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MEMORY AND TIME IN SOME OF SAMUEL BECKETT'S PLAYS

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ABSTRACT

Samuel Beckett is probably the most well known of the absurdist playwrights because of his play *Waiting for Godot*. Beckett's plays seem to focus on the themes of the uselessness of human action, and the failure of the human race to communicate. He has written in almost all genres: poetry, fiction and drama. He is a critic, an essayist, a short story writer and also a translator. Beckett's plays posit an absurd world which has been reached through the development of his fictional persona. His postwar era fame only came about in the 1950's when he published three novels and his famous play, *Waiting for Godot*. Beckett was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1969. This paper focuses on the use of Memory, and Time in some of Beckett's play.

ملخص البحث

يعتبر صموئيل بكت أشهر كتاب مسرح اللامعقول بسبب مسرحية في انتظار كودو. ان مسرحيات بكت تركز على موضوعات مثل عبثية العمل الانساني وفشله في التواصل مع اخيه الانسان. لقد كتب بكت في معظم المواضيع الادبيه مثل الشعر والروايه والمسرحيه كما كتب في النقد والمقاله والقصه القصيره والترجمه. ومسرحيات بكت ترسم عالما عبثيا تم الوصول اليه من خلال تطور شخصياته الروانيه. وبدات شهره بكت خلال خمسينيات القرن الماضي حين نشر ثلاث روايات اضافته الى مسرحيته المعروفه في انتظار كودو. ومنح بكت جائزه نوبل للاداب عام 1969. هذا البحث يركز على توظيف الوقت والذاكره في بعض من مسرحيات بكت.

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In 1931 Beckett had published his book *Proust*. This was much before his writing career had actually began, and had been written in response to a request of Richard Aldington who along with Nancy Cunard had awarded Beckett the first prize in the poetry contest for *Whoroscope*. In his preparation for that book he read the entire sixteen volumes of Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. Linda Ben\_Zvi quotes Beckett's description of Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* as the "abominable edition of the Nouvelle Revue Francaise"<sup>1</sup>. In this book Beckett gave priority to Memory over other elements like Time and Habit. His comments on the Proustian memory are substantiated by numerous examples for the text.

In fact it was Bergson who first distinguished between two types of memory: habit memory and pure memory. In Bergson's opinion:

Habit memory is a mere motor mechanism, a function of the brain and nervous system, as when we recite some lesson we have learned by heart; but pure memory, the recollection of specific events, is a function of the mind or spirit, by means of which we are aware of the past, and which cannot consist in any purely physical or mechanical activity.<sup>2</sup>

Proust calls the first memory voluntary memory, and the second involuntary memory. Involuntary memory can spring up 'unimpaired with a clear vision' of the original event. Involuntary memory, according to Beckett is "explosive, an immediate, total delicious deflagration."<sup>3</sup> This memory in Beckett's view reveals "what the mock reality of the experience never can and never reveal- the real."<sup>4</sup>

The action of the involuntary memory is similar to that of Joyce's epiphany, which implies the moment when an event is seen suddenly in all its full and unique significance. Beckett considers involuntary memory an unruly magician. He says:

It chooses its own time and place for the performance of its miracle. I do not know how often this miracle recurs in Proust...But the first \_ the famous episode of the Madeleine Steeped in tea\_ would justify the assertion that his entire book is a monument to involuntary memory and the epic of its action.<sup>5</sup>

He strikes an important note here that was later to reverberate through his own writing. In his plays his heroes are worn out with age, alienated from one another, paralyzed, immobilized, bitter and dried of all positive feelings, because they are engulfed in their past. Therefore a constant engulfment by memory causes alienation of the character and a sense of confinement. Almost all his characters "suffered with memories that constantly alter and shift in time and almost obliterate the present by their force, yet never fixed or clear."<sup>6</sup>

Besides Memory Beckett in *Proust* also examines another human faculty habit. Habit, for Beckett, is equal to the basic activities of life "Breathing is habit, Life is habit. Or rather a succession of habits, since the individual is a succession of individuals."<sup>7</sup> Beckett's plays demonstrate habits of human beings in relation to memory. Habit through its repetitive structure relates to the present, while memory relates to the past. Thus "in his plays as the characters move between the past and the present, habit provides the structural framework. It makes it possible for memory to interact with it." <sup>8</sup> *Waiting for Godot* begins and ends with human habits as the stage directions in Act One states: Estragon, sitting on a low mound, is trying to take off his boot. He pulls at it with both hands, panting. He gives up, exhausted, rests tries again. As before."<sup>9</sup> In the end of Act Two another habit is repeated. This time it is the wearing of trousers:

Vladimir : Pull on your trousers.

Estragon : what?

Vladimir : Pull on your trousers.

Estragon : you want me to pull off my trousers?

Vladimir : Pull on your trousers.

Estragon: (Realizing his trousers are down) True. ( He pulls up His trousers.) <sup>10</sup>

The friendship between Vladimir (Didi) and Estragon(Gogo) is another human habit which is based on the fact that each needs the other. Therefore friendship helps them to pass time, to live and recollect the past.

In Beckett's play *Endgame* the main character Hamm repeatedly asks for external verification of what he remembers of the past. In his case memory is wholly interiorized because he lacks the sense of sight. consequently the sense of physical rootedness of familiarity of location is also absent and he constantly need reassurance. *Krapp's Last Tape* is a biographical play, revealing three phases of Krapp's life. Though the play opens on one man, we are witness to three Krapps- Krapp in his near thirties, Krapp in his near forties and Krapp in his near seventies. The play covers roughly a span of forty years, seen in a sequence of fragmented

memories, knit together by the one unchanging self Krapp. *Krapp's Last Tape*, which was written for the Irish actor Patrick Magee, stars a tape recorder featuring the voice of Krapp at the age of 39 and the listener, Krapp, at the age of 69, with cracked voice and laborious walk. The old man shuffles, eats bananas, drinks backstage, but above all listens and comments on his memories of thirty years ago. His chief fascination is with the memory of a night on a lake with a woman. In *Krapp's Last Tape*, the past appears to have been captured in the tapes, but it is not possible to accept the account of the past as a correct version. The man who gave this account is almost non-existent. The old man who is replaying these tapes has come a long way, and is considerably changed from his former selves.

It is difficult to concretize, and capture memory, or depend on its certainty. Its fluidity is a strong element in the structure. The movement towards memory, towards the events of the past and then a withdrawal into the present, act like a constant movement to and fro. The various accounts of the past, in *All That Fall*, *Happy Days*, *Waiting for Godot* and almost in all his plays, accounts of the recent and remote happenings and occurrences interact with the accounts or responses to the present, and dramatic action generates from this interaction. In *Time in Literature* Hans Meyerhoff explains how memory fuses and overlaps with the present. He says:

Memory and expectation are proverbially vague, ambiguous and fallible. They are vague in that they often fuse and overlap even in the present; and they are fallible, or a constant source of error and deception, because of a number of psychological mechanisms such as forgetting, repressing, distorting or projecting. 11

Regarding the setting in the stage plays Beckett depicts a location of confinement. The atmosphere of confinement in *Endgame*, *Not I* and other plays is portrayed through the setting. In contrast the radio plays *Like All That Fall* and *Embers* have an open setting, because the concentration here is on sound and thus it includes many characters, animals and machines. In *All That Fall*, Maddy walks to the station to receive her husband on the day of his birthday. This symbolizes her journey through life consisting of ceremonies of birth anniversary and social exchange which brings the past in. She herself is preoccupied both with her physical illness and her emotional depression.

In his radio plays Beckett compensates the listeners for the missing visual dimension. He is aware that a radio play is finally assembled in the imagination of the listener. Clas Zilliagus compares radio plays to other visual plays and states:

Radio does not have the twofold obligation to project both sound and sight. This limitation can be turned into a virtue, as Beckett has done in *Embers*. The choice is between sound and silence. For Henry, the major character of *Embers*, such a choice does not exist. Where his voice ends, the sound of the sea takes over, distorted but inescapable. The auditory antagonism between voice and sea constitutes the chief element of tension in *Embers*.12

The Beckettians struggle to chain their present to their past in order to create a sense of background which justifies the present. This is obvious in case of Henry, Joe and other Beckettian characters. They attempt to search the stages of their past in order to frame each stage with certain boundaries of time, but the beginning, the middle, and the end cannot be located or connected in memory. Beckett himself refers to this aspect in *Proust*. Beckett states: "At the best, all that is realized in Time (all Time produce), whether in Art or Life, can only be Possessed successively, by a series of partial annexations – and never integrally and at once."13

In the plays the frequent failure of memory of the various characters breaks the frame of linear time to which man is accustomed. The recollections of past happening create an impression that there is neither a causal link nor a clear difference between the past and the present as they tend to merge into each other.

Pozzo, one of the four characters in *Waiting for Godot*, loses his watch and later claims that "The blind have no notion of time. The things of time are hidden from them too." (p.79) Before his final departure Pozzo announces to Vladimir the complete collapse of the past and the future as they coalesce in the present:

Vladimir: Dumb! Since when?

Pozzo: (Suddenly furious) Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time? It's abominable! When! When! One day is that not enough for you, one day like any other day, one day he went dumb, one day I went blind, one day we'll go deaf, one day we were born, one day we'll die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you? They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more. (p.82)<sup>14</sup>

Pozzo here echoes St. Augustine's philosophical belief in the total fusion of past and present. As Meyerhoff in *Time in Literature* has pointed out that "St. Augustine was the first thinker to advance a philosophical theory based entirely upon the momentary experience of time combined with the psychological categories of memory and expectation." <sup>14</sup> According to St. Augustine:

What happens, happens now; that is, it is always an experience, idea, or thing which is "present". Nevertheless, we can construct a meaningful temporal series accounting for past and future in terms of memory and expectation. By "past" we then mean the present memory experience of a thing past; by "future" the present expectation or anticipation of a future thing.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, Beckett portrays his notion of time in his plays where the dramatic structure destroys the sense of linear or progressive time. This destruction of both past and present is created by the introduction of circular design. This is worked out through the innumerable repetitions and returns statements, phrases, and motifs. The duet "well, shall we go? Yes let's go ..." etc. is repeated more than ten times in *Waiting for Godot*. Besides the cyclic technique of the dialogue we have another cyclic shape introduced by the stage directions. In *Waiting for Godot* Vladimir and Estragon seek to escape in four different directions, but they realize that there is no exit, and they are in a closed circle. In Beckett all notions of time as conceived by rational mind are false illusions and props to support oneself with the hope of a possible cessation of time. But beyond the rational concept (linear or progressive) is Beckett's concept of timelessness, where the end is the beginning and the beginning is in the end: "they give birth astride of a grave", says Pozzo.

In *Endgame*, the main character, Hamm feels that there is no need to talk about Memory, and it is not important to try and resolve its mystery. Ripeness in relation to memory comes through the passage of time. Thus Hamm does not wonder like Clove, another character in the same play, why it does not 'finish'. He grants Zeno, pre-Socratic Greek Philosopher, his belief in notion of time "moment upon moment pattering down, like the millet grains of...(he hesitates) the old Greek, and all lifelong you wait for that to mount up to a life." <sup>16</sup> Hamm affirms Clove's analogy of Zeno's heap, for that is what time is. In *Endgame* there is a hit towards the death of time in the play. The stage directions state that Clove gives Hamm his gaff, then he "goes toward door, halts, looks at alarm – clock, takes it down, looks round for a better place to put it, goes to bins, put it on lid of Nagg's bin." <sup>17</sup> That action of placing the alarm –clock among the dead characters suggests that time is not real. Perhaps it means that time is dead and all actions which are judged by time are mere illusions. But time in Beckett's plays moves through the characters to portray its force on their bodies, features and consciousness. This passage of time is recorded by both the stage settings and the deterioration of the characters. Therefore the stage setting of Act One in *Waiting for Godot* is closely related to time: "In moment it is night. The moon rises at back, mounts in the sky, stands still, shedding a pale light on the scene." <sup>18</sup> In Act Two, of the same play, the tree on the stage seems to flourish which is a new indication of the passage of time.

Lucky and Pozzo make reappearance in Act Two but in worsened condition ( Lucky is dumb and Pozzo is blind), and the purpose for which they had set out on their journey is unaccomplished.

In Act Two of *Happy Days* a similar technique is used in raising Winnie's mound from the waist up to her neck. Willie too, at the end of Act Two, has moved toward animalistic stage. He drops his hat and gloves, then starts to crawl up to Winnie. He is almost dumb and he speaks one word, "(Just audible). Win." 19 which besides being a pet- name for Winnie is a verb and acquires a polysemous dimension.

The function of memory helps us to understand the nature of the relationship between the different characters in the play. In *Waiting for Godot* through Vladimir's memory we know that he feels committed to their friendship. He takes upon himself the guardianship of Estragon and feels protective towards him during his moments of amnesia. He looks at Estragon and says:

Vladimir:...At me too someone is looking, of me too someone  
is saying, he is sleeping, he knows nothing, let him sleep on. 20

Vladimir could be regarded as a good friend or guide to Estragon though the latter has no need for guidance. In fact Vladimir asks about 190 questions in the play, many of which addressed to Estragon. Many of these questions attempt to stir Estragon's memory but he proves to be a character who lives only in the present. In Act Two it becomes clearer to Estragon, cannot even recollect what he and Vladimir had done the previous day. Vladimir is aware of Estragon's amnesia, thus even at the height of his suffering he is able to transcend his personal pain, and sympathies with ignorant Estragon. Vladimir also had "fished" Estragon of the Rhone River when the latter had attempted suicide. In fact the whole background to their relationship is depicted by the partial and episodic recollection of the past. Without the faculty of memory the play and the characters would have been totally unanchored in time.

In *Endgame* another type of relationship is portrayed. Hamm does not wait for Godot to save him, nor does he wait for the end. What he has is a good memory of the past and only one answer to the future: " Take it easy...Peace to our arses." 21 Neither is he at peace with his memory which keeps dripping in his mind. Hamm says to Clov " I was a father to you." 22 By denying the essentials of living to Clov ( supposed to be his son), and Nagg and Nell (his parents), he restricts them, and tortures them both at a physical and a psychological level. Also he does not allow them to recall their past. When Nagg and Nell use their memory to recall images of Lake Como, Hamm silences them: " Quiet, quiet you're keeping me awake...there's something dripping in my head." 23

Each and every event becomes one more grain of millet that had been added to the heap which still remains unfinished. It is significant to note that no memory appears to be complete or, self contained in the play. Hamm's story of the painter, Nell's of Lake Como and Nagg's tale of the tailor and trousers all these stories remain incomplete. However, Hamm in a moment of fury chides Nagg for his driveling memory; "Have you not finished? Will you never finish? (With sudden fury) Will this never finish?" 24

Hamm enjoys his memories which he terms as old questions and old answers, " I love the old questions (With fervor) Ah the old questions, the old answers, there's nothing like them!" 25 He also accepts his present as one of unending suffering. Hamm does wonder like Clov, " Why it (memory) does not finish." He chooses another way to face the present " Let's play it that way...and speak no more about it." 26

Hamm's treatment of Clov, Nagg and Nell are essentially the same as that of his dog. He asks Clov if the dog "is gazing at me?...As if he were asking me to take him for a walk? Or as if he were begging me for a bone...leave him like that standing there imploring me." 27

Similarly his father Nagg, implores him for biscuits, pap and sugar-plum. Hamm curses him as his accursed progenitor, and teases him with an offer of sugar-plum, if he would give a hearing to his recollections.

The relationship in *Happy Days* is of another kind. This time it is one of a husband and wife with similar names, Winnie and Willie. The play is a landmark in Beckett's writing, because the leading character is a 'well-preserved, blond woman'. The entire play is about Winnie's past recounted into two acts. She recollects her past while Willie is present on the stage, yet he never affirms or contradicts her memories. In fact she needs Willie because he is the link with her past. Throughout the play Winnie displays alternate feelings of

sadness and happiness in relation to her past. Perhaps the only way to counteract the present is to live the happy memories of the past. Every time Winnie speaks of time or 'day' she remembers that she is talking in the 'old style' which perhaps means old style of living, or the past. Winnie – Willie relationship can be seen as an actor – audience relationship with Willie remaining almost silent in both the acts. Thus, Willie is a part of her past, or an audience listening to her past.

Besides governing the relationship between the characters memory also affects the action in the plays. Memory becomes the primary action in itself in the sense that no actions (in the Aristotelian term) take place on stage in almost all the plays. In Beckett's plays we have the same elements of the Aristotelian formula (action- plot- character- thought), but the chain is broken, because the focus has been shifted from *doing* something to *remembering*. Thus, memory creates an artificial stasis when the characters keep moving backward to their past. Beckett has a clear perception of the stasis. Thus he concentrates on the voice, and makes it like a musical score. Memory is divided into voices which accompany the actors limited actions or movement. In *Happy Days*, Winnie says,

What now? (Pause) Words fall, there are times when even they fall. (Turning a little towards Willie) Is that not so Willie? (Pause. Turning a little further) Is not that so, Willie, that even words fail, at times? (Pause. Back front.) What is one to do then, until they come again? Brush and Comb the hair, if it has not been done, or if there is some doubt, trim the nails, if they are in need of trimming, these things tide one over. (Pause.) That is what I mean. (Pause.) That is all I mean. 28

To accompany memory or memories in *Krapp's Last Tape*, Beckett offers carefully controlled movements and actions to Krapp. Thus Beckett concentrates on memory more than actions or gestures. What makes the play interesting is the stark quality of the visual images portrayed through memory. Characters are old and approaching their death, and thus they live in the past. The plot is made up of their encounter with their past or memory of some lapses. Recollections of event and names are the main actions of the plays. In spite of its unreliability, memory remains the pivot of the plays. It is the only background against which the characters can measure themselves. Memory for the Beckettians is like a broken mirror which reflects different parts the same face in different degrees of incompleteness. Beckett's characters, as they represent the human condition, emerge more as archetypes and less as individuals.

In *Krapp's Last Tape*, we have one character on the stage; but when Krapp operates his recorder, we have two more by means of recorded memory of the younger Krapp. The past and the present (self) are brought together, and Krapp regards his former self with disdain, "All that old misery . once wasn't enough for you ."29

Memory brings on stage other characters, selves, events, and the forgotten past. Krapp at certain moments forgets that the voice on the tape is his own, even the words he had used must be looked up in the dictionary. Thus, when he attempts to record his present, he fails because he is not the same character of the same voice, the same language the same features and the same mind. Charles R. Lyons illustrates that old Krapp:

Is puzzled by the noun *equinox* he cannot remember the meaning of *viduity*, and searches a dictionary to discover the significance of the word used by the younger. While the past in *Krapp's Last Tape* seems to have more presence, authenticity and vitality than the remnants of the past in earlier plays, Beckett uses the physical or scenic division between character and memory- the separation of the figure of Krapp and the voice of the

tapes- to diminish the immediacy of the past.<sup>30</sup>

In *Waiting for Godot*, Vladimir's memory emphasizes the significance of religion. He recalls the story of the two thieves crucified alongside Jesus, one of whom was saved according to one of the four evangelists. Two of the evangelists say nothing about the matter, but the fourth says that both the thieves cursed him. Vladimir is obsessed with the fact that although all four evangelists were there or "thereabouts", only one says that one of the thieves was saved. Why should the evangelist who says that one of the thieves was saved be believed rather than the others?

Vladimir : But all four were there. And only one speaks of a thief being saved. Why believe him rather than others?

Estragon : Who believes him?<sup>31</sup>

To Estragon's question Vladimir says, "everybody knows the only version they know."<sup>32</sup> And then we have Estragon's opinion which might represent Beckett's verdict; "people are bloody ignorant apes."<sup>33</sup> However the Beckettian characters are not in harmony with the religious ideas. In Beckett's *Trilogy* the Unnamable says:

...I hear them, I'm mute, what do they want, what have I done to them, what have I done to God, what have they done to God what has God done to us, nothing, and we have done nothing to him, you can't do anything to him, he can't do anything to us, we are innocent, he's innocent, it's nobody's fault...<sup>34</sup>

personally Beckett could see no hope in religion. In an interview with Tom Driver he said:

I have no religious feeling...The family was protestant, but for me it was only irksome and I let it go. My brother and mother got no value from their religion when they died. At the moment of crisis it had no more depth than an old school tie. <sup>35</sup>

Beckett's works are of a multidimensional pattern and thus religious interpretations of his plays could appear in criticism. However it was Eric Bentley who was the first to suggest that *Waiting for Godot*, is based on the fabulous character Godeau in Balzac's *Le Faiseur* or some other interpretation of his name.

Beckett's plays are best understood as a dramatic interpretation of human life. He once described his characters as "people" and thus Martin Esslin's preliminary conclusion on Godot's identity appears admirably right:

Any endeavor to arrive at a clear and certain interpretation by establishing the identity of *Godot* through the critical analysis would be as foolish as trying to discover the clear outlines hidden behind the chiaroscuro of a painting by Rembrandt by scrapping away the paint. <sup>36</sup>

The development of Beckett's dramaturgy shows a conscious and a careful process of reduction of all the dramatic elements. He moves from plays of two acts with characters and props to plays of highly selected images which provide company to memory. Among the elements which have been condensed are language, actions, movements, and space. Earlier in *Waiting for Godot*, Beckett provided the ramps with an open space on a "country road". That country road has been reduced into a room in *Endgame*, a den in *Krapp's Last Tape*, and a spot of light on human lips in *Not I*.

In 1929 in his critical essay "Dante...Bruno. Vico.. Joyce", Beckett had considered the relationship between form and content as organic; "form is content, content is form. You complain that this stuff is not written in English. It is not written at all. It is not to be read- or rather it is not only to be read. It is to be looked at and listened to."<sup>37</sup> The words looked, listened and are the main orbits of Beckett's plays. In his plays (especially these plays, wherein memory is the main pivot) there is a fundamental relationship between the

voice (memory) and the image. In *Krapp's Last Tape*, and some other plays, this relationship provides the spatial image to the audience. When old Krapp listens to his former self, he sits under light which looks like an isolated island. But when old Krapp stops the recorder, he moves to the darkness to have a drink. Young Krapp speaks of similar imagery of light and darkness. In this context Linda Bin-zvi says that in the tapes

Krapp at twenty –nine lives with Bianca (White) on Kedar  
Street (dark). At thirty- nine, while waiting his mother's  
Death, he sits in a park sees a woman dressed in white  
Pushing ' a big black hooded perambulator, most funeral  
Thing.' His first act after death is to give black ball to a  
white dog.<sup>38</sup>

In *Play* the spatial dimension has been further reduced to a beam that flashes from a spot place at the centre of the footlights. Each of the three characters speaks of his own memory when the beam lights his face. *Not I* represents a further reduction of space. Beckett in his plays distills the spatial presence into almost its zero point. The whole play seems to take in what Charles R. Lyons called "black void." In this black void the only action left is narration of memory. The old woman represented by Mouth displays her past to cover a span of about seventy years of life. She begins with the first moment of birth "... Out...into this world ...tiny little thing...before its time." <sup>39</sup> However, Beckett knew that such distillation of spatial element might convert the plays into non-dramatic works. Thus when Alan Schneider praises *Not I*, Beckett replies in a letter to him saying: "Thanks for your reaction to *Not I*. Encouraging to my hope that it may be theatre after all in spite of all."<sup>40</sup> In *Rockaby* during the flows of memory the face of the woman gives a company to memory, slightly swaying in and out of light. This movement in the play is accompanied by memory to create a spatial dimension in the play. Some of the movements made by some characters in space perhaps suggest physical departure from spatial existence. In *Endgame* Clov wants to leave Hamm, and Krapp leaves his den to his off stage room.

This distillation of space achieves a very spectacular effect, which makes memory an important part of the character without which it cannot sustain itself on the stage. This is an important part, specifically in the theatre plays, because the positioning of the characters and their movement from scene to scene, episode to episode is an additional dimension which cannot be available to a radio play. Characters relate significantly to the words they speak and the actions they perform. At times the two may also contradict each other, and this point out the gaps in *Waiting for Godot*. At times the movement of the character(s) builds up an image which highlights the contrast as in *Krapp's Last Tape*.

In several ways, Beckett's development as a dramatist is continued exploration of the ideas he began to explore and work on when he wrote his commentary on Proust. In his plays this exploration assumed a somewhat different role than in his fiction. In his plays space was an additional factor to be considered. While emphasizing and developing the non-logical, monologue oriented, introspective contraction of reality, Beckett also had to relate it to the theatrical demands. The result is that the theatre is shifted to the mind of the character or the voice. This happens in *Endgame*, it also happens in *Eh Joe*. The similarities with the inside of the human skull are pointedly stressed, Beckett's use of memory also affects language and the pattern of dialogue. People don't talk to one another, more often they talk to their own selves. They are continuing a conversation which they had begun sometimes in the past. Maddy is not really talking to others in *All That Fall*, Vladimir and Estragon are often talking at cross-purposes in *Waiting for Godot*, Krapp only replays the tapes recorded at various stages in his life in *Krapp's Last Tape*. The nature of Beckett's imagery is consequently different. The images are not concretized through visual impact. Even when they relate to food like carrots, radishes and bananas, there is a feeling of uncertainty as to their identity. Smell and sound are more dominant than the eye as the inward look is only casually related to the external.

An examination of the past adjusts itself more naturally to narrative technique than to dramatic. But using memory for his dramatic works, Beckett achieved two things; first he questioned the traditional view of dramaturgy and by deifying it created a new kind of drama, second within this new kind of drama he began to

look at character, action and structure anew and established a new equation between internal space and theatrical space.

Beckett's plays are a dramatic portrayal of Man's predicament and his suffering which is a fundamental attribute of existence. The plays demonstrate different aspects of human suffering, loneliness, confinement and meaninglessness where memory is the only support available to the characters. Almost all Beckett's plays have emphasized the relationship between memory and reality. In their attempt to locate themselves in time the Beckettians try to explain the relationship each has (or believes he has) to his past. But their attempt collapses because one is never quite certain whether what the characters recollect is reality or illusion. Even the characters themselves are not sure whether they create stories or recollect actual events of their past. The common feature for the Beckettians is that their perception or understanding is never direct or directly related to reality. This indirectness of perception leads them to sketchy, or hazy portrayal of reality. One might agree with Tom Wingfield's statement that " the play is memory and being memory play it ...not realistic."41

#### End Notes

1. Linda Ben-Zvi, *Samuel Beckett* ( Boston, Twyne Publishers, 1986), p.24.
2. Done Locke, *Memory* (London, Macmillan, 1971), p.43
3. Samuel Beckett, *Proust and Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit* (London, Calder, 1965), p.20
4. Ibid, p.20
5. Linda Ben-Zvi, *Samuel Beckett* ( Boston, Twyne Publishers, 1986), p.26
6. Samuel Beckett, *Proust and Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit* (London, Calder, 1965), p.8
7. Linda Ben-Zvi, *Samuel Beckett* ( Boston, Twyne Publishers, 1986), pp.24-25
8. Samuel Beckett, *The Complete Dramatic Works* (Faber and Faber, London, 1986) p.p.86-87 .
9. Ibid, pp.87
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