

SAMUEL BECKETT'S TRILOGY

DR. ANJU BALA



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please contact:

BLUEROSE PUBLISHERS
www.BlueRoseONE.com
info@bluerosepublishers.com
+91 8882 898 898
+4407342408967

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my parents

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my husband, Prof. Hans Raj, for his unwavering support, patience, and encouragement throughout this journey. My heartfelt thanks also go to my beloved sons, Dr. Aryaman, Dr. Anuj, and Aahan. Your presence in my life has been a constant source of inspiration, and I am profoundly grateful for your love and belief in my work.

Preface

Samuel Beckett born in Foxrock, Ireland, in 1906, Samuel Beckett grew up in a prosperous Protestant family before his life was defined by restless movement and profound personal crises. In the 1930s, he endured a period of severe depression and psychosomatic illness, leading him to seek intensive psychoanalysis in London. His life was dramatically altered by his move to Paris in 1937 and the subsequent onset of World War II. During the German occupation, Beckett joined the French Resistance, working as a courier and secretary while living in constant fear of the Gestapo. This harrowing period, which witnessed the destruction of European society, proved to be the pivotal catalyst for his artistic transformation and his rejection of conventional narrative structures. Beckett's career is marked by several defining milestones that established him as a cornerstone of twentieth-century literature, The publication of *Molloy* (1951), *Malone Dies* (1951), and *The Unnamable* (1953) is considered his most significant literary contribution. In 1969, Beckett was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in recognition of his body of work. He successfully moved literature toward an avant-garde style, prioritizing the exploration of raw, pre-reflective consciousness over traditional plot-driven storytelling. Popularity and the Trilogy Beckett gained immense critical and academic popularity through *The Trilogy* by effectively turning his personal suffering into a universal exploration of the human condition. His rise to prominence was fueled by the following, A Radical New Voice: The war convinced Beckett that the "old world was dead," and he responded by writing in a completely new way, dismantling traditional structures of beginning, middle, and end. *The Intersection of Trauma and Philosophy*: By weaving his own psychological struggles and the collective trauma of a post-

war Europe into his work, he created a profound, albeit fragmented, mirror of the human experience that resonated deeply with the era's existential concerns. Academic and Intellectual Impact: The trilogy became an inexhaustible source of inquiry because it forces readers and critics to actively participate in the creation of meaning, bridging the gap between existential, psychoanalytic, and postmodern thought. Samuel Beckett, the Irish-born avant-garde novelist and playwright, stands as one of the most formidable literary figures of the twentieth century. Awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969, his life was as deeply marked by exile and trauma as his literary masterpieces. Born into a prosperous Protestant family in Foxrock, a suburb of Dublin, in 1906, Beckett's early life was one of relative comfort. However, a profound psychological crisis struck in the 1930s—a period characterized by severe depression and psychosomatic illnesses—which forced him to undergo intensive psychoanalysis in London with the renowned therapist Dr. Wilfred Bion. This personal struggle with the depths of his own psyche, coupled with his restless wanderings between Dublin, London, Paris, and Germany, forged a creative genius fundamentally at odds with conventional society. Having established the monumental significance of his epic prose cycle—The Trilogy, comprising *Molloy* (1951), *Malone Dies* (1951), and *The Unnamable* (1953)—I now turn my attention to how his life and the turbulent age he lived through directly shaped its radical narrative architecture. The trilogy, first published in French by the Éditions de Minuit, stands as Beckett's most significant work. As in ancient Greek tetralogies, these three novels form a larger whole while each retains its independent entity. To fully appreciate the trilogy, one must first understand the grim socio-political crucible in which it was forged. Beckett moved permanently to Paris in 1937, and his life there was violently disrupted by the outbreak of World War II. Refusing to remain neutral, he joined the French Resistance movement in 1941, serving as a courier and secretary, often facing the existential terror of being hunted by the Gestapo. This period—living in a state of perpetual fear, witnessing the

systematic collapse of European civilization, and experiencing the crushing weight of state-sponsored violence—was the ultimate catalyst for his literary evolution. He once famously noted that the war made him realize that “the old world was dead” and that he had to write in a completely new way. Thus, *The Trilogy* is not a mere intellectual exercise; it is a visceral, post-traumatic artistic response to the horrors of the Holocaust, the devastation of occupied France, and the widespread moral bankruptcy of a continent ravaged by war. A substantial body of criticism already exists on his work; however, while many have traced his personal biography and stylistic evolution, a full understanding requires a rigorous engagement with the philosophical, psychoanalytic, and socio-political theories that underpin his creative genius. In this book, I focus on three interrelated theoretical frameworks that make the trilogy revolutionary: Existentialism and Phenomenology: Beckett plunges into the raw, pre-reflective state of consciousness, abandoning external plot in favor of an inner, fragmented stream where wandering protagonists helplessly observe their own decaying minds. Psychoanalysis and the Uncanny: Rooted in Beckett's own analysis, the narrative voice mirrors the compulsion to repeat, while the fragmented body represents the struggle to define the "self" against the mirror of language within the "Symbolic Order". Postmodernism and Deconstruction: Beckett systematically dismantles the structural oppositions that underpin classical fiction—beginning vs. end, subject vs. object, meaning vs. nonsense—forcing the reader to actively participate in creating meaning. Beckett's genius lies in transforming his own crippling depression, his traumatic wartime experiences, and his existential exile into a universal, psychological, and linguistic crisis.

Introduction

Samuel Beckett, the Irish-born avant-garde novelist and playwright, stands as one of the most formidable literary figures of the twentieth century. Awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969, his life was as deeply marked by exile and trauma as his literary masterpieces. Born into a prosperous Protestant family in Foxrock, a suburb of Dublin, in 1906, Beckett's early life was one of relative comfort. However, a profound psychological crisis struck in the 1930s—a period characterized by severe depression and psychosomatic illnesses—which forced him to undergo intensive psychoanalysis in London with the renowned therapist Dr. Wilfred Bion. This personal struggle with the depths of his own psyche, coupled with his restless wanderings between Dublin, London, Paris, and Germany, forged a creative genius fundamentally at odds with conventional society. Having established the monumental significance of his epic prose cycle—*The Trilogy*, comprising *Molloy* (1951), *Malone Dies* (1951), and *The Unnamable* (1953)—in the preceding overview, I now turn my attention to how his life and the turbulent age he lived through directly shaped its radical narrative architecture. It is my objective in this chapter to demonstrate that Beckett's influence cuts across not only Europe but also the entire corpus of world literature, precisely because his work is the ultimate literary distillation of both a fractured personal identity and a fractured century.

To fully appreciate the trilogy, one must first understand the grim socio-political crucible in which it was forged. Beckett moved permanently to Paris in 1937, and his life there was violently disrupted by the outbreak of World War II. Refusing to remain neutral, he joined the French Resistance movement in 1941, serving as a courier and secretary, often facing the existential terror of being hunted by the Gestapo. His closest friends were

tortured and executed, and Beckett himself narrowly escaped capture before fleeing to the unoccupied zone of southern France, where he lived as a farmhand in extreme poverty and isolation. This period—living in a state of perpetual fear, witnessing the systematic collapse of European civilization, and experiencing the crushing weight of state-sponsored violence—was the ultimate catalyst for his literary evolution. He once famously noted that the war made him realize that “the old world was dead” and that he had to write in a completely new way. Thus, *The Trilogy* is not a mere intellectual exercise; it is a visceral, post-traumatic artistic response to the horrors of the Holocaust, the devastation of occupied France, and the widespread moral bankruptcy of a continent ravaged by war.

It is precisely this existential devastation that aligns Beckett's masterpiece with modern critical theory. A substantial body of criticism, consisting of learned discussions and exegeses in various journals, already exists on his work. However, while many have traced his personal biography and stylistic evolution, I contend that a full understanding requires a rigorous engagement with the philosophical, psychoanalytic, and socio-political theories that underpin his creative genius. Therefore, in this chapter, I intend to focus specifically on three interrelated theoretical frameworks that make the trilogy so revolutionary:

First is Existentialism and Phenomenology. Beckett was profoundly influenced by the French existentialists, particularly Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. Yet, Beckett took their philosophy a step further—where they argued for human freedom and choice, Beckett's trilogy plunges into the raw, pre-reflective state of consciousness. Drawing heavily on the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger, the trilogy abandons external plot and action in favor of the inner, fragmented stream of consciousness. The wandering protagonists—Molloy, Malone, and the Unnamable—do not actively live in the world; rather, they helplessly observe their own decaying minds, exposing the

fundamental alienation of the modern subject in a post-war world stripped of its former certainties.

Second is Psychoanalysis and the Uncanny (Freud and Lacan). The trilogy is a profound exploration of the unconscious mind, an exploration directly rooted in Beckett's own years of psychoanalysis. The narrative voice in *The Unnamable*, which famously declares "I can't go on, I'll go on," mirrors the psychoanalytic concept of the compulsion to repeat—a drive that forces the psyche to endlessly revisit traumatic states. Furthermore, Beckett's obsession with the fragmented body (the crippled Molloy, the immobile Malone) can be read through Lacanian psychoanalysis as the struggle to define the "self" against the mirror of language. Beckett creates a narrative where the protagonist is trapped in the "Symbolic Order," forever failing to articulate his true identity, resulting in a profound linguistic anxiety that parallels the psychological devastation of a generation traumatized by war.

Third is Postmodernism and Deconstruction. Perhaps most impressively, Beckett's trilogy is widely considered a foundational text of postmodern literature. In the tradition of Jacques Derrida's deconstruction, Beckett systematically dismantles the structural oppositions that underpin classical fiction: beginning vs. end, subject vs. object, meaning vs. nonsense. The trilogy physically dissolves the boundary between fiction and reality; characters dissolve into each other, and the narrator often turns out to be a character who is merely writing the story. This self-referentiality—or metafiction—forces the reader to abandon passive consumption and actively participate in creating meaning from nonsense. This radical linguistic breakdown is Beckett's ultimate artistic rebellion against the rigid systems of logic and language that failed to prevent the horrors of the Second World War.

My methodological approach is rooted in the belief that art is a social product, and I posit that it would be impossible to reach a

complete understanding of these texts while disregarding the profound sense of dislocation that characterized the post-war generation from which they spring. Beckett's genius lies in transforming his own crippling depression, his traumatic wartime experiences, and his existential exile into a universal, psychological, and linguistic crisis. It is precisely this dialectic—the tension between an isolated, decaying consciousness and the social world it can no longer inhabit—that I aim to dissect. I am mindful that even the most reluctant of critics have grudgingly conceded the profound intellectual depth of Beckett's despair. Therefore, in the following pages, I propose to unpack not only what Beckett wrote, but how his personal anguish and the socio-political ruination of Europe gave birth to a trilogy that remains an inexhaustible source of academic inquiry.

Contents

Chapter 1: Molloy: The Absurdity of the Human Quest.....	1
Chapter 2: Samuel Beckett's Malone Dies: A Critical Analysis.....	35
Chapter 3: The Unnamable: A Study of Self, Language, and Existential Void.....	53
Conclusion.....	71

Chapter 1

Molloy: The Absurdity of the Human Quest

The most important work of Beckett is contained in his three novels (a trilogy) which go under the titles *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *The Unnamable*. This well-known trilogy of his time was first published in French by the Éditions de Minuit under the titles *Molloy* (1950), *Malone Meurt*

(1951), and *L'Innommable* (1952). *Molloy* was translated by the author in collaboration with Patrick Bowles; it was published in 1955 by the Olympia Press. *Malone Dies*, in the author's translation, was first published by John Calder (Publishers) Ltd. (1956), and the whole trilogy, including *The Unnamable*, was first published together by John Calder (Publishers) Ltd. (1959). *Molloy*, the first novel of the trilogy, is considered to be Beckett's most impressive novel, rated as "...the first of any of his books to bring him fame." The novel was an immediate success. John Fletcher further remarks: "Unlike its predecessors, *Molloy* was from the start a modest commercial success, as well as an amazing succès de critique." Before we start commenting on the individual novels, it would be fruitful if we keep in mind the significance of the trilogy. In ancient Greece, when the dramatists started competing at the festival of the City Dionysia—a festival in the honor of Dionysus, the god of festivity—each dramatist had to present four plays. This was called a tetralogy, of which the first

three plays were tragedies and the fourth play was a satyr play. It was the practice of the earlier poets up to Aeschylus to present the three plays on the same myth or story. Each play, dealing with incidents in the same myth, would depict the action at different periods of time. The only surviving trilogy is the Oresteia, which contains three plays: Agamemnon, Choephoroi, and The Eumenides, which describe the story of the House of Atreus in three separate incidents. Thus, the plays in the trilogy are independent units while being part of a larger whole. In the 20th century, many novelists and dramatists have used this form. In the case of Beckett, three novels-Molloy, Malone Dies, and The Unnamable therefore form a larger whole while each retains its independent entity.

Part I: Molloy

Molloy starts with a character lying in his mother's bed in his mother's room. He is the first of Beckett's protagonists who is confined to bed because he is crippled. The protagonist has been brought to this room by somebody whose identity is not disclosed and who takes the pages which Molloy writes and gives him money for his labor; as it is described in the following lines:

"I am in my mother's room. It's I who live there now. I don't know how I got there. Perhaps in

an ambulance, certainly a vehicle of some kind. I was helped. I'd never have got there alone.

There's this man who comes every week. Perhaps I got here thanks to him... So many

pages, so much money."

What he is writing at the instance of this man is the novel that we are analyzing. This is the first novel in which the writer is himself telling the story of the fiction being written by him. He elucidates: "Unlike Beckett's earlier English fiction where the author enjoys the relatively omniscient position of the third-person narrative,

the hero now tells his own story in the first person, writing his monologue in a notebook which, supposedly, is identical in content to the volume we are reading," says Robinson. The protagonist tells us that "He's a queer one, the one who comes to see me... It was he told me I'd begun all wrong, that I should have begun differently. He must be right. I began at the beginning, like an old ballocks."

(p. 8) Though it is the beginning, it is also nearly the end, as it is supported in the narrative of the novel: "Here's my beginning... whereas now it's nearly the end."

(p. 8) The action of the novel, therefore, describes how he reached his present location. He doesn't know whether his mother is alive or dead. He also probably has a son about whom he is not sure. He has a "Premonition of the last but one but one."

(p. 8) He is also conscious of some guilt or sin which comes to his mind invariably: "It's my fault. Fault? That was the word. But what fault?"

(p. 8) However, Watt, the protagonist of Beckett's earlier novel, was free from any intimation of guilt or sin, though Sam reports that the first time he met him, Watt resembled Christ, "His face was bloody, his hand also, and thorns were in his scalp. His resemblance, at that moment, to the Christ believed by Bosch, then hanging in Trafalgar Square, was so striking, that I remarked it." Molloy, therefore, is the first protagonist who starts with a sense of sin. At the beginning of his story, the protagonist saw two persons whom he denominates as A and C. John Fletcher states: "In the French text, these men are designated as A and B, and they are still largely A and B in the English New World Writing extract of 1954, but in the definitive translation of 1955 they have become A and C, a possible reference to Abel and Cain." In case their identification with Abel and Cain is sustained, then the novel takes on a deeper significance of a real conflict. Some indications are made available to the readers that the hills where C is traveling are dangerous, as the description goes: "The

treacherous hills where fearfully he ventured were no doubt only known to him from afar. But now he knows these hills, that is to say he knows them better, and if ever again he sees them from afar it will be I think with other eyes, and not only that but within all that inner space one never sees, the brain and heart and other caverns where thought and feeling dance their sabbath, all that too quite differently disposed." (p. 10) The narrative of the novel moves towards a climax when the protagonist refers to not only a journey in the external world but also articulates its counterpart in the microcosm. In this context, referring to C, the protagonist remarks that the man was carrying a stout stick for thrusting himself onward and as a defense against 'dogs and marauders', as it is aptly described in an ironical way: "Yes, night was gathering, but the man was innocent, greatly innocent, what business has innocence here?"

(p. 10) The protagonist thus partly identifies himself with the figure of this C, commenting thereby: "I watched him recede, overtaken (myself) by his anxiety, at least by an anxiety which was not necessarily his, but of which as it were he partook. Who knows if it wasn't my own anxiety overtaking him."

(pp. 10-11) Evidently, therefore, the protagonist is shown on one of the rocks where he exclaims with nervousness, "I crouched like Belacqua, or Sordello, I forget."

(p. 11) It may be pointed out here that these two characters appear to have been taken from Dante, whom Beckett had used in his earlier fiction. It is interesting to see that out of the two men A and C that the protagonist watches, one goes back to the town and the other away from the town, but everything appears to be uncertain. He is not aware of the fact whether the man saw him, whether he was present there or not. He is also not confident whether it is A or C who goes back to the town, as it is referred to in the text:

"But in spite of my soul's leap out to him, at the end of its elastic, I saw him only darkly, because

*of dark and then because of terrain, in the folds of which
he disappeared from time to time... I*

*felt the first stars tremble, and my hand on my knee and
above all the other wayfarer, A or C, I*

don't remember, going resignedly home."

(p. 11) Further, the narrative deepens with a sense of uncertainty when we come to know that the man was accompanied by a dog of Pomeranian breed. We also discover that the protagonist is physically lame and is not able to follow someone. After watching the man and finding it difficult to distinguish between himself and the man, he raises the question to himself as to what he was doing there, and shows his ambivalence in the following words: "And I, what was I doing there, and why come? These are things that we shall try and discover. But these are things we must not take seriously."

(p. 14) It's in this uncertain state of mind that the protagonist describes the countryside in which he finds himself. However, he makes up his mind to go and see his Mother, as he affirms his decision: "But talking of the craving for a fellow, let me observe that having waked between eleven o'clock and midday (I heard the angelus, recalling the incarnation, shortly after) I resolved to go and see my mother."

(p. 16) His decision to see his mother shows both urgency and resolution of his mind. So the reason for his going to see his mother was connected with the need to establish his relations on a less precarious footing. He, therefore, ties his crutches on a bicycle and so mounted started his journey, as he describes it thus: "So I got up, adjusted my crutches and went down to the road, where I found my bicycle

(didn't know I had one) in the same place I must have left it. Which enables me to remark that, crippled though I was, I was no mean cyclist, at that period."

(p. 16) The narrative makes us believe one significant development quite clear: that the beginning of the novel recalls many of the adventure stories where the hero equips himself for a journey that will result in an ordeal in the long run. However, this is an anti-romantic romance that begins the novel, comparable to Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, as it appears in the prophetic statement thus: "I propped the foot of my stiff leg (I forget which, now they are both stiff) on the projecting front axle, and pedalled with the other. It was a chainless bicycle, with a free-wheel, if such a bicycle exists."

(p. 16) It is quite amusing to see that in the first stage of his journey, the protagonist reaches the ramparts of the town. There seems to have been a regulation according to which those who reach this part had to dismount, as it is aptly stated: "Yes, cyclists entering and leaving town are required by the police to dismount, cars to go into bottom gear and horse-drawn vehicles to slow down to a walk."

(p. 20) Although he was having difficulty in pushing his bicycle due to his physical disabilities, yet at this stage, he was hailed by a policeman who asked him what he was doing. With a sense of courage, the protagonist told the policeman that he was resting. Again, the attitude of courage of the protagonist soon enters into a mood of confusion and indeterminacy, as not to understand the rationale for being stopped by the policeman: "But a little further on I heard myself hailed. I raised my head and saw a policeman. Elliptically speaking, for it was only later, by way of induction, or deduction, I forget which, that I knew what it was."

(p. 20) The protagonist here expresses his doubt and shows his difficulties whether he answered the policeman or not, as it is made clear by him thus: "So it always is when I'm reduced to confabulation, I honestly believe I have answered the question I am asked and in reality I do nothing of the kind."

(p. 20) It appears that the protagonist had violated some traffic regulations, as he feels: "it ended in my understanding that my

way of resting, my attitude when at rest astride my bicycle, my arms on the handlebars, my head on my arms, was a violation of I don't know what, public order, public decency."

(p. 20) The policeman, therefore, asks for his papers. Here again, Beckett indulges in his vein of comic exaggeration: "'your papers', he said, I knew it a moment later. 'Not at all', I said, 'not at all'. 'Your papers!' he cried. 'Ah, my papers.' Now the only papers I carry with me are bits of newspaper, to wipe myself, you understand, when I have a stool. In a panic I took this paper from my pocket and thrust it under his nose." (p. 21) The psychological dilemma of the protagonist further gets complicated when at the police station he is asked questions which the protagonist hardly understands. For instance, as the description goes: "At the police station I was haled before a very strange official. Dressed in plain clothes, in his shirt-sleeves, he was sprawling in an arm-chair, his feet on his desk, a straw hat on his head and protruding from his mouth a thin flexible object I couldn't identify." (pp. 21-22) The protagonist is not able to account for his actions. He is also not able to tell the address of his mother, whose surname also he forgot. He only remembers that she lives near a butcher's market, but he is not even certain of that. He tells the officer that he can reach his mother even in the dark because of its nearness to a slaughterhouse. But he is not certain about it, as he makes himself conscious of the fact thus: "By the shambles, your honour, for from my mother's room, through the closed windows, I had heard, stilling her chatter... It could equally well have been the cattle market, near which she lived."

(p. 22) In the same spirit of comical satire, Beckett then describes a woman who was probably a social worker thus: "But suddenly a woman rose up before me, a big fat woman dressed in black, or rather in mauve. I still wonder today if it wasn't the social worker."

(p. 23) Here Beckett shows his disgust for all types of humanitarian sentiments, as he makes candidly clear his contention:

"Let me tell you this, when social workers offer you, free, gratis and for nothing, something to hinder you from swooning, which with them is an obsession, it is useless to recoil, they will pursue you to the ends of the earth, the vomitory in their hands. The Salvation Army is no better. Against the charitable gesture there is no defence that I know of."

(p. 24) When the protagonist is in extreme despair, he was told that he is free to go. He did not know the reason for this, nor was any reason apparent in the strange behaviour of the authority, as it is made evident in the following lines: "Conscious of my wrongs, knowing now the reasons for my arrest, alive to my irregular situation as revealed by the enquiry, I was surprised to find myself so soon at freedom once again, if that is what it was."

(p. 24) The speculations about the nature of the controlling authorities end this part of his adventures, as explained thus: "Had they succeeded in finding my mother and obtaining from her, or from the neighbours, partial confirmation of my statements? I don't know."

(p. 24) After being released from the police station, the protagonist passes through what appears like open countryside because he meets there a flock of sheep along with the shepherd and the shepherd's dog.

"I heard the shepherd whistle, and I saw him flourishing his crook, and the dog bustling about the flock, which but for him would no doubt have fallen into the canal."

(p. 29) It's, however, not clear as to what is the nature of the landscape, whether it is rural or urban. There seems to be some

haziness about the scene: "All that through a glittering dust and soon through that mist too which rises in me every day and veils the world from me and veils me from myself."

(p. 29) He then continues his journey towards his mother's house and reached the rampart of the town, but he does not know what town he reached, whether it was his mother's or any other town. He then resolves in his mind to ask some passer by the name of the town, but his speculations about the relationship between things and names puzzles him and he says, "And even my sense of identity was wrapped in a namelessness often hard to penetrate, as we have just seen... I think there could be no things but nameless things, no names but thingless names."

(p. 31) While the protagonist is completely absorbed in making a resolution about asking somebody the name of the town, he loses sight of the road and it was at this point,

"When my bicycle ran over a dog."

(p. 32) A very interesting scene ensues after this incident. All the people around pursued him when he tried to run away from the scene of the accident.

*"I was soon overtaken by a bloodthirsty mob of
both sexes and all ages, for I caught a glimpse of white
beards and little, almost angel faces,
and they were preparing to tear me to pieces when the
lady intervened."*

(pp. 32-33) A lady, whose name is not very clear in his mind, is called either a Mrs. Loy or Lousse, for her Christian name, he is not sure, though it is something like Sophie. This lady intervened on his behalf and tried to exculpate him. She says that though he killed her dog named Teddy, yet she was herself on the point of taking the dog to a veterinary to have him put to sleep because, "For Teddy was old, blind, deaf, crippled with rheumatism and perpetually incontinent, night and day, indoors and out of doors."

(p. 33) She, therefore, believes that she owes thanks to this man who had spared her a painful task as well as expense which she will be ill able to afford. The upshot is that the mob dispersed and Molloy prepares to leave this lady, but she is not done with him yet. As a policeman tries to intervene, Lousse rebuffs him and rescues Molloy from the unnecessary harassment of the policeman, but as Molloy tries to leave, she tells him that she needs him and he should stay back at least to bury the dog which he has killed. He also insinuates that he too needs her, "She needed me to help her get rid of her dog, and I needed her, I have forgotten for what. She must have told me, for that was an insinuation I could not decently pass over in silence..." (p. 34) Here Beckett through Molloy expresses the impossibility of communication in the modern world, "And I shall not abandon this subject, to which I shall probably never have occasion to return, with such a storm blowing up, without making this curious observation.... I had said too much."

(p. 34) Molloy accompanies the lady to her house where the dog is buried under a tree. Afterwards, she made him some propositions which in brief are that he should continue to live in her house without any obligation. She would provide him food and clothing gratis and he need not even dress himself or in any way keep himself clean. Molloy also hints that she kept him for sexual purposes. In this lady's house, Molloy's clothes were changed and his beard was shaved off. He also makes certain observations regarding his previous life and particularly about his intellectual achievements. He had at one time studied astronomy and subsequently anthropology and the allied disciplines like psychiatry, in terms of which the expression comes thus: "What I liked in anthropology was its inexhaustible faculty of negation, its relentless definition of man, as though he were no better than God, in terms of what he is not. But my ideas on this subject were always horribly confused, for my knowledge of men was scant and the meaning of being beyond me."

(p. 39) This seems to be an important stage in the development of the protagonist. Molloy speculates on the various ideas connected with the moon, being the symbol of time. He gets confused whether he has started his journey only the night before or whether time has been playing him tricks, as this is paradoxically stated thus: "For all things hang together, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, as the saying is."

(p. 41) What had confused him was the appearance of the full moon seen from the window of the lady in whose house he was staying.

"Had there then elapsed, between that night on the mountain, that night when I saw A and C and then made up my mind to go and see my mother, and this other night, more time than I had thought, namely fourteen full days, or nearly? And if so, what had happened to those fourteen days or nearly, and where they had flown?" (pp. 41-42) Even the room in which Molloy lives is undergoing changes constantly, "Whereas the room, I saw the room but darkly, at each fresh inspection it seemed changed, and that is known as seeing darkly, in the present state of our knowledge." (p. 44)

So at the end of an indefinite period which Molloy cannot specify, he leaves the house of Lousse and starts again in the quest of his mother's house. Hugh Kenner has compared Lousse to Calypso and the policeman to Cyclops, as the comparison is made explicit: "There has been a Calypso, named Lousse, in whose house he stayed some months after an acquaintance founded on running his bicycle over her dog. There has been a cyclopean police sergeant, who

threatened him with a cylindrical ruler." Another important change that takes place in the house of Lousse is that Molloy loses interest in his bicycle. He had called for his bicycle on the very first day when he woke up from his sleep, "I took a step forward and said, my bicycle.

And I said

it again, and again, the same words, until he appeared to understand." (p. 43) Finally, he finds

that he has lost interest in the bicycle completely and a new chapter of his gaining confidence

starts in his life. As far as his health is concerned, he finds that it did not deteriorate during his

stay in the house of Lousse:

"By which I mean that what was already wrong with me got worse and worse, little by little,

as was only to be expected.

But there was kindled no new seat of suffering or infection,

except of course those arising from the spread of existing plethoras and deficiencies.

But I

may very well be wrong. For of the disorders to come, as for example the loss of the toes of

my left foot, no, I am wrong, my right foot, who can say exactly when on my helpless clay

the fatal seeds were sown.

So all I can say, and I do my best to say no more, is that during

my stay with Lousse no more new symptoms appeared, of a pathological nature, I mean

nothing new or strange, nothing I could not have foreseen if I could have, nothing at all

comparable to the sudden loss of half my toes." (pp. 55-56)

This shows that human personality is disintegrating both in the physical as well as the mental

and spiritual aspects. Consequently, when Molloy leaves Lousse's house, he is not dependent

on any external contrivances like a bicycle. The characters in Beckett's trilogy lose their limbs

and various other organs. This has created the problem of characterizing his protagonists as

decrepit individuals who are waiting for their death. In fact, the significance of the loss of limbs

and other human faculties should be understood before approaching Beckett's fiction and his

drama. Hugh Kenner has compared Beckett's protagonists to circus clowns: "these constitute a

unique comic repertoire like European clowns.

The antecedents of his plays are not in literature

but-to take a rare American example-in Emmett Kelly's solemn determination to sweep a

circle of light into a dustpan." Hoffman explains that these clowns are used symbolically to

comment on the nature of the so-called metaphysical certainties. He says, "For Beckett, the

clown's gestures are a way of appealing, solemnly but also wryly, to metaphysical certainties

that in their very nature are guaranteed not to exist; or, assuming their non-existence at the

start, they are comic forms of intellectual concentration."

The Cartesian dichotomy between mind and body reduces the human body to the level of a machine, i.e., remote-controlled by the mind. In Beckett's fiction, the body is shown as constantly

becoming dysfunctional. According to Hoffman, "In the great tradition of nineteenth-century French poetry, the clown is a man reduced to comical-pathetic extremes." In other words, the loss of limbs is symbolic of modern man's loss of personality traits which reduce him to a helpless object, subject to the social forces from whom he has become alienated. Hoffman further compares the antics of the Beckettian protagonist to Charlie Chaplin's gestures. He remarks:

"Chaplin's gestures-the shrug of the shoulders, twitch of the mustache, the bowlegged walk, the mixture of sincerity and sentimentality, above all the survival of incalculable dangers are all of them imitations of a human nature free of pretension and profundity."

Sociologically, these protagonists show the effect of alienation as characterized by Marx in the Philosophical and Economic Manuscripts. According to some sociologists, the static hero who passes through successive states of mind in turn, instead of acting in a situation, is a characteristic of the stage of monopoly capital in modern society. G.P. Frantsov says, "Thus state monopoly capital modifies the old bourgeois individualist outlook in its own way. Of course, the basis of individualism-private property relations-is still there, but it is no longer possible for the individual to display some spirit of enterprise. The ideology of parasitism increasingly constrains the individual, killing all his active and creative elements. Abstract art is an expression of this dulling ideology. These features of parasitism are increasingly intensified as capitalism moves to its decline. The active, creative personality transforming the world is no longer held up as a model. In fiction it is the inward-looking character who ignores the surrounding world that is victorious. Instead of engaging in action, he goes through a succession of mental states." Another comment that Molloy makes is about love. The object of his love is a woman who could have been his mother, even grandmother,

but was not his mother, as he states: "A mug's game in my opinion and tiring on top of that, in the long run."

(p. 56) and he questions himself, "Have I never known true love, after all?"

(p. 57) In the reversal of the romantic convention of love, they meet in a rubbish dump: "This idyll was of short duration. Poor Edith. I hastened her end perhaps. Anyway, it was she who started it, in the rubbish dump, when she laid her hand upon my fly."

(p. 57) Therefore, he finally leaves Lousse's house without any hindrance, "But I left Lousse at last, one warm airless night, saying goodbye, as I might at least have done, and without her trying to hold me back, except perhaps by spells." (p. 59) Molloy hears voices like Aeneas in the Aeneid when he was staying in Carthage with Dido telling him that he should leave the house of Lousse immediately without caring to look for his bicycle, "And I was afraid, if I tried to find out, of wearing out the small voice saying, 'Get out of here, Molloy, take your crutches and get out of here', and which I had taken so long to understand, for I had been hearing it for a long time." (p. 59) He, therefore, went along with the wind, not knowing in which direction was his destination. He next takes up shelter in a blind alley as he was afraid of the policeman stopping him if he remains outside. From this shelter, he was driven out by a man who was perhaps a watchman. Next, he took shelter on a flight of stairs in a lodging house, as it is described in his words: "I, therefore, moved on and ensconced myself on a flight of stairs, in a mean lodging house, because there was no door or it didn't shut, I don't know." (p. 60) Then Molloy wandered about the town when this lodging house started emptying out. He also made an attempt to commit suicide, but his attempt failed. This experience is also made public thus: "For the space of an instant I considered settling down there, making it my lair and sanctuary, for the space of an instant. I took the vegetable knife from my pocket and set about opening my wrist. But pain

soon got the better of me. First I cried out, then I gave up, closed the knife and put it back in my pocket."

(p. 61) The failure of his attempt at committing suicide appears to be something like a moral failure. But he thought that it was a way of life, as he confesses thus: "I wasn't particularly disappointed, in my heart of hearts I had not hoped for anything better. So much for that. And backsliding has always depressed me, but life seems made up of backsliding, and death itself must be a kind of backsliding."

(p. 61) By that time, his second leg also became stiff and he found it very difficult to move. Molloy had stolen some silver and other trifles from Lousse's house, among which there was a little contraption which he did not much understand. Quoting his words, we come to know further: "I had stolen from Lousse a little silver, oh nothing much, massive teaspoons for the most part, and other small objects whose utility I did not grasp, but which seemed as if they might have some value... that is to say composed each of two identical V's, one upper with its opening above, like all V's for that matter..." (p. 63) This particular object inspired Molloy to a kind of veneration and it presented him with a puzzle which he could not hope to solve, "For to know nothing is nothing, not to want to know anything likewise, but to be beyond knowing anything, to know you are beyond knowing anything, that is when peace enters in, to the soul of the incurious seeker."

(p. 64) Molloy found himself next on a seashore. The speculations on the seashore lead him to think about death, but he is no hero, as he explains: "And I for my part have always preferred slavery to death, I mean being put to death. For death is a condition I have never been able to conceive to my satisfaction and which therefore cannot go down in the ledger of weal and woe... yes, the confusion of my ideas on the subject of death was such that I sometimes wondered, believe me or not, if it was not a state of being even worse than life." (p. 68) The most outstanding

event on the seashore is Molloy's attempt to arrange sixteen sucking stones in his four pockets. He makes various permutations of distributing sixteen stones in four of his pockets so that he could always have a fresh sucking stone. Each time he took a new stone from his pocket. As all the possible arrangements fail him, he throws the stones, and the solution to which he rallied in the end was to throw away all the stones but one, which he kept now in one pocket, now in another, and which of course he soon lost or threw away, or gave away, or swallowed. He found himself safe on the seashore, as he states: "I don't remember having been seriously molested. The black speck I was, in the great pale stretch of sand, who could wish it harm?... But when they saw the jetsam was alive, decently if wretchedly clothed, they turned away." (p. 74) Molloy is visited by various men and women on the seashore and particularly one woman approaches, "however, that may be, I see a young woman coming towards me and stopping from time to time to look back at her companions." (p. 75) Hugh Kenner has already pointed out that "Lousse is the Calypso (or Circe?) of the Odyssey, just as the woman who later approaches Molloy on the seashore is its Nausicaa and the police sergeant its Cyclops." It was at this seashore that Molloy's second leg also becomes stiff, "For the old pain, do you follow me, I had got used to it, in a way, yes, in a kind of way. Whereas to the new pain, though of the same family exactly, I had not yet had time to adjust myself... For I no longer had one bad leg plus another more or less good, but now both were equally bad." (p. 77) Molloy, therefore, is not able to hobble around on his crutches but starts crawling, as emotionally he states: "But I am human, I fancy, and my progress suffered from this state of affairs, and from the slow and painful progress it had always been, whatever may have been said to the contrary, was changed, saving your presence, to a veritable calvary, with no limit to its stations and no hope of crucifixion, though I say it myself, and no Simon, and reduced me to frequent halts." (p. 78) Only one more incident befalls him during his much-slowed movement towards his mother's house: he was moving through

the forest when he met with a charcoal burner who tried to bestow unnecessary attention on him, "The forest was all about me and the boughs, twining together at a prodigious height, compared to mine, sheltered me from the light and the elements... I notably encountered a charcoal burner." (pp. 82-83). The charcoal burner was probably sick with solitude and Molloy tried to ask the way to the nearest town. The charcoal burner, however, became quite confused. Molloy attacked the charcoal burner, "Either I did not understand a word he said, or he did not understand a word I said, or he knew nothing, or he wanted to keep me near him. It was towards this fourth hypothesis that, in all modesty, I leaned, for when I made to go, he held me back by the sleeve. So I smartly freed a crutch and dealt him a good dint on the skull."

(p. 84) There is a very interesting way in which he belabored him: "I carefully chose the most favourable position, a few paces from the body, with my back of course turned to it... I swung, that's all that matters, in an ever-widening arc, until I decided the moment had come and launched myself forward with all my strength and consequently, a moment later, backward, which gave the desired result." (p. 84) Finally, he finds himself near a tree where he hears a distant gong and he heard voices saying,

"Don't fret, Molloy, we are coming." (p. 91) So Molloy is back in his mother's bed where the novel starts.

One of the distinguishing features of Molloy is that it is divided into two parts and the novelist had not given any indication of relationship between the two parts. This has given rise to a great deal of speculation on this score. We will try to comment on this theme after we have studied the second part of it.

Part II: Moran

The protagonist of the second part is one Moran, whose first name is Jacques. It may be noted

that Moran is the only protagonist in Beckett's fiction who has a Christian name. He has a son whose name is also Jacques.

But the protagonist makes clear that his identity of name will not

create any complication, "His name is Jacques, like mine. This cannot lead to confusion."

(p. 92) Moran is busy writing a report which will take long. The report is about an assignment that he had received some time back to see about Molloy. The protagonist feels that his future is closed on account of something that has happened and which has also affected the career of his son, as he realizes: "I'm done for. My son too. All unsuspecting. He must think he's on the threshold of life, of real life. He's right there."

(p. 92) The protagonist starts by recalling the day on which he received the order. It was Sunday in Summer; he was sitting in his garden in a wicker chair with a black book lying close to his knees. At about 11 o'clock, while he was waiting for the time to go to church, he was visited by a messenger of the boss of the organization in which he was working as an agent. The messenger's name was Gaber. The protagonist is speculating on the Christian doctrine of observing the Sabbath. He is in a passive mood, when he laments: "I've always loved doing nothing. And I would gladly have rested on weekdays too, if I could have afforded it. Not that I was positively lazy. It was something else."

(p. 93) He, therefore, naturally resented the intrusion of Gaber, but he could not help it. Hence, he entertained Gaber in a pleasant way by offering him beer to drink with a comment: "I would gladly have driven him away, with a knout. Unfortunately it was not he who mattered. 'Sit down', I said, mollified by the reflection

that after all he was only acting his part of go-between. Yes, suddenly I had pity on him, pity on myself."

(p. 94) He, therefore, called his son and asked him to bring the beer with a doubt in his intention, as it appears in the statement: "I caught a glimpse of my son spying on us from behind a bush. My son was thirteen or fourteen at the time... I called him and ordered him to go and fetch some beer." (p. 94) It appears that Moran belongs to an organization that does some sort of detective work, and they have a boss who has employed a large number of messengers and agents. "peeping and prying were part of my profession. My son imitated me instinctively." (p. 94) Even later on in the novel, there appears to be some sort of mystery about some actions which is not quite cleared up. This may partly be the vulgarization of the mystery which is the feature of contemporary life. However, after meeting Gaber, Moran decides to visit Father Ambrose and requests private communion as he misses visiting the church. Moran, however, is uneasy regarding his resolve on account of the fact that he has drunk some beer along with Gaber. A question arises in his mind that he explains thus: "I remembered with annoyance the lager I had just absorbed. Would I be granted the body of Christ after a pint of Wallenstein? And if I had said nothing? Have you come fasting, my son? He would not ask. But God would know, sooner or later. But would the eucharist produce the same effect, taken on top of beer, however light?" (p. 97) This question is very similar to the one posed before Watt by Mr. Spiro. It is again a vulgarization of the Christian mystery of religion. Simultaneously with his anxiety about the doctrinal issue, there is also seemingly a moral issue connected with his son. Moran wanted to know whether his son had really gone to the church or merely wandered off aimlessly to deceive his father, as he contemplates thus: "And I determined to get the truth out of Father Ambrose, on this subject. For it was imperative my son should not imagine he was capable of lying to me with impunity." (p. 96) But the question of the morality of his son also highlights the way the church is conducting itself these

days. Moran decides that in case Father Ambrose is not able to enlighten him on the subject of his son's attendance at the church, he was determined to take help of the verger, who attended the church. As he thinks thus: "For I knew for a fact that the verger had a list of the faithful and that, from his place beside the font, he ticked us off when it came to the absolution. It is only fair to say that Father Ambrose knew nothing of these manoeuvres, yes, anything in the nature of surveillance was hateful to the good Father Ambrose." (p. 96) Moran tries to absolve Father Ambrose from any blame in the matter of keeping surveillance over the congregation, but finally he has to comment, "...that strange parish whose flock knew more than its pastor of a circumstance which seemed rather in his province than in theirs." (p. 96) Moran, therefore, visits the presbytery and asks Father Ambrose for private communion. After making enquiries about his son from Father Ambrose, who to Moran's surprise remembers perfectly well that his son Jacques had attended the service. He then asks Father Ambrose if he were to grant him a favour. He made the request in the following words: "'It's this', I said, 'Sunday for me without the Body and Blood is like'—he raised his hand. 'Above all no profane comparisons', he said." (p. 100) Finally, Father Ambrose granted his request while Moran still remained doubtful about the efficacy of the communion, as he explains in the following words: "Go and get my kit. He called that his kit. Alone, my hands clasped until it seemed my knuckles would crack, I asked the Lord for guidance. Without result." (p. 101) In the conversation that follows after the administering of the eucharist, Moran is disappointed with the conversational power and the mental attitude of Father Ambrose. Their conversation was mostly about mundane affairs like the accidental fall of Mrs. Clement, the chemist's wife, in her laboratory resulting in a fracture, or the hens, particularly Moran's grey hen which does not lay eggs. The only remarks that catch our attention are, as he says: "'Animals never laugh', he said. 'It takes us to find that funny', I said loudly. He mused, 'Christ never laughed either', he said, 'so far as we know'." (p. 102) The result

of the conversation was that Moran underwent a disappointment or rather disillusionment with Father Ambrose. He remarks: "This interview with Father Ambrose left me with a painful impression. He was still the same dear man, and yet not. I seemed to have surprised, on his face, a lack, how shall I say, a lack of nobility." (p. 102) On the other hand, the Eucharist is also treated at a material level. He feels uneasy, but the unease is something like somebody's having eaten any food item that does not agree with him. He appropriately states: "The host, it is not fair to say, was lying heavy on my stomach. And as I made my way home I felt like one who, having swallowed a painkiller, is first astonished, then indignant, on obtaining no relief. And I was almost ready to suspect Father Ambrose, alive to my excesses of the forenoon, of having fobbed me off with unconsecrated bread. Or of mental reservation as he pronounced the magic words." (p. 102) The feeling of unease that Moran underwent made him irritable. He rebuked his son for coming into the room without knocking. He exclaimed at him, "There is something, I said, more important in life than punctuality, and that is decorum." (p. 103) Similarly, he finds fault with his housekeeper Martha, particularly over lunch. He, therefore, decides to lie down in his bed so that he could cool off. While preparing, he muses about the dog of his neighbor. He says, "I don't like men and I don't like animals. As for God, he is beginning to disgust me." (p. 106) Once in bed, he starts thinking as to what his actual mission on this occasion was. Gaber was the messenger of the boss, one Youdi, and Moran himself was an agent. He, however, did not seem to be very much interested in the present assignment, in spite of the fact the chief had insisted that only he could perform the work. It is while resting in bed that he can see the problem in its proper light. "It is lying down, in the warmth, in the gloom, that I best pierce the outer turmoil's veil, discern my quarry, sense what course to follow, find peace in the author's ludicrous distress." (p. 111) It is while thinking on Molloy that he makes certain interesting revelations, such as: "For it was only by transferring it to this atmosphere, how shall I say, of finality without end, why not, that I could venture to

consider the work I had on hand. For where Molloy could not be, nor Moran either for that matter, there Moran could bend over Molloy." (p. 112) Moran discovers that he had known Molloy for a very long time. He elucidates: "Molloy, or Mollose, was no stranger to me..... Perhaps I had invented him. I mean found him readymade in my head."

(p. 112) He has a feeling or premonition of a 'déjà vu' as if he had already undergone this sort of experience, as he states: "For who could have spoken to me of Molloy if not myself, and to whom if not to myself could I have spoken of him?" He seems even to know Molloy's mother who is spoken of in the first part of the novel.

*"Mother Molloy, or Mollose, was not
completely foreign to me either, it seemed."*

(p. 113) He, therefore, tries to make up the picture of his perception of Molloy, which is not a very clear one, "I knew then about Molloy, without however knowing much about him. I shall say briefly what little I did know about him. I shall also draw attention, in my knowledge of Molloy, to the most striking lacunae."

(p. 113) There seems to be some internal connection between him and Molloy, as he realizes: "He panted. He had only to rise up within me for me to be filled with panting."

(p. 113) Again, in a very revealing description, he says that Molloy somehow possessed his mind at certain occasions, as he makes clear: "This was how he came to me, at long intervals. Then I was nothing but uproar, bulk, rage, suffocation, effort unceasing, frenzied and vain. Just the opposite of myself, in fact. It was a change. And when I saw him disappear, his whole body a vociferation, I was almost sorry."

(p. 114) He, therefore, concludes that Molloy is not one person but many, especially a subjective Molloy and an objective one, which is stated thus: "Between the Molloy I stalked within me

thus and the true Molloy, after whom I was so soon to be in full cry, over hill and dale, the resemblance cannot have been great."

(p. 115) In fact, he discovers that there was not only one such person but many more. He makes the contention clear: "The fact was there were three, no, four Molloys. He that inhabited me, my caricature of same.... To these I would add Youdi's were it not for Gaber's corpse-fidelity to the letter of his messages.... I will therefore add a fifth Molloy, that of Youdi."

(p. 115) After having given in to these speculations, he wakes up on hearing the sound of a gong struck with violence. It was Martha inviting him to dinner. At dinner again Moran shows an unease which issues out in his intimidation with Martha and his exaggerated strictness to his son, as he realizes: "Anger led me sometimes to slight excesses of language. I could not regret them. It seemed to me that all language was an excess of language."

(p. 116). When Moran's son complains that he was not well and had a stomach ache, he gave him an enema with salt water. It was while he was administering the enema that he feels an acute pain in his knee. After making the necessary preparations, Moran leaves his house along with his son. In these preparations, one of the important things is the dress. He insists that his son should put on his school uniform. He speaks authoritatively: "'We leave this evening', I said in substance, 'on a journey. Put on your school suit, the green.' 'But it's blue, papa', he said. 'Blue or green, put it on', I said violently. I went on, 'Put in your little knapsack, the one I gave you for your birthday, your toilet things, one shirt, one pair of socks and seven pairs of drawers... You have two pairs of shoes', I said, 'one for Sundays and one for weekdays, and you ask me which you are to wear'." (p. 103) Similarly, Moran is very particular about the dress and other equipment that he should carry along. He puts in his haversack a minimum, as he states: "I stuffed into my haversack a minimum of effects, similar to those I had recommended to my son, I put on my old pepper-and-salt shooting-suit with the knee-breeches, stockings to match and a

pair of stout black boots." (p. 124) On his head, he wears a strange hat which will become the typical feature of all Beckett's tramps. He states thus: "On my head, after mature hesitation, I decided to wear my straw boater, yellowed by the rain. It had lost its band, which gave it an appearance of inordinate height." (pp. 124-125). Another interesting feature of this hat is that it had two holes bored in it through which he passed a piece of elastic so that the hat may remain fixed in its place when he passed the elastic below his chin, "Two holes were bored in the brim, one on either side of course, I had bored them myself, with my little gimlet. And in these holes I had secured the ends of an elastic long enough to pass under my chin, under my jaws rather." (p. 127) Dressed thus, Moran leaves on his journey. Moran does not relate all the adventures that he met on his way from his country to Molloy's country. However, it is here for the first time he started hearing voices, which is again a common feature of the protagonist of Beckett's fiction. Moran says that it is not for any external reason or for fear of his master that he is continuing his mission. He states: "I am still afraid, but simply from force of habit. And the voice I listen to needs no Gaber to make it heard.... When I had a will, that others should." (p. 132) These voices are very clear and Moran is not certain what is the meaning or function of these voices: "yes, it is rather an ambiguous voice and not always easy to follow, in its reasonings and decrees. But I follow it none the less, more or less. I follow it in this sense, that I know what it means, and in this sense, that I do what it tells me." (p. 132) It also appears that the journey has something to do with a penance and he also associates this penance to the punishment of Sisyphus. It is an important way of realization and making a mythological statement: "For it is one of the features of this penance that I may not pass over what is over, and straightway come to the heart of the matter... But I don't think even Sisyphus is required to scratch himself, or to groan, or to rejoice, as the fashion is now, always at the same appointed places." (p. 133) Moran then gives the description of what he calls the Molloy country. "By the Molloy country I mean that narrow region

whose administrative limits he had never crossed and presumably never would, either because he was forbidden to, or because he had no wish to, or of course because of some extraordinary fortuitous conjunction of circumstances." (p. 134) He calls the main market town Bally and the adjoining areas as Ballyba. He describes it as a small area with a market town which in modern countries is called a commune or a canton: "And to express them we have another system, of singular beauty and simplicity, which consists in saying Bally

(since we are talking of Bally) when you mean Bally and Ballyba when you mean Bally plus its domains and Ballyba when you mean the domains exclusive of Bally itself."

(p. 134) Many critics have commented that this Bally country is Ireland and Beckett describes with nostalgia his memories of the previous experiences: "Bally, the country town of Ballyba, where Molloy was born, is intersected, like Dublin, by two canals, but from a distance he imagines it to be a walled town with towers and ramparts," says Robinson. It appears that Moran's duty is to track the person nominated by Youdi and then to do some further thing that he is instructed to do. Sometimes his mission was to bring a person to a certain place at a certain time. Moran had dealt with many such persons and have had various experiences, such as: "Oh the stories I could tell you if I were easy. What a rabble in my head. What a gallery of moribunds, Murphy, Watt, Yerk, Mercier and all the others... Stories, stories. I have not been able to tell them. I shall not be able to tell this one."

(p. 138) However, about Molloy he was doubtful as to what he is to do: "having found Molloy, I still did not know what to do with him."

(p. 138) While this question is kept in his mind, he starts feeling pain in his knee, "one night, having finally succeeded in falling asleep beside my son as usual, I woke with a start, feeling as if I had just been dealt a violent blow."

(p. 138) Moran thought it was only a bad dream, but that was not all.

*"For waking again towards dawn, this time in
consequence of a natural need and with a mild erection,
to make things more lifelike, I was
unable to get up."*

(p. 139) He, therefore, called his son and told him to go to the nearest town to buy a bicycle, preferably a second-hand one. Moran says, "I gave him five pounds, in ten-shilling notes."

(p. 141) The son went away and did not return for three days. During his absence, Moran went through some adventures. He was visited by a man who resembled C and whom Molloy had seen before he started on his journey, "He wore a coat much too heavy for the time of the year and was leaning on a stick so massive, and so much thicker at the bottom than at the top, that it seemed more like a club... The hat was quite extraordinary, in shape and colour. I shall not attempt to describe it, it was like none I had ever seen."

(p. 146) This man asked him to give him a piece of bread. Moran, however, offered him sardines but later on gave him the bread. He on his side asked the man to allow him to look at his stick. "Its lightness astounded me."

(p. 147) This man left Moran after receiving a piece of bread. Moran had another encounter soon after this. He was visited by another man in the evening. This man was strange to him and yet somehow resembled him: "He was on the small side, but thick-set. He wore a thick navy-blue suit (double-breasted) of hideous cut and a pair of outrageously wide black shoes, with the toe-caps higher than the uppers... But all this was nothing compared to the face which I regret to say vaguely resembled my own."

(p. 151) This man asked Moran whether he had seen an old man and Moran told him that he had not. After that, this man attacked

Moran and the result was that he found the man stretched on the ground sometime later.

*"As if self-propelled. I do not know what happened then.
But a little later,
perhaps a long time later, I found him stretched on the
ground, his head in a pulp."*

(p. 152) Moran dragged the body of this man into the cleft of trees near his tent. He cleared it out and made himself another shelter. It was sometime after this that his son came back with a bicycle which he had purchased from the town where Moran had sent him. After that, Moran and his son left the place on the bicycle. One day, his son suddenly left him and he found himself all alone, "I was therefore alone, with my bag, my umbrella (which he might easily have taken too) and fifteen shillings, knowing myself coldly abandoned, with deliberation and no doubt premeditation."

(p. 162) Moran was, however, perplexed and did not know what to do. He hoped that either his son will come back,

*"or that Molloy, whose country this was, would come to
me, who had not been able to go to him,
and grow to be a friend, and like a father to me, and
help me do what I had to do, so that Youdi
would not be angry with me and would not punish me!"*

(p. 162) It was in this condition of perplexity that Gaber came back and told Moran that Youdi had ordered him to go back. Moran asked Gaber whether Youdi had been angry with Moran. Gaber told him that Youdi merely laughed, "He said to me, said Gaber, Gaber, he said, life is a thing of beauty, Gaber, and a joy forever."

(p. 165) Thus we find Moran back home and writing his report. In the circumstances that he had been left without any support and was physically disabled, his return journey was extremely difficult. It appears that all the elements were against him and he

had no provisions to nourish himself: "It was in August, in September at the latest, that I was ordered home. It was spring when I got there. I will not be more precise. I had therefore been all winter on the way."

(p. 166) Through these difficulties, which appear to be both God-made and man-made, he busied himself with certain theological and metaphysical problems, some of which appear to be heretical, for example:

4. How much longer are we to hang about waiting for the antichrist?

5. What was God doing with himself before the creation?

6. Might not the beatific vision become a source of boredom, in the long run?

(pp. 167-68) Consequently, he makes a prayer which is counter to the church prayer, "Our Father who art no more in heaven than on earth or in hell, I neither want nor desire that thy name so hallowed, thou knowest best what suits thee."

(p. 168) While on his way back home, Moran thinks quite often of his bees, more often of his bees than of his hens. In the dance of the bees, he found a symbol of the organization of the universe. However, he could not understand this organization completely. Moran says, "Here is something I can study all my life, and never understand."

(p. 170) This perception gives rise to his comment on the usual explanations provided by theology and reason.

*"And I would never do my
bees the wrong I had done my God, to whom I had been
taught to ascribe my angers, fears,
desires, and even my body," says Moran.*
(p. 170)

It was after this revelation that Moran starts losing the various aspects of his physical identity.

He was becoming rapidly unrecognizable. His physical features underwent a complete metamorphosis and yet he was becoming aware of his real identity.

"And to tell the truth I not only knew who I was, but I had a sharper and clearer sense of my identity than ever before, in spite of its deep lesions and the wounds with which it was covered."

(pp. 170-71) Next to his physical disintegration comes his discarding of his clothes. One by one he sheds all the unnecessary parts of his dress, "And I had to part with my straw, not made to resist the rigours of winter, and with my stockings (two pairs) which the cold and damp, the trudging and the lack of laundering facilities had literally annihilated."

(p. 171) The gradual discarding of the superfluous is comparable to Lear's identification with man in his essence during the storm season. There are also biblical references in some of these contingencies. After describing how the drawers had rotted by constant contact with his incontinences, as it is aptly stated: "Then the seat of my breeches, before it too decomposed, sawed my crack from Dan to Beersheba."

(p. 171) All those things which give a social identity to man as a member of a particular class were left behind by Moran in this crisis. Finally, the rock bottom on which the bourgeois society is based was also discarded by Moran. While travelling home, he is rudely shaken by a farmer, perhaps the same one who had courteously offered to give him a lift back home when he was leaving with his son on his outward journey, dressed recognizably as a landowner. This farmer now rudely handled him by catching hold of his jacket by the lapel and cursing him. He merely cursed me. I wondered what I could have done, to put him in such a

state. I must have raised my eyebrows. But I always raise my eyebrows, they are almost in my hair, my brow is nothing but wales and furrows. I understood finally that I did not own the land.

(p. 173) The same Moran who had at one time worried whether his seeking communion after drinking a little beer would not be sinful on his part, now does not hesitate to take shelter behind religion to avoid the inconvenience of unpleasantness with the farmer. He tells him that he has taken an oath and is proceeding on a religious pilgrimage as a thanksgiving to a shrine of the Madonna whom he had pledged to visit in a straight line. This shows that Moran is now free of both the shackles of property and religion. Finally, when Moran reached home, the house was deserted. His bees as well as hens had disappeared. The electricity company had disconnected his power connection, though they agreed to reconnect it. Moran, however, refused to have the connection back. Physically he had reached the condition of Molloy, "Perhaps I shall meet Molloy. My knee is no better. It is no worse either. I have crutches now."

(p. 176) His final conclusion is, "I have been a man long enough, I shall not put up with it anymore."

(p. 176) Many critics have noted a connection between the two narratives. Though outwardly they are different and happen to deal with two characters who do not seem to have anything in common with each other, John Fletcher is of the opinion that the twofold structure of the novel is based on the influence of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, "the two chapters of Molloy together form an asymmetrical diptych which can be compared to *Pilgrim's Progress*." Michael Robinson in his famous study of Beckett agrees with the suggestion of John Fletcher and further adds that Beckett's twofold structure is a further progress on Bunyan.

"Where Bunyan originally wrote his

work in one part, adding the second pilgrimage only on the public success of the first, Beckett, with the additional experience of three centuries of novel writing, creates both monologues in a reciprocal alliance, the one inconceivable without the other."

Eugene Webb finds another relationship between the various characters of the trilogy. There are some common features in their personality and environment. These, according to Webb, are not very important. The deeper relationship is that of a creator and his creation, as explained in the following words:

"These similarities, however, are relatively superficial. They show only that the characters of the trilogy have a sort of family resemblance. There are also numerous suggestions recurring throughout the three volumes that there is an even closer relationship among the narrators.. And the reality Moran attributes to Molloy tends to be a mental relation, perhaps I had invented him, I mean found him ready-made in my head."

Frederick Hoffman suggests a deep relationship between Molloy and Moran: Edith Kern speaks of Moran as the creator of both Watt and Murphy, though Molloy is "a part of him", not just a creature but inseparably identified with Moran. They are not "separate phases" of a greater creation, but bear the same burdens and suffer the same painful deterioration of body and spirit. If a difference may be cited, it is that Moran is more conspicuously the creative imager, the fabulous artificer, Molloy more given to meeting emergencies by improvisation. John Pilling also finds that there is a dialectical relationship between Moran and Molloy. It is explicitly stated thus:

"It is not possible to confuse the hesitant, resigned, passive, constantly wavering Molloy with the

officious, socially accepted, over-cautious Moran. But they are clearly complementary figures."

Hugh Kenner, with his deep insight into the mind of Beckett, takes us a step further. In a parenthetical reference to the relationship between the two characters, he wonders whether they are not one and the same: "Unless a Molloy is simply what a Moran turns into when he goes looking for a Molloy." We would like to suggest that sociologically Molloy represents the evolution of Moran in contemporary society. The relationship between the two may be compared to the real career of King Lear from a king to a vagabond and the enactment of the same by Edgar in the role of Tom o' Bedlam. Edgar's assumed character undergoes the fictive transformation which Lear suffers in the play. When Lear asks Edgar in the character of Tom, "What hast thou been?" Edgar replies:

"A servingman, proud in heart and mind; that curl'd my hair; wore gloves in my cap; served the lust of my mistress's heart, and did the act of darkness with her;

swore as many oaths as

I spake words, and broke them in the sweet face of heaven;

one that slept in the contriving

of lust, and waked to do it. Wine loved I deeply, dice dearly;

and in woman out-paramour'd

the Turk;" (King Lear, Act III, scene IV)

In this speech, Edgar enacts the transformation of a proud knight, a symbol of the bygone age,

into a waste product, a mad vagabond of the contemporary age. Similarly, Moran, who is a

typical bourgeois character to begin with (notice particularly his emphasis on the right of keys),

is transformed into the tramp under the impact of social forces represented by Gaber and Youdi.

This analysis will also throw light on the characters in the remaining novels of the trilogy.

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Chapter 2

Samuel Beckett's *Malone Dies*: A Critical Analysis

The second part of the trilogy, *Malone Dies*, is the epitome of the novels he has written and perhaps it is the most appealing work of Beckett's. Certainly, it is the most approachable among the later novels. The novel is about a man who is 'an extension of the predicament of Molloy-Moran,' lying in a room waiting for the last payment of debts from the great debtor, Death. 'His immobility is a tension between hope and despair, desire and the void, his career is as much a quest as an escape, against death he can only pit a hypothetical imperative.'

Malone says that he may die anytime: 'I shall soon be quite dead at last in spite of all. Perhaps next month. Then it will be the month of April or of May.' He refers to various festivals like 'Saint John the Baptist's Day', and even the 'Fourteenth of July'. He even could survive up to 'Transfiguration' and 'Assumption'. But he is not sure. He thinks that these festivals will take place in his absence this year. He compares his present belief in death with the one he has had since he was born, but the present belief is different, as he believes, 'I could die today, if I wished, merely by making little effort. But it is just as well to let myself die, quietly, without rushing things' (p179).

Malone's passive figure is 'ostensibly an expression of Dostoevsky's underground man but he is a passive figure, not in any way in rebellion against the world or using himself to flout the realms of conventional sense or reason.' 'Nor is he Kafka's spirit brooding over legalistic intricacies of his moral obligation or in the self-hateful condition of Gregor Samsa,' says Hoffman. Malone simply 'lies dying. I shall die tepid, without enthusiasm' (p180). Malone speaks here in his creator's tone of disgust, 'he speaks in the familiar Beckettian tone of outrage using words almost identical to those with which Watt arraigned the intolerable series of birth and death and passing of the seasons.'

There are only two things he has to avoid, one the bouts of pain which he calls 'throes' and the second thing is 'the fits of impotence from time to time'. He, therefore, decides that he will tell himself stories, 'they will be neither beautiful nor ugly, they will be calm, there will be no ugliness or beauty or fear in them anymore, they will be almost lifeless like the teller' (p. 180). Although Malone declares that his stories are neither ugly nor beautiful yet, 'the stories, it will become apparent later, are not simple entertainments as he likes to pretend in the beginning but an endeavour with a crucial metaphysical purpose.'

At present Malone is in a room inherited by him on the death of someone. He feels: 'I came in for the room on the death of whoever was in it before me. I enquire no further in any case' (p183). For certain Malone knows that the room is neither in a hospital nor in any madhouse but a plain 'private room'. It was here in this room after regaining his consciousness, as he recollects, that he had been walking through a forest, lost in his nostalgic mood when he was struck by someone and felt unconscious. How and when he was removed to this present place, he does not know. He simply speculates, 'I do not remember how I got here. In the ambulance perhaps, a vehicle of some kind certainly. One day I found myself here, in the bed. Having probably lost consciousness somewhere' (p183).

Since then Malone is living in this room. 'The room is a complex arena. It is a womb-like retreat where the hero is concealed from his fellowmen, almost secure against the interference of an antagonistic humanity.' Malone's bed is by the side of a window from where he can have a glimpse of a street and into the houses across if he cranes. He could see strange things going on in these houses, 'Queer things go on there sometimes, people are queer. Perhaps these are abnormal' (p184).

Malone does not remember exactly for how long he has been here in this room except that as he thinks, 'I do not know how long I have been here... All I know is that I was very old already before I found myself here... But I think I have been here for some very considerable time' (p186). Initially, Malone was looked after by a lady perhaps out of sheer charity or compassion, 'but it is conceivable that she does what she does out of sheer charity, or moved with regard to me by a less general feeling of compassion or affection' (p186). But now the lady is perhaps dead and Malone is served by somebody else who comes through a half-opened door and places a bowl of soup on the table and takes the previous day's bowl.

Malone's present state is that he has never stirred out of his room. He is naked in the bed in the blanket, whose number he increases or diminishes as the seasons come and go. He has been reduced simply to the animal function of eating and excreting. 'What matters is to eat and excrete. Dish and pot, dish and pot, these are the poles' (p185). And his body is what is called, 'unadvisedly perhaps impotent' (p186). He is unable to do anything, unable to guide the limbs of his body, his senses of hearing and seeing almost fail him. It is in this state of his physical decay, Malone can still think and tell himself stories.

There is a dichotomy of mind and body in which the body is passive and the mind still active to think and function. In this context, Robinson remarks, 'This world of the novelist which is limited to the mental processes of a man in a room is founded on

Cartesianism and the trilogy illustrates that the development of the novel, and its own precarious existence, would have perhaps been impossible had Descartes not discovered his cogito ergo sum, in that lonely room with a stove it took him nine years to reach.'

It is from this point Malone begins to tell himself stories, as it is explained thus: 'It is there I die, unbeknown to my stupid flesh. That which is seen, that which cries and writhes, my witless remains. Somewhere in this turmoil thought struggles on, it too wide of the mark. It too seeks me, as it always has, where I am not to be found. It too cannot be quiet. On others let it wreak its dying rage, and leave me in peace. Such would seem to be my present state' (p187).

Malone here starts the story of a boy, 'The man's name is Saposcat. Like his father's Christian name? I do not know. He will not need one. His friends call him Sapo' (p187). Then he starts a very interesting description of the boy with the self-contradictory statements, 'He was a precocious boy. He was not good at his lessons, neither could he see the use of them. He attended his classes with his mind elsewhere, or blank' (p187). This boy liked arithmetic perhaps, but of an unusual kind as, 'he liked sums, but not the way they were taught. What he liked was the manipulation of concrete numbers. All calculation seemed to him idle in which the nature of the unit was not specified. He made a practice, alone and in company, of mental arithmetic' (p187).

The description of the family is full of pathos and realistic reflection of poverty in Ireland. 'Beckett, himself in a room that death is approaching, writes about Malone and through him remembers the Ireland of his youth.' The family is poor and in bad health. 'He was the eldest child of poor and sickly parents. He often heard them talk of what they ought to do in order to have better health and more money' (p187). His father was a salesman who was always planning to increase his income by working in

the evening and Saturday afternoon. He also hinted that he could work on Sundays even. But his wife protested that so much work would make him fall ill and thus on a balance of the merits and demerits of the scheme, things remained the same as they were.

'The life of the Saposcats was full of axioms, of which one at least established the criminal absurdity of a garden without roses and with its paths and lawns uncared-for' (p187-88). Therefore, he suggested that he could help the family's economy by growing vegetables. But there was again an objection that it is easier to buy vegetables than grow them because of the price of the manure. Finally, they considered moving to a smaller house, but again, were faced with the consideration that they were 'cramped as it is.' Therefore, the only possibility is to wait till the children one by one leave the house and they could then move to the countryside where they would take a cottage, 'and their children, grateful for the sacrifices made on their behalf, would come to their assistance. It was in this atmosphere of unbridled dream that these conferences usually ended. It was as though the Saposcats drew the strength to live from the prospect of their impotence' (p188).

Another consideration that occupied them frequently was the condition of their eldest son. Mr. Saposcat began by asking his wife the age of their firstborn. She replied, but usually the figures given by her were erroneous, as it is described thus: 'Mr. Saposcat took over the erroneous figure, murmuring it over and over to himself as it were a question of the rise, in price of some indispensable commodity, such as butcher's meat' (p188). Their son neither did well at school nor did he show any eagerness to make himself useful at home, and their son once signaled they wondered sadly if it was not the mark of superior minds to fail miserably at the written paper and cover themselves with ridicule at viva-voce. Still, the mother wanted to think of her son as a doctor though her husband would see him rather as a surgeon.

Sapo had other interesting traits. He had a number of friends with whom he was on good terms and was seldom solitary, 'He boxed and wrestled well, was fleet of foot, sneered at his teachers and sometimes even gave them impertinent answers' (p190). He would submit to the punishment of doing extra work but would not allow anyone to hit him, 'The first time an exasperated master threatened him with a cane, Sapo snatched it from his hand and threw it out of the window, which was closed, for it was winter' (p. 190). By fourteen he had become a plump rosy boy, 'His wrists and ankles were thick, which made his mother say that one day he would be even bigger than his father' (p190). But the most prominent feature of his body was his: 'Big round head horrid with flaxen hair as stiff and straight as the bristles of a brush' (p191).

But the proportion of his head had no correspondence to his capacity for thinking, 'even his teachers could not help thinking he had a remarkable head and they were all the more irked by their failure to get anything into it. His father would say, when in good humour, 'One of these days he will astonish us all' (p191). Again, Sapo loved nature but did not know how to distinguish various animals and plants, 'he confused the birds with one another, and the trees, and could not tell one crop from another crop. He did not associate the crocus with the spring nor chrysanthemum with Michaelmas' (p191). People for such reason considered him a simpleton, 'but he loved the flight of the hawk and could distinguish it from all others. He would stand rapt, gazing at the long pernings, the quivering poise, the wings lifted for the plummet drop, the wild reascent fascinated by such extremes of need, of pride, of patience and solitude' (p191).

The phlegmatic temperament which Sapo exhibited was not liked generally, 'in the midst of tumult, at school and at home, he remained motionless in his place, after standing, and gazed straight before him with eyes as pale and unwavering as a gull's. People wondered what he could brood on thus, hour after hour' (p192). His father attributed his behaviour to the first fluttering of

sex, 'but in the view of his teachers the signs were rather those of besottedness pure and simple' (p192).

Before his baccalaureate Sapo goes for a long walk in the country and instead of working at his examination in order to be in position to help provide for his younger brother and sisters, he broods upon himself. Immediately, before the examination, during the summer holidays, Sapo occasionally visits the Lamberts, a poverty-stricken peasant family consisting of an elderly but still active father, a young mother suffering from an unnamed but painful disease, and a son and a daughter.

The father was known as Lambert. He had married a young cousin and was still with her, 'Big Lambert had not a tooth in his head and smoked his cigarettes in a cigarette holder, while regretting his pipe. He was highly thought of as a bleeder and disjoiner of pigs and greatly sought after' (p200). Big Lambert possessed a small farm, 'The farm was in a hollow, flooded in winter and in summer burnt to a cinder' (p201). Big Lambert would turn loose his goats on the farm of his neighbor. Sapo visited the Lamberts and sat there but hardly said anything. He, however, left some presents for the Lamberts when he left. Sapo went away without speaking to them, by which they appeared to be a little hurt but were mollified when they discovered his present, 'or if at the time they could not help feeling a little hurt, this feeling was quite dispelled a little later, when they found on the kitchen table the crumpled paper-bag containing a few little articles of haberdashery. And these humble presents, but oh how useful, and this oh so delicate way of giving, disarmed them too at sight of the bowl of goat's milk only half-emptied, or left untouched' (p205).

He felt close to the daughter to whom sometimes he conveys his feelings. He told the daughter one day that he was going away forever. Here Beckett gives a strong turn to the story. In an ordinary story, his departure might have been motivated by an act of indiscretion towards the girl but here the situation in the

Lambert's household was incestuous, 'their quarters were cramped, certain refinements were not possible. Edmund then went up to bed, for no particular reason. He would have gladly slept with his sister, the father too. I mean the father would have gladly slept with his daughter, the time was long past and gone when he would have gladly slept with his sister... Incest then was in the air. Mrs. Lambert, the only member of the household who had no desire to sleep with anybody, saw it coming with indifference' (p216). Here in describing the life of his hero, Sapo from his childhood and then to insane and infirm Macmann, 'Beckett via Malone, satirizes the bourgeoisie, its concepts, attitudes and assumptions, in the traditional centre of its strength, the family.'

When Sapo is found again it is a long time since his earlier appearance, 'I ran him down in the heart of the town, sitting on a bench. How did I know it was he? The eyes perhaps. No, I don't know how I knew, I'll take back nothing. Perhaps it is not he. No matter, he is mine now, living flesh and needless to say male' (p227). In the course of telling stories, 'Malone feels that Sapo is no longer a suitable name for his creation and changes it to Macmann, thus emphasizing his kinship with Beckett's other heroes.' His name is now changed. He is now called Macmann, 'for Sapo-no, I cannot call him that any more, and I even wonder how I was able to stomach such a name till now. So then for, let me see, for Macmann, that's not much better but there is no time to lose, for Macmann might be stark staring naked under this surtout' (p229-30). He is seen sitting in a posture 'like that of the colossus of Memnon, dearly loved son of Dawn' (p228) his back turned to the river and watching, 'the dreadful cries of the gulls that swoop ravening about the offal' (p230). It is from here Macmann watches the busy streets and mad world.

But his face is towards the people that throng the streets at this hour, their long day ended and the whole long evening before them. The doors open and spew them out, each door its contingent. For an instant they cluster in a daze, huddled on the

sidewalk or in the gutter, then set off singly on their appointed ways. And even those who know themselves condemned, at the outset, to the same direction, for the choice of direction at the outset is not great, take leave of one another and part, but politely, with some polite excuse, or without a word, for they all know one another's little ways. And God help him who longs, for once, in his recovered freedom, to walk a little way with a fellow creature, no matter which, unless of course by a merciful chance he stumble on one in the same plight. Then they take a few paces happily side by side, then part, each one muttering perhaps. Now there will be no holding him. (p230)

In this passage Malone does not describe Macmann's own feeling but portrays the evanescence of human relations in modern world and loneliness in city life, Robinson remarks, 'It is Beckett's most sustained diatribe against what Heidegger termed "Forfeiture", the drab, impersonal vacuity of man's everyday exchange: life without a centre lived in the boring, mechanical repetition of spiritless gesture and debased, inhuman contact.(p13)

He also strikes a similarity of this passage to *The Wasteland*, 'In tone and imagery the passage is similar to Eliot's description of the modern city in *The Wasteland* and *Burnt Norton*.'¹⁴ A little later Macmann gives an account of the solitary travellers, 'At this hour then erotic craving accounts for the majority of couples. But these are few compared to the solitaires pressing forward through the throng, obstructing the access to places of amusement, bowed over the parapets, propped against vacant wall,' (p230) a few of them like the typist in Eliot's *Wasteland* seek refuge in unsatisfactory love making. In Malone's account not only spiritual decadence is alluded at but also the loss of individuality is hinted at, 'Malone forms his portrait of a solitary traveller in a cab into a complex image for our modern loss of individuality and for the seizure, or collapse, of will and desire. City life has reduced man to an unreasoning acceptance of his insignificance and his impotence. (p15)

The next glimpse of Macmann is in a rain storm that came suddenly, Macmann instead of running for shelter lays down on the ground, 'caught by the rain far from shelter Macmann stopped and lay down, saying, the surface thus pressed against the ground will remain dry, whereas, standing I would get uniformly wet all over.' (p239) At the end of about forty five minutes of lie-down Macmann started rolling but got nowhere, 'and as he rolled he conceived and polished the plan of continuing to roll on all night if necessary, or at least until his strength should fail him, and thus approach the confines of this plain which to tell the truth he was in no hurry to leave, but nevertheless was leaving, he knew it.' (p247)

Much later one day, 'Macmann came to again, once again, in a kind of asylum.' (p257) This was, he was told in the house of Saint John of God with the number one hundred and sixty six. There was a large number of people in the room or cell and one of them told him that, 'in addition to the nourishment carefully calculated to keep you alive, and even well, you will receive, every Saturday, in honour of our patron, an imperial half-pint of porter and a plug of tobacco.' (p257)

Beckett's description of mentally sick protagonists in his novels from *Murphy* through *Watt* to the first two novels of the trilogy shows his sympathies for these people. Robinson describes quoting from memoirs of the author. He writes: Beckett evidently shares the sympathies, if not the compulsion, of his characters. When he was living in London during the nineteen-thirties he visited Bethlem Royal Hospital at Beckenham and his close observation of the mentally sick is evident in the description of the inmates who accompany Macmann on his outing with Lady Peddle. The mental institution is the ultimate refuge of all his characters who 'live vanquished on a mad world, in the midst of strangers'. In an asylum they are no longer hounded back into the game by the hale and hearty inhabitants of whom they ask nothing better than to be left alone. It is the real world which appears insane to the hero (and in general to Beckett himself) and

he eventually resolves the problem of his alienation by entering the so called world of the mad. (p16)

In the asylum the person speaking to Macmann was man in the prime of his life and, 'he wore a scraggy beard no doubt intended to heighten his resemblance to the Messiah.' (p257) He was here committed to the charge of a woman called Moll. There started an affair with this woman, Moll, inspite of the fact that both of them were completely impotent. This woman who was immediately ill favoured in both face and body wore two long ivory crucifixes by way of ear-rings and there was a third crucifix in the form of her only tooth shaped from the only one tooth that had been carved in the form of Christ crucifixion. In Beckett's oeuvre humanized Christ is associated with the hero and becomes norm against which his characters examine themselves. However, Christ's crucifixion becomes the symbol of sufferings, as is aptly stated: 'The figure of Christ, the last promise of eternal salvation for the finite self, has, over the last century become humanized. The suffering figure on the cross who carries the burden of man's sins, appears as a scapegoat and sacrifice but one from which divinity has steadily receded. (p17)

Further commenting upon Beckett's use of Crucifixion imagery in the figure of Moll, who is putting on two ear-rings symbol of two thieves and a tooth representing Christ, Eugene Webb writes: The image of two thieves seems to represent the manner in which life continually torments its victims with illusory hopes - 'Why be discouraged, one of the thieves was saved, that is a generous percentage' - but the central image, an integral part of the very mouth with which Moll kisses her lover, is the cross of Christ, the traditional symbol of the most intense suffering. To Macmann, and to his creator, Malone, however, crucifixion appears to offer in addition to suffering, the possibility of death, and end to suffering...(p18)

Hoffman has also given a similar interpretation of Moll's two ear rings and tooth in her mouth, 'They are two thieves; Christ is in

my mouth, a long yellow canine bared to the roots and carved, with the drill probably, to represent the celebrated sacrifice. (p19) Here in the Moll sequence, crucified savior, Christ who is also a creator has been reduced to an ordinary sufferer. 'Christ as a creator has been reduced to occupying a cave, an opening, an orifice, from which life or its blasphemous facsimile emerges or should emerge. Molly Bloom also associates life which Crucifixes; and Molly will some time become Moll, one toothed and offering love in extreme. (p20) During this period Moll wrote a letter to Macmann, 'He then made unquestionable progress in the use of the spoken word and learnt in a short time to let fall, at the right time, the yesses, noes, mores and enoughts, that keep love alive. It was also the occasion his penetrating into the enchanted world of reading, thanks to the inflammatory letters which Moll brought and put into his hands.' (p261) After sometime Macmann also wrote doggerel verses in reply to her letters.

As a result of these enthusiastic gusts of passion, Moll started losing health. She started having fits of vomiting, 'Half a century younger she might have been taken for pregnant.' (p266) Finally, one day Macmann was informed that Moll was dead, 'One morning early man whom he had never seen came and told him that Moll was dead... My name is Lemuel, he said, though my parents were probably Aryan, and it is in my charge you are from now on.' (p267)

In this sequence of love between Moll and Macmann, Beckett's treatment of procreation and love is to a climax revulsion. Commenting on the conception of Beckettian love, writes Robinson, 'Beckett's conception of love is similar to the first stage of Unamuno's thought on that subject in *The Tragic Sense of Life*. Love for Unamuno is the most tragic thing of all; it is a handmaiden of despair for despair drives one to love and the discovery that even love is insufficient returns one to an even greater despair. (p21) And regarding Beckett's conception of procreation, Hoffman writes, 'Copulation, therefore, thrives but

feebly, usually among cripples or octogenarian, as further proof of the mind's disgust with life.(p22)

The guardianship of Lemuel was marked by harshness in his treatment of Macmann but perhaps, 'Lemuel gave the impression of being slightly more stupid than malevolent, and yet his malevolence was considerable.' (p267) Lemuel started exhibiting some strange characteristics. For example when asked Macmann, 'a question it was seldom he got an immediate answer.' (p267) If the question was repeated Lemuel got impatient and it usually ended by his saying that he did not know. On one particular day Macmann found him inflicting pain on himself, 'And one day rolling up the leg of his trousers, he showed Macmann his shin covered with bruises, scars and abrasions. Then producing smartly a hammer from an inner pocket he dealt himself, right in the middle of his ancient wounds, so violent a blow that he fell down backwards, or perhaps I should say forwards.' (p269)

In course of time, however, Macmann was able to build a working relationship with Lemuel so that they would sometimes spend some periods of time together in the open, 'wearing over his long shirt a great striped cloak reaching down to his ankles, Macmann took the air in all weathers, from morning to night' (p276) In the beginning, the keeper thought that Macmann had run away but it was subsequently discovered that there was no need for sustained search as Macmann always hid in the same place, 'From then on it was Lemuel who went out alone, ... And often the two of them remained there for some time, in the bush, before going in, huddled together.' (p276) But on one or two occasions Lemuel had behaved eccentrically when he found Macmann carrying a branch torn from bush to support him as he walked. He had Macmann beaten by Pat, 'Then Lemuel took it from him and struck him with it over and over again, no, that won't work, then Lemuel called a keeper by the name of Pat, a thorough brute though puny in appearance, and said to him, Pat will you look at that. Then Pat snatched the stick from Macmann who, seeing the turn things were taking, was holding it clutched

tight in his two hands, and struck him with it until Lemuel told him to stop.' (277) Sometimes Macmann found that the authorities took unwanted harsh steps without any reason, 'Besides no questions were ever asked in the House of Saint John of God, but stern measures were simply taken, or not taken, according to the dictates of a peculiar logic.' (p277)

This was a period of comparative happiness for Macmann. Even tenure of Macmann's life was disturbed by a picnic arranged for one Lady Pedal, 'On, One morning Lemuel, putting in the prescribed appearance in the great hall before setting out on his rounds, found pinned on the board a notice concerning him. Group Lemuel, excursion to the islands, weather permitting, with Lady Pedal, leaving one p.m..' (p281) It was either the month of May or April, '... April more likely, it is doubtless the Easter weekend, spent by Jesus in hell. And it may well have been in honour of this latter that Lady pedal had organized, for the benefit of Lemuel's group, this outing to the islands which was going to cost her dear.' (p282)

Lemuel had five persons under his charge. Lemuel collected six excursion suits from kitchen and went to a secluded place and there, 'when his bucket had been filled Lemuel withdrew to a secluded place, rolled up his sleeve to the elbow, fished up from the bottom of the bucket one after another the six pieces of bacon, his own and the five others, ate all the fat off them.' (p283) Then he visited the cells of all the five inmates of asylum under his charge. The cells were far apart but Lemuel visited all of them, 'In the first a young man, dead young, seated in an old rocking-chair, his shirt rolled up and his hands on his thighs, would have seemed asleep had not his eyes been wide open.' (p283) Then he went to the cell of the second inmate, 'the second cell, four or five hundred paces distant from the first, contained one whose only really striking features were his stature, his stiffness and his air of perpetually looking for something while at the same time wondering what that something could possibly be ... He was called the Saxon, though he was far from being any such thing.'

(p283-84). In the third cell there lived a small thin man pacing up and down with an umbrella in his hands, 'in the fourth a misshapen giant, bearded, occupied to the exclusion of all else in scratching himself, intermittently. Sprawling on his pillow on the floor under the window, his head sunk, his mouth open, his legs wide apart, his knees raised, leaning with one hand on the ground while the other came and went under his shirt, he awaited his soup.' (p284) In the fifth there was Macmann half-asleep.

It took him nearly two hours to assemble his flock and then the picnic started. They went on a coach, 'Lady Pedal clung to the box, her bust flung back. She was a huge, big, tall, fat woman. Artificial daisies with brilliant yellow disks gushed from her broad-brimmed straw hat,' (p286) They reached the island on a boat which was towed by sailors. On the Island Lemuel killed the sailor with his hatchet. Seeing the sailor dead, Lady Pedal fainted and when she recovered her senses she began to moan and groan, 'when the sun had vanished, behind the hills, lights of the land began to glitter, Lemuel made Macmann and the two others get into the boat and got into it himself. Then they set out, all six, from the shore.' (p289)

Malone in the meanwhile is undergoing certain deprivations in the bed where he is lying. In the beginning, was it the beginning, I used to see an old woman, then for a time an old yellow arm, then for a time an old yellow hand. But these were probably no more than the agents of a consortium. (p254) He seems to have been neglected by whosoever are his keepers. He finds that his soup which was left at the table by his side is now not supplied for some time, 'It is some days now since my soup was renewed, did I mention that? I suppose so. It is in vain I dispatch my table to ...blending with that Macmann.' He notes at one point, 'I pause to record that I feel in extraordinary form. Delirium perhaps.' (p258)

When Malone comes back to his own story, it is hardly distinguishable from that of Macmann in the asylum of the House of St. John of God. He hears an aeroplane flying low and that

reminds him of an incident when he first saw an aeroplane with his mother. He fondly remembers: 'I saw the very first in flight and then in the end the latest models, oh not the very latest, the very second-latest, the very antepenultimate. I was present at one of the first loopings of the loop, so help me God, I was not afraid. It was above a race-course, my mother held me by the hand. She kept saying, "It is a miracle, a miracle."' (p269) Then he may have had a visitor. He was struck on the head by a strange man, as he recalls: 'I felt a violent blow on the head. He had perhaps been there for some time-one does not care to be kept waiting forever... what an idea, all the same, to hit me on the head. The light has been queer ever since, oh I insinuate nothing, dim and at the same time radiant, perhaps I have concussion.' (p270) He wanted to ask the stranger many questions but finds himself unable to do so.

Now deprived of any means of movement, even the stick by which he could reach his possession, Malone slowly sinks. He feels, 'Easy, Malone, take it easy, you old whore. That reminds me how long can one fast with impunity?' (p275) He thinks of the Lord Mayor of Cork who lived for a long time without food or drink and he feels a great thirst for water, 'Water for pity's sake! How is it that I am not thirsty.' (p275) He feels his head burning, as it is depicted thus: 'My head. On fire, full of boiling oil, what shall I die of, in the end? A transport of blood to the brain? That would be the last straw. The pain is almost unbearable, upon my soul it is.' (p275) And then coming to the end of Macmann's story, he describes the end of both stories in a description which is common to both: 'absurd lights, the stars, the beacons, the buoys, the lights of earth and in the hills the faint fires of the blazing gorse. Macmann, my last, my possessions, I remember, he is there too, perhaps he sleeps, Lemuel.'

Lemuel is in charge; he raises his hatchet on which the blood will never dry, 'but not to hit anyone, he will not hit anyone, he will not hit anyone anymore, he will not touch anyone anymore, either with it or with it or with it or with or ...' (p289)

Evidently, therefore, with *Malone Dies* the question of identity, which earlier appears in *Molloy*, becomes the overriding preoccupation of Beckett's fiction, as John Fletcher aptly comments, 'with *Malone Dies* the questions of identity, prefigured in *Molloy* become the overriding preoccupation of Beckett's fiction; it can in fact safely be said that the last novels are chiefly concerned with the investigation of the pronoun "I"'. He further convincingly argues, '*Malone* shows already a longing, very similar to that of the nameless hero of the *Texts pour rien*, to lose his own persona completely in someone else's; in Sartrean terms, we have here an instance of the "pour-soi" seeking metamorphosis into an "en-soi-pour-soi" that will give it permanence: what *Malone* calls "the brave company I have always longed for, always searched for and which would never have me," adding that he has "sought all his life to elude himself in order truly to find himself."

While within we the wild beast of earnestness padded up and down, roaring, ravening, rending gravely I struggled to be grave no more, to live, to invent... But at each fresh attempt I lost my head, fled to my shadows as to sanctuary... of myself I could never tell any more than live or tell of others. Thus, the story of *Malone Dies* primarily remains the record of his repeated attempts to do this and the complex problem of lending out self.

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Chapter 3

The Unnamable: A Study of Self, Language, and Existential Void

The third novel of the trilogy marks a progress over the earlier two. John Fletcher says, 'The last volume of the trilogy is not only a logical (one might almost say foreseeable) consequence of the latter, but also of the whole of Beckett's fiction up to its composition.' It starts with rhetorical questions, 'Where now? Who now? When now?'

All these questions point out the hero's yearning for an earlier selfhood that he seemed to have lost at the end of two parts of the trilogy. John Pilling writes in this context, 'The unnamable's quest is as much for the preconditions of selfhood (a tense - when now? a place - "where now?") as for self-hood itself (who now?)' But this quest is bedeviled in the course of the development of the plot of the novel.

There is only one certainty and that is himself, 'Unquestioning. I say I' (p293). It is something like Descartes' opening statement, 'Cogito, ergo sum'. But it is not necessary to point out that the novel is a metaphysical demonstration.

The second impression that the opening of the novel creates is that of absolute indeterminacy, 'what am I to do, What shall I do, What should I do, in my situation, how proceed?' (p293). An example is contained in the preceding sentences, 'I seem to speak,

it is not I, about me, it is not about me' (p293). Therefore, his conclusion is that the only way to proceed is, 'By aporia pure and simple? Or by affirmations and negations in validated as uttered, or sooner or later.' (p293). He, however, makes clear that he does not know what 'aporia' means, 'I should mention before going any further, any further on, that I say aporia without knowing what it means' (p293).

He has one compulsion and that is the necessity of continuing to speak: 'I am obliged to speak. I shall never be silent. Never' (p294). This compulsion is imposed on the Unnamable like that of his creator, Beckett himself. Kenner writes, '... he is talking of the compulsion to string out words likening it to a penum, an imposition of lines to be written out as a punishment for inaccurately repeating a lesson. Yet he does not know what lines he is to write out, and can only hope to hit on the right ones by chance Strange hope, turned towards silence and peace.'

Another fact is that he is alone as he emphatically says: 'I am of course alone' (p294). He might very soon acquire company but he is not sure of that. It is said that, 'where there are people there are things' (p294). But he would avoid the system of logic at all costs, 'The thing to avoid, I do not know why, is the spirit of system people without things, people without things, things without people, what does it matter' (p294). The hero's search is filled with contradictions-on the one hand his inability to keep silent and on the other his decision to speak only of himself. Robinson says, '... the unnamable is caught in the universal, human paradox which sends one in search of another even though to find him will solve nothing. The hero abandons the detested society of his fellow men only to discover a need for recognition in his isolation.' And like his predecessors, the unnamable abandons logic because he has fully understood 'the irreconcilable disparity between rational meaning and the immensity of nothingness,' says Robinson.

The disembodied voice-i.e., the unnamable-now starts describing his surroundings. He meets the characters of the earlier novels who accost him in this place now and then. The unnamable says, 'Malone is there of his mortal liveliness little trace remains. He passes before me at doubtless regular intervals' (p294). It is while watching Malone that he tries to specify the nature of his abode because he is sure that he is fixed in a certain location and does not move at all.

'It was while watching him pass that I wondered if we cast a shadow. Impossible to say He passes close by me a few feet away, slowly, always, in the same direction' (p294). There is also Malone's brimless hat but he is not sure what Malone is sitting or standing on and 'I see him from the waist up, he stops at the waist, as far as I am concerned. The trunk erect. But I do not know whether he is on his feet or on his knees' (p295). Malone also reminds him of Molloy, 'Sometimes I wonder if it is not Molloy. Perhaps it is Molloy, wearing Malone's hat. But it is more reasonable to suppose it is Malone, wearing his hat.' (p295). It is not only Malone or Molloy; probably all the earlier characters also inhabit the same space. 'To tell the truth I believe they are all here, at least from Murphy on, I believe we are all here, but so far I have only seen Malone,' (p295).

The novel poses a problem for the readers and Beckett's critics regarding the relation of characters amongst each other. One doubts if these are the same characters at different stages of a process of development. In this regard John Fletcher remarks, 'the preceding heroes whose names are occasionally mentioned in the text are stripped away at last, leaving only the naked voice of the being who exists and has been existing all along, behind all of them, and who has been seeking, in vain to invest himself in their rays for lack of any of his own.' Whereas, Eugene Webb in this connection points out, 'The unnamable seems to be the sort of person Malone might have become after death. He feels that he had died, but cannot understand why death has not brought his extinction.'

Another fact that The Unnamable mentions is the negation of change, 'I have always been sitting here, at this self same spot, my hands on my knees, gazing before me like a great hawk-owl in an aviary Nothing has ever changed since I have been here' (p295-96). He, however, does not want to accept the conclusions of logic. If nothing has changed it does not mean that it will not change in the future. It is explicitly expressed: 'If once a change were to take place, resulting from a principle of disorder already present or on its way, what then? That would seem to depend on the nature of the change. No, here all change would be fatal and land me back, there and then, in all the fun of the fair No, frankly, hand on heart, wait a second, no nothing, to my knowledge' (p297).

In this space he sometimes hears sounds. He once heard a sound which recurs often such as: 'That I am not stone deaf is shown by the sounds that reach me. For though the silence here is almost unbroken, it is not completely so. I remember the first sound heard in this place, I have often heard it since.' (p297-98) Though on the one hand he claims that he had been here all the time, yet it seems to imply that there was a beginning. Earlier he had said, 'I have been here, ever since I began to be, my appearances elsewhere having been put in by other parties' (p296), and again he said, 'I owe my existence to no one, these faint fires are not of those that illuminate or burn. Going nowhere, coming from nowhere.' (p296) But when he says that he heard the sound for the first time, he is probably talking in parables, 'For I am obliged to assign a beginning to my residence here, if only for the sake of clarity. Hell itself, although eternal, dates from the revolt of Lucifer.' (p298) He, therefore, infers that, 'It is, therefore, permissible, in the light of this distant analogy, to think of myself as being here forever, but not as having been here forever.' (p298) His logic is that it is helpful to attribute a beginning to his residence in this place because he could then relate it to that of his abode. Very much like Milton's Satan he asks himself, 'Did I wait somewhere for this place to be ready to receive me? Or did it wait

for me to come and people it?' (p298) His conclusion then is that he and this place originated simultaneously,' I shall say, therefore, that our beginnings coincide, that this place was made for me, I for it, at the same instant.' (p 298)

In addition to Malone, the presence of 'others' has also been felt. Once he saw two shapes resembling men striking against each other, 'Two shapes then oblong like man, entered into collision before me. They fall and I saw them no more, I naturally thought of the pseudo couple Mercier-Camier.' (p299) If the presumptions so far made are true then he could not possibly know about other people, i.e., about men or things, 'Why did I have myself represented in the midst of men, the light of day? It seems to me it was none of my doing. We won't go into that now. I can see them still, my delegates.' (p299) It is through these delegates that he came to know about other places, things, and persons, as it is stated thus: 'The things they have told me! About men, the light of day. I refused to believe them. But some of it has stuck.' (p299) This again raises another question: how is it that he could have communicated? 'What puzzles me is the thought of being indebted for this information to persons with whom I can never have been in contact' (p300). He also does not believe that he could have innate knowledge of such things as people have the knowledge of good and evil. How could he know of such things as his mother or God? 'Innate knowledge of my mother for example, is that conceivable? Not for me. She was one of their favourite subjects of conversation. They also gave me the low low-down on God. They told me I depended on him, in the last analysis. They had it on the reliable authority of his agents at Bally.' (p300) It is also the delegates who gave him the knowledge of such subjects as love, intelligence, and numbers, 'They gave me courses on love, on intelligence, most precious, most precious. They also taught me to count, and even to reason.' (p300) Like Molloy, the unnamable also considers his knowledge of the world of men with a mixture of disgust, boredom, and contempt for the reasons that both the world and man are

valueless. Thus all the information and instructions he receives through his delegates acquire no value in a world that is worthless to start with. Robinson comments on the learning of the unnamable as, 'If man is no more than a zero no amount of multiplication can increase or change his situation. Therefore, he scorns the information with which he has been indoctrinated, for without it he would never have suffered the agony of learning its emptiness.' One of these delegates was called Basil, 'There were four or five of them at me they called that presenting their report. One in particular, Basil I think he was called, filled me with hatred.' (p300) Hugh Kenner, about the unnamable's invention of Basil, writes: He faces back to a past spent inventing the previous characters - a ponderous chronicle of Moribunds in their courses moving, clashing, writing or fallen in short lives, swoons and forward to a future in which perhaps I shall be obliged, in order not to peter out, to invent another fairy tale, yet another, with heads, trunks, arms, legs and all, that follows, let loose in the changeless sound of imperfect shadow and dubious light. He is represented, fraudulently, up there in the world; by someone he first calls Basil, then decides to call Mahood. He has a future state still more reduced if he can succeed in getting it born, and this he calls, Worm: 'Worm the inexpugnable', the undying worm.'

These delegates have a strange effect on him. Basil, for example, makes him change by just looking at him, 'without opening his mouth, fastening on me his eyes like cinders with all their seeing, he changed me a little more each time into what he wanted me to be.' (p300) Basil is not the only one; there are others, 'The other advances full upon me. He emerges as from heavy hangings, advances a few steps, looks at me, then backs away.' (p300) He can see the hat of this second delegate, 'The crown all worn through, like the sole of an old boot, giving vent to a straggle of grey hairs. He raises his eyes and I feel the long imploring gaze, as if I could do something for him.' (p 300-01) From the mention of Malone in this context, it appears that Malone probably is also one of these delegates, 'His visit has never coincided, up to now,

with the transit of Malone. But perhaps some day it will.' (p301) Then there are others still, 'others come towards me, pass before me, wheel about me. And no doubt others still, invisible so far' (p301). This leads to the possibility that one day he may be able to get rid of them, 'The search for the means to put an end to things, an end to speech, is what enables the discourse to continue. No, I must not try to think, simply utter. Method or no method, I shall have to banish them in the end, the beings, things, shapes, sounds, and lights with which my haste to speak has encumbered this place.' (p301-02)

Then the unnamable gives a description of himself, 'perhaps it is time I paid a little attention to myself, for a change.... Me, utter me, in the same foul breath as my creatures?' (p302) He then talks about the atmosphere or rather the air which surrounds him. It appears that all around him is a sort of grey obscurity, 'close to me it is grey, dimly transparent, and beyond that charmed circle deepens and spreads its fine impenetrable veils.' (p302) However, this obscurity is luminous. Within this grey there are some colours, 'This grey, first murky, then frankly opaque, is luminous nonetheless.' (p302) In this space he is fixed, '..., here I can count on my body alone, my body incapable of the smallest movement and whose very eyes can no longer close as they once could, according to Basil and his crew, to rest me from seeing, to rest me from waking, to darken me to sleep, and no longer look away, or down, or up open to heaven, but must remain forever fixed and staring on the narrow space before them where there is nothing to be seen, And come to think of it this grey is shot with rose, like the plumage of certain birds, among which I seem to remember the Cockatoo.' (p303)

The unnamable is certain that he is bound to speak, 'I who am here, who cannot speak, cannot think, and who must speak.' (p303) Apart from this compulsion to keep on speaking, he also ascertains that he has not been anywhere else and is, therefore, immobile, 'And the simplest therefore is to say that what I say, what I shall say, if I can, relate to the place where I am, to me

who am there, in spite of my inability to think of these, or to speak of them, because of the compulsion I am under to speak of them, and therefore perhaps think of them a little.' (p303-04) He also speculates that the space he is occupying may be the inside of a skull, 'I'll never know, which is perhaps merely the inside of my distant skull where once I wandered, now am fixed, lost for tininess, or straining against the walls, with my head, my hands, my feet, my back, and ever murmuring my old stories, my old story, as if it were the first time.' (p304-05) At one point the protagonist also compares himself to man's first benefactor, Prometheus, in whose exile he notices certain similarities to his own, but hastily dismisses any similarity between their respective positions, 'The fact that Prometheus was delivered twenty-nine thousand nine hundred and seventy years after having purged his offence leaves me naturally as cold as camphor. For between me and that miscreant who mocked the gods, invented fire, denatured clay and domesticated the horse, in a word obliged humanity, I trust there is nothing in common (p305). Beckett through his protagonist mocks at humanism which the latter had learnt from Prometheus. Beckett emphatically denounces the concept of humanism which most of the European countries are supposed to believe in, on the basis that like other knowledge, humanism also is only a way of multiplying the zeros. At this point, the protagonist seems to remember the earlier incarnations of himself whom he now regards as insufficient to represent him, as he himself describes: 'All these Murphys, Molloyes and Malones do not fool me. They have made me waste my time, suffer for nothing, speak of them when, in order to stop speaking, I should have spoken of me and of me alone.' (p305) He considers that he had probably made these earlier protagonists of Beckett's novel his delegates so that they might represent his suffering, but now he is not sure. He emphasizes: 'I thought I was right in enlisting these sufferers of my pains. I was wrong. They never suffered my pains, their pains are nothing, compared to mine, a mere little of mine.' (p305) He would have nothing to do with them in the future, and he continues: 'Let them be gone now, them and all the

others, those I have used and those I have not used, give me back the pains I lent them and vanish, from my life, my memory, my terrors and shames.' (p305-06) He denies that they ever existed or that they have any reality. He alone has existed to his delegates, as he explains: 'And Basil and his gang? Inexistent, invented to explain I forget what. Ah yes, all lies, God and man, nature and the light of day, the heart's outpourings and the means of understanding, all invented.' (p304)

These statements sometimes tend to identify this last protagonist with Beckett, the author himself. Robinson writes: 'In an ambiguous relationship which he has with his characters it is Beckett who undertakes this role. Like his characters his life has been spent with a remarkable purity and tenacity of purpose, creating what he regards as an arduous penum..., he has made use of these seemingly autonomous characters, Malone and the Unnamable as they in their turn claim to have invented others, Macmann, Mahood or Worm, in the endeavour they share with him to escape the prison of time and words into the timeless and changeless conditions of self-hood they believe was lost at birth.' However, there are considerations which point towards other possibilities.

The protagonist then goes on to explain his situation in greater detail. His eyes are open, as he says to himself: 'I, of whom I know nothing, I know my eyes are open, because of the tears that pour from them unceasingly. I know I am seated, my hands on my knees, because of the pressure against my rump, against the soles of my feet, against the palms of my hands, against my knees.' (p306) He is gazing in front of him, and this assures him that he is not in a horizontal position. He realizes it deeply: 'I feel my back straight, my neck stiff and free of twist and up on top of it the head, like the ball of the cup-and-ball in its cup at the end of the stick.' (p306) His tears are falling all over his face and down along the neck. Then he asks himself whether he is clothed: 'Am I clothed? I have often asked myself this question, then suddenly started talking about Malone's hat or Molloy's great coat, or

Murphy's suit. If I am, I am but lightly. For I feel my tears coursing over my chest, my sides, and all down my back. Ah yes, I am truly bathed in tears.' (p307) He has lost all projection and protrusions, 'It is a great smooth ball. I carry on my shoulders, featureless, but for the eyes, of which only the sockets remain.' (p307) He could give himself the shape, if not the consistency, of an egg, with two holes no matter where to prevent it from bursting, for the consistency is more like that of mucilage.' (p307) He has no sex organ, 'Why should I have a sex, who have no longer a nose?' (p307) He sums up his existence by saying, 'I'm a big talking ball, talking about things that do not exist, or that exist perhaps, impossible to know, besides the point.' (p307)

The delegates' names change quickly. Basil now changes into the next incarnation called Mahood, 'Decidedly Basil is becoming important, I'll call him Mahood instead, I prefer that, I am queer.' (p311) Mahood is probably the most important of the delegates mentioned in this part of the narration, 'It was he told me stories about me, lived in my stead, issued forth from me, came back to me, entered back into me, heaped stories on my head.' (p311) Then the protagonist tells some of Mahood's stories. In one of the stories which he tells in the first person, he comes back from a world tour, 'At the particular moment I am referring to, I mean when I took myself for Mahood, I must have been coming to the end of a world tour, perhaps not more than two or three centuries to go.' (p319) Mahood at that time-or the protagonist in the person of Mahood-had only one leg left, 'perhaps about it, I had, somewhere off the coast of Java.' (p319) He slowly moves towards what is probably his home where his family lived, 'In a word I was returning to the fold, admittedly reduced, and doubtless fated to be even more so, before I could be restored to my wife and parents, you know, my loved ones, and clasp in my arms, both of which I had succeeded in preserving, my little ones born in my absence.' (p319-20) His family is living in an unusual type of house which he describes, 'I found myself in a kind of vast yard or campus, surrounded by high walls, its surface an

amalgam of dirt and ashes, and this seemed sweet to me after the vast and heaving wastes I had traversed, if my information was correct. I almost felt out of danger! At the centre of this enclosure stood a small rotunda, windowless, but well furnished with loopholes.' (p320) He moved slowly in a curve as if in an inward-moving spiral, and it took him so long that by the time he reached there the whole family had died of food poisoning, 'But what shocked me profoundly, to such a degree that my mind (Mahood dixit) was assailed by insuperable doubts, was the suggestion that the misfortune experienced by my family and brought to my notice first by the noise of their agony, then by the smell of their corpses, had caused me to turn back.' (p324)

What had actually happened is explained in his own words, 'And let us consider what really took place, if Mahood was telling the truth when he represented me as rid at one glorious sweep of parents, wife and heirs. I have plenty of time to a blow Finally I found myself, without surprise, within the building, circular in form as already stated, its ground-floor consisting of a single room flush with the arena, and there completed my rounds, stamping underfoot the unrecognisable remains of my family, here a face, there a stomach, as the case might be, and sinking into them with the ends of my crutches, both coming and going' (p325-26). The description describes the type of disgust which humanity arouses in him, particularly the woman: 'The one forever accursed that ejected me into this world and the other, infundibuliform, in which, pumping my likes, I tried to take my revenge.' (p325) Again describing the remains of his family, he shows the same dislike of humanity; 'I like to fancy, even if it is not true, that it was in mother's entrails I spent the last days of my long voyage, and set out on the next. No, I have no preference, Isolde's breast would have done just as well, or papa's private parts, or the heart of one of the little bastards.' (p326)

The second experience is, if anything, even more grotesque. After describing his travels, he shows himself as a mere trunk with a head joined to it and placed in a jar in front of a certain restaurant,

'For of the great traveller I had been, on my hands and knees in the later stages, then crawling, on my belly or rolling on the ground, only the trunk remains (in sorry trim), surmounted by the head with which we are already familiar, this is the part of myself the description of which I have best assimilated and retained. Stuck like a sheaf of flowers in a deep jar, its neck flush with my mouth, on the side of a quiet street near the shambles.' (p329) It is in this incarnation that he stays there week after week as a living sort of insignia of the eating place. He thinks aloud: 'And alone perhaps the state of my skull, covered with pustules and bluebottles, the latter naturally abounding in such a neighbourhood, preserved me from being an object of envy for many, and a source of discontent. I hope this gives a fair picture of my situation. Once a week I was taken out of my receptacle, so that it might be emptied.' (p330) It is after this experience that he further changed the name of the delegates to Worm. In the above sequence, the reference to the place where Mahood was a jar-man in a restaurant and the other where his family lived, in fact, is akin to Beckett's nostalgia of place in Paris and Ireland. John Fletcher writes: It is interesting to remark in this connection that the restaurant where Mahood was a 'jar-man' actually existed. Following up a shrewd surmise made by Rayner Heppenstall, I discovered that there was formerly an eating-house called the 'Ali-Baba' with, appropriately enough, a 'thief' outside it, fixed in a jar, supporting the menu. Beckett places it in the novel (without naming it) in the rue Brancion, facing the bust of the propagator of horse meat.... The real Ali-Baba stood, however, in the rue de Dantzig, on the western side of the abattoirs, near a dilapidated round wooden building inhabited by artists (La Ruche) which may well have suggested the windowless rotunda in which Mahood's family live. The restaurant, run by an old woman, fell on hard times and had to close ten years ago. Beckett would have known it since he lived at one time in the rue de Favorites, not far away.

Mahood at least had a body, though it was reduced finally to a limbless torso stuck like a sheaf of flowers in a deep jar, and his body having been reduced to such an extent that he cannot even turn his head, but still he has a body. Worm, on the other hand, is a creature who not only lacks any resemblance to a body but even all understanding and faculty of perception. The Unnamable, therefore, gives him the name of Worm, as he affirms: 'But it's time I gave this solitary a name, nothing doing without proper names. I, therefore, baptize him Worm. It was high time.' (p340) Worm. I don't like, but I haven't much choice. It will be my name too, when the time comes, when I needn't be called Mahood any more.' (p340) Worm is different from all other delegates, 'Before Mahood there were others like him, of the same breed and creed, armed with the same prong. But Worm is the first of his kind.' (p340)

Worm differs from Mahood in the sense that Mahood could not think about him, but he had some sense of perception. 'But Worm cannot note. There at least is a first affirmation, I mean negation, on which to build. Worm cannot note. Can Mahood note? That is it, weave, weave-yes, it is the characteristic, among others, of Mahood to note, even if he does not always succeed in doing so, certain things, perhaps I should say all things, so as to turn them to account, for his governance.' (p342) His incapacity to have the faculty of perception is well brought out in the following words, 'Worm, to say he does not know what he is, where he is, what is happening, is to underestimate him. What he does not know is that there is anything to know. His senses tell him nothing, nothing about himself, nothing about the rest, and this distinction is beyond him. Feeling nothing, knowing nothing, he exists nevertheless, but not for himself, for others, others conceive him and say, Worm is, since we conceive him.' (p349)

As for his physical appearance, he is without any shape or features, 'He is nothing but shapeless heap, without a face capable of reflecting the niceties of a torment, but the disposition of which, its greater or lesser degree of crouch and huddledness, is

no doubt expressive for specialists, and enables them to assess the chances of its suddenly making a bound, or dragging its coils faintly away, as if stricken to death. Somewhere in the heap an eye, a wild equine eye, always open, they must have an eye, they see his possessed of an eye.' (p360) This absolutely inchoate creature is the one with which the protagonist tries to identify himself. But finds some difficulties in making him exist, 'Mahood I could not die. Worm will I ever get born?' (p355) The reason for this is that he can never be sure that he is Worm if he is actually the same individual, 'No, I have no voice, in this matter I have none. That is one of the reasons why I confused myself with Worm. But I have no reasons either, no reason, I'm like Worm, without voice or reason, I'm Worm, no, if I were Worm I wouldn't know it, I wouldn't say it, I wouldn't say anything, I'd be Worm.' (p350)

In this strange place which is no particular place, the unnamable is haunted by tormentors. He denies that he has had those experiences which are ascribed to Mahood and Worm, 'I was never anywhere but here, no one ever got me out of here.' (p326) These tormentors have forced him to say all that he is saying and describing, 'There will be no more from me about bodies and trajectories, sky and earth, I don't know what it all is. They have told me, explained to me, described to me, what it all is, what it looks like, what it's all for, one after the other, thousands of times, in thousands of connections, until I must have begun to look as if I understood.' (p326)

These unknown and unseen tormentors have some purpose of their own, probably it is, 'To testify to them, until I die, as if there was any dying with that tomfoolery, that's what they have sworn they'll bring me to.' (p327) He again and again asks himself the question, 'But who, they? Is it really worthwhile inquiring? With my clogged means? No, but that's no reason not to.' (p327) He has decided that he will meet them at their own game, 'Can it be they have abandoned me, saying very well, there's nothing to be done with him, let's leave it at that, he's not dangerous.... First I'll say

what I am not that's how they taught me to proceed, then what I am, it is already under way.' (p328)

The Protagonist is sharply aware that he is not a free agent but has to suffer, 'Yes, I have a pensum to discharge, before I can be free, free to dribble, free to speak no more, listen no more, and I have forgotten what it is. There at last is a fair picture of my situation. I was given a pensum, at birth perhaps, as a punishment for having been born perhaps, or for no particular reason, because they dislike me, and I have forgotten what it is.' (p312) He finds himself in an absolutely helpless condition because even if he finished his pensum then he would have his lesson to say, 'For all I need say is this, that if I have a pensum to perform it is because I could not say my lesson, and that when I have finished my pensum I shall still have my lesson to say.' (p313) He does not have the capacity to perform the task that is required of him, as it appears within him, 'Strange notion in any case, an eminently open to suspicion, that of a task to be performed, before one can be at rest.... But is it possible? Bereft of hands, perhaps it is my duty to clap, as, striking the palms together, to call the waiter, and of feet, to dance the Carmagnole.' (p313)

The protagonist finds that his existence was, in fact, non-existence, 'yes, in my life, since we must call it so, there were three things, the inability to speak, the inability to be silent, and solitude. That is what I have had to make the best of. Yes, now I can speak of my life, I'm too tired for niceties, but I don't know if I ever lived, I have really no opinion on the subject.' (p400) That is why during his lifetime he had to invent everything, as he describes: 'I invented my memories, not knowing what I was doing, not one is of me. It is they asked me to speak of them, they wanted to know what they were, how they lived, that suited me, I thought that would suit me, since I had nothing to say and had to say something.' (p399-400) One of the effects of this loss of all existence and personality is that he cannot have even language of his own, He states: 'Mercier never spoke, Moran never spoke, I never spoke, I seem to speak, that's because he says I as if he

were I, nearly believed him.' (p407) Because he cannot speak it is the fault of speech itself, 'Do you hear him, as if he were I, I who am far, who cannot move, can't be found, but neither can he, he can only talk, if that much, perhaps it's not he, perhaps it's a multitude, one after another, what confusion, someone mentions confusion, is it a sin, all here is sin, you don't know why, you don't know whose, you don't know against whom.' (p407-08) And if reality takes the form of language then existence would be also parts of speech. Therefore, the protagonist cannot have any name, 'someone says you it's the fault of the pronouns, there is no name for me, no pronoun for me, all the trouble comes from that, that, it's a kind of pronoun too, it isn't that either, I'm not that either, let us leave all that.' (p408) In this regard Robinson also comments, 'Unnamed because there is in language no word to describe his Self. All pronouns and vice-existers are equally futile for the Self, once named, ceases to be itself and becomes a projection of its insufficiency.'

The tyrants that harass him cannot be named perhaps it is one, perhaps it is many, 'There may be more than one, a whole college of tyrants, differing in their views as to what should be done with me, in conclave since time began or a little later, listening to me from time to time, then breaking up for a meal or a game of cards.' (p312)

The conclusion, therefore, is reached in a state of complete uncertainty, 'Perhaps it is a dream, all a dream, that would surprise me, I'll wake, in the silence, and never sleep again, it will be I, or dream, dream again, dream of a silence, a dream silence, full of murmurs, I don't know, that's all words, never wake, all worlds, there is nothing else, you must go on, that's all I know, they are going to stop, I know that well, I can feel it, they are going to abandon me, it will be the silence, for a moment, a good few moments, or it will be mine, the lasting one, that did not last, that still lasts, it will be I, you must go on, I cannot go on, you must go on, perhaps it's done already, perhaps they have said me already, perhaps they have carried me to the threshold of my

story, before the door that opens on my story, that would surprise me, if it opens it will be I, it will be the silence, where I am, I don't know, I'll never know, in the silence you don't know, you must go on I can't go on, I'll go on (p418)

The last novel of the trilogy concludes in hysteria of 'Can't' and 'must' and 'will', a kind of ambiguous resolve, the comic-pathetic insistence on being as against being.' These hesitations, ambiguities, irresolutions,' as Hoffman affirms, 'are the mess and mixture of existence and identity.'

To conclude, we can say that the trilogy marks the highest achievement of Beckett in fiction. He presents a more severely morbid view of man's situation portraying his protagonists as physical and moral cripples-often aging men who are degenerate, near-blind, lame, bed-ridden, or doomed to crawl about in mind. As the trilogy presents and we shall see later in his plays, the protagonists seemed to have lost control of their bodily functions. Ignorant and lively, they know not who they are or who any one else is. In fact, they have no effective relationships with others and are reduced to inadequate stammering in their attempt at communication. Beckett's view of human predicament, no doubt, incorporates many tenets of existentialism, and he seems more pessimistic than most atheist existentialists but it is important to note that for Beckett, Existentialism may be a 'mood' than a philosophy. And Beckett's novels and his plays communicate a mood rather than a system of ideas, 'But by portraying his characters as extremes Beckett uncovers the relation of modern man's predicament and ridicules his illusions. Because of Beckett's narrow concentration with existential experience, the reader comprehends his work as more than literary structures. They are explorations into the nature of an individual's mode of existence.'

However, the reality of the human self and his predicament in the twentieth-century world that Beckett portrays in the trilogy is too mysterious to be simplified in isolation of his plays. In the next

chapter an attempt shall be made to explore this reality analyzing his major and shorter plays.

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Conclusion

Samuel Beckett is one of the most distinguished representatives of post-World War II literature, and his novels have achieved widespread recognition and notable success. A detailed study of his fiction in the foregoing chapters, in terms of theme and variety of artistic techniques, demonstrates a penetrating vision of the absurd that he constantly portrayed. The thesis is divided into five chapters, with the second and third chapters focusing specifically on the existential evolution within Beckett's masterpiece: the trilogy comprising *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *The Unnamable*.

The study explores the growing consciousness of an existential predicament, revealing a progressive development of the sense of helplessness throughout this series of novels. Watt serves as a formidable precursor to this trilogy. The protagonist's temporary sojourn in Mr. Knott's house, where everything escapes rational categorization, is symbolic of a meaningless stay in a bewildering universe ruled by indifferent and arbitrary forces. Watt's rational mind attempts to unravel the mystery of day-to-day incidents but fails miserably to understand the rationale of human existence. His relation to the universe is pointless and regulated by inexorable but arbitrary laws. This absurdity suggests the avant-garde writer's characteristic response to life, representing a man bewildered by the strange and non-human nature of his world, ultimately bringing him to the point of alienation from both the self and society.

Following Watt, from 1945 to 1949, Beckett retired to his room in Paris and, in a remarkable period of sustained creation, wrote in French the series of books which form the core of his work. The trilogy—*Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *The Unnamable*—was a massive achievement of concentration as well as content. *Molloy*,

the first novel, is a unique work of fiction written in the form of a personal narrative. The journey undertaken by the protagonist refers not only to the external world but also articulates its counterpart microcosm. The narrative points out the irony of life in a satirical way at the utter helplessness faced by innocent people. Beckett highlights his disgust for humanitarian sentiments that give false hope, and ridicules charitable gestures, which he views as having no defense against extreme despair. He brings to the surface the Cartesian dichotomy between mind and body, reducing the human body to the level of a machine. Thus, in Beckett's fiction, the human body becomes a functional creature, shown losing limbs and acquiring the status of a helpless creature.

Malone Dies, the second novel, takes the action initiated in Molloy further. Malone personifies Dostoevsky's or Kafka's spirit brooding over legalistic intricacies, but he simply 'lies dying'. The underlying idea is Beckett's portrayal of the evanescence of human relations in the modern world and the loneliness of city life. It reminds us of T.S. Eliot's description of the modern city in *The Waste Land*, where the protagonist seeks refuge in unsatisfactory lovemaking. In Beckett's perception, city life reduces man to an unreasoning acceptance of his insignificance and impotence.

As stated earlier, it may be reiterated that the third novel of the trilogy, *The Unnamable*, denotes progress over Molloy and Malone Dies. A highly perceivable truth of life, described as 'absolute indeterminacy', gets highlighted in this work. The center-stage of action remains preoccupied by answering key questions: What am I to do? What shall I do? In this manner, Beckett brings to the fore the compulsions of life which emanate from the loneliness in which the protagonist finds himself. He is caught in a human paradox which keeps him searching for his identity, but he does not find any logic to understand "the irreconcilable disparity between rational meaning and immensity of nothingness."

A brief bird's-eye view described here makes us believe that the trilogy is definitely a reflection of Beckett's eminent achievement in the art of fiction. In the monologues of the trilogy, from Molloy onward, the protagonist progressively loses various faculties of action and reverts inward until, in *The Unnamable*, we have a mere report of the mental state of an individual bereft of all organs of sense. This progression parallels the development of capitalism from the early stage of entrepreneurship to monopoly capital, where the individual finds himself absolutely helpless. Like a Beckettian protagonist, the social position of the worker deteriorates; his social deprivation grows, and he is increasingly reduced to the level of an adjunct to the machine, crippled both mentally and physically.

Thus, Beckett employs various strategies—minimization, multiplicity of time scales, and experiment with language—to lend his novels a universal dimension. He reduces everything to the barest minimum and impregnates it with maximum suggestiveness. For instance, by reducing verbal means, the depth of expression is increased. A similar advantage is gained when the language of the body is broken down into rudimentary elements, frozen gestures, restricted movement, and disembodied voices.

And of all, perhaps nothing in Beckett is marked more by the experimental spirit than language. To depict a life that is inexplicable and a humanity incapacitated by the lack of dependable faculties of communication, Beckett dethroned both language and logic. The monotonously entangled nature of his words and sounds suggests the intricate patterns of human life. Beckett's use of inverted syntax, fragmented phrases, broken syntactic order, detached words, and dream-like aural patterns were all done with the view to foiling the expectation of objective ideas and logical sequences to show a disordered and irrational existence