic conflict of the play, despite the distancing and protective shield of its third-person, parabolic, narrative focalisation. The fact that the play ends when Hamm finally manages to articulate the end of his chronicle after various interruptions and editorial changes, suggests "the extent to

[2] Kristin Morrison has insightfully suggested the link between the narrative extravaganza proposed in Waiting for Godot and other disparate narrative structures present both in the music-hall review and in European canonical literary works such as The Decameron and The Canterbury Tales (Morrison 1983: 14).

which this narrative is emotionally and philosophically important to Hamm, a way to give "meaning" to his life, a way to justify his behaviour" (Morrison 1983: 28).

In addition to this extensive use of a single narrative, in Endgame we also find shorter narrative forms of the kind already seen in Waiting for Godot, namely the joke and the anecdote. On the one hand, there is Hamm's brief anecdote about the madman, an old friend of his who could not perceive the boons of nature out of his window. Interestingly enough, the anecdote makes perfect sense within the reality of imprisonment, as well as physical and perceptive decay encroaching all the characters in Endgame.

On the other hand, Nagg and Nell, Hamm's "cursed progenitors," take to cracking jokes despite their dust-binned existence of physical infirmities and filial neglect. "Nothing is funnier than unhappiness, I grant you that," says Nell. In fact, their hearty laughter over similar miseries informing Hamm's tormented chronicle, serves as a caustic, comic, counterpoint always present in Beckett's drama. Nagg and Nell remember in good spirits "When we crashed on our tandem and lost our shanks" (Beckett 1996: 100). Nagg's favourite joke about the tailor who botches a pair of striped trousers for a client and then has the nerve to compare his capolavoro with God's even less impressive work done in botching the world invariably cheers Nell up:

In his radio-play All That Fall Beckett is particularly alert to the dramatic potential of narration, especially within the exclusively aural medium of the radio. The dramatic appeal in All That Fall lies precisely in the interpretative demands exerted upon the audience, who are requested to put together all the narrative bits and pieces scattered along Mrs Rooney's way. Mrs. Rooney's walking journey to the train station is in fact interspersed with a number of encounters on the way – mostly male characters – and with a subsequent number of verbal exchanges featuring apparently unrelated and surreal allusions, memories, comments, anecdotes, jokes, dreams, vignettes and stories. All of these narratives, in their fully idiosyncratic nature, serve, not

only to characterise the voices populating the radio-piece. More importantly, when thematically connected by free association, they compose a telling mosaic scenery of loneliness, need for love, sterility, physical deterioration, sexual frustration, communicative failure, and impending death.

Happy Days presents a particularly complex use of narrative on stage, and by extension, the play does contemplate a complex understanding of language and its envisioning of reality. Winnie resorts to a number of different kinds of short and extensive narrative forms, ranging from anecdotal memories of her youthful past, storied allusions, as well as poetical misquotations. Most of Winnie's memories provide "explicit narrative units" containing romantic and/ or erotic elements (Morrison 1983: 44) which reveal not only Winnie's sexual ideals, but also, in their nostalgic motivation, her present disabilities.

Still, it is Winnie's two extended narrative memories, the Shower-Cooker anecdote, and above all, the little Mildred story, that provide the most allusive and significant source of commentary on Winnie's sexual impairment. Winnie is not quite sure any more of the couple's name who last passed by and mockingly contemplated her buried, disabled body. In fact both names proposed, Shower and Cooker, phonetically suggest the German verbs "schauen" and "gucken," both equally meaning "to see" – even "to stare" and "to gape." The fact that Winnie ponders quite lengthily on this memory-anecdote emphasises the extent to which she suffers from her own sexual frustrations, despite her impostured optimism. Mr. Shower's "coarse" remarks about Winnie's physical immobilisation and about Willie's apathetic indifference actually hit the raw nerve of Winnie's hypersensitive mind, clearly identifying the play's central image of Winnie's physical immobilisation in earth, which she calls that "old extinguisher," with her buried, non-existent, sexual life:

> What's she doing? he says – What's the idea? he says – stuck up to her diddies in the bleeding ground – coarse fellow – What's it meant to mean? […] Why doesn't he dig her out? [Pause. Resumes filing.]

> What good is he to her like that? […] I'd dig her out with my bare hand, he says – must have been man and – wife (Beckett 1990: 157).

Winnie saves her most precious story, little Mildred's story, for the final moments of the play, "when all else fails" (Beckett 1990: 163). While narrating her surreptitious story, Winnie is in fact also reliving her most private sexual desires and fears. Winnie's performance of little Mildred's piercing screams on seeing the mouse running up her thigh is so intense that it somehow betrays the narrator's fiercely shielded self. Story-telling on Beckett's stage serves thus not only as a way of diversion, of passing the time, but more importantly in dramatic terms, it simultaneously and paradoxically provides with both shelter from, as well as exorcism for private terrors unspeakable in first person singular, yet more feasible in the third.

Beckettian Language Stands

Beckett's characters' relationship with the language they speak is not particularly noteworthy for its smooth, face-valued nature. Quite inimical to the traditional, complying, equation between language and reality, Beckett's theatrical language reveals itself in all its representative short-comings. This is the very reason behind Beckett's characters' linguistic fastidiousness, which is recurrently manifested, for instance, in his characters' verbal observations and puzzling persistent questions, all symptomatic of the dark side of language in its rendering of reality. We have already mentioned in this sense Mrs Rooney's awareness of the "bizarre" nature of the language (idiolect) she speaks, which is indeed archaic, featuring flamboyant words such as "ramdam" (Beckett 1990: 185), Irishisms such as "gobstopper" (Beckett 1990: 188), or euphemisms such as "collision" (Beckett 1990: 186), "retarded" and "hitch" (Beckett 1990: 187). In fact, Mrs Rooney's funereal prognostication of the short life-span of human language in general, and of her "poor dear Gaelic" language in particular, forms part of a general aural tableau of sterility and deterioration prevailing in the radio-play:

> MRS ROONEY Well, you know [to Mr Rooney], it [language] will be dead in time, just like our own poor dear Gaelic, there is that to be said (Beckett 1990: 194).

On the other hand, Winnie in Happy Days, who lacks discursive autonomy, and is increasingly haunted by a growing awareness of her failing, void, words, feels on the safe side by constantly checking with her dumb husband, Willy, for language appropriateness: "What would you say, Willie, speaking of your hair, them or it? The hair on your head, I mean" (Beckett 1990: 146). Her lexical queries, though, far from being as innocent as they appear, do contain a substantial amount of perversity, perhaps propelled by a hidden desire for revenge after years of loneliness and sexual frustration. After ruminating all throughout Act I over the meaning of the word "hog" in the phrase "hog's setae" – inscribed in her toothbrush – Winnie finally addresses her query to Willie ("what exactly is a hog, Willie, do you know, I can't remember") whose answer ("Castrated male swine. Reared for slaughter," Beckett 1990: 159) conjures up a wickedly happy expression on Winnie's face, suggesting some kind of private, ironic, triumph on her part over her sterile husband.

Is that why Winnie "cannot remember," because she cannot remember when was the last time she had sexual intercourse with her husband? In direct relation to her unstable rapport with language, Winnie's speech contains a significant amount of grammatical mistakes, as well as profuse, hilarious, literary misquoting, two discursive features likewise found in Mrs Rooney's archaic discourse. In fact, such linguistic impairment in both female characters is concomitant with a shared, physical and mental, escalating deterioration arising from a comparable psychological symptomatic profile of severe sexual and maternal frustration. In this sense, Winnie's fixation with hogs certainly finds its counterpart in Mrs Rooney's obsessive query about hinnies – the offspring of a female donkey and a stallion – again a mammal carrying the stigma of sterility:

Tiyatro Araştırmaları Dergisi, 23:2007 • ISSN: 1300-1523

> Can hinnies procreate, I wonder? […] You know, hinnies, or jinnies, aren't they barren, or sterile, or whatever it is? […] Yes, it was a hinny, he rode into Jerusalem or wherever it was on a hinny. [Pause.] That must mean something […] (Beckett 1990: 197).

Both the hinny and the hog serve Mrs Rooney and Winnie as their respective narrative distractions in order to displace, but simultaneously control from a safe distance, their sexual and maternal frustrations. As we will see further on, the third-person narrative perspective is nothing but the psycho-discursive shield Beckettian narrators wear so as to protect their fragile and disjointed subjectivity. In the case of the hinny, its powerful resonance within Mrs Rooney's mind is further sanctioned by the canonical Gospel narrative of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a hinny on Palm Sunday. Mrs Rooney earnestly believes "that must mean something" (Beckett 1990: 197). But, not unlike Vladimir in Waiting for Godot, she will soon grow suspicious of the supposedly truthful and irrefutable message of such authoritative narratives.

According to Estragon and Vladimir, language holds a faulty, arbitrary, relation with reality. Is it by a "tree," a "willow," a "bush," or a "shrub" they are supposed to wait for enigmatic Godot? Does Lucky's hat "irk" or rather "itch" Vladimir? Words do not seem to match the reality before their eyes. Furthermore, a particular choice of words may determine a particular reading of reality due to language's politically loaded nature. The most patent example of this ongoing imbalance is probably the mismatch between words and actions ending both Act I and Act II, in a kind of reverse mirror-effect, which far from simply falling into the trite label of absurd theatre-making, is in fact a genuine theatrical revision of the severe rift between language and reality:

> ESTRAGON Well, shall we go?
> VLADIMIR Yes, let's go.
> [They do not move]
> (End of Act I, Beckett 1990: 52).

VLADIMIR Well, shall we go?
ESTRAGON Yes, let's go.
[They do not move]
(End of Act II, Beckett 1990: 88).

In Endgame Beckett makes perhaps his most audacious statement about language in his early theatre. In a play that undermines and inverts the sustaining and providential role attributed to the divine and human father figure (by biblical tradition and human narrative convention), Beckett contemplates language and its rendition of the past as the barren, loveless and meaningless bequest passed by a father over to his son:

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 others. Or let me be silent (Beckett 1990: 113).

In fact, in Endgame there is a latent, pervasive, appeal for the ultimate order of silence. "It's my dream," says Clov, "A world where all would be silent and still and each thing in its last place, under the last dust" (Beckett 1990: 120). Still, the very awesome sense of finality intrinsic to silence propitiates the characters' desperate clinging to words, with the particular evidence of Hamm's deliberate postponing of his chronicle till the final tableau of the play. This is nothing but Beckett's dramatic envisioning of human tragedy par excellence: the human incarceration between soothing, but sterile, words, on the one hand, and peaceful, but final, silence, on the other.

Sons in Endgame are invariably distraught by paternal neglect. Hamm is most disdainful towards his "accursed progenitor," Nagg, who let him cry as a boy at night and even moved him "out of earshot" so as to "sleep in peace" (Beckett 1990: 119). Now Hamm has revengefully banished Nagg out of his sight into a

dust bin as well as to the scant rationing of pap and sugarplums. Clov, on the other hand, has suffered a life-long, abiding, silent existence under the despotic domination of his senile putative father, Hamm. In such a despondent scenario of paternal-filial disbelief, language emerges, in its narrative guise, both as the expression of power and manipulation, on the one hand, as well as the only solace at hand. By narrating his chronicle in dosed instalments, Hamm is adopting the role of the omnipotent father and historian with self-conscious awareness of his narrative skills, such as voice and rhetoric, as well as with overbearing control over origins, ends and the interpretation of their meaning. Still, and despite his ostentatious display of narrative command, Hamm is a fragile "tiny boy" at heart, as Nagg suggests, with a deeply unsatisfied and urgent need to have a father, a listener. In fact, he is ready to bribe his father with a bon-bon and one of his favourite sugar-plums in exchange of the receptive attention to his chronicle. It is perhaps Hamm's surrendering his own words that best disclose his real child's deserted soul, as well as his particular fancy of words in terms of luminous company: "Then babble, babble words, like the solitary child who turns himself into children, two, three, so as to be together, and whisper together, in the dark" (Beckett 1990: 126). Once again in Beckett storytelling betrays the narrator's deepest fears and ends, "allowing the character simultaneously to reveal and conceal himself" (Morrison 1983: 33). By telling the story about the supposedly altruist father from a disbelieving narrative point of view, Hamm has vented his deep-rooted feelings of having been a neglected and resented son. At the same time, though, the story "has allowed him to disguise this revelation as fiction" (Morrison 1983: 39). Hamm never mentions Nagg nor Clov explicitly during his narration, but it is more than evident that he is trying out fiction as a therapy towards the acknowledgement of his role both as a son to Nagg and as a father to Clov.

Beckettian Gallery of Discursive Styles

Interestingly enough, each of these early Beckett full-length plays contemplate the interplay of antagonistic discursive and narrative fashions, a potential source of conflict providing a

good deal of effective dramatic tension on the Beckettian stage. Mrs Rooney's easy-going, attentive, mostly allusive discourse, stands out, for instance, against Mr Rooney's anxious, reluctant and concealing speech. Winnie's exhausting verbosity is likewise conspicuously contrasted with Willie's near muteness. Unlike Estragon's despondent refuge in sleeping, dreaming and silence, Vladimir is a tenacious believer in the power of language to activate memories and to design futures. And finally, Clov largely plays the role of the obliging listener, eager to reach the ultimate stage of orderly silence, as well as to eventually listen to the end of Hamm's chronicle, whereas Hamm obstinately clings to the illusory benefits of suspending the end of his chronicle for ever despite his deep level of awareness: "The end is in the beginning and yet you go on" (Beckett 1990: 126). Still, no matter how disparately they may verbalise their inner obsessions, Beckett's stage characters share a unique conscientious confrontation with both the boons and the drawbacks of human language and silence.

In All That Fall Beckett accurately explores the prominent urgency of aural imagination by adjusting this basic, sine-qua-non, requirement of the radio-drama genre with his distinct dramatic featuring of subjectivity as a narrative construction, to be reconstructed, in this case, by the audience's perceptive imagination. Mrs Rooney as a narrator is basically allusive, whereas Mr Rooney is mostly concealing. Notwithstanding this self-evident discursive disparity, both narrative modes do ultimately balance each other, for they "are not mere diversion, not the sign of a couple talking at cross purposes; they present characters who, as Pinter says of his own people, communicate all too well" (Morrison 1983: 79). In fact, their respective hermetic, apparently nonsensical, narratives, in all their obsessively repeated patterns – themes, discursive, psychological features – are more revealing and cohesive than in their actual contents.

Throughout her wide-ranging verbal interactions along her walking journey to and from the train station, Mrs Rooney reveals a covert, but in any case quite see-through, state of being. In fact,

her verbal imagery is psychologically most meaningful, invariably related to her sexual, existential, as well as gender anxieties and frustrations. Just to name a few, we find, for instance, her constant incongruous queries and comments about hinnies, stydung, horses' buttocks, as well as other sexually loaded animal similes: "Oh, Mr Tyler, you startled the life out of me stealing up behind me like that like a deer-stalker! Oh!" (Beckett 1990: 174); "Go, Mr Tyler, go on and leave me, listening to the cooing of the ringdoves" (Beckett 1990: 176). Her references to dust, worms, rotting leaves, as well as her confessed incapability to look at her watch (Beckett 1990: 175) connote a deep sense of deadness and fear of time and hope elapsing inexorably.

Mr. Rooney, on the other end of the discursive spectrum, is a reluctant, elusive narrator. In his narration of the train journey he deliberately leaves out the circumstances under which his train was delayed. What is more, his eagerness to gain Mrs. Rooney's credit and belief for his account – "You say nothing? [Pause.] Say something. Maddy. Say you believe me" (Beckett 1990: 195) – sounds suspicious, and hints at some kind of narrative fabrication on his part – i.e. he may not be telling the whole truth. While dodging the sought-after narration on the part of his wife, all along the way from the station, in his grumpy ramblings, Mr Rooney reveals his fondness for a permanent standstill: "it is clear that by lying at home in bed, day and night, winter and summer, with a change of pyjamas once a fortnight, you would add very considerably to your income" (Beckett 1990: 193). Furthermore, his aversion to any physical contact with Mrs Rooney, whom he treats really nastily, significantly adds to his calculated, stingy nature: "Kiss you? In public? On the platform? Before the boy? Have you taken leave of your senses?" (Beckett 1990: 188).

The central narrative revelation in All that Fall, namely, the reason why Mr. Rooney's train was delayed, remains hidden and postponed until the very last moment, with the striking narrative disclosure of a minor character, Jerry, the errand boy, until then minimally featured in the play. Jerry's last-minute story "emphasizes the issues of truth and falsity" (Morrison 1983: 74)

and hints at the possibility of child murder on the part of Mr. Rooney, leaving the thrust of the play openly unresolved to the audience's interpretative responsibility.

Happy Days again features an unbalanced tandem of gender and discourse. Winnie is indeed a woman of discursive resources, a see-through verbal display-window of emotions and desires, whereas Willie's unyielding muteness is connected to his deep unacceptance of his discreditable sterility.

Words are a "boon" within Winnie's wretched existence of physical immobility, sexual dissatisfaction, and pervading sense of loneliness: "What would I do without them, when words fail? […] They are a boon, sounds are a boon, they help me… through the day. The old style! Yes, those are happy days, when there are sounds" (Beckett 1990: 162). This "old style" Winnie nostalgically invokes to in a number of situations throughout her solo largely captures her unique discourse style, as well as her gendered conception of life. The spectator soon grows aware of the fact that Winnie's alleged inveterate optimism (at odds with her extreme physical limitations), her spur-of-the-moment logorrhoea, together with her frivolous rummaging of objects from her bag is in fact a calculated, and histrionic, contrivance aiming to dilute her actual lack of autonomy. Winnie is in fact a conventionally compliant wife always finding justification and comprehension for her husband – even if he is a pig and does not wipe his nose:

> [Pause. She cranes back to look at him. Pause.] Oh really! [Pause.] Have you no handkerchief, darling? [Pause] Have you no delicacy? [Pause.] Oh, Willie, you're not eating it! Spit it out, dear, spit it out! [Pause. Back front.] Ah well, I suppose it's only natural. Human. What is one to do? (Beckett 1990: 156).

Strictly speaking, Winnie's verbal performance is not a monologue, for she is actually addressing her almost speechless husband, Willie. In fact, Winnie wishes she could speak to herself, that is, be more independent in all senses. But the thing

Tiyatro Araştırmaları Dergisi, 23:2007 • ISSN: 1300-1523

is she desperately needs company, and above all, a listener, an interlocutor for her lonely words:

> Ah yes, if only I could bear to be alone, I mean prattle away with not a soul to hear. [Pause.] Not that I flatter myself you hear much, no Willie, God forbid. [Pause.] Days perhaps when you hear nothing. [Pause.] But days too when you answer. [Pause.] So that I may say at all times, even when you do not answer and perhaps hear nothing, something of this is being heard, I am not merely talking to myself, that is in the wilderness, a thing I could never bear to do – for any length of time (Beckett 1990: 145).

In a way, Winnie inhabits a narrative world of surrogates, containing romantic and erotic anecdotal memories from her younger times, as well as frequent quotations of poorly remembered fragments of poetry. Winnie's real tragedy is far from being merely circumscribed to her physical and sexual disability. In fact, the significant visual transition of the play's central image of the mound from Act I to Act II, suggesting the intensification of Winnie's confinement ("embedded up to above her waist" in Act I, "embedded up to neck" in Act II) correlates as well with Winnie's increasing abatement and awareness of the failure of words. In Act II Winnie's mobility is utterly restrained. She can no longer crane back her head to her right and then down to spot and address her mute husband. She can no longer entertain herself rummaging and displaying the contents of her black bag around the mound. Now it is her eyes that cope with most of the physical strain available to her. Neither her eyes nor her mind can any longer overlook the limits of her reality, the dark pits of memory, the mirage-like effects of language, prayers, songs, narratives.

Winnie is indeed one of Beckett's most articulate mouthpieces on stage, whose acute sense of consciousness renders her as a particularly complex and fascinating dramatic personality, with all her frivolous and blathering flaws. Winnie herself has best formulated her own tragedy, which could be likewise applied to all Beckett's stage characters: "There is so little one can say,

one says it all. All one can. And no truth in it anywhere" (Beckett 1990: 161).

Willie's spare verbal contact with his wife Winnie, on the contrary, takes the form, if at all, of minimal, contributions which most of the time are grudgingly muttered with the only purpose of appeasing Winnie's urgent communicative needs. Willie remains silent for 99,9% of the play's running-time, hidden to the right back side of the mound – Winnie's perspective – either sleeping, engrossed in his paper, or sneaking a look at a seemingly pornographic or scatological postcard. He does not even answer to some of Winnie's vital questions of the type: "Was I lovable once, Willie? [Pause.] Was I ever lovable? [Pause.] Do not misunderstand my question, I am not asking you if you found me lovable, we know all about that, I am asking you if you found me lovable – at one stage" (Beckett 1990: 150). Willie's minimal verbal appearances could be divided into his telegraphic reports from the social chronicle in the newspaper; his yes-no, monosyllabic answers to Winnie's personal and grammatical queries, as well as the couple of explanatory references to emmets: "Eggs […] Formication" (Beckett 1990: 150), and hogs: "Castrated male swine. Reared for slaughter" (Beckett 1990: 159), which humorously alludes to his own lack of "jizz," just as Winnie reproaches him at one point (Beckett 1990: 167). In its sour sparseness, Willie's minimal discourse reveals a great deal of dissatisfaction with his performance as a husband, as well as a much deeper level of stasis than in the case of his wife Winnie, who is a born survivor.

Estragon's and Vladimir's respective disparate discursive styles mutually and necessarily complement each other, while they constitute one of the most memorable dramatic symbiosis of human despondency and tenacity within 20th-century world theatre. The very first exchange of words between Estragon and Vladimir is already particularly significant in terms of distinct characterisation:

ESTRAGON [Giving up again.] Nothing to be done.
VLADIMIR [Advancing with short, stiff strides, legs wide apart.] 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 […] (Beckett 1990: 11).

Estragon has long ago capitulated to the evidence of his defeated memory: "I'm not a historian," he says, and recognises his limited knowledge of reality: "[Exasperated] I don't know why I don't know!" (Beckett 1990: 62). As a way of compensation, he has found refuge in sleeping and dreaming, and wishes to share his dreams with Vladimir for coherence and order. Vladimir, however, does not want to hear about Estragon's nightmares nor happy dreams:

> ESTRAGON I had a dream.
> VLADIMIR Don't tell me!
> ESTRAGON I dreamt that –
> VLADIMIR DON'T TELL ME!
> ESTRAGON [Gesture towards the universe.] This one is enough for you? [Silence.] It's not nice of you, Didi. Who am I to tell my private nightmares to if I can't tell them to you?
> VLADIMIR Let them remain private. You know I can't bear that (Beckett 1990: 17).

Vladimir does not sleep nor dream. He wants to believe there is a paradise for him in reality, in the future time of uncertain tomorrows. Unlike Estragon, Vladimir has not given up his memory, and in Act II he tries hard at remembering the day before, rather groping at it and at its words and scenario:

> VLADIMIR Wait… we embraced… we were happy… happy… what do we do now that we're happy… go on waiting… waiting… let me think… it's coming… go on waiting… now that we're happy… let me see… ah! The tree! (Beckett 1990: 61).

Still, by the end of Act II Vladimir's former conviction about the

capability of human perception and memory to grasp the past increasingly dwindles away as he realises neither Estragon, nor Pozzo, nor the herald boy can remember the day before. Not unlike, inveterately optimistic Winnie, Vladimir shows signs of exhaustion, even exasperation in Act II, while he contemplates a desolate reality of ignorance, impotence and death: "The air is full of our cries. But habit is a great deadener" (Beckett 1990: 84). The epiphanic quality of these words contains in fact a similar message of necessary futility of language likewise present in Winnie's enigmatic musing mentioned before: "There is so little one can say, one says it all. All one can. And no truth in it anywhere" (Beckett 1990: 161).

Endgame proposes a tug-of-war between silence and language, their respective champions being Clov and Hamm. Clov articulates his hopeless life impasse in terms of capitulation to silence: "I ask the words that remain – sleeping, waking, morning, evening. They have nothing to say" (Beckett 1990: 132). Hamm, on the contrary, incarnates Beckett's genuine spirit of tenacious continuation despite the acknowledgement of inexorable limitation: "The end is in the beginning and yet you go on" (Beckett 1990: 126).

While Clov cannot put up any longer with Hamm's daily story-telling farce, and threatens his putative father with abandoning him – which he never does – Hamm desperately clings to his chronicle as his only thread of connection – however contrived it may be – with his son:

CLOV	I'll leave you.
HAMM	No!
CLOV	What is there to keep me here?
HAMM	The dialogue.[Pause.] I've got on with my story. [Pause.] I've got on with it well.[Pause. Irritably.] Ask me where I've got to.
CLOV	Oh, by the way, your story?
HAMM	[Surprised.] What story?
CLOV	The one you've been telling yourself all your… days.

HAMM Ah you mean my chronicle?
CLOV That's the one.
[Pause.]
HAMM [Angrily.] Keep going, can't you, keep going!
CLOV You've got on with it, I hope.
HAMM [Modestly.] Oh not very far, not very far. [He sighs.] There are days like that, one isn't inspired. [Pause.] Nothing you can do about it, just wait for it to come. [Pause.] No forcing, no forcing, it's fatal. [Pause.] I've got on with it a little all the same. [Pause.] Technique, you know. [Pause. Irritably.] I say I've got on with it a little all the same (Beckett 1990: 120-1).

In a way, it is as if language would provide Hamm with the illusion of normality, connection and continuity he actually lacks. The fact that it is he himself that instigates Clov into this sort of "game" makes Hamm's tragedy even more painful, due to his acute level of self-consciousness. In fact, Beckett's characters' awareness of language's therapeutic, though simultaneously surrogate, disposition constitutes perhaps one of the most influential outlooks of Beckett's theatre, for whom language invariably stands on stage as a double-edged reality of complex, mutually challenging, interpretations.

This is a play haunted from the very beginning by its very end. Clov first opens his mouth to formulate his deepest wish that his dreary existence of submissive listening to his senile putative father's resentful chronicle will soon be over: "Finished, it's finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished" (Beckett 1990: 93). Silence would mean peace to Clov, but it conversely means dreadful finality to Hamm: "Yes, there it is, it's time it ended and yet I hesitate to – [he yawns] – to end" (Beckett 1990: 93). In fact when Hamm decides to finally put an end to his story, we all know he will end as well. Hamm calls out to his father Nagg, he calls out to his son Clov as well. He gets no answer. He feels irrevocably alone. There is no listener left for his story, so

why go on with it? The game is over:

> 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 unfolds]… and speak no more about it… [he finishes unfolding]… 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. He covers his face with handkerchief, lowers his arms to armrests, remains motionless.] (Beckett 1990: 133-4).

In many ways, Endgame echoes the very ambiguous stance as regards language that informs other Beckett's early plays, such as Waiting for Godot and Happy Days, in that it is propelled by the fundamental conception of language as the paramount metaphor of tremendous, but limited, human potential.

Beckettian Narrative Performances

Beckett's narrators distinctly detach themselves from their stories with their inclination for imposturing narrative voices and fabricated accounts, together with their characteristic use of the third-person narration. They are also likely to leave their obsessive, cryptic, stories unfinished, in the air. Prompted to narrate them by other characters they may even dodge the story without any explanation. Such anxiety towards the narrative material, added to the thorny relationship with language above related, reveals a strong embedded sense of repudiation of the self (Morrison 1983: 73), as well as of the private past and present reality. This severe existential dissatisfaction is thus rendered through narrative concealment and narrative self-deception.

The quasi-systematic adoption of the 3rd-person narrative perspective on the part of Beckettian narrators on stage is probably the most telling characteristic within the complex tandem of narrator-narration proposed. In concealing the

autobiographical component within the stories they narrate through the safe, disguising, distance of the third-person narrative strategy, Beckett's stage characters are dramatising the central conflict of the self in straits. The shortcomings of language in its ascribed representative role are to be exposed in Beckett's theatre as one of the foundations, if not the chief foundation, for the self's incapacity towards definition and acceptance.

Both Mrs Rooney and Winnie narrate before their respective aloof husbands a distressing story of a little girl. Both stories feature a little girl of uncertain existence, most likely to be the imaginary projection of both Minnie's and Mrs Rooney's unaccomplished maternal yearnings. Despite the safe shield provided by the third person perspective adopted for the narration of both cryptic accounts, there are certain clues within each narrative performance which do inform of the ineluctable unconscious correspondence between the teller and the told. Mrs Rooney attributes the story of the unborn girl to "one of these new mind doctors" she once listened to at a lecture. The unborn girl of the story is nothing but the narrative alter-ego of Minnie, Mrs Rooney's own lost child (dead, unborn, we do not know) whose name Mrs Rooney calls out every time she breaks down during her walking journey to the station. This could well be the kind of "wretchedness" on which she invariably broods awake at night, "tossing to and fro," according to a vexed Mr Rooney (Beckett 1990: 196).

Winnie resorts to story-telling in Act II, when she is embedded up to her neck into the mound, and she is increasingly aware of the survival contrivances of the mind, of the imagination, of memory. Still, her frenzy of words, misquotations, naughty memories and a couple of interrupted narrations, on the one hand, together with her frivolous rummaging of disparate objects she produces from her bag (toothbrush, comb, mirror, toothpaste, lipstick, magnifying-glass, revolver, spectacles, handkerchief) on the other, are her two main sets of resources not to collapse into silence and physical stasis. Her "two lamps," as she calls them, "when one goes out the other burns brighter [Pause] Oh yes,

great mercies" (Beckett 1990: 153). Little Mildred's story is Winnie's life-vest which temporarily distracts her overwhelming dead-end consciousness: "There is my story of course, when all else fails" (Beckett 1990: 163). Once again, the narrator's choice for a third-person narrative indirectly unveils relevant data about the teller's pent-up traumas, which in the case of Winnie, have a two-fold origin, largely coinciding with the two most likely hypotheses around the figure of little Mildred.

According to the first speculative line of thought, Mildred would represent Winnie's imaginary daughter who is growing up in the surrogate womb of her mind during her daily ramblings and according to her moody needs. At the narrative present moment, for instance, little Mildred is "four or five already and has recently been given a big waxen doll" (Beckett 1990: 163). This theory would accordingly serve to understand little Mildred's story as Winnie's narrative exorcism of her maternal unfulfillment. The second line of speculation would consider little Mildred as a displaced image of Winnie herself. Interestingly enough, Winnie "dresses up" little Mildred in her narrative with her own accessories (white straw hat and pearly necklace). Furthermore, Mildred's "china blue eyes that open and shut" (Beckett 1990: 163) are significantly evocative of Winnie's reference of the eye as the vigilant organ of the mind:

> How often… [pause]… I say how often I have said, Ignore it, Winnie, ignore the bell, pay no heed, just sleep and wake, sleep and wake, as you please, open and close the eyes, as you please, or in the way you find most helpful. [Pause.] Open and close the eyes, Winnie, open and close, always that […] (Beckett 1990: 163).

Winnie proposes a certainly disconcerting narrative scenario featuring a bold little Mildred stealthily undressing and scolding her doll in the middle of the night, as well as the ensuing sudden presence of a mouse running up Mildred's little thigh. This second theory points towards Winnie's paradoxical sexual attitude, both lascivious and prudish, an explosive kind of blend with understandable origins in her actual sexual frustrations.

Tiyatro Araştırmaları Dergisi, 23:2007 • ISSN: 1300-1523

Winnie not only reports little Mildred's screams on feeling the disturbing mouse on her thighs, but she cannot help screaming herself, what could be described as the definite evidence of ultimate coalescence between narrator and her story. In other words, Winnie is in fact both narrating and screaming for help. Realising Willie's utter lack of attention to her story she decides to postpone its climatic narrative moment of the mouse for a little later. But she cannot hold it back much longer. Her rambling digressions become more and more spiritless, invariably informed by a Winnie at the end of her tether (i.e. her mentioning of coming and going cries in her head; of sadness after singing comparable to sadness after sexual intercourse; her usual melancholic misquotations, and the resumption of the Shower-Cooker story). It is "too late," she says to Willie, coolly, after she has managed to finish little Mildred's story with an all too truthful, and piercing, rendering of Mildred's screams. Winnie has reached exhaustion as well as painful consciousness through the act of narration. Her happy days are certainly over, death looming close ahead. Still, not unlike all Beckett's characters, she meritoriously keeps abreast of hope through the company of her words until the very end: "There is so little one can bring up, one brings up all. [Pause.] All one can" (Beckett 1990: 165).

Hamm cares much more about his so-called "chronicle" than he pretends to. For underneath Hamm's apparently naïve summoning of his family members to his daily session of story-telling – ridiculous, anyway, before the patent evidence of dysfunctional family traits suggested by the surreal scenario proposed – lies, in fact, Hamm's patriarchal and centripetal anxiety – he orders Clov to move his wheelchair to "his place," that is, right in the centre of the room (Beckett 1990: 104-5) – together with his imperative need to make some sense of his life-story of parental neglect and loneliness. Such anxiety is betrayed indeed in Hamm's particular fuss about every single element within the narrative event (listeners, the effect of his narrative voice and tone, as well as of his "technique" and constant editorial changes within the narrative unfolding of events) disclosing the actual "historical" reasons for Hamm's present disparaging and disbelieving behaviour.

Essentially, Hamm's chronicle has to do with a man and his son. The son is starving and his father crawls all the way towards Hamm imploring his aid. Both character and narrator of his narrative, Hamm assumes a patronising and disdainful attitude which significantly contrasts God's fatherly and providential manner in the many biblical narrative counterparts[3] echoed in Hamm's chronicle.

In fact, the scriptural feel of the events narrated, together with Hamm's assuming the role of hyper-judgemental and self-conscious narrator reveal Hamm's ultimate vindication of what he believes is the only real type of fatherhood, that is, a genuinely disconcerting and demystified human version of the supposed altruist and providential divine Fatherhood. According to Kristin Morrison, in his chronicle Hamm "records a bereft existence, a modern inversion of 'providential history'" (1983: 28).

Hamm's disbelief about altruist and providential Fatherhood is present both in his role as narrator and character of his own narration, as well as during his narrative intermissions. As narrator and character of his chronicle Hamm keeps a suspicious scrutiny of the father's apparent care for his son. Still the man's selfless attitude for his starving son puzzles Hamm, who has never experienced such a paternal love as a child. Hamm finds refuge for his perplexity in his distant and cynical formulations: "Use your head, can't you, use your head, you're on earth, there's no cure for that! […] 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?" (Beckett 1990: 118).

Hamm interrupts his narration for he feels he has arrived at a destabilising impasse for his anomalous interpretation of fatherhood. Outside his narration it is easier for him to torment Nagg about his sugar-plums with impunity, to scornfully disparage the heavenly Father from Nagg's prayer ("The bastard! He doesn't exist!," Beckett 1990: 119), as well as to keep a domineering attitude upon Clov. That is, Hamm makes use of

[3] Kristin Morrison alludes to several biblical stories as potential narrative inspiration to Hamm's caustic and twisted narrative version. In these stories "a parent intercedes on behalf of a dying child […] the passionate commitment of the parent is shown by his or her traveling a distance and being undeterred by difficulties" (1983: 28-9). The great faith of the parent moves God's divinity to provide miraculous sustenance. Morrison mentions in this respect the story of Jairus's daughter (Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56); the story of the centurion and his servant (Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10); the story of the father seeking cure of his epileptic son (Mark 9:14-29, Matthew 17:14-21); the story of the Syrophoenician woman and her persistence on behalf of her afflicted daughter (Matthew 15:21; Mark 7:24-30), as well as the story of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8-24).

Tiyatro Araştırmaları Dergisi, 23:2007 • ISSN: 1300-1523

his narrative intermission to vent his hostility against both failing fathers (Our Father and Nagg) and a submissive son (Clov). Hamm resumes his narration only to break it off again at the same point. Hamm had treacherously tempted the man in his chronicle to take him into his service. Before accepting the job as a gardener, the man "asks if he may have his little boy with him" (Beckett 1990: 122). According to Kristin Morrison, "Hamm seems not to be able to move the narrative beyond this point" (1983: 37). He alleges inspirational drain after "the prolonged narrative effort" (Beckett 1990: 122), but in fact, Hamm is unable to face such genuine benevolence and altruism on the part of the man towards his son.

Hamm's narrative and existential wariness betrays his futile attempt to neutralise the pain of his personal experiences both as a mistreated and abandoned son, and as a failed and abusive father. The central dramatic conflict in Endgame certainly lies in the intricate net of interrelations – echoed, disguised, even ciphered – between Hamm's chronicle, its detached record of intimate past events, as well as the bizarre scenario of blathering, decrepit, inert, characters inhabiting two ashbins and a chair in castors, which makes up the dramatic present of the play.

Beckettian Dismantling of Hegemonic Narratives

In his plays Beckett advances in many ways Jean-François Lyotard's appeal to the narrative, dissenting, imagination of his so-called petits récits, to be confronted with the monolithic and imposed apparatus of the "Grand Narratives" along human history. His "abdication of authorial power and [his] appeal to the creative intervention of readers mark Beckett out as one of the founding fathers of, and one of the major witnesses to, our Post-Modern condition" (Worton 1994: 85).

In this sense, Beckett is particularly sceptical about the supposedly irrefutable legitimacy and veracity of biblical narratives. Beckett will accordingly propose a systematic, though

subtle, stage subversion of the canonical Story of Salvation as told in the Scriptures. Such counter-narrative commitment may be traced, for instance, in the significant title of Beckett's radio-play All That Fall; in Vladimir's revisionist reading of the Gospels' inconsistently narrated story of the two thieves, and perhaps most structurally, in Hamm's dosed chronicle of demystified Fatherly Providence.

All That Fall is, according to James Knowlson, largely informed with Beckett's profound protestant agnosticism (Knowlson 1996: 430). In fact, the radio-play takes its title from Psalm 145, verse 14, which Mrs Rooney quotes at the end of the radio-play answering to her husband's question about the text for the following day's sermon: "The Lord upholdeth all that fall and raiseth up all those that be bowed down" (Beckett 1990: 198). Both seventy-year-old lame Mrs Rooney and her blind husband greet the biblical passage with wild, bitter, laughter. Mrs Rooney, who has described herself as "a hysterical old hag […] destroyed with sorrow and pining and gentility and church-going and fat and rheumatism and childlessness" (Beckett 1990: 174) has lived enough miseries to grow cynical and sceptical about the Scriptures. At one point she even questions the accuracy and reliability of two biblical references: Jesus entering Jerusalem on an ass's colt, on the one hand, and his parable about the birds in the air[4]:

MRS ROONEY It wasn't an ass's colt at all, you know, I asked the Regius Professor.

[Pause.]

MR ROONEY He should know.

MRS ROONEY Yes, it was a hinny, he rode into Jerusalem or wherever it was on a hinny. [Pause.] It's like the sparrows, than many of which we are of more value, they weren't sparrows at all.

MR ROONEY Than many of which!… You exaggerate, Maddy.

MRS ROONEY [With emotion.] They weren't sparrows at all!

MR ROONEY Does that put our price up? (Beckett 1990: 197).

[4] "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:29-31; see also Luke 12:6-7).

There may have been no messianic triumph, and man may not be any precious object worthy of special care, as Mr Rooney's final ironic comment suggests (Morrison 1983: 81).

The biblical narratives, both historical event and didactic parable, as well as the text of the sermon proclaim a world of bonanza that is far from matching the Rooneys' reality of misery and sterility. "The sacred stories are not true and do not comfort […] The Lord does not sustain Mr and Mr Rooney" (Morrison 1983: 81). On the contrary, the petis récits of their personal obsessive idiosyncrasies, their pent-up resentment and spasms of hostility and destructiveness are a much more reliable expression of their real world, while at the same time offer protection, within their elusive nature, to the speaker from too immediate a revelation. The radio-play's last aural tableau – Mr and Mrs Rooney silently drag themselves home in the middle of a tempest of wind and rain, after having listened to Jerry's striking account of the dead little child, silencing the self-evident implication of Mr Rooney's hypothetical infanticide – may hint at the perpetuation of the status quo of eluded perception, silence, as well as shielding uses of language and narration.

For all its apparent gratuitous nature, the story of the two thieves crops up early in Waiting for Godot into Vladimir's mind, not only "to pass the time" in a desperately boring situation, but, in its explicitly problematic textual uncertainties, it is again directly related to Beckett's agnostic contemplation of absence of Salvation and of futile hope. Vladimir has grown alert to the chipped-off side of canonical Scriptures, and not unlike Mrs Rooney, his acute sense of language consciousness has made him aware of the misleading mechanisms operating in culture, in particular within canonical narratives and their prescribed interpretative readings:

> VLADIMIR […] how is it that of the four Evangelists only one speaks of a thief being saved. The four of them were there – or thereabouts – and only one speaks of a thief being saved […] One out of four. Of the other three two don't mention any thie-

ves at all and the third says that both of them abused him […] 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 (Beckett 1990: 14-15).

As Kristin Morrison suggests, the story of the two thieves, had it not been for its serious blemish in its veracity and consistency of its versions, could have provided both its narrator (Vladimir) and its listener (Estragon) with a strong sense of significance and history. "But if the history is only fiction, significance becomes problematic. Was the thief ever really saved? From hell? From death? Or is that only a story, with various versions? Will Godot ever come? And if he does, will they really be saved or is that hope, too, only a fiction?" (Morrison 1983: 19).

Finally, in Endgame we encounter a sustained dramatic subversion of the traditional role of providential Fatherhood – by and large, a cultural image of supreme selflessness and altruism divulged by the Scriptures and their stories. Accordingly, Hamm emerges, both in his chronicle as in the play's dysfunctional dramatic present, as "the god who damns by withholding or being unable to provide the means which make life possible, whether it be bread in the wilderness or light in the darkness" (Morrison 1983: 35). The first of Morrison's allusions refers to Hamm's haughty refusal to offer bread to the man's famished child of his haughtily narrated chronicle:

> […] Come on, man, speak up, what is it you want from me, I have to put up my holly. [Pause.] Well to make it short it finally transpired that what he wanted from me was… bread for his brat. Bread? But I have no bread, it doesn't agree with me (Beckett 1990: 117).

The second allusion refers to Clov's reproaching Hamm for his indolence manifested to old Mother Pegg in the past:

> CLOV [Harshly.] When old Mother Pegg asked you for oil for her lamp and you told her to get out to hell, you knew what was happening then, no? [Pause.] You know what she died of, Mother Pegg? Of darkness (Beckett 1990: 129).

This latter passage, according to Kristin Morrison, is a clear reference to the New Testament parable about the wise and the foolish virgins[5]. Both narratives associate darkness with damnation. What is more, Clov's harsh, admonishing words to Hamm make us consider the hidden selfish and callous side of the supposedly wise virgins from the biblical narration, as well as Beckett's disbelieved contemplation of the world as a ruthless rat race ruled by the law of the jungle, with deep, subliminal, seeds within canonical Biblical narrations.

Incredulity and disillusion are Hamm's and Clov's respective and personal readings of a number of alleged "universal truths" at the final stage of their lives proposed in Endgame. Both as narrator and central character of his chronicle, Hamm reveals himself as a cynical God sceptic, not only of the very world he has created, but also of his presumed almighty benevolence. Clov, on the other hand, assumes the role of the deeply disillusioned son, who feels betrayed by the "Grand Narratives" of paternal love, friendship, the world's beauty, ultimate order and eventual Salvation. All those stories "they said to him," though, do not match at all with his private experiences in life:

> CLOV [Fixed gaze, tonelessly, towards auditorium.] They said to me, That's love, yes yes, not a doubt, now you see how […] How easy it is. They said to me, That's friendship, yes yes, no question you've found it. They said to me, Here's the place, stop, raise your head and look at all that beauty. That order! They said to me, Come now, you're not a brute beast,

[5] "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 25:1-13).

think upon these things and you'll see how all becomes clear. And simple! They said to me, What skilled attention they get, all these dying of their wounds […] I ask the words that remain – sleeping, waking, morning, evening. They have nothing to say […] I say to myself that the earth is extinguished, though I never saw it lit […] (Beckett 1990: 131-2).

Tiyatro Araştırmaları Dergisi, 23:2007 • ISSN: 1300-1523

Selected Bibliography

Beckett, Samuel (1990). London: Faber & Faber.

Morrison, Kristin (1983). Canters and Chronicles: The Use of Narrative in the Plays of Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Knowlson, James (1996). Damned to Fame: the Life of Samuel Beckett. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Worton, Michael (1994). "Waiting for Godot and Endgame: Theatre as Text." In John Pilling (ed.) The Cambridge Companion to Beckett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 67-87.