



# The Name of the Unnamable or Tragedy of Self in Samuel Beckett

Yücel Dursun

THIS article aims to exemplify, through a philosophical approach, how Samuel Beckett's novel, translated into English under the name *Trilogy* – consisting of three stories, *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *Unnamable* – can be read in relation to specific philosophical doctrines. In exploring the content of these three stories and the narrative structure of the novel as a whole, which takes on a manifestly expressive form in *The Unnamable*, the first argument of this article will expostulate that what the subject lives through in his struggle to reach out for his Self is essentially the problem of being Self, where the latter is taken as either a problem that is “out there”, though far away, or one that is “lost as soon as it is accomplished.” The problems presented here embody a paradox that can be expressed, perhaps, as “speaking for silence”. In an attempt to address this paradox, the second argument will present this same paradox as deriving from some type of tragedy experienced by the subject. This tragedy, which highlights the significance of the paradox, is the frustration of the Self as a subject trying on one hand to make himself, in various dynamic forms, an object within the reality, and his attempt to articulate this on the other.

This article will take as its starting point a description of the general characteristics of the narratives and explore the discussions centered around them. It will then move on to the problem of the self, elucidating the centrality of the latter to the fictive subjects of these narratives – in fact central to those subjects-construed-by-subjects – based on the readings of the text. Finally, I will address the tragedy leading to this problem of the self, which can potentially be experienced by any reflective subject.

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### General Characteristics of the Stories

The general or overarching characteristics of Beckett's stories can be evaluated vis-à-vis the general themes of the narration, its language and the connection between them. What is markedly distinct in each of the three stories is the presentation of the narrators' own deficiencies (disability, old-age, loneliness, absence of a powerful and vivid memory, inability to know the whole, inability to know the self, inability to reach out the self, etc.)<sup>1</sup> as enclosed monologues, whereas the outer world they live in is ignored. Sometimes the narrators relate these deficiencies by constructing real life situations involving themselves (as is particularly apparent in the character of Molloy), while at other times, they are the expressed creations of the narrator (as in the example of Malone). Sometimes the narrator does not seem to be telling, even in implicit fragments, a meaningful story. As matter of fact, the narrator is again telling the real story, the subject-matter of the previous two stories, a specific life condition, which reveals itself as the pursuit, catching, knowledge, and articulation of the identity of the Self – that is, the thing he experiences as a subject (intensely in *The Unnamable*).

These desperations and deficiencies, which are the outcomes of certain life situations and conditions, are also reflected in the language of Beckett's narrators. However, this does not take the style or form of direct narration, but rather of contradictions and negations, as echoed in the narrator's sentences. For instance, it is possible to find examples of contradicting sentences such as: "I had only to want to. And yet no, for I did want to."<sup>2</sup> or "It is midnight. The rain is beating on the windows. It was not midnight. It was not raining." (Beckett 182). The narrators make frequent use of such seemingly contradicting sentences and the like throughout his narratives. He replaces or displaces a sentence for another through direct or indirect negation. This technique, according to Iser, is the characteristic feature of the style in each of the three stories:

*The sentence construction in this [In Molloy] and the subsequent novels is frequently composed of direct contradictions. A statement is followed by the immediate retraction of what has been stated. The degree of contradiction varies from modification or patent undermining right through to total negation.<sup>3</sup>*



Still, why is the narrator in need of such a technique? The answer to the question may be this: it is related to the thing intended to be narrated or transferred via the stories and the linguistic possibility of transferring that thing. If, above all, certain life situations of the subject are to be transferred through a particular language, this is possible with the experienced reality unbound by the same language. Otherwise, what is experienced in reality will be one thing, and the way of transferring that which belongs to the agent's language will be another. However, the linguistic style in Beckett's stories seems to depict the opposite.

Smith, writing in relation to the Trilogy's narrative structure, notes that, "as the Trilogy's narrative is played out, motion that was thought to be linear turns out to be circular".<sup>4</sup> The Circularity<sup>5</sup> of the narrative is that the sense of time in the Trilogy is circular and is closely related to the subject.<sup>6</sup>

Reality experienced by the subject, as will be further referred to, is made of concentric circles<sup>7</sup> imprisoning the subject. In Smith's words, it is "an imprisonment of the Self within a labyrinth". (Smith 74) For the Self, reality that is experienced resembles a labyrinth and this reality is a variety of predicaments the Self desires to overcome, i.e. the desire to overcome the impossible. Conveying "what is experienced" corresponds to one of these predicaments because what is "conveyed" in the stories is at the same time what is "experienced." In other words, while expressing something, the narrator experiences the thing(s) that causes him to articulate it in a particular manner, and in the process, that original expression gives way to the expression of his present state. Therefore, the reality of subject is closely related to the language that expresses it. As we have already mentioned, this relationship refers to an impossible situation. For, as reality is tried to be transmitted as it actually is, "the way it is expressed" is also included in the reality. The language style of the narrator, however, seems to be an effort to overthrow such impossibility. This style of the language in narratives, as stated above, poses a challenge against the rules of expression. Thus, the language used by the narrator, despite its contradictions, claims a closer link to reality. On the one hand, the style of language employed by the narrator (contradictions, take-backs,



and alternations) is an attempt to mirror the contradicting, renouncing, and negating language as used in reality, while, on the other, that same language leads to a narrative diversity by the appearance, through writing, of reflections made over the attempts to reach out for reality. This means that the style of language is related to reality in two ways. The first arises from the fact that the conveyance of reality is a part of the reality itself. That is, the conveyor experiences the reality as it is in the very moment he conveys. In this respect, contradictions, renunciations or negations are always present in the style of language since reality is experienced in the same way as during the conveyance. The narrator either skips from one idea to another or just omits it. The second relationship between a style of language and reality is a reflective one – reflective in the sense that the narrator first conveys something, and then he conveys his state of mind or perception that makes him convey the former, and the cycle goes on. This is why he can easily negate or alter the initial statements, for what he attempts to convey undergoes successive levels of transmutations, and this alteration is precisely what is reflected in the conveyance. Thus, the language of the narratives is related to reality in two forms. The first is to experience the reality in the very moment of the conveyance, and the second is to go back to it using the conveyance as a means. In terms of the second aspect of the conveyance, the narrator constructs the road to reality with his narrative.

Still, which conveyance is it that is conveyed? How far is the narrator from the reality he is trying to transfer? Or, to put it another way; how does the relationship between the narrative style and the narration develop in regard to the reality? Iser thinks that it is “through the nature of his narrative” that “Molloy gives a number of indications both directly and indirectly as to what stipulates all of these contradictory statements.” (Iser165) According to Iser, the reflection of the narrator is thus:

*Embedded in a process which Molloy would like to narrate but which he has to falsify because the convention of narration has its own laws that have little or no bearing upon actual reality. Narration sets out to convey something which cannot possibly be conveyed by it, and so any narrative representation must inevitably be a lie. (Iser 166)*



It is because of this that the narrator, or the one who is in the act of telling, sometimes has to falsify or modify a particular sentence in the very subsequent one. This, in turn, leads to a variety of narrative techniques emerging with various changes. Therefore, according to Iser, as the presentation and transfer of any given reality has to end up in modification of that reality, the teller conveys contexts of the reality as part of his presentation which unfortunately do not comply with reality because the latter can be nothing but itself. (166) This is because diversity in narration develops in accordance with the mode of the teller's presentation. In this respect, by indulging in his own mode of narrative and building the new narrative out of his perception that stipulates the previous narrative, the narrator keeps away from not only what is happening in his narrative in reality, but is seemingly distant from the original reality. Yet, it is at this precise moment that he finds himself closest to that reality. In this sense, the narrative can be seen as the narrative of the perception stipulating every narrative, and the narrative of what stipulates it is the reflective condition of the teller. Thus, with his narrative, the chain of reflections are triggered, and so whenever the teller needs to reflect upon his Self, he will inevitably want to narrate certain things. And this chain of reflection in the narratives of the teller is seen as a deviation from the original narrative. Meanwhile, it brings the teller closer to his Self as to the perceptions that lead, or are leading him to create the narrative.

On the one hand, as in *Molloy*, what befalls the latter at the end, or what happens to the detective tracking him remains unresolved. The unresolved nature of the narratives, however, is of little importance. In fact, as it can be seen in *Malone Dies*, the narrator's story of his own and other narrations (Sapo and others) have all been incomplete. It is because what matters is not what they are, but the context that can be reflected through them. This situation presents itself so overtly in the first two stories that in *Molloy*, the detective confesses the fictive nature of both himself and the narrative (Beckett 114-115). Iser writes:

*This insight is conveyed by the alternation of statement and modification throughout the narrative, for every statement imposes a particular order of things, thus excluding much of what might really be. (Iser 166)*





On the other hand, this is not the ultimate evaluation regarding the narrator's style of language. As Iser points out, it matters little whether the narrator is the conveyer of reflections, of recorded perceptions as to how and where each context is constituted – resulting in the narration of little pieces often digressing from the main story, as in the probability story of *Molloy* (Beckett 69-74) – or, for this reason, he decides to concentrate on the process of interpretation by driving the conscious attention of the mind away from the actual interpretation of things (Iser 166-7). What does matter is that they are in pursuit of the self through their own narrations and fictive images belonging to their own life situations. In *Malone*, the narrator is aware of this when he says, "It [writing] is in order to know where I have got to go, where he has got to go". (Beckett 208)

### **Self seeking to see its being in the sound of silence**

The case emerging as the story-teller's recession from reality through what he says, and showing itself in the language of the stories, brings about the teller's becoming closer to himself with a reflection he makes through writing. This is the reason why in *Molloy*, there are more complete (or nearly-complete) stories, whilst in *Malone*, there tends to be more incomplete and diversified narratives branded together with fictive pieces narrated by a fictive teller, and in contrast to both of the above, *The Unnamable* is a story of reflection that focuses only upon the Self. It is because the sequence of the stories is both arranged in line with writing and a reflection upon the Self that the latter becomes more apparent as the writing proceeds.

In *The Unnamable*, the narrator finds himself in the "Now" and "Now", and says: "Hell itself, although eternal, dates from the revolt of Lucifer. It is therefore permissible, in the light of this distant analogy, to think of myself as being here forever..." (Beckett 298)

This sense of the narrator's "now" and "here" is envisaged again (remaining a recurrent theme throughout) when he declares, "And indeed I greatly fear, since my speech can only be of me and here..." (Beckett 304), or when he states that "I was anywhere but here, no one ever got me out of here." (Beckett 326) This is the basic and innermost of the concentric



dungeons that the narrator finds himself in. It is in the “Now” and “Here” that the narrator exists. Taking these two concepts in a Hegelian approach, the “Here” is itself inexhaustible, but remains constant during the vanishing of “that what is here”, and in this sense not different from “that what is here” (Hegel 61). Likewise, the “Now” is also not different from “That is in Now”. This can be further clarified as: “Now” and “Here” in their respective singularity sustain their being “Now” and “Here”. This in a sense means each singular is always “Here” and “Now” in terms of singularity. For example, the glass on my desk is “Here” and “Now”. Even if a certain period of time passes and its position alters in some way or other, for the glass it is still the same “Here and Now”. This is because each singular case and time of the glass is “Now and Here” as to that singularity. Secondly, they are indifferent from that is “Now” and “Here”. For each singular existing in “Now” or “Here” primarily exists in “Here” and “Now” due to the very singularity in question, and therefore is not different from it. As seen in the glass example, its being “now” and “here” is the same as the period of time and place it is in. It can be seen that being “Now and Here” is being in no particular or general situation. Hegel calls this situation sense-certainty. However, what we use and conceptualize linguistically as “Now and Here” are general concepts and involve plurality, or in other words, they are plural-oriented. For instance, even in the moment of uttering as “now”, many “now’s” might occur from the beginning to the end of our utterance – or each of the points supposed to have “occurred” is in the position of a “Now” – and in uttering “now”, we express the general comprising all this plurality. Thus, these singular “Now’s” and “Here’s” mentioned here, in the Hegelian sense, gain plurality through the reflections and negations upon themselves. Hence, there exist many “Now’s” and “Here’s”. There is a movement from the “Here” received as many “Here’s” towards the general “Here”, which is a simple plurality of “Here’s”. (Hegel 64) The same applies for “I”, and the generic “I” is involved with “Now”, “Here” and “I” experiences that are not general in the sense-certainty.

The narrator of *The Unnamable* feels, as an “I”, his self almost imprisoned in this singularity of sense-certainty since in every point he



is confined by the singular “Now” and “Here”. He tries to breach this imprisonment, saying:

*And indeed I greatly fear, since my speech can only be of me and here, that I am once more engaged in putting an end to both. Which would no matter, far from it, but for the obligation, once rid of them to begin again, to start again from nowhere, from no one and from nothing ... (Beckett 304).*

The Narrator has to re-start in every attempt of escape because in each point there is the singularity of both his “I” and “Here.” As singular the “Here” is indifferent from the singular “what is here”, it always accompanies it. However, he can reach out for his self to gain a move, a progress with a Hegelian negation through these singularities. In this context, he is a subject continuously “seeking” some things,<sup>10</sup> and a subject especially seeking “his self”<sup>11</sup> To “know”<sup>12</sup> and reach<sup>13</sup> his self is for he who wants to be himself,<sup>14</sup> because he does not know his self.<sup>15</sup> To know his self, to be his self, the subject (or the narrator), must above all get out of the dungeon of “Now” and “Here”. The effort to escape the dungeon in *The Unnamable* is thus deemed to be a progress: “For to go on means going from here, means finding me, losing me, vanishing and beginning again, a stranger first, then little by little the same as always, in another place...” (Beckett 304)

In fact, this activity of the narrator is an effort referring to his Self which is “out there”. But the narrator was only a singular “I” that can be counted as an ally of His Self out there.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, in the attempt to overcome the first circle – “Now and Here” – there is another circle: singular “I” situations. In *The Unnamable*, for instance, Iser illustrates that in each case the sentences resemble each other, and they expose the impregnability of the Self and its passion to observe itself. (Iser 171) He writes: “he [the Unnamable] is in search of a name: he wants to speak as author, to say *je* (I), and hence seize his own identity, without transforming himself into a fictional character.”<sup>17</sup>

The “I” in the experience of a singular “I” observes this experience and tries to penetrate and reach out for his Self. After all, the dungeon is also the result of this because the subject is confronted with more than one “I” in itself.<sup>18</sup> In fact each of them is an “I” experience. Considered from the





phenomenological perspective of Edmund Husserl, these are cogitations, and the narrator's attempt, at this point, to reach the transcendental ego is a transcendental-phenomenological epoché. We have mentioned that each singular situation of the teller resembles Husserl's cogitationes. Husserl considers cogitationes as every conscious experience of the transcendental Ego (i.e. the Self). In this sense, the singular "I" situations of the narrator in the *Unnamable* are singular versions of cogitations, that is, singular situation of each conscious act such as imagining, rejecting, approving, perceiving, assessing, and desiring; as in the case of a subject, who imagines a variety of things, imagining a glass or marking a table singularly. More broadly speaking, it is a situation similar to an able-to-desire subject's want of "money" or "vacation". In all these singular "I" situations there is another I (Ego) viewing, accompanying, and orienting its reflective attention to them, which is the transcendental Ego (Husserl 31). As the narrator of the *Unnamable*, Iser says that he observes his Self and tries to penetrate it. For, in the Husserlian sense, he always sees himself as a singular "I" of Cogitationes, and while this remains the case, there is always a "thing" accompanying and viewing him. That is why the narrator in the *Unnamable* turns his attention to the accompanying "thing" so as to identify it and understand it. In a sense he wants to realize a Husserlian procedure. Bracketing each singular "I" situation, he wants to find the viewer in "I" situations. And this, as Husserl explains, is an attempt to reduce the natural human ego and its psychological experience to a "transcendental-phenomenological Ego" "by phenomenological epoché (Husserl 26). Briefly getting out of various singular "I" situations, he tries to reach his Self, the transcendental Ego. That is why it can be said that each singular "I" situation is a situation of imprisonment that needs to be overcome and reduced.

At the same time, with regards to the subject in pursuit of his Self, there is the problem where the subject loses his Self (the Self that is "out there") in the very moment of seizure<sup>9</sup> due to finding himself in a singular situation – for it is also in the circle of "Now and Here" in the Hegelian sense. In the very moment the subject feels to have overcome singular "I" situations, and therefore, particularities of "Now and Here", he will



desire to experience his Self. However, as his experience is related to his conveyance of the experience – in order to be able to experience that situation, paradoxically, he must be in a process of conveying regarding the stipulator of the experience – the subject will again find himself in a singular “I” situation in this very process of conveyance. For the stage of conveyance is made up of many singular situations. And for each singular situation there are singular reflective experiences of the subject. Therefore, the narrator faces a difficulty in trying to grasp the Gestalten perception of his Self by overcoming these particularities. We will call this problem “the Problem of the Self” – that is, the difficulty to reach out for the Self from singular “I” situations. The “Problem of the Self” becomes clear in a paradox with the narrator of *The Unnamable*: Silence and Articulation.

The narrator is, on the one hand, desperate to keep his silence<sup>20</sup> while on the other, he feels urged to speak.<sup>21</sup> In fact, he describes this as a speech for silence.<sup>22</sup> But why does he want to be silent? Why still, does he have to speak? It is because the narrator wants to hear his absolute voice.<sup>23</sup> In other words, he seeks to listen to the voice of his Self, which is voiceless, but to do that, he must speak. He is urged to speak to keep silent.<sup>24</sup> By speaking, he aims on the one hand at consuming all that should be spoken, and on the other he gets closer to his Self.<sup>25</sup> He longs to tell all that can be said, and then keep his silence.<sup>26</sup> In a way, the narrator finds himself in a paradoxical situation similar to that of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*: On the one hand – since the Self is a state of silence that can not be spoken over – he adopts the idea, “whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent”<sup>27</sup> while on the other, by saying “there is indeed the inexpressible” (#6.522), he tries to paradoxically articulate by getting closer to it through speech. For what cannot be expressed reveals itself in many ways (as the Self, in the Husserlian sense, showing itself by accompanying “I” singularities...).

In fact, the paradox comes afore – in the form of an urge to express himself and his Self as a whole – just at the moment when the narrator thinks he has reached his Self,<sup>28</sup> or when he feels like listening to the sound of his silence. This informs us that there exists a rooted desire and tragedy that leads to the problem of the Self, i.e. the existence of the desire to express the Self, accompanying the desire in the subject’s efforts to reach



out for his Self through singular “I” experiences. This tragedy needs to be addressed, but before I elaborate on it, it would be useful to consider another circle rendered visible by the paradox: the state of the “I” in the “Other”.

### **The I Within the Other, desired to be Otherized**

In *The Unnamable*, the narrator meets various faces of his own whilst trying to listen to the sound of his silence. These faces, despite being different from his Self, nevertheless accompany that Self, and although it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between them, he listens to their voices for a while. These voices tell him, in a way, that the “faces” are formed by the others through their teaching and lifestyles. They are the “faces” of many a kind. For instance, Mahood<sup>30</sup> represents a loyal-to-the-teachings “face” formed directly by the teachers. Worm<sup>31</sup> on the contrary, is an indirect face of the “I” made over the others, and opposes their teachings. The “I” conceives that these “faces” belong to him, but is aware that they are not part of his Self.<sup>31</sup> It is at this very moment when voices multiply and the noises of the others are heard. In his efforts to become his Self, and to find his self, the narrator faces the danger of being otherized by the others.<sup>32</sup> This is another circle surrounding the doors of the dungeon, which he comes across with other doors while becoming Self and making himself the latter’s object. The circle is such that it adds Gordian knots to the chains of his tragedy. Whenever he tries to get out from the place he is in, he finds himself as an “other face” either shaped by their teachings, or as an “other face resisting to otherization”, negating and rejecting any teaching. Indeed, the subject himself is neither the “other face” (Mahood), nor the “other face resisting to otherization” (Worm). In Hegelian terms, these are the sites for consciousness where the subject seeks to achieve an awareness of his freedom, while in Nietzsche’s conception, he is either a “flock man” who cannot perceive reality through his own eyes, or the “free man” who wants to see. However, they are still not the “tragic, overmen” who can perceive reality with their own eyes.<sup>33</sup> That reality, for the narrator of *The Unnamable*, is his Self.<sup>34</sup>

Despite the subject being enclosed by all the circles<sup>35</sup> we have mentioned



so far, he is nevertheless aware of his freedom; he knows that he is free.<sup>36</sup> Yet what he wants is only to hear his own voice in all that noise and babble.<sup>37</sup> That is, he wants only to reach his self, and listen to the sound of a Self that does not have a voice. In a sense, this can be interpreted as an awareness of his freedom, which is why he resists otherization.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, that resistance is both a motion and a progress; the motion is such that it's a progress ceasing at itself by refusing (negating) the other, while gaining content through a mediation over it.<sup>39</sup> In general terms, the progress is a Hegelian one, because within the latter's conceptual framework, the negation of the narrator is a pure negation, which is the inherent power of the motion itself (Hegel 12). Still, the subject re-constitutes itself "through a reflection made over the otherness in itself" [Worm and Mahood in *The Unnamable*] (Hegel 10) This is his "being" process, where that "being" is understood as a circle presupposing its end as its goal, and one which has its end as its beginning. (Hegel 10) In short, the subject, who is itself situated at the beginning, returns to that beginning as in and for itself through the other that is for itself. But it does this by attaining content. (Hegel 14) Therefore, in this reflective mediation made over the other, the second beginning is not identical to the first one; the former has content, while the latter presumes this as a goal. In *The Unnamable*, this content seems to be the consciousness of the "I"s in the "I" not being "I".<sup>40</sup> In other words, the narrator first otherizes his own "faces" within him; the narrator determines this because, although Mahood and Worm are his own faces, they are nevertheless formed by others, i.e. they are the faces representing them, not him. Thus, he can also respond to his own self being otherized. He negates these "faces," so to say, and verifies their unbelongingness to him. He then makes these "faces" in him – they are faces of the mediation related to the other – "for himself", thinking within their otherness; anything that may exist in persona of Mahood and Worm is a notion that regards the finding of his Self. As a result of the negation and mediation mentioned above, he is able to conceive and re-discover himself. This conception reveals to him that the Self (in himself) is different from the other "I"s. It can be said that the subject of *The Unnamable*, as part of the "in itself", makes other "faces" (like Worm and Mahood) "for itself,"



moving towards his Self through a mediation over them, and reaching his Self as a result of the activity. As “in itself” then, he is trying to achieve, in sense, the consciousness of his freedom.

Yet, for the subject of *The Unnamable*, there is a tragic point in this motive for progress; for while trying to penetrate into his Self, he is also in an effort to express and articulate himself.

### **And Tragedy...**

The following words by the narrator are significant: “But within, motionless, I can live, and utter me, for no ears but my own.” (Beckett 327) It can be seen that the narrator, while listening to his own voice, that is to say, while viewing his Self, wants also to express and articulate this state of viewing. Nevertheless, he is aware of the impossibility of this: “... but it’s my turn, I too have the right to be shown impossible.” (Beckett 379), for as soon as he expresses his self, he will fall from the state of watching his Self down to a singular “I” situation or experience; that is, in the stage of expression, he is no longer the looker, but the one looked at.<sup>41</sup> However, in the case of viewing or experiencing himself, or his Self as a whole, he will not have a voice, as the latter is only an “entirely disembodied voice”.<sup>42</sup> This is the point where language disappears.<sup>43</sup> It is a situation where there’s only one experience. In this sense, it resembles the noesis state of Plato’s philosopher watching the ideas.<sup>44</sup> That point is a stage in which seeing through thinking becomes possible. Still, he strives to overcome the problem of Self and reach the stage where that Self is overcome,<sup>45</sup> seeking his Self and the state of silence there. That absolute state of silence is all that he is sure of, which explains why he wants to be silent so as to experience it. Yet, at this very moment, he has to speak to reach that state – since to write (i.e. speak) is the prerequisite for the reflection necessary to reach his Self – and describe what is experienced. Hence, there appears a complete tragedy; a tragedy that is personified by the very key – the obligation to speak – used by the subject to overcome the surrounding circles, both locking and unlocking the doors.



### To Conclude...

It is all because the subject in *The Unnamable* had to speak (and therefore write) to reach out for his Self. Through speech, he was orienting his reflective attention to the perception which made him speak, and in trying to articulate the reflective attention formed at this stage, he was taking a course in this direction to experience his Self. The course that lay ahead was realized through a series of negations and mediations. All this progress was characterized, to begin with, by the innermost circle where the subject was situated; in the state of innermost captivity (being "Now" and "Here"). From that innermost circle, the next circle (of singular "I" situations) followed, and then the "faces" made up of many singular "I"s (as a general "I" situation). Finally, there is an attempt to overcome the inter-subjectivity that was established through its "Otherness" connection. As a result, throughout all these transcending stages, the narrator had to reflect, or speak, in order to actualize "transcending". In this respect, "to speak" was in some way functioning as a reflection, and it also served as a key to overcome the states of imprisonment through reflection. Furthermore, because everything was based on the subject's desire to experience himself as a whole, "to speak" also functioned as a key to locking the doors. And the subject has motive to describe what is experienced (the state of "silence"), as well as an obligation of speech to reach that state. Even if the ending condition – of the process of reaching the Self and experiencing it – is expressed as putting an end to reflection, and merely experiencing the point reached, this condition itself is eliminated qua the subject in the Unnamable. Hence, desire to reach that state makes the situation more difficult, and exposes the "locking" role of the key.

This, in turn, re-starts the whole chain of reflections, the discourse, to be silent again. All this goes on incessantly, and as it does, the impossibility of the situation becomes clear. The condition for the narrator's discourse to cease (the experience of Self and silence) is an impossibility – because even if the same condition existed for the cease-point, it would still be a point (description point) triggering the chain of discourse – but one that is nevertheless necessary for the discourse to exist until that cease-point. Thus, the narrator of *The Unnamable* has to go on experiencing the tragedy

exposed by this impossibility, and no matter what the consideration is, he cannot stop.

This is why at the very end of the Trilogy, in *The Unnamable*, the narrator finishes his tragedy saying: "...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." (Beckett 418).

## Notes

- 1 The following can exemplify these deficiencies appearing early in Molloy : disability- "Suddenly I see, it was my right leg the stiff one, then." (Beckett 26); old age "She said in effect, she told me so later on and I believed her, Leave this poor old man alone." (Beckett 33); "Yes, an old foetus, that's what I am now, hoar and impotent..." (Beckett 226); shortness of memory- "Unable to remember the name of my town I resolved to stop by the kerb, to wait for a passer-by with a friendly and intelligent air..." (Beckett 32); inability to perceive his self-subject "And even my sense of identity was wrapped in a nameless often hard to penetrate..." (Beckett 31); inability to know and reach out for the self — "It is in order to know where I have got to go, where he has got to go." (Beckett 208); "...my own (meaning) escapes me just as much?" (Beckett 296); "I. Who might that be?" (Beckett 339); inability to catch the self- "I am he who will never be caught, never delivered..." (Beckett 341) and inability to see the whole - "It's for the whole there seems to be no spell" (Beckett 27). All of these deficiencies, from general to specific, are the desperations surrounding the subject in each of the three stories.
- 2 Samuel Beckett, *Trilogy (Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable)*, New York: Calder Publication, 1994, 13.
- 3 Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader*, London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1974, 64.
- 4 Roch C. Smith, "Naming the M/inotaur: Beckett's Trilogy and Failure of Narrative", *Modern Fiction Studies*, 29:1 (1983:Spring), 74.
- 5 For the form of the circularity and the others, see Ingo Berensmeyer, "Twofold Vibration: Samuel Beckett's Laws of Form", *Poetics Today*, 25:3, (2004): 465-495 (470-2)
- 6 Leslie Hill, "Fiction, Myth, and Identity in Samuel Beckett's Novel Trilogy", *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 13:3 (1977:July), 235.
- 7 These circles which will further be elaborated can be exemplified as such: A circle formed of the teachings of others, but the "I", articulation revealing itself as not to speak or inability to speak of the self, "I" situations that are allied to self etc. (These examples, in the *Unnamable* are expressed metaphorically. See TL, p.316 for the circle explained in terms of the opposition between ability to stop and ability to express see p.317 for the other circle defined by "me, who am not" p. 358)
- 8 Such imprisonment of the subject is a situation in which it is both encapsulated by the Self and externally by the Others. In the *Unnamable* this situation is explained as : "They'll clap me in a dungeon, I'm in a dungeon, I've always been in a dungeon..." (Beckett 372), "...where nothing stirs, nothing speaks, and that I listen, and that I seek, like a caged beast born of caged beasts born of caged beasts born of caged beasts born in a cage and dead in a cage, born and then dead, born in a cage and then dead in a cage..." (Beckett 390), "...I'm in something, it's not I, that's all I know..." (Beckett 409).
- 9 G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller, USA: Oxford University Press, 1977, 60.
- 10 "...seeking incessantly, in yourself, outside yourself..." (Beckett 389), "...I'm always seeking something..." (Beckett 391)

- 11 "...he is the one to be sought..." (Beckett 417)
- 12 "I. Who might that be?" (Beckett 339), "...what I am?..." (Beckett 392)
- 13 "...finding me, ..." (Beckett 304)
- 14 "Dear incomprehension, it's thanks to you I'll be myself, in the end" (Beckett 327), "Hear me! Be yourself again!" (Beckett 339)
- 15 "I, of whom I know nothing..." (Beckett 306)
- 16 "I who am here, who cannot speak, cannot think, and who must speak, and therefore perhaps think a little, cannot in relation only to me who am here, to here where I am, but can a little, sufficiently, I don't know how, unimportant, in relation to me who was elsewhere, who shall be elsewhere, and to those places where I was, where I shall be." (Beckett 303)
- 17 Philip Howard Solomon, "Samuel Beckett's 'L'Innommable': The Space of Fiction", *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 7:1 (1971:Jan.), 83.
- 18 "Where I am there is no one but me, who am not." (Beckett 358), "...it's he who speaks, he says it's I, then he says it's not, I am far, do you hear him, he seeks me I don't know why, he doesn't know why, he calls me, he wants me to come out, he thinks I can come out, he wants me to be he, or another, let us be fair, he wants me to rise up, up into him, or up into another, let us be impartial, he thinks he's caught me, he feels me in him, then he says I, as if I were he..." (Beckett 407).
- 19 "For to go on means going from here, means finding me, losing me..." (Beckett 304), "Which would not matter, far from it, but for the obligation, once rid of them..." (Beckett 304).
- 20 "...shall I be able to speak of me and of this place without putting an end to us, shall I ever be able to go silent...?" (Beckett 305), "...my pensum ended, in the silence, I spoke, I must have spoken, of a lesson, it was pensum I should have said, I confused pensum with lesson." (Beckett 312) "...so as not to have not lived in vain, and so as to go silent..." (Beckett 328)
- 21 "It is not mine, I have none, I have no voice and must speak..." (Beckett 309)
- 22 "But in order for that to happen I must speak, speak." (Beckett 311). "And at the same time I am obliged to speak." (Beckett 294)
- 23 "Let it go through me at last, the right one, the last one, his who has none, by his own confession." (Beckett 350). "...I'll go silent, for want of air, then the voice will come back and I'll begin again. My voice. The voice. I hardly hear it anymore. I'm going silent. That's to say I'll hear it still, if I listen hard. I'll listen hard. Listening hard, that's what I call going silent. I'll hear it still, broken, faint, unintelligible, if I listen hard." (Beckett 397)
- 24 "All this business of a labour to accomplish, before I can end, of words to say...before I can end..." (Beckett 316)
- 25 "...and I'll emerge from silence." (Beckett 397)
- 26 "Perhaps I've said the thing that I had to be said, that gives me the right to be done with speech, done with listening, done with hearing, without my knowing it." (Beckett 397). Not hearing and not listening here, should be considered as not hearing and not listening to those sounds coming from the singular "I"s and "others" of the narration.
- 27 Ludwig Wittgenstein. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. C.K. Ogden, New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. 1988, #7.
- 28 In fact, the narrator speaks of Self that he represents with silence as : "The silence, speak of the silence before going into it, was I there already, I don't know, at every instant I'm there, listen to me speaking of it, I know it would come, I emerge from it to speak of it, I stay in it to speak of it, if it's I who speak, and it's not, I act as if it were, sometimes I act as if it were...", (Beckett 411), "... that's not the real silence, it says that's not the real silence, what can be said of the real silence, I don't know, that I don't know what it is, that there is no such thing, that perhaps there is such thing, yes, that perhaps there is, somewhere, I'll never know." (Beckett 412)
- 29 "One is particular, Basil I think he was called, filled me with hatred. 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. " (Beckett 300), "Decidedly Basil is becoming important, I'll call him Mahood instead, I prefer that, I'm queer." (Beckett 311), "Pupil Mahood, for the twenty-five thousandth time, what is a mammal?" (Beckett 339).
- 30 "I can hear him (Worm) yet, faithful, begging me to still this dead tounge of the living." (Beckett 340).
- 31 "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." (Beckett 350), "I'm Worm, that is to say I am no longer he, since I hear." (Beckett 352). "... I am Mahood after all, [...] And what if Mahood were my master?" (Beckett 313).
- 32 "If only I knew what they want, they want me to be Worm, but I was, I was, what's wrong, I was, but ill, it must be that, it can only be that, what else can it be, but that..." (Beckett 367), "To make me believe I have an ego all my own, and can speak of it, as they of theirs. Another trap to snap me up among the living." (Beckett 348).
- 33 For "Flock", "free man", "tragic, overman" in Nietzsche, see (Kuçuradi 27, 53, 69)
- 34 W. Iser, too, claims that the reality sought on the part of the narrator is himself. See (Iser 173).
- 35 "For this feeling of being entirely enclosed, and yet nothing touching me, is new." (Beckett 348).
- 36 "Idle talk, idle talk, I am free, abandoned." (Beckett 316).
- 37 "Ah if I could only find a voice of my own, in all this babble, it would be the end of their troubles, and of mine." (Beckett 351).
- 38 "I've got nowhere, in the affair, that's what galls them, they want me there somewhere, anywhere, if only they'd stop committing reason, on them, on me, on the purpose to be achieved, and simply go on..." (Beckett 388).
- 39 "I had already advanced a good ten paces, if one may call them paces, not in a straight line I need hardly say, but in a sharp curve which, if I continued to follow it, seemed likely to restore me to my point of departure, or to one adjacent. I must have got embroiled in a kind of inverted spiral, I mean one the coils of which, instead of widening more and more, grew narrower and narrower and finally, given the kind of space in which I was supposed to evolve, would come to an end for lack of room." (Beckett 318-319).
- 40 "...that's all I know, it's not mine, it's the only one I ever had, that's lie, I must have had the other, the one that lasts, but it didn't last..." (Beckett 418).
- 41 "As if anyone were looking at me! As if it were I!" (Beckett 397).
- 42 William Hutching, "The Unintelligible Terms of an Incomprehensible Damnation: Samuel Beckett's *The Unnamable*, Sheol and St. Erkenwald", *Twentieth Century Literature*, 27:2 (1981:Summer), 105.
- 43 "...he is made of silence, there's a pretty analysis, he's in the silence, he is the one to be sought, the one to be, the one to be spoken of, the one to speak, but he can't speak, then I could stop, I'd be he, I'd be the silence, I'd be back in the silence, we'd be reunited, his story the story to be told, but he has no story, he hasn't been in story, it's not certain, he's in his own story, unimaginable, unspeakable, that doesn't matter, the attempt must be made..." (Beckett 417).
- 44 For a discussion about the possibility or impossibility of contemplating the self see (Gendron 48-49)
- 45 "...if only I could go there, if only I could describe it..." (Beckett 405).

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