

**A Genetic Study of Samuel Beckett's Creative Use of His 'Psychology Notes'
in *The Unnamable***

Reza Habibi



A thesis submitted for the degree of master of philosophy in English

Department of Foreign Languages

University of Bergen

May 2015

Abstract

Ma thèse étudiera l'utilisation créative que Samuel Beckett fait de ses 'Notes de Psychologie' en tant qu'outil scientifique cruciale à la compréhension de son oeuvre *L'Innommable* d'un point de vue de la collecte documentaire, de la critique génétique et de la génétique des manuscrits. Cette analyse de la façon dont Beckett intègre ses 'Notes' dans *L'Innommable*, où ces cas sont introduits, si il ya des révisions ou des ajouts, des élisions, leur portée, la différence qu'ils apportent dans la compréhension du texte - est ainsi rendue possible par la disponibilité des deux ouvrages et de la BDMP (Beckett projet manuscrit numérique). Du moment que le texte de Beckett construit la subjectivité à travers la déconstruction textuelle aussi bien psychanalytique que celle de l'écriture du 'moi', conduisant à une insistance obsessive et répétitive sur un 'soi' infiniment de division, je vais relier cela aux 'Notes de Psychologie' en tant que source thématique dans *L'Innommable*, et dans le cadre de son dossier génétique. Enfin, il sera démontré que Beckett attribue un langage psychanalytique à la voix innommable qu'il utilise, mais qui n'est jamais suffisamment définie par. Il était crucial pour Beckett d'adopter un langage qui pourrait être mis en place en cas d'échec pour l'achèvement textuelle de *L'Innommable*.

A Genetic Study of Samuel Beckett's Creative Use of His 'Psychology Notes' in *The Unnamable*

Introduction

There have been wide debates on the focal presence of depth psychology and psychoanalysis, especially with regard to *genetic criticism* and *manuscript genetics*, within Samuel Beckett's writing, over the past decades. These debates were given a new dimension after James Knowlson's biography *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* was published in 1996. This revealed Beckett's extensive readings in psychology during his therapy with Wilfred Bion in 1933-35, whilst writing his early novel *Murphy*. Knowlson's work was carried further by Matthew Feldman, who examined Beckett's posthumously discovered notes on psychological topics.

Samuel Beckett's 'Psychology Notes' thus becomes a crucial scholarly tool for understanding his texts from a 'source-hunting' point of view. In addition, another unprecedented scholarly tool has recently become available: the Samuel Beckett Digital Manuscript Project (BDMP), an online resource developed by the Centre for Manuscript Genetics at the University of Antwerp in collaboration with the Beckett International Foundation at the University of Reading, the Beckett Estate, and a number of research libraries with Beckett holdings. The ambitious aim of this project is to gather all of Beckett's unpublished manuscripts towards his literary works together in one digital 'place', in editions that include complete transcriptions of all materials and html-tagging of individual words and phrases that allow for detailed comparisons of the development of segments of writing across numerous versions. The most recent – and also most extensive – BDMP module is *L'Innommable/The Unnamable*, edited by Dirk Van Hulle and Shane Weller. My thesis will bring together these two scholarly tools, to examine what use Beckett makes of the 'Psychology Notes' in the course of writing *The Unnamable*.

This analysis as to how Beckett incorporates his ‘Notes’ into *The Unnamable*, where these instances are introduced, if there are any revisions, elisions or additions, what significance they bear, and what difference they make in understanding the text – is thus made possible thanks to the availability of both the Notes and the BDMP (Beckett Digital Manuscript Project). It is worth noting at the outset that this thesis will not be a psychoanalytic reading of Beckett’s text in the sense of taking psychoanalytic concepts simply as a key to meaning; rather, it is an empirical investigation into how his ‘Psychology Notes’ affect the composition of this text. In Part I, I will draw on two critics, Phil Baker and J. D. O’Hara, who have researched the topic of Beckett and psychoanalysis in detail, although without access to the Notes. Their work demonstrates that Beckett’s corpus is rife with psychoanalytic concepts; but I will show that it is also ripe for further investigation with enhanced precision, given our access to the Notes. I will review the methodological background for my approach in detail, both in terms of recent developments in Beckett scholarship, and in terms of the wider discipline of genetic manuscript studies, drawing especially on work by Dirk Van Hulle and Finn Fordham. Part I concludes with a short note on the information about the manuscripts towards *L’Innommable/The Unnamable* available on the BDMP. It is this BDMP module as a whole – and not any one published or unpublished text – that will be the focus of my detailed investigation in parts II and III.

In Part II, I will study the way in which Beckett’s text constructs subjectivity through the textual deconstruction of both the psychoanalytic and the writerly ‘I’, leading to an obsessive and repetitive focus on an infinitely divisive ‘self’. Then, I will relate this to the ‘Psychology Notes’ as a thematic source in *The Unnamable*. I will go through examples of possible uses of the Notes theme by theme, including the trauma of birth, narcissism, paraphrenia, melancholia, anal personality, and so on. I will examine nine related themes which will reveal surprising connections between the Notes and the text. I will also consider in many cases how speculative the connection I am making will be, that is, whether the phrase or concept that I have found draws directly on the Notes, or whether I am pointing to a less provable connection. The organization of my discussion will be according to the thematic links I have discovered, not according to the structure of Beckett’s book as a whole. The main idea throughout this part will be to show how Beckett stages a ‘failing talking cure’ in *The Unnamable*, using the Notes as a primary (but not exclusive) source. In my conclusion to this chapter, I will consider what

difference the Notes make to our understanding of Beckett and psychoanalysis, emphasizing again the failure of the talking cure.

Part III deals with the Notes as part of the genetic dossier for *L'Innommable/The Unnamable*. My aim is to find a few examples where the Notes are very probably being directly used in the composition of the text. Here it becomes relevant to consider precisely when the allusions to the Notes come in: that is, do they appear at an early or a later stage of composition; are they crossed out or inserted, and in general, is there any kind of revision going on in the manuscripts around the point where the Notes are being used by Beckett? Therefore, I will in some cases need to compare the English and the French versions for this analysis. The idea behind this section of my thesis is to think about how the Notes become part of Beckett's problem of composing a particular passage. These examples will be discussed in some depth to help us understand what is happening during the writing process and what we actually learn from these particular inclusions, exclusions and revisions. I will continue to hold onto the main idea of the voice's resistance to the 'talking cure', how it is parodied, and how it fails to rid the voice of its psychoneurotic conditions. This will be linked with Beckett's own documented resistance to his psychoanalytic therapy. As we shall see, Beckett was keenly aware of how standard psychoanalytic language depicted him as a 'specimen'; and this makes the introduction of *textbook* psychoanalysis into the 'failed talking cure' of *The Unnamable* specially significant. Then, in my conclusion to this chapter, I will recall the notion that it was crucial for Beckett to adopt a language that could be set up to fail for the textual completion of *L'Innommable* to succeed; that is, Beckett assigns a language to the unnamable voice that it makes use of but is never sufficiently defined by.

Finally, in my conclusion to the whole thesis, I will consider how the perspective I have developed here can lead to further work in Beckett studies.

Part I

Methodology

I. Beckett's 'Psychology Notes' as a Scholarly Tool

The importance of Samuel Beckett's note-taking from a 'source-hunting' point of view has been heavily emphasized by scholars over the past decade, especially after the authorized biography, James Knowlson's *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett*, appeared in 1996. Before he died in 1989, Beckett had discussed with Knowlson how, for a period of two years, between late 1933 and late 1935, he was treated by the psychoanalyst, Wilfred R. Bion, in London, whilst writing his early novel *Murphy*. During this time, Beckett initiated an extensive study of philosophy and psychology (focusing mainly on psychoanalysis), partly undertaken alongside his therapy. The record he made of these studies is now known in Beckett scholarship as the 'Philosophy Notes' (TCD MS10967) and the 'Psychology Notes'.¹ These creatively and personally important notes were taken down by Beckett in two notebooks (TCD MS10971/7 and MS10971/8). They attest his intensive reading of a number of prominent figures in both spheres. As a young critic, his early fascination with the philosophical works of Arthur Schopenhauer, especially *The World as Will and Representation* (1818), led him to a spirited application of the notion of 'will' to Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* (1913), in his monograph entitled *Proust*, ably discussed by J. D. O'Hara (1997: 13-33) among others. He also read Schopenhauer's 'On Women' (1851) (Letters 509), as a diversion in 1937, and as Shane Weller points out, 'over two decades later Beckett took up Schopenhauer's various (highly misogynistic) claims about women in his essay "Über die Weiber" and used them fairly systematically in his characterization of Winnie in *Happy Days* (written in 1960-61)' (Weller 2010: 135). This re-use of reading materials from Beckett's crucial early period of self-education in the 1930s is a recurring pattern in his later work, though the allusions here tend to become less and less explicit

¹The 'Psychology Notes' are transcribed in full in Matthew Feldman's 'Sourcing Aporetics: An Empirical Study on Philosophical Influences in the Development of Samuel Beckett's Writing' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Oxford Brookes University, 2004). Feldman notes that, 'Beckett's typed notes from various authors are transcribed from a microfilm of TCD MS 10971/7/1-17 and 10971/8/1-36' (2004, 309).

compared with an early novel like *Murphy*.² This point is well documented by Matthew Feldman, who has conducted the most extensive examination of Beckett's posthumously discovered notes on both philosophical and psychological topics.³ Feldman usefully transcribed the psychology notes in full in his doctoral thesis, and discussed their contents in his monograph *Beckett's Books* (2006). The books Beckett studied were Karin Stephen's *Psychoanalysis and Medicine: The Wish to Fall Ill* (1933), R. S. Woodworth's *Contemporary Schools of Psychology* (1948), Alfred Adler's *Individual Psychology* (1925) and *The Neurotic Constitution: Outlines of a Comparative Individualistic Psychology and Psychotherapy* (1921), Ernest Jones's *Papers on Psycho-Analysis* (1913) and *Treatment of the Neuroses*, Sigmund Freud's *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1933), Wilhelm Stekel's *Psychoanalysis and Suggestion Therapy* (1923), and Otto Rank's *The Trauma of Birth* (1924). Crucially, as can be seen from this list, Feldman demonstrated that much of Beckett's psychoanalytic reading was mediated through secondary textbooks.⁴ Furthermore, Feldman shows how Beckett would return to his notes (both on psychology and philosophy) during the creative process, even long after their initial composition. Feldman also distinguishes methodologically between a reading of Beckett based on psychoanalytic theory, and the empirical demonstration of how psychoanalysis as a system of thought is mediated and incorporated by Beckett in his writing (Feldman 2004: 115), taking the latter approach as his own exclusive task.

2 For details of Beckett's allusions, see C. J. Ackerley's *Demented Particulars: The Annotated Murphy*.

3 For a catalogue, see the journal *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui* 16 (2006), pp. 157-66.

4 The fact that most of Beckett's notes are drawn from secondary textbooks implies that while much previous scholarship has simply assumed that Samuel Beckett read *very* widely in the psychoanalytic literature based on a wide variety of allusions found in his texts, it seems more likely that many of these allusions and ideas can be traced back to highly specific passages in the secondary literature (often general summaries) that he read and made notes on. (Similarly, Feldman changed the consensus in the field about the assumed influence of Descartes when he proved in his book that Samuel Beckett almost certainly did not read much Descartes apart from a small anthology of texts and a short biography; the idea of Descartes as Beckett's 'favorite philosopher' had until then been dominant. Feldman does some of the same regarding Freud and Jung; Beckett may not have read much of these in the original. This increases the importance of the 'Psychology Notes' as a source.

Beckett's cognizance of such theories is disclosed by the explicit overuse of psychoanalytical jargon, often verging on parody, in his early works from the 1930s. Again, this practice grows increasingly implicit in his later work, both fictional and dramatic. Yet, as Shane Weller has shown in his analysis⁵ of *Endgame* in terms of Beckett's use of Ernest Jones' explication of 'anal sadism' (the Freudian theory of the anal-sadistic phase), it is still possible to make surprisingly precise identifications of sources with the notes to hand. Weller's paper, which is based around Beckett's 'Psychology Notes', stands as a pertinent model for my own work. In his study, Weller shows that

when composing *Endgame* in the mid-1950s, Beckett proceeded in a strikingly systematic manner to include the principal traits of the anal-sadistic personality as outlined in Ernest Jones's chapter on "Anal-Erotic Character Traits" in his *Papers on Psycho-Analysis* (1912), a work read by Beckett in early 1934 (135).

He deems this intertextual, source-based study to be of great significance, since once psychoanalysis is taken into consideration, many of the latent concepts, topoi, and images of the play that have puzzled scholars can be unraveled with higher precision.

Such precision increases further with access to manuscript materials such as drafts and letters, and annotations from Beckett's own library, all of which adds further supporting evidence towards reconstructing his creative writing process. In *Samuel Beckett's Library* (2013), Dirk Van Hulle and Mark Nixon masterfully depict the varying literatures in French, Italian and German that were annotated by Beckett, along with other books on philosophy, religion and science, not to mention those on music and art:

Beckett was, throughout his life, an avid reader, although his reading habits and the way he made notes on his reading changed. At times, in particular in the 1930s, Beckett would annotate his books, at others using notebooks in order to record aspects of his reading that he wished to preserve. Describing himself as 'phrase-hunting' (Letter to MacGreevy, 25 January 1931) or being 'soiled by the demon of notesnatching' (Letter to MacGreevy, undated [early August 1931]), Beckett filled several notebooks with notes taken from books he was reading. These notebooks, as well as references in manuscripts and his correspondences, have over the years

⁵ Shane Weller, 'Staging Psychoanalysis: Endgame and the Freudian Theory of the Anal-Sadistic Phase', *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui*, 22 (2010).

given readers and scholars an insight into the books he had consulted or read. Moreover, Beckett's texts self-consciously refer, in intertextual allusions and direct references, to other texts; [...] Beckett's texts are imbued with references to his reading (xvi-ii).

Six of these notebooks, the so called 'German diaries', were written during a journey through Germany that lasted for six months in 1936-1937. As Mark Nixon observes, these notebooks were 'found by Edward Beckett in a trunk following Samuel Beckett's death in 1989. [...] They were first made available to James Knowlson, whose perceptive and illuminating discussion of these notebooks in his 1996 biography, *Damned to Fame*, remains unrivalled [...] (1996: 230-61)' (Nixon 2-3). The German diaries are not the focus of my research here, but suffice it to say that they shed light on two different aspects of Beckett's writing. One is the fact that 'it can [...] be seen as a progression from the "talking cure", aided by an analyst, to a self-therapy exercised through a form of "writing cure"' (ibid, p. 38). Secondly, the turn to the diary form affects Beckett's later writing through the roaming 'I', the epitome of which is the voice in and from the void in *The Unnamable*. Thus the 'introspective quality' and 'self-explanatory nature of the diary' (38) is disclosed by Nixon to be related 'to the psychoanalytic sessions Beckett undertook with Wilfred Bion in London' (ibid, p. 38), which is to say that his notes on psychology affected the direction his writing took toward maturity, starting with the German diaries. This kind of note-taking was to some extent encouraged by Bion who 'asked Beckett to keep a record of his dreams' (ibid, p. 45), which the analyst could further use for therapeutic purposes. His dream notes, which he further kept adding to during his trip to Germany (two recorded dreams in the German diaries) 'attest to Beckett's dedication to a form of writing that could accommodate a self-therapeutic, or at least a self-analytical, impulse' (ibid, p. 47).

Notebooks and, more generally, intertextuality benefit both the writer and the scholar. The writer deploys his notes to suffuse his writing with explicit – or, more often, implicit – intertextual references and allusions, and the scholar is given clues to deciphering the text. As Van Hulle observes in *Textual Awareness* (2004),

Intertextuality is an important factor in [high art] elitism, as it increases the complexity of the literary work. Notebooks are an invaluable instrument to study the intertextual references [...], and the manner in which authors have combined, reorganized, and added surplus value to extratextual material (7).

But just as important as Beckett's notebooks are the manuscript materials that will form the principal focus of analysis in this thesis: namely, the recently published module of the *Samuel Beckett Digital Manuscript Project* (hereafter BDMP: see www.beckettarchive.org) on *L'Innommable/The Unnamable* (by Dirk Van Hulle and Shane Weller). This module, now available online for subscribers, contains not just scans, but also fully searchable transcriptions of the whole extensive series of manuscript drafts towards this central Beckett work. In addition, a crucial feature of this edition is the html-tagging of individual phrases so that the entire genetic development of a particular sequence of text can be compared at a glance. Wider examination of these extremely rich, previously inaccessible materials will undoubtedly change the direction of Beckett Studies in general. My research will make full use of the BDMP search features to identify uses of specific words and phrases drawn from Beckett's 'Psychology Notes' within the manuscript drafts. This will then enable an unprecedentedly detailed documentation of Beckett's creative use of psychoanalysis at different stages of the writing process of *The Unnamable*.

A hint as to the potential importance of this topic came through reading Edouard Magessa O'Reilly's article⁶ on several pages that Beckett cut from the novel *Molloy*. These concern the economy of the country of 'Ballyba', which is entirely based upon 'shit'. As a reading of Shane Weller's article on the anal-sadistic phase in *Endgame* suggests, such an 'economy' clearly carries very definite psychoanalytic associations (Weller 2010). It is significant that this whole passage was finally cut, with just a hint left in the published text as to its existence.

Two points must be noted here: First, the preservation of manuscripts by an author, and second, the study of those manuscripts by a researcher. The former, writes Dirk Van Hulle, is not necessarily undertaken for fiscal reasons, for easing and organizing the 'afterlife' of a work, or for 'reinstating authorial authority'; it may also be an integral part of the author's poetics, part of his or her continuous search for a form that also allows the chaos, for a 'scene that also accommodates the obscene [off-scene]' (Van Hulle 2008: 46). In the second place, the notion of scrutinizing such manuscripts is not a new idea hit upon by researchers but an old idea given impetus by writers themselves:

⁶ Edouard Magessa O'Reilly, 'Molloy, Part II, Where the Shit Hits the Fan: Ballyba's Economy and the Worth of the World'. *Genetic Joyce Studies*, 6 (2006).

The idea of analyzing literary manuscripts was prompted by authors themselves around the middle of the nineteenth century. In his letters to Louise Colet, Gustave Flaubert promises to show her his manuscripts in order to lay bare the complex mechanisms by means of which a sentence takes shape. Around the same time, Edgar Allan Poe demystified the idea of divine inspiration by emphasizing the craft involved in what T. S. Eliot would later call the *métier* of poetry (Van Hulle 2004: 8).

Elsewhere, Van Hulle writes: “In the course of the twentieth century, the act of keeping manuscripts has increasingly become part of a view on writing as a dialectics between completion and incompleteness, which also manifests itself in the published texts” (Van Hulle 2014: 15). Thus it is no wonder that Thomas Mann preserved and brought with him all the notes he had taken, his manuscripts, his ‘clippings’, and other related materials employed for the composition of *Doktor Faustus* (Van Hulle 2004: 9). His account of both the genesis and the writing process of *Doktor Faustus*, entitled *Die Entstehung des Doktor Faustus: Roman eines Roman*, indicates how invaluable a source manuscripts can be for understanding this process in a given literary work. Similarly, James Joyce⁷ initiated the composition of his *Work in Progress* after *Ulysses*. James S. Atherton writes that the *Work in Progress* ‘tells a great deal about its own creation, and discusses its own manuscript at some length’ (qtd. in Van Hulle 2004: 9). And Marcel Proust writes about ‘the slow process preceding the actual writing of a book [as] the very subject of *A la recherche du temps perdu*’ (9). In light of this, having in mind Joyce’s growth of *Finnegans Wake*, among others, the critic A. Walton Litz deems these works as ‘merely extreme examples of that self-consciousness which has characterized so much European literature since the Romantic period’ (Litz, qtd. in Van Hulle 2004: 9). Similarly, borrowing from Louis Hay, Van Hulle uses the terms ‘écriture à programme’ and ‘écriture à processus’ in *Modern Manuscripts*, to differentiate between Mann’s and Beckett’s writing methods, and to argue that the former uses ‘programmatically writing’ whereas the latter employs a ‘writing of process’: ‘Beckett did not start with a fully elaborated programme that only had to be executed once it had been set in motion’

⁷ ‘Some modernist authors (such as Proust and Musil) found it sometimes hard to finish their literary projects and others (such as Joyce, Beckett, Michiels, Ponge) thematized or even included the production process in their literary products, which often keep hovering between completion and incompleteness. Against this background, the act of preserving the traces of one’s creative process can be considered part of many twentieth-century authors’ view on their writing’ (Van Hulle 2014: 24).

(ibid, p. 252). Beckett's notes have therefore proved to contribute to understanding the relationship of his writerly process to his aesthetic of lessness, fragmentation and 'failure'.

However, without access to the 'Psychology Notes', but still making excellent use of Knowlson's *Damned to Fame* and Beckett's "Whoroscope Notebook" among other new sources, J. D. O'Hara and Phil Baker (1997) both delve deep into the world of psychoanalysis (the former mostly deals with Freud and Rank while the latter focuses on Jung and Freud) to disclose how Beckett succeeded in connecting psychoanalytic concepts to the percepts and images he created in his writing. In O'Hara's words:

Knowlson confirms what a number of critics have been slowly demonstrating: like Joyce, the early Beckett relied more heavily on sources and systems of thought than critics had heretofore suspected, and the identification and close study of this source material can reveal much not only about Beckett's creative methods but about the completed works themselves (vii, qtd. in Feldman 2004: 116).

In their analyses, O'Hara and Baker mainly focus on the novels *Watt* and *Molloy* besides other stories and shorter fictions. The sigmoidal (S-shaped, fetus-like) figures, the concepts of birth and death, the fetal posture, earth (the Mother Earth), obsession, repetition (in both Freud and Beckett implying Thanatos: death), permeate these texts. Moreover, anal-eroticism, the anal-sadistic phase, anal-retentive characters, orderliness, parsimoniousness, and obstinacy (the last three akin to anal fixation at an early age), mainly refer to Beckett's notes on Ernest Jones (TCD MS 10971/8/1-20).

The inventory above points to the wealth of as yet less explored psychological and philosophical aspects inherent in Beckett's corpus, not least in *The Unnamable*. Despite the fact that Baker and O'Hara (unlike, say, Weller 2010) did not have access to Beckett's notes, their work does demonstrate the pervasiveness of psychoanalytic ideas and references in his work.

Phil Baker's study attempts to bring to the fore 'the relation between Beckett's work and psychoanalytic ideas such as mourning and melancholia, internalized parent figures and gendered identification with them, displacement, anality, the womb, deathly repetition, and idealised regression' (xii). He bases his structural study of *Molloy* on S.E. Gontarski's observation that both halves of the novel 'develop aspects of the Oedipal paradigm, the Molloy

section with maternal, the Moran section with paternal, emphasis' (qtd. in Baker xii). In *Molloy*, we actually encounter terms such as the 'fatal pleasure principle' (Trilogy 99) and the 'Obidil' (162), the latter being 'a lower-case mirror reflection of libido' (Baker xii). Such debts 'to psychoanalytic myths and models', Baker argues, are depicted 'throughout the middle prose' (ibid, p. xiv). The concepts of birth, death, Oedipus complex, the id, the ego, the superego, weaning, and so on, also permeate the subtexts of *Watt* (ibid, p. 74). Further, there is extensive use of Otto Rank's *The Trauma of Birth* in Beckett's Novellas and short stories from the 1940s. This is especially discussed under the heading, 'Freud, Rank and The Trauma of Birth' (ibid, p. 68), While believing that the 'contrast as the *Trilogy* continues points up the thematic freighting of *Molloy*', he argues that 'personal mythologies of parents and childhood persist in Beckett's work long after the impasse of *The Unnamable*, and they overlap extensively with the ambient mythology of psychoanalysis' (ibid, p. xiv).

Likewise, J. D. O'Hara's seminal work on the structural uses of depth psychology in Beckett depicts the author's hidden drives, their root and source, in shaping his corpus of writing. O'Hara considers his study to be 'concerned with those incredible and inescapable systems, the basic structures of thought that uphold Beckett's literary works' (1). However, his study 'most clearly concentrates on the earlier works, especially the fiction [in which] we can most clearly see the external sources' (ibid, p. 1). O'Hara devotes around two hundred pages exclusively to *Molloy*. Like Baker, he elaborates on the structural duality of *Molloy* (ibid, p. 101), delineating both parts in greater detail than Baker does, with reference to both Freudian and Jungian concepts. O'Hara is ultimately more speculative and creative in his readings than Baker, drawing on a wide range of psychoanalytic texts which Beckett may or may not have read. His work is therefore suggestive, but hardly definitive.

The cumulative effect of these previous studies leave no doubt that psychoanalytic concepts and imagery is very widespread in Beckett's writing. My thesis thus aims to fill an important gap in the existing literature on Beckett and psychoanalysis: in the first place, by making full use of Beckett's documented reading and notes on this topic to re-examine his texts, and, in the second place, by examining highly specific creative transformations of his psychoanalytic sources through one major manuscript corpus. *L'Innommable* is central in Beckett's creative development: and *with* access to Beckett's notes and manuscripts, my project

aims to reveal just how central Beckett's engagement with psychoanalysis was to that development.

It must be noted, however, that a critic cannot rely solely on a psychological approach to unravel a complex text such as Beckett's. Feldman warns us against simplification when he writes:

[T]here is rarely scholarly fire without Beckettian smoke (and 'a great mirror'). As regards psychology, Phil Baker placed readers on guard for psychoanalytic language and ideas at the outset of his important text, and twenty years earlier Pilling's revolutionary study Samuel Beckett first found 'the anagrammatic playfulness in Molloy (Freud's libido becomes the "character" Obidil)' and, almost as an afterthought, noted Freud's dictum in the "Three Dialogues" 'when seeking a stick with which to beat Kant'. Unsurprisingly, Pilling already anticipated some of these arguments in his 1976 study: 'no Freudian, or Jungian key, will unlock Molloy'. [John Pilling, *Samuel Beckett* 130] Extending this insight, my suggestion is that there is no single key capable of unlocking Molloy, or any other of Beckett's texts, with psychological (or any other) approaches (Feldman 2006: 83).

Also, the reader must be aware of Beckett's skepticism toward, and distrust of, psychoanalysis. Beckett did not take psychoanalytic concepts and theories for granted to use them blindly in his writing. Studying his notes (including skeptical comments within them) tell us about the problematic nature of using psychoanalytic concepts as a 'key' to his texts. Almost ten months before he quit the therapeutic sessions, he acknowledged in a letter to Thomas MacGreevy, dated 1 January 1935, that 'the analysis is going to turn out a failure' (qtd. in Nixon 44). Although Beckett benefited from the insights that the sessions offered him, he grew ever more distrustful of the psychoanalytic system and its solutions. To be sure, he was now more aware 'that his problems were somehow related to the "savage loving" of his mother (SB to TM, 6 October 1937), whose intense demands on him had reached unbearable levels following his father's death in February 1933' (Nixon 38). Feldman deems these 'notoriously complex emotions felt for his mother' to be 'the most vexed female interactions' he had to suffer. And 'indeed, the paternal memories continued to "kill him" [ça me tue (It kills me), Nixon, *German Diaries*, 19] more than three years on' (2004: 122). Feldman lists a number of other significant events in the 1930s that amounted to 'highly distressing' mental problems for Beckett and led to the two years of

psychotherapy: ‘disenchantment with academic life’ and the ensuing issues that erupted with his family for that reason; the rejection of his *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* by multiple publishers; his ‘estrangement from James Joyce in May 1930’; the illness of Lucia Joyce with whom Beckett was romantically involved, who was ‘later diagnosed with schizophrenia’ and institutionalized; his ‘unrequited feelings for Ethna McCarthy and the problematic relationship with his cousin in Kassel, Peggy Sinclair’ who died from tuberculosis in May 1933, leaving Beckett more devastated (ibid, p. 122). But besides psychoneurotic concerns, he suffered from ‘psychosomatic’ ones as well:

A veritable scholarly consensus holds that much of what Beckett was doing and feeling stemmed from psychosomatic concerns, resulting in a number of physical symptoms. Bair, Cronin and Knowlson spare no details on the variety and consequent discomfort these episodes caused Beckett: boils on the groin and an anal abscess, constipation and diarrhoea, eczema around his face, anaemically thinned blood, severe colds, and two bouts of pleurisy (ibid, p. 122).

However, fed up with the therapy, Beckett overtly expresses his frustration with and condemnation of the ‘therapeutic voodoo’ (*Murphy* 133) in another letter to MacGreevy, 16 January 1936: ‘As I write, think, move, speak, praise & blame, I see myself living up to the specimen that these 2 years have taught me I am. The word is not out before I am blushing for my automatism’ (Nixon 45). This frustration came to Beckett after his reading of Otto Rank’s *The Trauma of Birth*. Despite the insights he received from the book, he was now impatient with Rank’s over-interpretation of certain aspects of the system,

so that the previously committed note-taking is now interspersed with humorous aside: ‘Inestimable advantage of man over woman, consisting in his being able partially to back into the mother by means of the penis which stands – ha ! ha ! – for the child’ (TCD MS 10971/8. 18r) (ibid, p. 45).

Yet, Beckett had an ‘overriding’ belief in the ‘impregnable’ unconscious, and ‘may have turned away from psychoanalysis as a system – what *Murphy* calls “complacent scientific conceptualism” – but not necessarily from some of its methods’ (111, qtd. in Nixon 45). In his dialogues with Knowlson, Beckett said that he had kept a journal on psychoanalysis which he ‘used to go back to my digs and write notes on what had happened, on what I’d come up with’ (Knowlson 1996, 177, qtd. in Nixon 45). Unfortunately, these particular notes have not been

found. However, this only increases the importance of the ‘Psychology Notes’ from a ‘source-hunting’ point of view.

II. The ‘Psychology Notes’ and the Genetic Dossier of *L’Innommable/*

The Unnamable

In Parts II and III of this thesis, I will examine Beckett’s notes as part of the ‘genetic dossier’ for *L’Innommable/The Unnamable*. The term ‘genetic dossier’ indicates every scrap of textual material that can be provably linked to the writing process of a particular work. In order to clarify the point of this approach to Beckett’s text, we first need to know what ‘genetic criticism’ is, and what kinds of insight about the text we can typically derive from this approach. Dirk Van Hulle’s helpful overview in *Manuscript Genetics*⁸ argues that ‘From a genetic perspective, the so-called *bon a tirer* moment (the moment the author decides his work is ready to be printed and to be confronted with the public) is perhaps less important than the moment an author finds a way to incorporate external material into his own composition’ (22). Examining the analogy between biogenetics and literary studies, he warns that genetic criticism may in some ways be ‘a confusing term’, for if ‘the most interesting moment in a botanical growth process is the point where the roots grow down and the rest of the plant grows up, literary composition involves not just the downward movement, but the upward movement as well’ (ibid, p. 22). One of the key terms involved in this discipline is what Thomas Mann called the ‘downward drilling’:

[...which] includes looking for information, reading books, taking notes and excerpts. The absorption of this extratextual material is still part of the “underground” aspect of the genesis, but the selective incorporation, processing, and further elaboration in ever new versions is a matter of inflorescence (ibid, p. 22).

The idea if the ‘genesis’ and further ‘growth’ of a literary text was promoted by M. Jimmie Killingsworth in his analysis of Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*, entitled *The Growth of “Leaves of Grass”*. According to Van Hulle, in his typological analysis, Killingsworth sketches ‘three variations on the theme of growth [which] are clearly discernible: the genetic, the progressive, and the cyclic’ (ibid, p. 10). Van Hulle complicates this picture:

⁸ Dirk Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics: Joyce's Know-How, Beckett's Nohow*. University Press of Florida, 2008.

The genetic type ‘implies that the work of the poet grows from an essential center of being’ (1993: 1). According to this view, each poem, each stanza, each line by the same poet is imbued with an identity that links it to ‘an informing center.’ The entire oeuvre radiates from this center, which is compared to a gene. Because of this analogy, Killingsworth calls this conception of poetry ‘genetic’ – which further confuses the term ‘genetic criticism.’ The second category in his typology stresses the sequential aspect of growth, as in concepts such as progress and evolution, which contrast sharply with the image of radial growth. This second type of growth implies amelioration and a form of teleology. According to this view, the steady progress culminates in completion. The third category in its turn dismisses this ‘ascending narrative’ and prefers a cyclic view on organic growth. This ‘modern’ approach includes both maturation and decline, ‘admitting loss as well as gain as a consequence of organic growth’ (ibid, p. 1).

The cyclic nature of many modernist and postmodernist texts indicates that repetition and reproduction are indispensable in their writing processes. The French poet, Francis Ponge, for instance, published his drafts alongside his published work as an ‘integral’ part of it, to illustrate that ‘writing processes cannot be reduced to “underground” activities’ (ibid, p. 22). What is inferred from this view is that a published text is not complete by itself; rather, like the growth of a flower, it enjoys what Ponge (in his *L’opinion changee quant aux fleurs*, 1992: 130) calls ‘relative perfection’ (qtd. in Van Hulle 2008: 22). That is to say, the final appearance of a text as a published work is not to be seen as ‘the eventual, long-awaited flowering of the work – but as just one in a series of versions’ (ibid, p. 22). This flower conceit is further explicated and illustrated by Ponge. The outcome, according to him, is only reproduction which stems from the urge toward perfection culminating in the ripest stage in the growth of the plant: the flower. However, because the flower’s reproductive organs are thrust into the air, the awareness we receive is that the flower, now doomed to death, bears only relative perfection. The acknowledgement of death itself implies the renunciation of absolute perfection, with ‘repetition’ being what remains. Evidently, Ponge’s attitude to writing corresponds with the cyclic view of Killingsworth, in which decline is not refuted, but is deemed as indispensable part of the writing process (ibid, p. 22).

In this respect, the cyclic type of growth in Killingsworth’s typology encompasses not only ‘Joycean composition’ but also ‘Beckettian decomposition’. That said, they also bear progressive (Killingsworth’s second type) characteristics, as the title ‘Work in Progress’ suggests:

‘Some kind of project, however vague. As a consequence, it constantly oscillates between an anticipatory perspective (...) and a retrospective vision’ (Ferrer 1996: 225-qtd. in Van Hulle 23). As Van Hulle further argues,

Joyce and Beckett did not always have the final “telos” in mind from the start, but once the goal began to take shape, they tried to finish their project as well as possible by means of numerous revisions. Although this process can be said to entail the suggestion of “amelioration”, neither Joyce nor Beckett ignored the relativity of perfection. The type of growth characterizing their writings can only be described as “genetic” (Killingsworth’s first type) if this adjective includes the notion of textual descent with – both intentional and unintentional – modification” (ibid, p. 23).

The idea of intentionality, the author’s intent and authority in and over his text, links us to the notion of ‘avant-texte’ and how approach of genetic criticism destabilizes the whole distinction between ‘finished text’ and ‘avant-texte’. Pierre-Marc de Biasi defines this central concept of the avant-texte in genetic criticism as ‘the work’s process of production, insofar as it can be pieced back together by the analysis of the author’s working manuscripts, and then interpreted following a defined critical method called *critique genétique*’ (1996: 38, qtd. in Van Hulle 29). As Van Hulle (2014: 11) explains: ‘The “genetic dossier” is the physical collection of documents [...] pertaining to the work one wishes to study, whereas the *avant-texte*⁹ is the result of the critical analysis of these documents (de Biasi 2000: 30-31), that is, the chronological reconstruction of the writing process’.

One should not forget that genetic criticism can also be applied to any other discipline or artistic type, from painting to music to architecture where ‘the notion of *avant-texte* is not quite suitable’ (Van Hulle 2008: 30). Even when it comes to literature itself, the idea of ‘text’ becomes problematic because what is meant by the ‘avant’ or what it can refer to remains vague sometimes. This holds true in the case of certain dramatic works, especially by Beckett who

⁹ To mark the difference, Pierre-Marc de Biasi calls the genetic dossier an ‘ensemble matériel des documents’ [a material collection of documents] and the *avant-texte* ‘une production critique: il [l’*avant-texte*] correspond à la tranformation d’un ensemble empirique de documents en un dossier de pièces ordonnées et significatives’ [a critical production: the *avant-texte* corresponds with the transformation of an empirical collection of documents into a dossier of ordered and meaningful items] (de Biasi 2000: 30-1).

manipulated both the content and the form (certain scenes) of his plays. In this respect, he ‘has brought this problem to a head, not only by directing (and making postpublication changes to) some of his own plays, but also by translating them and thus creating yet another authorial version of the text’ (ibid, p. 30). Shillingsburg differentiates between ‘text’, ‘version’ and ‘work’ by delineating the ‘text’ as consisting of more than one ‘version’ of a ‘work’. ‘A version is one specific form of the work’ (Shillingsburg 1996: 47) and a ‘work’ is ‘the imagined whole implied by all differing forms of a text that we conceive as representing a single literary creation’ (Shillingsburg 1996: 43, qtd. in Van Hulle 2014: 10). Van Hulle observes that,

These ‘differing forms’ are the multiple ‘versions’ of the work. For instance, Samuel Beckett has made several drafts of his play *Fin de partie* (*Endgame*). The earliest of these drafts do not bear any title and feature characters with names that differ from the characters in the published version of this work. Beckett scholars therefore disagree whether one of these drafts (a dialogue between two characters, Ernest and Alice) is to be regarded as a ‘version’ of the ‘work’ *Fin de partie* or not (Cohn 2001: 220, qtd. in Van Hulle 10).

Asserting the authorial intent by the writer may even grow stronger with old age. Even T. S. Eliot who was not interested in too much information about the origins of a poem and was not in favor of manuscript research because it broke his contact with it, wrote a letter toward the end of his life to King’s College, Cambridge, asking whether the university would be willing to receive the drafts of his *Four Quartets* (2008: 30). Van Hulle believes that the reasons for this may vary from writer to writer or from case to case: From financial motivations to safeguarding the text to ‘at least presenting some traces of his intentions. Since a text has no meaning unless it is acted upon by agents, it seems only natural – from a writer’s perspective – that he may want to assert his role as an agent, especially when he is nearing his death’ (ibid, p. 30). Furthermore, he writes:

This may even be more pressing in the case of playwrights, such as Samuel Beckett, who have seen numerous performances that did not tally with their view of their own plays. When an author realizes that after his death his work will be acted upon unilaterally by the *intentio lectoris*, he may see a donation of his manuscripts as a way of presenting some traces of what the text was meant to mean, as a counterweight to what it will be made to mean (ibid, p. 35).

The once director of the manuscript department of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Florence Callu names this tendency of the 20-century writers to preserve their manuscripts and typescripts, from a small note to a corrected proof, the ‘golden age of the contemporary manuscript’ (Callu 1993: 65, qtd. in Van Hulle 2014: 4).

Ghost canon or ‘grey canon’ (2005: 143) is a term that S. E. Gontarski coined in order to point to such a corpus of texts, especially in view of Beckett’s works (including not just draft manuscripts but also the post-publication ‘epigenesis’¹⁰). Gontarski’s coinage refers to an ‘expansion of the canon [which] is precisely what Beckett at first sought to resist, since it reinscribes the traditional presumption of authorial authority’; yet ‘he finally extended such authority, insisting on the primacy of the playwright in the process of performance’ (Gontarski 2005: 142-43, qtd. in Van Hulle 2008: 35). What makes Beckett an apt target of discussion for such a paradoxical stance is his bilingual writing: the fact that he composed some of the most important and successful of his works in French and then translated them to English, such as *L’Innommable/The Unnamable*. Besides turning to drama, Steven Connor sees this phenomenon as yet another means of exercising authority over his oeuvre:

The paradox here is that Beckett visibly exercised a high degree of proprietary concern and power over a body of texts which consistently claim the condition of being uncontrolled, unmastered, or without origin in a responsible or authoritative “I”. What focuses these problems for Beckett in particular are, first, his turn to French, with the resulting requirement to become his own translator, and, second, his turn to drama. In both cases, Beckett found himself no longer able simply to separate himself from his works after their completion but continued to work with them (and against them) in various ways (1992: 155, qtd, in Van Hulle 2008: 36).

We will see, before long, how *L’Innommable/The Unnamable* itself thematises the distinction between ‘finished’ and ‘unfinished’ text, and how this thematisation in turn challenges ideas about subjectivity in the first person voice of the novel. However, by extending the authorial

10 ‘Epigenesis examines th[e] continuation of the genesis after publication in twentieth-century literature. Samuel Beckett’s work is particularly interesting in this respect, because he kept changing his texts, not only in his self-translations (from French into English or vice versa), but also in his capacity as director of his own plays. The creative undoing has left several textual scars, which require adequate editorial methods of representation, for which digital scholarly editing may offer innovative solutions’ (Van Hulle 2014: 28).

authority even after the completion of his works, Beckett simultaneously exercises the extension of problematizing such a completion. The paradox above, Van Hulle believes, applies both to authority and to the concept of the ‘work’: ‘the important fact that Beckett continued to work with and against his texts also problematizes the notion of their completion and makes them a particularly suitable corpus for genetic criticism’ (ibid, p. 36).

In *Textes pour rien*, Beckett writes: ‘Qu’importe qui parle (...)’/ ‘What matter who’s speaking’, but the next sentence destabilizes the previous one: ‘...someone said what matter who’s speaking’. In 1969, Michel Foucault used this quote to open his famous lecture, “What Is an Author?”, but even here Beckett is mentioned as its *author*. The lecture is what we know today as “What Is an Author?” Foucault regards ‘Qu’importe qui parle’ as a sign of indifference toward the concept of authorship characterizing contemporary writing. But, van Hulle argues, ‘precisely in the case of Samuel Beckett, this is less unequivocal than it may seem. What Foucault interprets as indifference seems to have been the object of a permanent internal struggle throughout Beckett’s career as a writer’ (ibid, p. 44). Nearing his death, Beckett donated his manuscripts to a university library; probably knowing very well ‘that what S. E. Gontarski called ‘the intent of undoing’ can only be conveyed if one also shows the things that have been undone to arrive at the published version’ (ibid, p. 45).

The ‘intent of undoing’, pertaining to ‘endogenesis’ or moments of uncertainty or revision in the writing process¹¹, is clearly manifested in one of the ways in which Beckett works

¹¹ Van Hulle believes that ‘Exogenetic research is especially useful for studies on intertextuality, notably in the case of challenging literary works’ (2014: 25). The critic also ‘studies the endogenetic process of writing, paying special attention to moments of doubt and decision making as manifested in traces of creative undoing (cancellations, omissions, cuts, revisions). The awareness of manuscripts’ intellectual value, which gradually increased in the course of the nineteenth century, culminates in the work of twentieth-century authors such as Paul Valéry or Samuel Beckett, who presented a new image of writers who fumble for words and therefore keep looking for them. This notion of continuous incompleteness becomes even more striking if the genesis continues after publication’ (2014: 28). However, on drawing on the limits of the *avant-texte*, he concludes that ‘The limits of the *avant-texte* are notoriously difficult to determine. The zone between exogenesis and endogenesis is often characterized by gradual transitions and in many cases the genesis continues in the editorial phase (which in Pierre-Marc de Biasi’s typology corresponds to the stage of the “text”, no longer to the stage of the “*avant-texte*”; de Biasi 1996a: 34-5; see Introduction)’ (qtd. in Van Hulle 2014: 279).

to deconstruct his texts and to destabilize the authoritative 'I' through systematic negation. Combining genetic criticism and cognitive narratology, Van Hulle writes:

To the extent that manuscripts reflect the process of thinking and writing, there is a connection between the act of preserving these traces of the production of stories and methods of evoking the characters' consciousness, characterizing the work of many modernists. The most challenging aspect of the reassessment of modernism's so-called 'inward turn' is to show *how* an analysis of the workings of the 'extended' mind on the level of the writer can inform the analysis of the workings of the 'extended' mind on the level of the protagonists (2014: 4).

'From a post-Cartesian perspective, Richard Menary believes that manuscripts are an integral part of the "extended mind". Many modernists, whether intuitively or consciously, employed the interaction with their notebooks and manuscripts to induce creative cognitive processes (Menary 2007: 621, qtd. in Van Hulle 2014: 4). He argues that even interacting with the paper becomes part of this cognitive process: 'writing transforms our cognitive abilities' (Menary in Van Hulle 4). Further, Van Hulle observes that 'the nexus between the mind and the manuscript is a constant process of interaction that helps constitute the mind in the first place' (ibid, p. 272). In *Modern Manuscripts*, Van Hulle 'focuses on the reassessment of modernism's preoccupation with evocations of the mind and the so-called "inward turn"' (15). Freud famously believed that humankind had undergone three major blows by the advent of the 20th-century. The first blow came with Copernicus's discovery that the earth was not the centre of the universe. The second blow was struck by Darwin who promoted the notion that the human race was not to be privileged and prioritized among other organisms. With regard to humankind's 'descent from the animal kingdom and his ineradicable animal nature, Freud claimed to have struck the third blow. As a psycho-analyst, he therefore made a "call to introspection"' (Freud 1966 [1917]: 353, qtd. in Van Hulle 2014: 15). This 'introspection' has led to the so-called "inward turn" of modernism' (Van Hulle 15). Yet this may be an oversimplification.

In *I do I undo I redo* (2010), Finn Fordham speculates on the formation and 'reformulations' of the *self* through 'textual production', especially 'during the modernist period' (7). His insightful discussions are very conducive to understanding the relationships between subjectivity and textuality in modernist genetic dossiers. As Fordham asserts, his study 'brings together, on the one hand, the ephemeral world of writing processes, and, on the other,

theoretical abstractions around the nature of identity, the self, and subjectivity (ibid, p. 7). He initiates his argument with a quote from Kim Worthington that ‘Human beings are to be understood as texts’ (qtd. in Fordham 8). Fordham goes on to relate D. H. Lawrence’s ‘notion [...] of the Self and Selflessness, where there is introverted retrogression and outward projection’, to Hegel’s expression that ‘Man is a *thinking* consciousness, i.e....he draws out of himself, and makes explicit for himself, that which he is, and, generally, whatever is...man as mind *reduplicates* himself (Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, qtd. in Fordham 8). Writing, then, becomes a means of such reduplication. Fordham, however, does not necessarily follow Hegel’s notion that ‘an image of the self’ will be produced through this act. Rather than seeing writing as issuing from the self, he argues that ‘even if one is to agree that the self might be an origin, the result of the writing might form a world quite separate from and unlike this self’ (ibid, p. 8). For him, writing acquires a double role:

Writing can be a translation as well as a direct expression of the self, a transformation as much as a reduplication of the self, the generation of a form defined by its separation from the self thought to have produced it. Moreover, in the instance where writing can be thought of as emerging from somewhere other than the self, or not having the self as its subject, it does not follow that an image of the self will *not* be produced: the work that appears, whether as if from nowhere or from some subterranean subconscious somewhere, can be reabsorbed into the self-image of the owner of the hand that mediated the message. [...] to paraphrase Nietzsche, philosophies are forms of autobiography [*Beyond Good and Evil*]. The ego turns whatever might once have seemed other to it into itself: ‘where Id was, ego shall be [*New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*]’ (ibid, p. 9).

However, the writer must beware of the pitfalls of such an ‘image’ of the self and its complicating the process of textual production. So much so that ‘the goal of self-projection may moreover obstruct the aim of textual production – too great a sense of self-consciousness prevents composition’ (ibid, p. 11). In this case, lack of authenticity is the end result of the final production, ‘taking the producer further away from the goal of self-knowledge and self-expression’ which leaves us only to conclude that ‘the self in itself may only be an illusion and as an end product it can be neither inauthentic nor authentic since there’s no original self which can be used as a measure against its supposed expression’ (ibid, p. 11).

Fordham ends up with the suggestion that ‘*the self* is not a presupposition, but a consequence, an effect, a product of *textual construction, of writing processes*’ (ibid, p. 15, author’s italics). Having borrowed the title of his book from the artist Louise Bourgeois, Fordham, however, gives writing a primacy over other artistic modes ‘in its relation to the formation of the self’: for if ‘the self as process can be thought of as taking its shapes through the acts of formation’ (ibid, p. 16), then:

Formation will be most intense and complex within the matter of written language. Because of the variety of its formations, the reach of its referentiality, the simplicity of its iterability, the sophistication of its manipulability – writing is the primary technology in the formation of an identity. In this respect, writing precedes building, engineering, textiles, painting, and speaking, though in these processes too we can reflect on ourselves as a narrative in process. Representations of the self and theories of the self issue from the processes behind textuality and they often take their form from processes of composition (ibid, p. 16).

Fordham concludes that ‘genetic criticism’ is an apt study of the self if ‘it is to be understood as a narrative rather than an essence’, in which case ‘an understanding of its projection through composition will be best pursued through the material of drafts and manuscripts which are the focus of ‘genetic criticism’’ (ibid, p. 16). He summarizes this ‘as the study of writers’ processes and drafts for various ends, such as understanding different kinds of composition processes, *other* than establishing an authorized or edited ‘version’’ (ibid, p. 16).

For Fordham, as for Beckett, writing is not only a self-therapeutic process, but also the coming of age of the subject, of the self being created, uncreated, and recreated. Such creative processes, he observes, ‘confirm identity’ (ibid, pp. 1-2). Such questions about selfhood, (negated) subjecthood and the writer/character’s ‘extended mind’ lead us on to the question of psychoanalysis in Beckett’s writing where ‘introspection’ and the ‘inward turn’ reach their acme of expression: What can our knowledge of Beckett’s reading notes on psychoanalysis, *considered as avant-texte*, tell us about the writing of subjecthood in *The Unnamable*?

In chapter III, by recalling Fordham’s notion of the self and subjecthood as a textual process of being done, undone and redone, I will bring in the notion that for Beckett, the psychoanalytic language becomes another type of language to be played with, chopped up, and ironized; a language which fails, while trying to take over the ego as a psychoanalytic end,

through the Unnamable's resistance against that language by means of a voice whose words are not his own.

III. A Note on the Genetic Dossier of *L'Innommable/The Unnamable*

Beckett wrote the first version of *L'Innommable* in two notebooks, namely FN1 and FN2, now being preserved at the University of Texas at Austin, which in the BDMP genetic edition appear as MS HRC SB/3/10 and MS HRC SB/4/1 with the following description:

'L'Innommable'. Autograph manuscript, signed, begun 29 March 1949, completed at Ussy, January 1950, 284pp., folio. Written in ink and in pencil in two cloth-bound ledgers. With autograph deletions and emendations throughout. The flyleaf of Notebook I has an autograph note: 'This is the original MS / of L'Innommable / written 1949-50 and / published by the Editions / de Minuit May 1953. / Samuel Beckett / in 2 notebooks.' Two 4to sheets of autograph text and corrections are tipped in at the end. Autograph notes inside back cover (Lake 1984, 59-60, item 109).

As Van Hulle and Weller have noted,

In the top right corner of the first notebook's opening recto page, Beckett has marked (and encircled) the date: '29.3.49' (FN1, 1r). The second notebook opens with the date '2 octobre 1949' (FN2, 1r) and closes with 'FIN', followed by 'Ussy janvier / 1950' (FN2, back flyleaf verso). The last mention of a precise date before the end of the manuscript is marked with a large 'X', 16 folios earlier: 'USSY XMAS 1949' (FN2, 62r). [...] it is remarkable that the closing paragraph of the novel coincides with the physical terminus (the verso of the back flyleaf) of the second notebook – as if Beckett set himself the task, not so much to write a novel as to fill two notebooks (*Making of Samuel Beckett's 'L'Innommable'/'The Unnamable'*, 2014: 31).

Van Hulle and Weller add that 'It took Beckett less than a year to write the first full draft of *L'Innommable*. The dates and places mentioned in these two notebooks are (ibid, p. 32):

Notebook 1 (FN1):

29.3.49 (FN1, 1r)

Ussy 20.5.49 (FN1, 21r)

2.6.49 La Cier (FN1, 23r)
PARIS 8.6.49 (FN1, 27r)
9.8.49 (!) Retour de Dublin (FN1, 32r)
Ussy 14 septembre 1949 (FN1, 67r)

Notebook 2 (FN2):

2 octobre 1949 (FN2, 1r)
Ussy 10/11/49 (FN2, 40r)
Paris 13.11.49 (FN2, 41r)
17 12 49 (FN2, 55r)
USSY XMAS 1949 (FN2, 62r)
Ussy janvier 1950 (FN2, back flyleaf verso) (ibid, p. 32-33).

Besides these two notebooks, there is a loose sheet referred to as FLS which is ‘an autograph version of the opening paragraph [...], a fair copy, written on the recto and verso of a single sheet of paper. The catalogue number is UoR MS 1227/7/9/1’ (ibid, p. 34).

Beckett wrote the autograph manuscript of *The Unnamable*, the English translation of *L’Innommable*, in three notebooks: EN1, EN2, and EN3 which in the BDMP genetic edition appear as MS HRC SB/5/9/1, 2, 3 (ibid, p. 35). According to Van Hulle and Weller, ‘The HRC catalogue describes these three notebooks as an ‘Autograph manuscript, signed, begun at Ussy, February 1957, completed 23 February 1958, 253 pages., small 4to, in morocco-backed folding box’ (ibid, p. 35).

The English notebooks are described as follows:

Written in blue and red inks in three notebooks. Each notebook has, in Beckett's hand, the title, number of the notebook, and the note, 'original manuscript of the author's translation'. The second notebook has the additional phrase (title?) 'Beyond words?' The last manuscript page of the third notebook bears the inscription: 'This is the original MS of my translation of L’Innommable / For my friend Jake Schwartz, / with my best wishes. / Samuel Beckett / March 1958.’ (Lake 1984, 62, item 112) (ibid, pp. 35-6).

Van Hulle and Weller have outlined ‘the dates mentioned in the three English autograph notebooks’ (ibid, p. 36):

Notebook 1 (EN1):

‘February 1957’ (EN1, 1r)

‘22.10.57’ and a line across the page (EN1, 22v-23r)

Notebook 2 (EN2):

‘November 1957 (EN2, 1r)

‘Reprise 21.1.58 apres echec de Henry et Ada’ (EN2, 23v)

Notebook 3 (EN3):

‘Jan. 1958 Ussy’ (EN3, 1r)

‘23.2.1958 Ussy’ (EN3, 54r; the last recto)

‘March 1958’ (EN3, 54r) (ibid, p. 36).

However, despite what these dates indicate as the beginning and ending of Beckett’s translation of *L’Innommable* into English between February 1957 and March 1958, the actual process of the translation took two years for Beckett, ‘over twice as long as the time taken to write the original French version, *and also entailed substantial revisions*’ (ibid, p. 36) [emphasis added]. Beckett’s ‘letter of 12 March 1956 to Pamela Mitchell’ (ibid, p. 36) attests to this fact: ‘Have started the impossible job of translating L’Innommable and gave it up the other day in loathing’ (LSB II 606) (qtd. in Van Hulle and Weller 36).

In the next two sections of this thesis, I will focus on the English manuscripts, EN1, EN2, and EN3 as well as the French ones, FN1 and FN2. When I am not quoting manuscript variants, I refer to the Grove Press edition of *The Unnamable* as it appears in the BDMP module. This itself sometimes contains corrections and revisions by Beckett, which I have retained in my quotations. The ‘final’ text in fact remains in process.

Part II

The ‘Psychology Notes’ and *The Unnamable*

The composition of *L'Innommable* was initiated some fifteen years after the completion of the *Psychology Notes*. It is likely that Beckett consulted his notes only at certain points during the creative process while relying for the most part on his excellent memory during composition. However, as this chapter will demonstrate, there are simply too many thematic and verbal connections between the notes and Beckett's discordant prose-monologue for the link to be a trivial one. A reading of Beckett's textual corpus (including the manuscripts) with the notes to hand can alert us to a dense thicket of themes and possible verbal echoes we might otherwise not notice – even if some of these connections must remain more tentative and disputable than others. This approach then trains the mind to notice fresh connections between the notes and Beckett's text and (where relevant) his *avant-textes*, too. This will bring us closer to Beckett's creative transformation of his sources, and prepare us for the exploration of modes of textual 'resistance' to psychoanalysis traceable through the genetic dossier in the next chapter¹².

Before we begin tracing such detailed connections, however, some general remarks about Beckett's narrative strategy of denarration and disnarration¹³ are in order, for this strategy continuously redefines and refracts two interlocking modes of the 'I' in this text: the narrative-authorial 'I', and as we shall see, the 'I' as psychoanalytic entity. Indeed, *L'Innommable* is a text that constantly highlights the difficulty of saying and writing 'I': and this difficulty will itself be related here to Beckett's psychology notes. The concept of the psychoanalytic 'talking cure', which Beckett himself underwent with Bion and which is thematized several places in his notes, will serve in my reading as an overarching framework for understanding why references to psychoanalysis are so pervasive in this text. Crucially, *L'Innommable* dramatizes a *failing* talking

¹² I will refer to the Grove Press edition (as cited on BDMP) when the Grove Press and the drafts show no significant variation, that is, I will only refer to variants with long MS numbers if there is a substantial variation between this and the published text. This will be my consistent practice in my entire thesis. Moreover, I need to point out that since I am here searching for any and all evidence of links between the psychology notes and any aspect of the genesis or published variants of this text, I have decided not to differentiate examples that appear in the draft manuscripts from those that appear in the published text in my discussions.

¹³ Gerald Prince defines 'disnarration' as 'The elements in a narrative that explicitly consider and refer to what does not take place i.e. 'X didn't happen'; 'Y could have happened but didn't' (Prince, 2003: 22).

cure: one that needs to be resumed over and over again, and must finally ‘go on’ even beyond the last page.

I. Narrative strategies of negation, the psychoanalytic ‘I’ and the talking cure

In ‘Denarration in Fiction: Erasing the Story in Beckett and Others’ (2001: 168-175), Brian Richardson refers to denarration as ‘a kind of narrative negation in which a narrator denies significant aspects of her narrative that had earlier been presented as given’ (168). In fact, denarration looms everywhere in *The Unnamable*. The text famously opens: ‘Where now? Who now? When now? Unquestioning. I, say I. Unbelieving’, and later in the same paragraph, the voice outlines its narrative intentions: ‘By aporia pure and simple? Or by affirmations and negations invalidated as uttered, or sooner or later?’ (Grove Press Edition, p.01r). By the end of the novel, it still adheres to its ‘affirmations’ and ‘negations’: ‘you must go on, I can’t go on, I’ll go on’ (ibid, p. 142r), and negates and parodies the ‘authoritative’ ‘I’: ‘I’ll emerge from silence’ followed by ‘As if it were I!’ (ibid, p. 118). As an extreme mode of narration, such denarrations permeate the text of the novel. In his book *Unnatural Voices: Extreme Narration in Modern and Contemporary Fiction* (2006), Richardson describes this undoing as

the phenomenon of ‘denarration,’ voices that erase the texts that they have been creating, such as found in the sentences, ‘Yesterday it was raining. Yesterday it was not raining.’ The last, which I call the ‘permeable narrator,’ slips (or is collapsed) into other minds and discourses and speaks what should be impossible for it to know; this is a favorite strategy of Beckett, especially in the trilogy (Richardson 2006: xi, qtd. in Van Hulle 2014: 250).

This alludes to the ending of *Molloy*: ‘Then I went back into the house and wrote, It is midnight. The rain is beating on the windows. It was not midnight. It was not raining’ (1994: 241). In *The Unnamable*, the voice’s declaration ‘As if it were I’ points to this same paradoxical quality of denial. In ‘Voice and Pronouns in Samuel Beckett’s *The Unnamable*’ (2011), Llewellyn Brown asserts that the voice ‘assumes a characteristic form throughout the text; it utters the long monologue and has the monopoly of speech, but it continually denies being the author of its utterances’ (175). This voice is apparently bereft of its common lingual and vocal supports, as if coming from somewhere ‘outside of any positive realization in utterances’ (ibid, p. 176), outside

of language, outside of the body itself. In fact, it does not seem to demand ‘the presence of a vocal organ, a character responsible for its utterances, or any particular localization’ (ibid, p. 176). Brown offers an example from the novel where the narrator declares:

[...] no need of a mouth, the words are everywhere, inside me, outside me, well, well [...] I hear them, no need to hear them, no need of a head, impossible to stop them, impossible to stop, I’m in words, made of words, others’ words, what others, the place too, the air [...]’ (Beckett, 2009, 379; qtd. in Brown 2011: 176).

Brown finds a ‘dimension’ of this voice ‘that is tied up to the question of pronouns, particularly that of the first person singular. Indeed the use of the pronoun *I* reveals the paradoxical quality of the voice’ (ibid, p. 180) because it is coupled with the notion of ‘negation’. There is a persistent negation of utterances that have been spoken by the narrator, which makes it practically impossible for the reader to situate the voice: ‘In *The Unnamable*, the narrator who says *I* declares that he is not the author of his discourse... of which he is nonetheless the bearer’ (ibid, p. 180). Brown concludes that knowing ‘the deictic pronoun’ *I* can help us understand its ‘circular formulation’: ‘I is he who says *I*’¹⁴. As the voice in *The Unnamable* narrates, ‘But they will devise another means, less childish, of getting me to admit, or pretend to admit, that I am he whose name they call me by, and no other’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 71r). In fact, Beckett deliberately stages the idea of ‘Beckett the author-narrator’ in *The Unnamable* where the ‘real and extra-linguistic’ anchor of the discourse becomes the author: ‘All these Murphys, Molloyes, and Malones do not fool me’ (ibid, p. 16r)¹⁵. He thus mentions previous characters from his own novels including *Watt* where the author-narrator binary also looms, with a narrator called ‘Sam’.

These narrative multiplications of, divisions within, and self-reflexive denials of the ‘I’ may readily be related to the psychoanalytic concept of self. A useful background for

¹⁴ ‘I is the “individual who utters the present instance of discourse containing the linguistic instance *I*”’ (Benveniste 1969, 252, qtd. in Brown 2011: 192).

¹⁵ I am using the Grove Press Edition in the BDMP, which appears in the MS as (MS-WU-MSS008-3-71).

understanding the 'I' as psychoanalytic entity in *The Unnamable* is Beckett's note on Freud's 'Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis', where the Id/Ego/Superego model is schematized:

Super-ego: heir to Oedipus complex. A special function within the ego representing demand for restriction & rejection. Acute case of over-severity of super-ego towards ego appears in the melancholic attack. Cp. delusions of observation of certain psychotics, whose observing function (super-ego) has become sharply separated from the ego & projected into external reality. The Ego, (including super-ego), not coextensive with the conscious (since patient is frequently unconscious of his resistances), just as the repressed is not coextensive with the unconscious. Id: Instinctual cathexes seeking discharge - that in our view is all that the id contains. The ego is that part of the id which has been modified by contact with the external world. It borrows its energy from the id. The means by which it has separated itself off from one part of the id were repressions & resistances. Repressed material merges into the id. The poor ego has to serve three harsh masters & do its best to reconcile claims of all three. The three tyrants are: The external world, the super-ego & the id. Goaded on by the id, hemmed in by the super-ego, rebuffed by reality, the ego struggles with its economic task of reducing forces & influences working in it & upon it to some kind of unity. When it fails it breaks out into anxiety. Reality anxiety in face of the outer world, moral anxiety in face of the super-ego, neurotic anxiety in the face of the id (TCD MS 10971/7/6).

This schematization leads us to a split self: a self in internal and perpetual conflict between the 'id' and the 'superego'; in particular, an inherent conflictedness which can be related to the 'I that is not an I', that is not whole, not coherent. In *Samuel Beckett's Abstract Drama* (2007), Erik Tønning links this Freudian notion back to Beckett's interest in Freud's precursor Schopenhauer and his 'doctrine of the Will at war with itself' (136):

Therefore the parts of the body must correspond completely to the chief demands and desires by which the will manifests itself; they must be the visible expression of these desires. Teeth, gullet, and intestinal canal are objectified hunger; the genitals are objectified sexual impulse; grasping hands and nimble feet correspond to the more indirect strivings of the will which they represent. Just as the general human form corresponds to the general human will, so to the individually modified will, namely the character of the individual, there corresponds the individual bodily structure, which is therefore as a whole and in all its parts characteristic and full of expression (Schopenhauer 1966a: 108, qtd, in Tønning 136).

This kind of ‘determined reductivism’ accounts for ‘the sense of displacement – a distinctly pathological detachment from, or avoidance of, the “I”’ (ibid, p. 133); an ‘I’ which is in constant refutation and denial of itself in *The Unnamable*.

But if the writerly “I”, as an indefatigable voice, ultimately tends to negate itself, it also uses psychoanalytic means to try to calm and cure itself – albeit *in vain* – through speech: ‘Calm, calm, there must be something else that goes with this grey, which goes with everything’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 84r). The subject of talking cure appears twice in Beckett’s notes: once referred to as the “talking-out” method (“mental catharsis”, “abreaction”) (TCD MS 10971/7/14), and the second time as “chimney sweeping” (TCD MS 10971/8/34). The narrator of *The Unnamable* seems to be dubious about ‘talking-out’ as ‘mental catharsis’ and favors silence instead: ‘I’m a big talking ball, talking about things that do not exist, or that exist perhaps, impossible to know, beside the point’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 18r). Realizing that talking would amount to nothing, he wonders what would happen if he went silent: ‘Talking of speaking, what if I went silent?’ (ibid, p. 20r). He muses on the futile circuit of talking, not even knowing what the talk is about: ‘At no moment do I know what I am talking about, nor of whom, nor of where, nor how, nor why, but I could employ fifty wretches for this sinister operation [sic] and still be short of a fifty-first, to close the circuit, that I know, without j^knowing what it means’ (ibid, p. 57r). And parody emerges when silence is opposed to the ineluctability of ‘talking unceasingly’ (ibid., p. 109r) to which the narrator is ‘condemned’ (ibid, p. 91r): ‘But there is always this to be said, things are only beginning, though long since begun, they will not lose heart they’ll remember the motto of William the Silent and keep on talking’ (ibid, p. 88r). Finally, ‘talking to me of me, impossible to stop’ (ibid, p. 119r), the narrator wishes for and pictures a quasi-psychoanalytic room where he can ‘close his eyes’ and ‘talk’:

If I could only shut myself up, quick, I’ll shut myself up, it won’t n^be I, quick, I’ll make a place, it won’t be mine, it doesn’t mag^tter, I don’t feel any place for me, perhaps that will come, I’ll make it mine, I’ll put myself in it, I’ll put someone in it, I’ll find someone in it, I’ll put myself in him, I’ll say he’s I, perhaps he’ll keep me, perhaps the place will keep us, me insiⁿ de the other, the place all round us, it will be over, all over, I won’t have to l^ktry and move any more, I’ll close my eyes, all I’ll have to do is talk, that will be easy, I’ll have things to say, about me, about my life, I’ll make it

a good one, I'll know who's talking, and about what, I'll know where I am, perhaps I'll be able to go silent, perhaps that's all they're waiting for, ~~they~~ there they are again, to pardon me, waiting for me to reach home, to pardon me, it's the lie they refuse to stop, I'll close my eyes, be happy at last, that's the way it is this morning (ibid, p. 126r).

The picture that Beckett paints here of the Unnamable being shut up in a room talking about him and his life, and being pardoned by some unknown authoritarian figures he refers to as 'they' relates to the idea that in psychoanalysis, the analyst represents for the patient images or projections of parent-figures in all their ambiguity such as love-hate, authority-rebellion, fear-respect, and so on, so that the idea of inventing or projecting an 'other' who listens here - 'I'll put myself in him' - may be fruitfully related more deeply to the situation of psychoanalytic therapy. These images or projections of parent-figures are what Karin Stephen calls 'parent imagos, fantastic creations reflecting the child's own intentions. [...] Danger & dread of parent imagos, & of the archaic conscience derived from them & modeled on the child's own omnipotent destructive fantasies' (TCD MS 10971/7/4). However, such expressions as 'there they are again, to pardon me', 'it's the lie they refuse to stop' and so on become merely the projections of how the voice is trying to distance itself from the psychoanalytic language by rebelling against its imagos.

By the close of this passage, the idea of the therapeutic catharsis promised by psychoanalysis is again ironized and parodied; that is, the 'talking cure' fails once more in having the ego take over the id. With respect to the triad of the superego-ego-id, 'The object of psychoanalysis is to strengthen the ego, make it more independent of the super-ego, widen its field of vision & so extend its organisation that it can take over new portions of the id. Where id was, there shall ego be' (TCD MS 10971/7/6). According to this theory, while the aim and the usual progress of the 'talking cure' are to purge and purify the individual of the unconscious wounds and negative emotions, help the ego take over parts of the unconscious where the id used to reside, and make the individual feel 'happy at last', what typically prevents it from success in *The Unnamable* is the voice's will to resist, and at times rebel against, this same aim and progress through constant negations, self-denials and authority-rebellion mechanisms that find expression in a language which fails in expression, and in words that are 'invalidated as uttered' (Grove Press Edition, p. 01r). Therefore, it is crucial to note that the talking cure fails for

Beckett. In fact, he shows us this failure by staging a parodied talking cure which is not successful; that is, his creative use of – and differentiation from – psychoanalysis is meant to say that he stages an *unsuccessful*, perennially ongoing ‘talking cure’ in this text.

In fact, the word ‘ego’ appears in BDMP. A perfect example of this type of resistance by the voice is when the Unnamable speaks of ‘an ego of [his] own’ (ibid, p. 66r):

I say what I am told to say, in the hope that some day they will weary of talking at me. The trouble is I say it wrong, having no ear, no head, no memory. Now I hear them saying it is Worm's voice beginning, I pass on the news, for what it is worth. Do they believe that I believe it is I who am talking? That's theirs too. To make me think that I have an ego of my own and can speak of it, as they of theirs. Another trap to snap me up among the living (ibid, p. 65-6r).

This gives us an important idea, that the notion of the ‘ego’ taking control or taking over – heralded by psychoanalysis as the goal of the talking cure - is being resisted by the voice as an imposition from some unknown ‘they’ (the psychoanalysts?) The voice does not wish to be ‘caught among the living’, among those who can believe in their own ‘I’, and utters what it is told to utter ‘in the hope that some day they will weary of talking at [it]’. It finds *their* way to be another trick to trap it in order to make it compatible to this tribe. The use of the preposition ‘at’ instead of ‘to’ or ‘with’ in this passage implies a tint of an external authoritarian tone of dictation which makes the voice talk and believe in an ego of its own, which then again it rejects and shows disbelief in. Therefore, one reason why the talking cure is unsuccessful in this text is that there is enormous resistance to it.

Certainly, resistance is itself a significant concept in relation to the psychoanalytic treatment. Patients usually enter the psychoanalytic room with the unconscious intention of not getting well in order to win over the psychoanalyst and proceed along with their comfort zone of mental distresses. They hold onto this unconscious resistance against the therapy until they are informed by the analyst about the psychological game they are involved in, and surprisingly enough, they get well, if ever, as soon as they understand this. In fact, patients eventually do this as a favor to the psychoanalyst. This abnormal tendency in patients is explicated by both Stekel and Adler, which respectively appear in Beckett’s notes: ‘Neurotics never get well for their own

sake. They get well to please the physician, as a favour to him' (TCD MS 10971/8/24); and 'Patients recover as soon as they understand that the motive of adhering to their disease is for the purpose of humiliating the physician' (TCD MS 10971/8/28). Similarly, the voice's resistance in the text may be read as a conscious effort in annihilating such an external authority and undermining the promises of the 'talking cure'.

Beckett's skepticism toward the possibilities of psychoanalysis to heal the individual of his unconscious wounds can be linked to one of Rank's statements that appears on the last page of Beckett's notes: 'The depths of the unconscious can no more be changed than any other organ necessary to life. The only result we can attain in Psychoanalysis is a changed attitude of the Ego to the Unconscious' (TCD MS 10971/8/36). Also, Beckett's note on Freud, taken from his chapter 'Anatomy of the Mental Personality' in his *New Introductory Lectures*, as presented by Karin Stephen (TCD MS 10971/7/6) is crucial in this regard, where Freud deems the ego's taking control of the id to be 'reclamation work, like the draining of the Zuyder Zee'¹⁶. However, the voice in *L'Innommable* fails to accomplish this task, as the reclaiming of 'new portions of the id' and the draining of the unconscious wounds by the ego – 'free discharge from necrotic areas' (TCD MS 10971/8/21) - become nothing more than merely removing the pus¹⁷ from those 'insignificant wounds' (Grove Press Edition, p. 09r) in a 'wounded wistiti'¹⁸ (ibid., p. 68r).

However skeptical Beckett might seem toward talking cure as a scientific method of abreaction and its promises, psychoanalysis as the science of talking cure is valuable for

16 See Matthew Feldman's thesis (Feldman 2004) p.44, and *Beckett's Books* (Feldman 2006), p.31.

17 The analogy here draws on Ernest Jones's explanation that 'To check the analysis before the fundamental aberration is elucidated is like presuming to cure a riddling abscess by tapping superficial pockets of pus instead of thoroughly laying open & draining entire system of connected cavities (free discharge from necrotic [sic] areas) (TCD MS 10971/8/21).

18 (*Callithrix Jacchus*), also common marmoset, a monkey of the genus *Callithrix*. The body length is 17 to 20 cm, and the tail length, 24 to 37 cm. The pelage is long, with black and gray annulations, which are especially noticeable on the tail. There are long, white tufts on the ears. The face is covered with hair, and there is a white, rhomboid spot on the forehead. The wistiti is distributed in the equatorial rain forests of Brazil, south of the Amazon. It lives in tall trees in groups of three to eight individuals and feeds on insects and fruits. It bears two offspring at a time (<http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Wistiti>).

understanding the voice here, because above all, ‘its theoretical findings [which Beckett knew well] shed light on the cleaving that detaches words from the voice as a defined object’ (Brown 176).

Nonetheless, in the following paragraphs, the reader must also be aware of the important fact that there are significant distinctions between Freud’s, Jung’s, Jones’s, Adler’s, Stekel’s, Stephen’s and Rank’s theories and their very different perspectives. Furthermore, Beckett in turn made ironic or critical comments on them all.¹⁹ Their individual positions are controversial, and they do not stand for the same notions just because Beckett made notes about them. At the same time, I would argue that Beckett, in drawing on the notes and his memories of them, is less preoccupied with such distinctions. *The Unnamable* does not give us a consistent case study according to any one theory, but a wide array of symptoms and symbols from the notes all mixed together in the creative process. Indeed, the *Unnamable* seems to suffer from a veritable encyclopedia of psychic illness.

II. Womb-Tomb: Birth Trauma and Death Wish

‘Birth was the death of him.’
Samuel Beckett, *A Piece of Monologue*

Beckett was preoccupied with the ‘womb-tomb’ at least since the novel *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (1932). The idea of life itself as a ‘punishment for having been born’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 24r) is first encountered by Beckett through Schopenhauer²⁰. Moreover, Beckett was preoccupied with his own supposed recollected experience on being in the womb: feeling constricted, imprisoned, and so on. In fact, Rank confirms and develops themes that Beckett had been mulling over for a long time. However, the fact that the womb and the tomb appear together in Beckett’s text, does not mean that Rank is necessarily his primary or only reference point.

19 See Matthew Feldman’s *Beckett’s Books* and Mark Nixon’s *German Diaries*.

20 ‘I was given a pensum at birth perhaps, for the punishment of having been born perhaps’. In *The Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett*, C. J. Ackerley and S. E. Gontarski define ‘pensum’ as ‘the “task” of living, as defined by Schopenhauer’s Doctrine of Suffering (*Parerga und Parapomena* II.xii # 157): “Das Leben ist ein Pensum zum Arbeiten: in diesem Sinne is *defunctus* ein schöner Ausdruck” (“life is a task to be worked off: in this sense *defunctus* is a fine expression”)’ (Ackerley and Gontarski 2004: 431).

Nonetheless, as Phil Baker (71-105) has shown, he *was* fascinated by Rank and by the contemporary trend (embraced by Salvador Dalí and others) for recovering supposed memories from the womb and the birth-trauma.

The term ‘womb’ appears twice on two successive pages, 8r and 9r, of the original translation of *L’Innommable*. The first passage is as follows:

For here comes along another, to see what happened to his pal, and ~~make him break~~ ^{get him} out, and back to his senses, and back to his kin, with a flow of threats, and promises, and tales ~~of~~ like this of wombs and cradles, diapers bepossed and the first long trousers, ^{wombs and cradles cradle eribs-and-eots eribs-and} ~~and eots~~ ^{tales like this of wombs and cradles, diapers bepossed and the first long trousers} love's young dream and life's old lech, ~~I love's~~ ^{y love's young} ~~dream~~ ^{dream} ~~and life's old lech~~ ^{lech} lech blood and tears and skin and bones and the tossing in the grave (MS-HRC-SB-5-9-3, p. 08r).

These three additions appear on the facing leaf, and are a variant of the line ‘and tales like this of wombs and cradles, ... love’s young dream and life’s old lech’ (8r). The significance of the line is implied through the variants, additions and omissions, which are instances of disnarration. In later versions (MS-HRC-SB-5-10, p. 104r, and Grove Press Edition, p. 102r), ‘cradle’ becomes ‘crib’, both signifying birth. In fact, in this line we can see a drastic portrayal of life from the womb to the cradle/crib (birth) to the grave (death). ‘The tossing in the grave’ also implies the ejection from the womb, later dramatized in Beckett’s *Act without Words I* (1965). The character embarks on carrying out his pensum the moment he is thrown on earth, the moment he is born, what Beckett calls ‘resuming struggles’ in the mime. For the narrator of *The Unnamable*, birth becomes a sin for which he has to pay the price: ‘I was given a pensum, at birth perhaps, for the punishment of having been born perhaps’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 24r). Here the pensum becomes the crib, bepossing diapers, getting ready for the first long trousers, dreaming, lechery, coping with blood and tears and awaiting the grave.

For Beckett, then, the womb is indelibly connected with the tomb. The second time ‘womb’ appears in the manuscript, the word is briefly replaced by ‘woman’, only to be crossed out for ‘womb’ again (MS-HRC-SB-5-10, p. 105r). In the final (third) version primed for the Grove Press, the line becomes: ‘they think I’m alive, what a business, were there but a cadaver it would smack of body-snatching, not in a womb either’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 102r). Woman is

not only the carrier of life, but also ‘appears as bearer of the law of death, and in this identification, at the same time appears as affectionate and as a dark threatening power, capable of the deepest sympathy but also of the greatest severity’ (Rank 115). In fact, the ‘return to the mother (earth)’, ‘womb-symbolism’ and the ‘intra-uterine life’ are a constant theme throughout Beckett. It should be pointed out that this is a theme even before he engages with psychology in the notes. There are also examples in Beckett’s earlier texts besides *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (1932), namely, *Murphy* (1938), *Watt* (1953), *Mercier and Camier* (1970; written in 1946), *Molloy* (1951), and *Malone Dies* (1951) where the womb-tomb theme is employed:

Molloy opens in the mother’s room with the familiar rhythms of polymorphous perversity, the child’s uninhibited pleasure in the womb. It records such intimate details as May Beckett’s donkey cart and Pomeranian and the imperatives of angelus and gong. Molloy enacts the Jungian drama of the Great Mother in the idyll chez Lousse, followed by the expulsion from an embryonic Eden, a paradise lost that can never be regained. His section concludes with a complex allegory of birth (the rhyme of womb, room, and tomb) (Ackerley and Gontarski 2004: 383).

As Deirdre Bair observes, Beckett’s own ‘womb fixation’ was reflected in the “simple inclination to stay in bed” and his “deep-seated need to pay frequent visits to his mother” (qtd. in Baker 68). Beckett’s fixation as such is expressed outwardly by Pozzo in *Waiting for Godot* (1953) where he declares: ‘[suddenly furious.] ...one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you? [Calmer.] They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it’s night once more (Beckett 2012: 57). Hence Beckett’s equating of vagina with grave, and their apparent linkage to birth and death.

Beckett devotes the last pages of his *Psychology Notes* to Otto Rank’s *The Trauma of Birth*. There is a probable connection between the Unnamable’s womb fixation and these notes:

Common characteristics of all infantile theories, also illustrated in myths & fairy tales, is the denial of the female sex organs, due to repression of birth trauma experienced there. Painful fixation on this function of the female genital as organ of birth lies at the bottom of all neurotic disturbances of adult sex life, psychical impotence as well as feminine frigidity (TCD MS 10971/8/35).

Having in mind the triple equation of womb-birth-death above, we can find further evidence in Rank who believes that ‘with the thought of death is connected from the beginning a strong unconscious sense of pleasure associated with the return to the mother’s womb’ (Rank 24). Beckett’s ‘cradle’, ‘crib’, and ‘cot’ (in the passage quoted above) all symbolize the womb: ‘from the nursery, which is only an extension of the kangaroo’s pouch and the bird’s nest beyond the swaddling clothes and cradle, to the house, instinctively formed to imitate the womb’ (ibid, p. 88). It seems that birth and life are for Beckett the ever present conditions of guilt as long as the individual is punished for ‘having been born’: ‘[...] and come back to earth again, by way of the vagina like a real live baby, and reach a ripe age, and even senility, without the least assistance from them and thanks solely to the hints they had given me’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 47r). This voice has even tried to take revenge on it earlier where he feels ‘upset at having been delivered so economically of a pack of blood relations, not to mention the two cunts into the bargain, the one for ever accursed that ejected me into this world and the other, infundibuliform²¹, in which, pumping my likes, I tried to take my revenge’ (ibid, p. 39r).

The ‘I’ in this textual corpus is clearly also functioning as a psychoanalytic entity via ‘the “Strange task” which consists in speaking of oneself – the obligation to express’ (C. J. Ackerley & S. E. Gontarski 431). In *Contributions to Psychoanalysis* (1916), Sandor Ferenczi formulates his theory about the ‘omnipotence of thought’ as a means for the obsessional neurotic to get back to the intrauterine state or the primal situation (Ferenczi 181, qtd. in Rank 60). Such yearning is fulfilled, as Rank argues, through indirect and individual means ‘by plunging into philosophic speculations about death and immortality as well as the “beyond” and its eternal punishment. In this way he repeats the seemingly unavoidable projection of life before birth into the future after

21 In French, infundibuliforme (FN1, 37v). ‘The word “infundibuliforme” is probably derived from *Les Chants de Maldoror* by Lautreamont (pseudonym of Isidore Ducasse): “O pederasts incomprehensible, ce n’est pas moi qui lancerai des injures a votre grande degradation; ce n’est pas moi qui viendrai jeter le mepris sur votre anus infundibuliforme” (Canto V, verse 5). Beckett owned a copy of the *Oeuvres completes d’Isidore Ducasse* (ed. Maurice Saillet, 1963), presented “a Samuel Beckett / en hommage amical” by Maurice Saillet, but he had already used phrases from Lautreamont’s works in the early 1930s, in *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (see Pilling 2004, 238). The use of the word “infundibuliforme” in *L’Innommable* suggests that *Les Chants de Maldoror* was in Beckett’s mind almost two decades later, and the book might even have served as some kind of model for what he was undertaking in a work that was no less original than its predecessor’ (Van Hulle & Weller 134).

death' (ibid, p. 60-61). Rank's explication parallels Beckett's speculations about the 'projection of life' from the 'womb' to the 'crib', to 'blood and tears' and 'bones, and finally to 'the tossing in the grave'. The 'tossing in the grave' which denotes burial is a manifestation of 'the Unconscious concept of death itself as an everlasting return to the womb' (ibid, p. 114). Like Jung, Rank views rebirth as 'burdened from the beginning with the curse of death (reincarnation)' and 'the tendency to return to death' as 'a wish-reaction to the birth trauma' (ibid, p. 114).

III. Varieties of Narcissism

'Post natum omne animal triste est'
Otto Rank, *The Trauma of Birth*

Names and Memory

Beckett's unnamable narrator tends to forget names. He neither remembers others' names nor wants to attribute one to himself. Speaking of his pseudo-companions, he says: 'I am neither, I needn't say, Murphy, nor Watt, nor Mercier, nor - no, I can't even bring myself to name them, nor any of the others whose very names I forget' (Grove Press Edition, p. 42r); 'Or Moran's boss, I forget his name' (ibid, p. 26r). The voice sets itself up as somehow the 'author' or creative impulse behind previous Beckett texts, but what he recalls is only 'nameless images' and 'imageless names', preferring to call 'windows' 'doors', or 'at least by some other name' (ibid, p. 134r). He knows his own forgetful streak, however: 'Ah. Where was I, in my lessons? I forget. That is what has had a fatal effect on my development, my lack of memory'. But despite his efforts to give 'this solitary a name', he fails: 'there's nothing doing without proper names. I shall therefore call him Worm' (MS-HRC-SB-5-9-2, p. 08r). 'I shall therefore baptize him Worm' (Grove Press Edition, p. 56r) replaces this line later. Further on, he confesses to having memories of the past among which is the remembrance of Worm, but of the other he cannot remember the name: 'And yet I have memories, I remember Worm, that is to say I have retained the name, and the other one, what is his name, what was his name' (ibid, p. 120r).

In *Papers on Psychoanalysis* (1913), Ernest Jones (whom Beckett dubs 'Erogenous Jones' in his notes), speculates that forgetting names implies high self-esteem and functions as a

form of narcissistic regression. Beckett's notes on Jones's elaboration of lost memory and narcissism read as follows:

Inability to remember persons' names is frequently associated with excessively high estimation of one's own & of oneself in general. Increasing difficulty in remembering names marks regression to narcissism. Falsification of memory & apparently purposeless prevarication similarly determined in the unconscious. Replacement memories always associated with lost memory (TCD MS 10971/8/6).

Above these lines Beckett recorded a quotation from Nietzsche's *Jenseits von Gut und Bose*, with 'Defensive amnesia' as an entry: 'Das habe ich getan, sagt mein Gedächtnis. Das kann ich nicht getan haben, sage mein Stolz und bleibt unbitterlich. Endlich gibt das Gedächtnis nach' (TCD MS 10971/8/6): [This have I done, says my memory. This I cannot have done, says my pride and remains relentless. Finally memory gives in]. The narrator of *The Unnamable* is in a constant state of uncertainty between these two states of the psyche, namely the obsession with the past memories of things, places and people, the desire to nail them down to the mind, to recall them, by naming them, and the denial of those events and memories, manifested mostly in the *failed* process of naming them. As my argument shows, this can stem from a regression to narcissism. In fact, the narrator's search for names is as relentless as his failure to achieve that purpose: 'I'll have to find a name for this latest surrogate, ~~with~~ his head splitting with vile certainties [...] with the stink of Mahood and Worm still in our nostrils' (Grove Press Edition, p. 117r), yet 'I'll never see him again, yes I will, now he's there, with the oʻy 'hers, I won't name them again' (ibid, p. 123r)²².

22 In *Proust* (1930), Beckett says that there is no escape from the memory of the past since 'yesterday has deformed us, or been deformed by us. The word is of no importance. Deformation has taken place. Yesterday is not a milestone which has been passed, but a day stone on the beaten track of the years, and irremediably part of us, within us, heavy and dangerous' (13). The problem is not only deformation caused by the past, both psychically and corporeally, but it is also the fact that 'We are not merely more weary because of yesterday, we are other, no longer what we were before the calamity of yesterday' (13). Of 'voluntary memory' he writes:

Voluntary memory (Proust repeats it ad nauseam) is of no value as an instrument of evocation, and provides an image as far removed from the real as the myth of our imagination or the caricature furnished by direct perception. There is only one real impression and one adequate mode of evocation. Over neither have we the least control (14).

Paraphrenia

On the page previous to the Nietzsche quote in the notes on Jones, a definition of narcissism appears in parenthesis: '(egocentric attitude towards the world & belief in omnipotence of thought)' which is 'Regarded by Freud as intermediate between early auto-eroticism and later object-love. Hence important distinction between libidinal & egoistic aspects of the self' (TCD MS 10971/8/4). Jones furthermore sees a relationship between narcissism and paraphrenia, a form of schizophrenia characterized by delusions of persecution, grandeur or jealousy; its symptoms may include anger, anxiety, aloofness and doubts about identity (especially gender identity). The following lines appear in Beckett's notes:

Essence of paraphrenia (dementia praecox) is withdrawal of libido from object & its restoration to subject, with concomitant megalomania & egocentricity. [...] Whereas in the psychoneuroses the libido is withdrawn from objects of outer world & reattached to fantasies of them, in paraphrenia the object-libido is converted into ego-libido (TCD MS 10971/8/4-5).

In fact, the narrator of *The Unnamable* seems to suffer not only from morbid anxieties of the birth trauma, but also from delusions of persecution, egocentricity and the mixing of identities. Severed from external objects, his libido consequently takes refuge in the subject, forming both ego-libido and 'ego-ideal: libido transferred from real to ideal self' (TCD MS 10971/8/5). In his obsession, at one point the narrator says that 'I am he whose name they call me by, and no other' (Grove Press Edition, p. 71r), thus merging identities with an externally projected 'name'. In a constant fear of being persecuted, punished and 'usurped' of his name by a nameless 'him' or 'them', the voice muses: 'Is he still usurping me y name, the one they foisted on me, up there in their world, patiently, from season to season?' (ibid, p. 09r). And it wishes for the day that it will not call itself Mahood any longer: 'It will be my name too, when the time comes, when I needn't call myself Malone Mahood any more, if ever that time comes' (MS-HRC-SB-5-9-2, p. 08r). His

In *The Unnamable*, it is the narrator's inability to control the 'real impression' and the 'evocation' of the event that leads him to constant fluctuations between the two polarities of trial and failure in attempting to envisage the past as it was. Thus the names of people, past events, and their vague memories become for Beckett only tools to depict an impression that has taken place and an *inadequate* evocation of that impression.

morbid anxiety and unrelenting fear are interrelated with his delusions of persecution described thus: 'I only think, if that is the name for this vertiginous panic as of hornets smoked out of their nest, once a certain degree of terror has been exceeded (Grove Press Edition, p. 71r). He ponders the possibility that if 'the other' is after him: 'I'll soon know if the other is still after me' (ibid, p. 58r). This other can be 'the master', 'my master' (ibid, p. 25-6r), or any other invisible authority: 'his master, and his long shadow will follow him' (ibid, p. 88r). The authority can be 'them' or one of 'them' who will afflict him, among others, with the fear of punishment: 'their master, who will punish them, or who will spare them, what else is there, up above, for those who lose, punishment [sic], pardon, so they say.' (ibid, p. 38r). Their punishment can be 'to kill' him: 'for fear I might defend myself, they want to catch me alive, so as to be able to kill me' (ibid, p. 102r). But again he mixes identities, this time Mahood with his master, in his fear and anxiety that arise from a state of uncertainty he dwells in: 'And what if Mahood were my master?' (ibid, p. 25r). Or parodying his own position as master, he muses that 'I am master on board, after the rats' (ibid, p. 117r). As an entry to a longer passage on Ernest Jones, Beckett writes: 'Forgetting material not in itself unpleasant' (TCD MS 10971/8/8), which denotes its function as defensive mechanism against remembering unpleasant events. On the same page, there is a note on 'Recollection: [...] The original theory, that it is more difficult to remember unpleasant than pleasant experience on account of repressive action, may be extended to apply to material not in itself unpleasant, & further to the entire phenomenon of forgetting' (TCD MS 10971/8/8)). In fact, what the narrator hears reminds him of 'them'; therefore, he is prone not only to defensive amnesia to *not* remember things, but to fear of sounds as well: 'but there it is, fear of sound, fear of sounds, the sounds of beasts, the sounds of men, sounds in the daytime and sounds at night, that's enoy^u ["]gh, fear of sounds, all sounds, more or less, more or less fear [...] I hear, now it comes back to me, all back to me, they say I seek what it is I hear, I hear them' (Grove Press Edition, p. 111r). Considering the repetition of the words 'hear' (three times), 'fear' (four times), and 'sound' (eight times) all compressed in these lines, we can perhaps discern a subtext of 'repetition'²³ as 'death-wish' (Rank 196) and even suicide, since for the obsessional neurotic, repetition or reiteration becomes a pleasurable activity that implies a regression to the ego ideal, and hence to narcissism.

23 See Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* for compulsion to repetition.

Melancholia

The Unnamable broods over having been ‘sufficiently assassinated, sufficiently suicided’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 51r). Compare here Beckett’s notes on Ernest Jones’s explanation of ‘melancholia’:

Melancholia: After some deprivation connected with loved object the subject has withdrawn his love from that object, but instead of transferring it to some new one, as the normal person would do, or introverting it on to unconscious fantasies, as the neurotic does, or on to the ego, as the paraphrenic does, he replaces it by narcissistic [love - sic] of himself with former object, thereby no doubt regressing to original narcissism of his love-making. Thus the ego becomes split, the conscious part criticizing, abusing & hating the unconscious part formed by fusion with idea of object. It is this ability to treat oneself as object that leads to suicide (TCD MS 10971/8/6).

Here, Karen Stephen speculation on ‘auto-eroticism’ is also noteworthy: ‘Auto-erotic activities are not merely an attempt to obtain sense-pleasure, but are partly acts of revenge, the hostility towards the earliest unsatisfactory love-objects being transferred to the self’ (TCD 10971/7/1). Erik Tønning has pointed out

Beckett’s knowledge of Freud’s theory of melancholia (and the related concept of narcissism). During the Berlin production of [That Time], Beckett remarked to Walter Asmus that [speech number seven by voice C] was ‘a story of depersonalization – seeing oneself as an object’ (Asmus 1977: 93). This compares interestingly with Beckett’s notes on Ernest Jones’s summary of Freud’s paper ‘Mourning and Melancholia (1917).

Beckett’s change of discourse from active to passive in the following line in *The Unnamable* emphasizes the notion of depersonalization, where the subject is textually annihilated, while the object takes over its stead: ‘~~They have~~ ^{You have been} sufficiently assassinated, ~~you~~, sufficiently suicided-, ~~for you~~ to be able now to stand on your own feet, like a big boy’ (MS-HRC-SB-5-10, p. 51r). In fact, the Unnamable sees itself as an ‘object in view’ (MS-HRC-SB-5-10, p. 111r) which is, however, crossed out in later versions.

Inferiority

In *The Neurotic Constitution*, Alfred Adler speculates on the feeling of inferiority in the neurotic, its origin and its modes of expression. Beckett made several notes on the neurotic character and the inferiority complex and its mechanisms in a section that he devotes to Adler's book mentioned above. These lines appear in this section: 'Every neurotic possesses to some degree the coquetry which has its origin in narcissism...originating from hypostasized idea of personal value and founded like this upon an original feeling of inferiority' (TCD MS 10971/8/26). Therefore, very implicitly, the self-staging of a terrible suffering in *The Unnamable* is a form of coquetry from a psychoanalytic perspective. We see the utmost expression of inferiority for the Unnamable in his occasional 'self-denial', making him bereft of any name, pronoun or any other type of identity: 'there is no name for me, no pronoun for me' (Grove Press Edition, p.130r). His continuous masochistic afflictions to the self and 'the labouring mind' (ibid, p. 69r), if not the body, are an acute expression of 'self-denial' or 'suicide' which Adler believes to be 'the last expression of the masculine protest' (TCD MS 10971/8/25) and 'represents a security from humiliation by withdrawal' (TCD MS 10971/8/28). He confesses that 'it's I who do this thing and I who suffer it, it's not possible otherwise' (Grove Press Edition, p. 128r).

Such masochistic tendencies, 'the conversion of the pains caused by parturition' (Rank 34), are repeated by the narrator over and again: 'But I am there to be pained, that is what my tempters have never grasped' (Grove Press Edition, p. 38r). Rank's remark implies that the pains inflicted and suffered by the subject originate from the ones experienced at parturition or birth. This is an idea suggested repeatedly in *The Unnamable*: 'Be born, dear friends, be born [...] you'll just love my colic pains, it won't take long, I've the bloody flux' (ibid, p. 103r). He fantasizes the return of his pains from others he had once lent them: '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' (ibid, p. 16r). Yet the feeling of inferiority, however psychically intense, may stem from an underlying somatic cause.

The first line of Beckett's notes on Adler says: 'Feeling of inferiority resulting from inferior organ'. They continue:

From constitutional inferiority there arises a feeling of inferiority which demands compensation in the sense of a maximation of the ego-consciousness. From this circumstance the fiction which

serves as a final purpose acquires an astonishing influence and draws all the psychic forces in its direction. Itself an outgrowth of the striving for security, it organizes psychic preparatory measures for the purpose of guaranteeing security' (TCD MS 10971/8/25).

The maximization of the ego-consciousness is the 'fictitious final goal of the neurotic' (TCD MS 10971/8/26) which as we observed, the narrator of *The Unnamable* undergoes by severing his libido from any external object and restoring and turning it to the subject, that is, regression to his 'self'. All this is a 'striving for security', escaping from the external world with fear and panic, and taking refuge in words with an 'inward turn'. According to Adler, 'A strong anticipatory craving for security is revealed by...hypersensitiveness to pain' (TCD MS 10971/8/28). In fact, the text of *The Unnamable* is rife with references to 'pain': 'They never suffered my pains, their pains are nothing, compared to mine, a mere tittle of mine, the tittle I thought I could put from me, in order to witness it' (Grove Press Edition, p. 16r). He muses on being 'only moderately, or perhaps I should say finitely pained' (ibid, p. 38r). And he is ultimately there 'to be pained' (ibid, p. 38r). This, coupled with Adler's theory that 'Feeling of inferiority result[s] from inferior organ', we find that as the bearer of his own fiction, the Unnamable suffers from feelings of insecurity, hence his hyper-reaction to pain, *and* inferior organs as signs of somatic illness:

look, here's the medical report, spasmodic tabes, painless ulcers, I repeat, painless, all is painless, multiple softenings, numerous hardenings, insensitiveness to blood [w] [s], sight failing, chronic gripes, light diet, shit well tolerated, hearing failing, heart irregular, sweet-tempered, smell failing, heavy sleeper, no erections, would you like some more, commission in the territorials, inoperable, untransportable, look, here's the face, no no, the other end, I assure you, it's a bargain, I beg your pardon, does he drink, good God yes, passionately, I beg your pardon, father and mother, both dead, at seven months interval, he at the conception, ~~he at~~ she at the nativity, I assure you, you won't do better, at your age, no human shape, the pity of it, look, here's the photograph, you'll see, you'll be all right, what does it amount to (ibid., p.100r).

As discussed in Part I, Beckett himself had undergone similar psychosomatic illnesses in the 1930s, some of which he attributes here to his narrator. Some of these disturbances never left him. In a parody, the narrator of *The Unnamable* says: 'But the days of sticks are over, 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' (ibid, p. 12r). Painkillers must have been necessary to ameliorate the pains: 'Well supplied with pain-killers I drew upon them freely, without however permitting myself the lethal dose th~~x~~^at would have cut short my functions, whatever they may have been' (ibid, p. 36r). The emphasis on 'painless' as an understatement produces a counter-effect only to make an even more 'painful' effect on the reader. Here is what the narrator will have received for his pains: 'muted lamentation, ~~with~~ panting and exhaling of impossible sorrow, like distant laughter^{er}, and brief spells of hush, as of one buried before his time. Long or short, the same silence. Then I resurrect and begin again. That's what I'll have got for all my pains' (ibid, p. 118r). As said earlier, his inflicted pains vacillate between masochism and sadism in an exchange between him and others ('let them give me back the pains I lent them' (ibid, p. 16r)): 'What they all wanted, each one according to his particular notion of what is bearable, was that I should exist and at the same only be moderately, or perhaps I should say finitely pained' (ibid, p. 38r). He even *compares* his pains to others' in order to manifest superiority arising from his misery: 'They never suffered my pains, their pains are nothing, compared to mine, a mere tittle of mine, the tittle I thought I could put from me, in order to witness it' (ibid, p. 16r). This tendency of the narrator to view the amount of pain he receives as a parameter for an expression of superiority is a common symptom in the neurotic character which in Adler's reading originates from complexes relating to feelings of psychosomatic inferiority.

Sleep

Sleep is a fundamental concept in Beckett that relates to narcissism, the death-wish and the intrauterine state. The fetal imagery in his oeuvre testifies to this fact. As Baker observes, 'sleeping' is an 'Oblomov-like symptom', a death symbol and a sign of Rankian 'improper birth' (68). Considering his biographer Deirdre Bair's observation about Beckett's proneness to stay in bed, we observe the narrator's obsession with 'sleeping' in *The Unnamable*: 'I've forgotten my apodosis, but I can't, I don't hear any more, I'm sleeping, they call that sleeping, [...] I hear this horrible noise, coming back takes time, I don't know where from, I was nearly there, I was nearly sleeping, I call that sleeping' (Grove Press Edition, p. 128r). He must be 'darkened' to fall asleep: 'to rest me from seeing, to rest me from waking, ~~to help~~^{darken} ~~me to sleep~~ 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, 99% of the time'

(ibid, p. 12r). Baker observes an association between ‘refuge and death’ and the house in Beckett (77). My contention, however, is that there is a strong and suggestive connection between the narrator’s preference for dark and closed spaces for sleeping and Rank’s *The Trauma of Birth*. The following lines appear in Beckett’s notes on Rank’s book: ‘Anxiety of child left alone in dark room due to his unconscious being reminded (erinnert) of intrauterine situation, terminated by frightening severance from mother’ (TCD MS 10971/8/34). Another connection is to Ernest Jones’s *Papers on Psychoanalysis* which links ‘sleep’ to ‘narcissism’, and appears in Beckett’s notes: ‘Essence of the state of sleep is the restoration of the most complete form of narcissism, the wish to return into the mother’s womb’ (TCD MS 10971/8/6). Put together, these lines show ‘sleep’ as a death-wish which has its origin in the intrauterine situation, a manifestation of complete regression to the ‘self’. Rank also sees ‘sleep as being a temporary return to the embryonal situation’ (60), situating the inclination in the intrauterine phase in the development of the individual, revealing that he wakes up from sleep with the unconscious thought of what time to go to sleep again. He finds signs indicative of ‘regression to the intrauterine position: bent carriage of the body, curling up in bed, lying without movement and speech for days at a time, refusal to feed oneself, etc. (ibid, p. 61). The individual, therefore, is liable to spend ‘half the life in a state similar to that of the intrauterine (ibid, p. 74). The juxtapositions of sleep and death, love and Worm, and flowers, especially daisies symbolizing death, is stunning in the following passage in *The Unnamable*:

And the game would be won, lost and won, he'd be somehow suddenly among us, among the rendez-vous, and people saying, Look at old Worm, waiting for his sweetheart, and the flowers, look at the flowers, you'd think he was asleep, you know old Worm, waiting for his love, and the daisies, look at the [!] daisies, you'd think he was dead (Grove Press Edition, p. 85r).

There is also another instance in the novel where ‘Worm’ is associated with ‘sleep’ or ‘death’ as we see in the following line: ‘And often all sleeps, as when I was really Worm, except this h^voice which has denatured me, which never stops’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 71r).

The psychoanalytic concepts discussed in this section are very conducive to our understanding of the text, and moreover, due to their appearance in the Psychology Notes, make a huge difference to our reading of the passage in each context. The narrative of *The Unnamable* is a long meditation, a long interior monologue, carried out by the first person narrator, which

approximates the psychoanalytic talking cure, at times with the ‘dreamy attitude of [the] meditation approaching the embryonal condition’ (Rank 119). The aim of all this meditation can be ‘Nirvana, the pleasurable Nothing, the womb situation, to which even Schopenhauer’s half metaphysical “Will” yearned solely to return’ (ibid, p. 119). It also ‘makes possible an extensive reminiscence of the intrauterine situation’ (ibid, p. 120) and ‘the pleasurable return into nothingness (ibid, p. 171). However, the Unnamable never ‘gets there’, never attains ‘calm’ and the ‘pleasurable unbeing’ even if this longing is active. Again, by staging the attempt at ‘talking cure’ as ineffective, Beckett stages its failure.

IV. Prison Psychosis

It seems that in *The Unnamable*, the philosophic ponderings just mentioned occur in a ‘dungeon’, which in microcosm is a dark room and in macrocosm, the world at large, where the narrator hears himself pouring out words from his mouth: ‘They’ll clap me in a dungeon, I’m in a dungeon, I’ve always been in a dungeon, I hear everything, every word they say, it’s the only sound, as if I were speaking, to myself, out loud, in the end you don’t know any more, a voice that never stops, where it’s coming from’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 91r). In *The Trauma of Birth*, Rank speculates on ‘the pleasurable character of certain neurotic symptoms, so-called “Prison Psychosis” in which the patient makes himself prisoner by withdrawing into a room which he locks, or by pessimistically phantasying the whole world as a dungeon and thereby unconsciously feeling comfortable in it’ (136). Rank links this to ‘the habits of masochists’ who intend to escape ‘the real punishment’ which is ‘originally the expulsion from the womb’ through these ‘phantasies of self-punishment’, the womb being ‘that primal paradise, which is sought for again and again, with unquenchable longing and in every possible form’ (ibid, p. 136). Besides the word ‘dungeon’ that is repeated one more time in a different passage (Grove Press Edition, p. 42r), ‘prison’ appears many times throughout the narrative, which reminds us not only of the so-called ‘prison psychosis’ from which the Unnamable may be suffering, but also of his ‘self-punishment’: ‘no need of walls, yes, we must have walls, I need walls, good and thick, I need a prison, I was right, for me alone, I’ll go there now, I’ll put me in it, I’m there already, I’ll start looking for me now, I’m there somewhere, it won’t be I, no matter, I’ll say it’s I, perhaps it will be I’ (ibid, p. 137r). At one point, he associates prison with his parlour: ‘I can’t stir, I haven’t stirred, I launch the voice, I hear a voice, there is nowhere but here, there are not two places, there are

not two prisons, it's my parlour, it's a parlour, where I wait for nothing' (ibid, p. 137r). In another passage, 'vault' and 'abyss' are juxtaposed with 'prison', which altogether lends more to the universality of the world as dungeon: 'go through the motions, what motions, you can't stir, you ~~m~~ launch your voice, it dies away in the vault, it calls that a vault, perhaps it's ~~an~~^{the} ~~abyss~~, abyss, those are words, it speaks of a prison, I've no objection, vast enough for a whole people, for me alone, or waiting for me, I'll go there now, I'll try and go there now, I can't stir, I'm there already' (ibid, p. 136r). The change of the indefinite article 'an' to 'the' makes it more definitive for the abyss to represent the world and adds to its universality; a world where 'I should like to be veiled more often' (MS-HRC-SB-5-9-1, p. 47r); where 'Close to me it is grey, dimly transparent, and beyond that charmed circle deepens and spreads its fine impenetrable veils' (Grove Press Edition, p. 12r). In the line above, 'veiled more often' is replaced with 'shrouded more often' for the Grove Press Edition.

Closely related to the notion of the prison psychosis is the 'wall' imagery in *The Unnamable*. At one stage, the narrator finds himself in a space enclosed by 'high walls': 'I found myself in a kind of vast yard or campus, surrounded by high walls' (ibid, p. 32r). Then, he explicitly confesses that he needs walls and a prison to be in. But immediately after having said that, he realizes that he is already in it, surrounded by walls 'good and thick':

I'm not outside, I'm inside, I'm in something, I'm shut up, the silence is outside, outside, inside, thee 'e is nothing but here, and the silence outside, nothing but this voice and the silence all round, no need of walls, yes, we must have walls, I need walls, good and thick, I need a prison, I was right, for me alone, I'll go there now, I'll put me in it, I'm there already, I'll start looking for me now, I'm there somewhere, it won't be I, no matter, I'll say it's I, perhaps it will be I (ibid, p. 137r).

The 'I' is entrapped in a prison besieged by walls all around. Of his voice, he says, 'It issues from me, it fills me, it clamours against my walls, it is not mine, I can't stop it, I can't prevent it, from tearing me, racking me, assailing me' (ibid, p. 20r). In a previous version, we hear the voice 'besieging me' rather than 'assailing' me (MS-HRC-SB-5-9-1, p. 19r), like walls as dense as lead: 'But may not this screen which my eyes probe in vain, and see as denser air, in reality be the enclosure wall, as compact as lead?' (Grove Press Edition, p. 12r). This 'foul of a wall' (ibid, p. 32r) is impenetrable and thick in a world that is small, as a dungeon can be such: 'a little

world, it will be round, this time it will be round, it's not certain, low of ceiling, thick of wall, why low, why thick, I don't know, it isn't certain, it remains to be seen, [...], a little world (ibid, p. 131r). The voice still bounces back and forth, colliding with him sporadically: 'now it comes back to me, what it can possibly be, and where it can possibly come from, to me, since all is silent here, and the walls thick' (ibid, p. 111r). These voices piled one on top of the other, build more walls around him: 'I am walled round with their vociferations' (ibid, p. 42r). In a parody, he solicits help to describe his place: 'Help, help, if I could only describe this place, I who am so good at describing ~~places~~ places, walls, ceilings, floors, they are my speciality' (ibid, p. 124r). In the end, what remains for him is nothing but 'man', 'sky' and 'walls': 'There are others, even more beautiful, and the rest, walls, sky, man' (ibid, p. 131r), which he calls 'my walls' (ibid, p. 116r & 122r).

V. Petrification and Coprosymbolism: Stones, Pebbles, Sand, the Shingle, and the Seashore

Rocks, stones and pebbles are often associated with stillness, love and death in Beckett. In *More Pricks than Kicks*, for example, Belacqua has 'tears in his eyes' when 'creeping about in a rock-garden' (94), which alongside Molloy with his pebbles, Baker relates to 'indifference' and 'stillness' (137-8). We cannot find direct references to the notes in this category, but some sources outside of the notes are also traceable, such as Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. As Baker observes,

Beckett told his friend Gottfried Buttner in 1967 that as a child he would pick up stones from the beach and carry them home, where he would build nests for them and put them in trees to protect them from the sea. (Buttner 67). He describes his relationship to stone as 'almost a love relationship' [Ibid.] and associated it with death, telling Buttner of Freud having written that 'man carried with him a kind of congenital yearning for the mineral kingdom' (Buttner's paraphrase). Beckett's remarks followed a discussion of death and 'petrifying' after the medically trained Buttner had spoken of 'sclerotic traits' in Krapp. We can recognize Beckett's Freud reference to be to *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*; Beckett/Buttner's 'congenital yearning for the mineral kingdom' is Freud's 'most universal endeavour of all living substance—namely to return to the quiescence of the inorganic world' (Baker 139).

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud ‘expounds a nostalgia for the inorganic at the end of life’s circular form’ which ‘Beckett’s narrators display correspondingly’ (ibid, p. 139). In this connection, Tønning summarizes Freud’s speculation as follows:

He [Freud] argues that the wish to return to ‘an initial state from which the living entity has at one time departed’ (310) is so powerful that it can *set aside* the pleasure principle. The inertia of inanimate matter before the advent of organisms is in Freud’s view even more fundamental. Hence, there is embedded in all organic life what Beckett in 1967, with reference to this essay, called a ‘congenital yearning for the mineral kingdom’ (Tønning 2007: 136).

Tønning adds that it is ‘not difficult to see that the world-picture that emerges here would be congenial to Beckett’s existing intellectual concerns’ (ibid, p. 136) that further relate to Schopenhauer and Freud’s elaboration of him.

In *The Unnamable*, ‘pebbles’, ‘the shingle’ and ‘the seashore’ are accompanied by ‘evening’, an imagery which in Beckett is usually associated with old age and death. In the following lines we read, ‘along the ~~shore, it's a~~ seashore, it's a seashore, on the pebbles, on the sands, in the evening air, it's evening, that's all is known, evening, shadows, somewhere, anywhere, on the earth’ (MS-HRC-SB-5-9-3, p. 13r). In a later version, however, Beckett interchangeably uses ‘shingle’ for ‘pebbles’, both belonging to the same category of associations: ‘along the seashore: now it's a seashore: on the ~~pebbles~~ ^{shingle}, ~~on~~ ^{along} the sands: in the evening air: it's evening: that's all is known: evening: shadows: somewhere: anywhere: on the earth’ (MS-HRC-SB-5-10, p. 110r), so that in the published Grove Press edition, the passage, alongside other changes, appears as follows: ‘along the seashore, now it's the seashore, on the shingle, along the sands, in the evening air, it's evening, that's all I know, evening, shadows, somewhere, anywhere, on the earth’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 107r). The ‘seashore’ too appears once more in another passage in the novel: ‘I would ¹ []d have liked to lose me, lose me the way I could long ago, when I still had some imagination, close my eyes and be in a wood, or on the seashore’ (ibid, p. 116r). The sense of losing oneself and closing one’s eyes are emblematic both of a meditative state, leading to Nirvana, and of death (loss). In the following lines, evocations of death coincide once again with the sea, the shingle, sand and earth which the narrator has had enough of:

I strained my ear towards what must have been my voice still, so weak, so far, that it was like the sea, a far calm sea dying - no, none of that, no beach, no shore, the sea is enough, I've had enough of shingle, enough of sand, enough of earth, enough of sea too (ibid, p. 22r).

Finally, a vivid implication of death appears in 'your mouth full of sand' (ibid, p. 113r). References to earth, sand and pebbles as coprosymbols are traceable in Beckett's final notes on Ernest Jones's *Papers on Psychoanalysis*, where he writes:

Instinct of the infant to keep & play with faeces, the pleasure it takes in smearing, which it does with excreta as a token of affection. Cp. Idiosyncrasies relating to food (sausages, rissoles, spinach, etc). Chief coprosymbol – money (Dukatenscheisser, goose with golden eggs, golden Ader (piles), filthy lucre, wallowing in, stinking with, money, currency, liquid money). *Interest gradually transferred from excreta to money via mudpies (odourless), sand (dehydrated), pebbles (steinreich), marbles, buttons.* (TCD MS 10971/8/19) [emphasis added].

Considering this passage, the connection between earth, rock, stones *and* muck, dirt and excrement becomes more indicative in Beckett of not only petrification and death but also coprosymbolism. The narrator of *The Unnamable* once remarks, 'First dirty, then make clean' (Grove Press Edition, p. 11r). His obsession with material as coprosymbols is at least as intense as that of Krapp in the later play *Krapp's Last Tape*. At one point, he finds himself in a similar situation as Belacqua, but instead of creeping in a rock garden, he is faced with 'dirt and ashes': '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' (ibid, p. 32r). In an earlier version, Beckett had used the words 'earth and cinders': 'its surface a mixture of ~~earth~~ dirt and cinders' (MS-HRC-SB-5-9-1, p. 32r), which he then changed to 'dirt and ashes' appearing in the final version. The replacement of 'earth' with 'dirt' hints at the former's status a coprosymbol. Also the pleasure taken in smearing and dirt is implied by the word 'sweet'. At another stage, he 'flounders in muck': 'For my feeling was rather one of annoyance at having to flounder in such muck just at the moment when my ~~final~~ closing ~~convulsions~~ contortions called for a firm and level surface' (Grove Press Edition, p. 40r). Jones names some materials as 'excretory products' that appear in Beckett's notes: '...unconscious symbols for excretory products (dirt, paper, waste products, money) (TCD MS 10971/8/18). In the passage above, we see the narrator having traversed 'heaving wastes' juxtaposed with both

‘dirt’ and ‘sweetness’. The Unnamable’s obsession with forms of ‘waste’ (especially his time) thus suggests another strong point of connection with the Psychology Notes. Furthermore, this also points to a link with the notion of ‘anal-erotic’ character traits theorized by Jones.

VI. Cardinal Triad of Anal-Erotic Character Traits: Orderliness, Parsimony &

Obstinacy

Obsession is a major trait among the anal-erotic character traits. Most Beckett characters suffer from such obsessive traits as orderliness, parsimony and obstinacy. In fact, the heading above appears in Beckett’s notes on Jones (TCD MS 10971/8/18). In *The Unnamable*, we find the narrator obsessed with ‘order’ and ‘disorder’. He says that ‘All has proceeded, all this time, in the utmost calm, the most perfect order, apart from a few manifestations the meaning of which escapes me’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 04r) which becomes a parody in itself. Then, he questions its prevalence so far: ‘Where was I? Ah yes, from the unexceptionable order that has prevailed here up to date, may I infer that such will always be the case?’ (ibid, p. 05r). The parody becomes even more caustic in the following lines: ‘I shall transmit the words as received, by the ear, or roared through a trumpet into the arsehole, in all their purity, and in the same order, as far as possible’ (ibid, p. 69r). Things might vary, which are still ‘of a different order’ (ibid, p. 89r). Then he muses on the order or disorder of the lights, a typical anal-erotic/retentive character trait: ‘In which case there would be no ~~more~~ ^{further} grounds for my ~~complaining~~ complaining about the disorder of the lights, this being due simply to my insistence on regarding them as always the same lights and viewed always from the same point.’ (ibid, p. 06r). But he subsequently questions the disorder of the lights as an illusion: ‘In a word, no change apparently since I have been here, disorder of the lights perhaps an illusion, all change to be feared, incomprehensible uneasiness’ (ibid, p. 06r). Of a visitor that visits him *regularly*, he asserts that ‘He does not come often, I cannot be more precise, but regularly assuredly. His visit has never coincided, up to now, with the transit of Malone. But perhaps some day it will. That would not necessarily be a violation of the order prevailing here’ (ibid, p. 10r). Like almost all Beckett characters, the narrator of *The Unnamable* wishes everything to be in its last place, under the last dust, to be ‘done with’, and finally inviolate. In fact, the expression ‘done with’ is repeated many times in

The Unnamable: ‘Let the man explain himself and have done with it’ (ibid, p. 27r). This phrase also appears in Beckett’s notes on the anal retentive character:

A man, habitually reticent in speech, cherished the ambition, largely carried out, of being able so to construct his clauses, on a very German model, as to expel all he might have to say in one massive but superbly finished sentence that could be flung out & the whole matter done with (TCD MS 10971/8/19).

The Unnamable goes beyond mere speech only to be done with not only words, but also actions, though in vain. Arguably, then, the whole narrative of *The Unnamable* is a long speech that the narrator tries in vain to be done with, which at last ends in ‘on’ mirroring ‘no’²⁴. His obsession is still with lights when he says ‘But these lights, in the plural, which rear aloft, w^h well, sweep down and go out hissing, reminding one of the Naja-naja, perhaps the moment has come to throw them into the balance and have done with this tedious equipoise, at last.’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 85r). Earlier, he wondered if ‘One might as well speak and be done with it’ (ibid, p. 22r).

At this point, the Unnamable’s voice, mingled with Mahood’s, prevents him from confirming his identity and being done with words and voices: ‘But his voice continued to testify for me, as though woven into mine, preventing me from saying who I was, what I was, so as to have done with saying, done with listening’ (ibid, p. 23r). He then muses on an unaccomplished ‘imposed’ task that he must carry out before he is ended and done with words: ‘All this business of a labour to accomplish, before I can end, of words to say, a truth to recover, in order to say it, before I end, of an imposed task, once known, long neglected, finally forgotten, to perform, before I can be done with speaking, done with listening’ (ibid, p. 28r).

All the same, he is not even certain that what he has uttered is what he intended, which does not give him the right to be done with ‘speech’, ‘listening’ and ‘hearing’ without his knowledge: ‘Perhaps I’ve said the thing that had to be said, that gives me the right to be done with speech, done with listening, done with hearing, without my knowing it’ (ibid, p. 118r).

The narrator’s parsimonious character is revealed in his obsession with ‘waste’ which at certain points finds expression with ‘time’. That Beckett was obsessed with meticulousness, especially in opting for certain words and phrases in his writing is undeniable. A line in his notes

²⁴ See Samuel Beckett’s *Nohow On*, 1989.

tells us about the anal-erotic character traits: ‘The desire for perfection, nothing must be done by halves. Cp. Excessive care in handwriting, style, etc. of letter’ (TCD MS 10971/8/19). Two lines below this, we read: ‘Rage at being done out of the smallest amount of money, at having one’s time wasted’ (TCD MS 10971/8/19). Thus the narrator complains about the fact that ‘They have made me waste my time’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 16r), or about ‘The time they a^w [’^w]aste repeating the same thing, when they must know pertinently it is not the right one’ (ibid, p. 96r), or even about such ‘bran-dips’ as Murphy with whom ‘I think of the time I’ve wasted’ (ibid, p. 115r).

However, the most pertinent example of the obsessional neurotic character is a fascination with centrality. As Weller (2010) has shown, the best epitome of this is Hamm’s anal-retentive character trait in *Endgame*, expressed in his obsession with being ‘bang in the centre’, despite being blind and unable to verify whether Clov has placed his chair correctly. In Beckett’s notes, the following lines appear under the cardinal triad of anal-erotic character traits: ‘Mania for proving capacity for self-control (sphincters). Fascination for all underground passages, canals, tunnels, etc., for idea of centrality (exact centre of a town, of the universe, etc.) (TCD MS 10971/8/19). The narrator of *The Unnamable* suffers from similar obsessions. There are numerous examples of such a fascination for centrality throughout the novel. He expresses his longing to occupy the center as thus: ‘I like to think I occupy the centre, but nothing is less certain’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 05r). Then he broods on his position between the center and the circumference: ‘From centre to circumference in any case it is a far cry and I may well be situated somewhee^e between the two’ (ibid, p. 06r). However, verging on a humanistic parody, he finds it best to think that he is situated at the center: ‘But the best is to think of myself as fixed and at the centre of [] this place, whatever its shape and extent may be’ (ibid, p. 06r). The idea of centrality is also oriented toward external objects as when the narrator observes a rotunda: ‘At the centre of this enclosure stt^od a small rotunda, windowless, but well furnished with loopholes’ (ibid, p. 33r). However, most of his centrality obsession veers toward the human individual’s position in the world. The narrator sees this individual as ‘Come into the world unborn, abiding there unliving, with no hope of death, epicentre of joys, or^f f^r griefs, of calm’ (ibid, p. 67r). And ‘No matter where he goes, being at the centre, he will go towards them. So he is at the centre, there is a clue of the highest interest, it matters little to what. They look, to see if he has stirred’ (ibid, p. 78r). Finally, he muses on the centripetal movement of Malone wherever

he goes or he might be: ‘But this grey, this light, if he could escape from this light, which makes him suffer, is it not [°] obvious it would make him suffer more and more, in whatever direction he went, since he is at the centre, and drive him back there, after forty or fifty vain e×ursions?’ (ibid, p. 90r).

Also of significance are some doodles that Beckett drew in his manuscripts of *The Unnamable* about the same pages that the word ‘centre’ appears most often. This further shows Beckett’s own obsession, if not fascination, with centrality and his way of parodying it.

VII. Born/Unborn duality

Beckett’s characters, once born, are still unborn: ‘Come into the world unborn, abiding there unliving, with no hope of death, epicentre of joys, or^f griefs, of calm’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 67r). In fact, Beckett had attended one of Carl Jung’s 1935 Tavistock lecture in which he discussed a case about a young female patient who was not even born - O’Hara says that Beckett ‘was much moved by hearing Jung remark, about a neurotic girl, that “she had never been born completely”’ (108).

It is very probable that Beckett looked up the text of this lecture at some point; that is, he had more available to him than just the notes in this case. However, he devotes a small portion of his notes on Jung under the heading ‘C.G. Jung (b. 1875). Analytic Psychology’ (TCD MS 10971/7/15) via R. S. Woodworth’s *Contemporary Schools of Psychology* (TCD MS 10971/7/7). There is no mention of the theory of ‘born/unborn’ in this section in the notes, but as O’Hara has observed (108), Beckett learned and benefited a lot from Jung’s influential lecture and used some of his ideas such as the anima/animus duality in his writing, especially in *Molloy*.

The notion that some patients are not completely or properly born is also elaborated by Rank who maintains that one of the functions of psychoanalysis is to help the patient to re-experience the birth event so as to overcome the birth trauma through therapeutic procedures, especially via the talking method. The technical term for this re-experiencing is ‘abreaction’, a term that appears in Beckett’s notes on Jones with a brief definition: ‘Abreaction: working off

pent-up emotion by re-experiencing it' (TCD MS 10971/8/19). The term also appears in Wilhelm Stekel's *Psychoanalysis and Suggestion Therapy* on which Beckett made notes (TCD MS 10971/8/24), but not in these notes themselves.

Closely related to the idea of analytic situation and the state of being unborn are two important lines on Rank's *The Trauma of Birth* that appear in Beckett's notes one after the other: 'Analysis the belated accomplishment of incomplete mastery of birth trauma' and 'Analytic situation identified with intrauterine one, patient back in position of unborn' (TCD MS 10971/8/34).

The word 'unborn' appears twice in *The Unnamable*. In both instances, it is juxtaposed with 'death' or 'the dead': 'why it piles up all about you, instant on instant, on all sides, deeper and deeper, thicker and thicker, your time, others' time, the time of t^he ancient dead and the dead yet unborn' (Grove Press Edition, p. 113r). For Beckett as for Rank, 'being unborn' becomes a 'fortune' (142) and the individual is to be punished for 'having been born' (Grove Press Edition, p. 24r). Having been conceived, the narrator ruminates about improper birth as a failure to have been conceived: 'convinced at last ~~that~~ I shall never get born, having failed to be conceived' (ibid, p. 73r). Existence and inexistence merge for the narrator as he ponders his situation: 'I know it well, I'll remember it as I go along, all adown it I'll be born and born, births for nothing, and come to night without having been (ibid, p. 125r). For being in this state of purgatory, he seeks to avenge his mother: 'I'm looking for my mother to kill her, I should have thought of that a bit earlier, before being born' (ibid, p. 116r).

Through his long soliloquy, the narrator is actually working off pent-up emotions by re-experiencing them. Thus, *The Unnamable* is on the whole a long self-therapeutic process of 'abreaction': an endeavor on the part of the narrator to cure himself of his *unbornness*, of an improper birth, which is eventually doomed to fail: 'you'll never be born again, what am I saying, you'll never have been born' (Grove Press Edition, p. 102r).

VIII. Cloacal Theory: Nest, Home and the Veil

As stated earlier, for Otto Rank images of the house, the home and the nest imitate the womb (Rank 88). In *The Unnamable*, home becomes the haven the narrator should have never left: ‘Without being sure I had seen it before, but I had been so long away from home, I ~~said to myself~~ kept saying to myself, Yonder is the haven you should have never left, there your dear absent ones are waiting for your return, patiently, and you too must be patient’ (MS-HRC-SB-5-9-1, p. 32r). The word ‘haven’ is replaced by ‘nest’ in the final version for the Grove Press (Grove Press Edition, p. 33r). This haven or nest becomes the refuge where the narrator is saved in the end: ‘saved at last, home at last’ (ibid, p. 80r). Until he takes refuge in this haven, he feels insecure, dislodged and isolated. Finding it difficult to describe his environment, he ruminates about the possibilities of what his home can be like: ‘I’d say what it’s like, in my home, instead of any old thing, this place, if I could describe this place, portray it, I’ve tried, I feel no place, no place round me’ (ibid, p. 124r). In some passages, the warm nest is provided by a *female* protector who safeguards the narrator against chills or the cold winter: ‘When the first frosts come she makes me a nest of rags, well tucked in all round me, to ~~protect~~^{preserve} me from chills’ (ibid, p. 60r). This existential caricature grows more pathetic with the portrayal of the possibility of the female protector taking care of his physiological needs: ‘Would she rid me of my paltry excrements every Sunday, make me a nest at the approach of winter, protect me from the snow, change my sawdust, rub salt into my scalp, I hope I’m not forgetting anything, if I were not there?’ (ibid, p. 63r). The picture provided here of the narrator is like that of a child being taken care of by his mother. Rank associates not only the nest, but also the ‘discharge of faeces’ with the womb. Beckett has noted down Rank’s observation as follows: ‘In the consciously uncontrollable & apparently automatic ejection of urine & discharge of faeces (“as proof of love” for the mother) the child behaves as it were still in the womb, inter faeces et urinas’ (TCD MS 10971/8/34). The juxtaposition of the female character as a mother figure ridding the narrator of his excrements, and providing a nest for him once again bring together images of the womb in a few highly condensed lines, also related to the infantile cloacal theory of birth noted down by Beckett via Jones. On psychosexual impotence, we read ‘Female genitalia & organs of excretion conceived of as a common cloaca’ (TCD MS 10971/8/17). In another passage on coprosymbols listed by Jones, Beckett has noted: ‘Infantile cloacal theory of birth (vagina & anus one passage in premammalian animals), babies made of faeces (cp. flowers from dung)’ (TCD MS 10971/8/19). Moreover, Rank regards ‘cloaca theory’ as signifying an ‘abode in the womb’ (68). The narrator

seeks protection against the cold implicitly via warm hands in a warm nest. Rank offers a series of unconscious associations with the womb such as ‘the hands of the midwife’, ‘the warm water’, ‘the swaddling clothes’ - Beckett’s ‘a nest of rags, well tucked in all round me’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 60r) - ‘the bed’, and ‘the room’, etc. as external ‘substitute for the mother’ (Rank 103). In the above lines from *The Unnamable*, there seems to be a subconscious identification of the mother with coproducts further linked to the nest, home and the womb (return to the mother), especially through sensual or tactile imagery as such.

Nixon sees the veil in Beckett’s writing as ‘another basis for the rupture between subject and object’ whose image Beckett derived ‘from his reading of Schopenhauer’s *The World as Will and Idea* in July and August 1930, which he used when writing *Proust* (SB to TM, undated [25? July 1930]) (168). Nixon writes that

A central argument in Schopenhauer’s *World as Will and Idea* is that the world of phenomena is illusory, obscuring a deeper reality, the ‘thing-in-itself’:

But the sight of the uncultured individual is clouded, as the Hindus say, by the veil of Maya. He sees not the thing-in-itself but the phenomenon in time and space, the *principium individuationis*, and in the other forms of the principle of sufficient reason. And in this form of his limited knowledge he sees not the inner nature of things, which is one, but its phenomena as separated, disunited, innumerable, very different, and indeed opposed. (WWI, Book 4, § 63; 454) (qtd. in Nixon 168).

As Feldman observes, ‘Maya is Schopenhauer’s Hindu shorthand for the paradox of humankind expressed through individual existence’ (2004: 199):

precisely this visible world in which we are, a magic effect called into being, an unstable and inconstant illusion without substance, comparable to the optical illusion and the dream, a veil enveloping human consciousness, a something of which it is equally false and equally true to say that it is and that it is not’ (World as Will and Representation, Vol. I, Appendix, p. 419; qtd. in Feldman 2004: 199).

He sees the ‘veil of Maya’ as

The division between individual perception – called by Schopenhauer the *principium individuationis* (or ‘principle of individuation’, and occasionally ‘egoism’) – and Reality, the

thing-in-itself, or what Beckett dubs 'non- anthropomorphised humanity' in a letter to MacGreevy: in fine, the world independent of subjectivity (ibid, p. 199).

However, the veil also becomes a prominent intrauterine symbol in *The Unnamable*. Elaborating on Freud's theory of 'womb phantasy' and 'primal scene', Rank writes: 'Starting from the analytical rebirth phantasies of the patient, whose complaints "that the world seemed to him disguised by a veil" could be traced back to his birth in a caul, Freud came to the conclusion that the patient wished himself back in the womb' (193). Similarly, the narrator's world is impenetrably veiled: 'Close to me it is grey, dimly transparent, and beyond that charmed circle deepens and spreads its fine impenetrable veils' (Grove Press Edition, p. 12r). But unlike Freud's patient, he does not complain. Rather, he wishes more of the veiling: 'I have tried to make her understand, dashing my head angrily against the neck of the jar, that I should like to be veiled more often' (MS-HRC-SB-5-10, p. 1-04r). For him, even 'the fringe of a mantle spread[s] like a veil, or fingers opening and closing to try and shut out the world (Grove Press Edition, p. 98r). The veil is closely related to the screen that he is desperately after and which, being unattainable, he takes for the wall: 'But may not this screen which my eyes probe in vain, and see as denser air, in reality be the enclosure wall, as compact as lead?' (ibid, p. 12r). The screen which in technical jargon is referred to as 'dream screen' is the embryonal caul, 'the loss of which in a dream signifies separation from a part of one's Ego (Rank 91).

This separation which is due to the natal separation from the mother, from which the birth trauma ensues, is what compels the individual, and here the narrator, to be immersed in 'womb phantasy' throughout his narrative. In fact, by recalling his 'mother', the Unnamable desires such phantasy even if it may not be true: '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 ~~journey~~ ^{voyage}, and set out on the next' (Grove Press Edition, p. 40r). 'I like to think' (MS-HRC-SB-5-9-1, p. 40r) being replaced with 'I like to fancy' for the final edition readily implies the womb phantasy. Also, the word 'voyage' replacing 'journey' in this line implies the smoothness and fluidity of the blissful fluid state of the intrauterine situation.

Finally, it is particularly interesting that in the following passage, the idea is of storytelling itself as a form of 'cloacal' birth:

I'll let down my trousers and shit stories on them, st^lories, photograp^hs, records, sites, lights, gods and fellow-creatures, the daily round and common task, observing the while, Be born, dear

friends, be born, enter my arse, you'll just love my colic pains, it won't take long, I've the bloody flux (Grove Press Edition, p. 103r).

Here, by letting down his trousers and shitting stories, the Unnamable is getting himself involved in a creative process of doing and undoing, that is to say, of muddying with words, making or telling stories, and finally shitting on and smearing them all. This aptly relates to the material from the notes where the 'Instinct of the infant to keep & play with faeces, the pleasure it takes in smearing, which it does with excreta as a token of affection' (TCD MS 10971/8/19) becomes a creative act, a form of cloacal birth and re-creation.

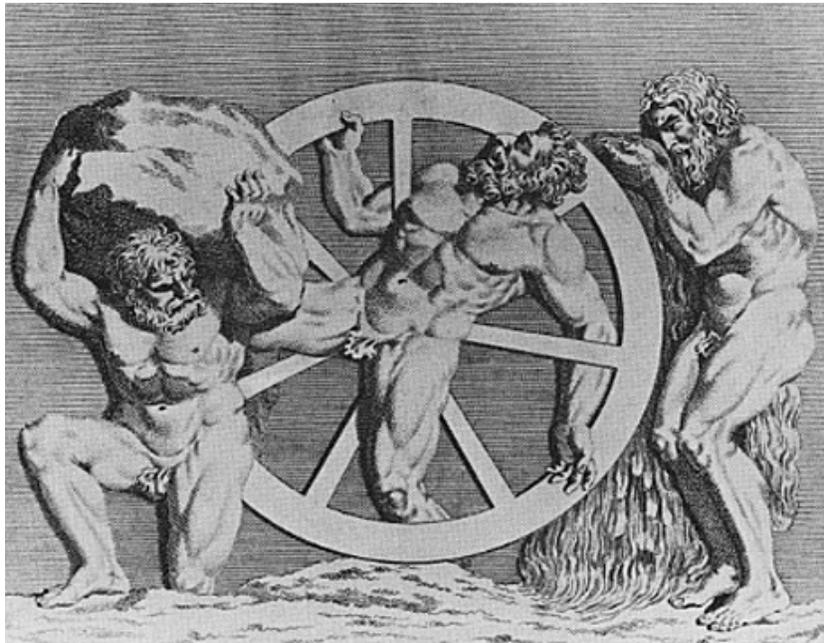
IX. Punishment and the Primal Situation: The cross

The 'cross' is only mentioned once throughout *The Unnamable*. In this highly condensed statement, the image of the 'cross' is accompanied by the notion of 'sinning', both suggestive of punishment. The narrator reveals that 'I am Matthew and I am the angel, I who came before the cross, before the sinning, came into the world, came here' (Grove Press Edition, p. 13r). A possible connection can be drawn here between the cross imagery and the notion of punishment in Beckett's notes on Rank: 'Punishments representing primal situation, with stress on painful aspect: Ixion on his 4-spoked wheel; Tantalos on wheel, threatened with stone, eternally tortured by hunger & thirst; Sysyphos, for ever [sic] rolling back the stone; Christ, the spokes of the wheel becoming the cross' (TCD MS 10971/8/36).

In his book, Rank delineates the tragedies of Ixion and Tantalus in a chapter entitled 'Religious Sublimation', with illustrations that appear below.



IXION ON THE WHEEL. (*Picture taken from a Vase in Berlin.*) (134)



TANTALUS. (*On a Sarcophagus.*) (ibid, p. 135).

Rank argues that ‘It is significant, for the development of the concept of punishment, that not only all punishments devised by mankind in phantasy, but also those converted into deed, represent the primal condition of the womb situation with emphasis laid on its painful character’

(ibid, p. 133). Beckett's 'came into the world, came here' latently points to the painful character of the birth as punishment, a sort of crucifixion in itself. As Rank observes,

Crucifixion, which as punishment for rebellion against God the Father stands at the center of the Christ myth, corresponds to the same conversion and assimilation of the intrauterine situation as the confining of Ixion in the wheel, with the abolition of which the spokes become the cross.²⁵ Consequently crucifixion likewise corresponds to a painfully emphasized return to the womb, after which follows quite consistently the resurrection, namely, birth and not rebirth. For here it is also a question of nothing but a repetition and reproduction of the process of birth, ethically and religiously sublimated in the sense of a neurotic overcoming of the primal trauma. Hence the great part which the Christian mystery of redemption plays in the phantasy life of neurotics and also of the insane is explained as identification with the passive hero who succeeds in returning to the womb by means of pleasurable suffering. This identification is a sublime attempt at recovery, which has saved mankind from the destruction of the ancient world and as such is clearly recognizable in the traditional miracles of Christ. He makes the blind and the lame healthy through his example. That is, he provokes them to identify themselves with him, because they could see in him one who had overcome the birth trauma (ibid, pp. 136-37).

This explanation is followed by two more illustrations that depict the crucifixion scenes, the first of which is 'CRUCIFIXION' by 'LUKAS CRANACH', and the second of which without caption. All the four illustrations offered by Rank add to the vivid visuality of the cross, the sinning, and the suffering.

The 'I' that 'came into the world, came here', thus born, is linked by its problematic, unfinished nature to its 'unbornness'. As Brown argues, 'The status of *I* is problematic because the narrator is *spoken by the Other*: the speech that passes through him cannot be ascribed to him, since he has no "existence" in language, he has not been inscribed in language (he has 'not been born' in Beckettian imagery)' (182). Therefore, the 'I' becomes the Other, becomes *he*, Worm, Mahood, but also 'Matthew' and 'the angel'. Via merging of identities, 'The narrator seems thus to allow the pronoun *I* to circulate from himself to this other, that he designates as *he*' (ibid, p. 182). In other words, by uttering 'I', 'the Unnamable does not speak of himself; and at

25 Thus the cross itself still represents something "inward," namely, the spokes freed from the clasp of the rim. Also the hooked cross belongs in this connection: the spoked cross growing again into the rim of the wheel is naturally an emblem of life and victory" (Schneider, *l.c.*, p. 8, note 2) (qtd. in Rank 136).

the same time, he cannot speak of himself without saying *I* (ibid, p. 182-3). Thus, ‘I shall not say I again, ever again, it’s too farcical. I shall put it in its place, whenever I hear it, the third person, if I think of it’ (Beckett, 2009, 348). In fact, Beckett shatters the authority of the ‘I’ through its ‘refusal to say *I*’ (ibid, p. 183), through denarrating both its writerly and its psychoanalytic voice.

Referring back to Mark Nixon's account in *Samuel Beckett's German Diaries*, we recall the fact that Beckett found Bion's ‘insistence that more work was needed to free him from his neuroses’ (45) and achieve a ‘total cure’ distasteful:

With the ‘internal combustion heart as bad as ever’ (SB to TM, 31 August [1935]), Beckett in the winter of 1935 decided to discontinue his therapeutic sessions with Bion. A letter to MacGreevy in January 1936 forcibly states that the whole enterprise had done nothing to improve his relations with his mother or to remove the nocturnal anxiety attacks (ibid, p. 45).

Instead, he turned to ‘self-therapy’, partly through taking notes on his dreams, recommended by Bion. By the end of the same year, December 1936, says Nixon, Beckett’s ‘desire to continue some form of self-therapy is suggested by his response to a letter received while in Germany from Geoffrey Thompson, who relayed a message from Bion “deploring any interruption of treatment, opining a total “cure” if I had stayed a little longer, & trusting to see me again.” NIX ZU SAGEN. Oder zu viel [NOTHING TO SAY. Or too much]’ (GD, 8 December 1936; Nixon, 46).

Thus, having experienced the failure of talking cure in his therapy with Bion, he grew skeptical toward and distrustful of its promises, which is reflected more and more in his later writing. Nonetheless, as we have seen, psychoanalytic concepts, whether parodied or not, lie at the core of *The Unnamable*. As shown above, the difference the *Notes* make to our understanding of Beckett and psychoanalysis is considerable. It should be noted, however, that we are not dealing with a scrutiny of Beckett’s personality or treating his corpus of writing as simply exemplifying psychoanalytic concepts. Instead, Beckett *stages* rather than embodies philosophical thoughts and psychological theories through the employment of certain topoi, objects, images, themes, mises-en-scenes, and mises-en-abyme. Although Beckett at one stage believed himself to be an ‘obsessional neurotic’ (Weller 2010: 135), the therapies he underwent as well as the extensive reading he did on psychology and psychoanalysis, were attempts to cure

and free himself of those mental and physical diseases. Even the process of writing, as walking, was for Beckett a kind of 'self-therapy' as Didier Anzieu argues (Anzieu in Weller 2010: 145).

Last but not least, the ideas that I have explored from the *Psychology Notes* in this chapter, namely, birth trauma and death wish, narcissism, paraphrenia, melancholia, inferiority complex, memory, dreams, prison psychosis, petrification and coprosymbolism, anal-erotic character traits such as orderliness, parsimony, and obstinacy, the cloacal theory, punishment and the primal situation, as well as various somatic illnesses, point to a crucial fact in *The Unnamable*: that the voice seems to be involved in a self-therapeutic procedure, that is to say, an ongoing but failing 'talking cure'. Its attempts to rid itself of conditions that ultimately leave no room for cure whatsoever, culminate in intense moments of anxiety attacks, and ends in pain and melancholia. Moreover, considering the sheer variety of psychoanalytic ideas, conditions and illnesses in the text associated with the unnamable voice, it is no wonder if it is unable to cure itself of all the psychosomatic symptoms that make up its troubled existence: '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' (Grove Press Edition, p. 142r).

Part III

The 'Psychology Notes' as the Genetic Dossier for *L'Innommable/The Unnamable*

In this chapter, I will examine direct references to the 'Psychology Notes' whence Beckett takes a word, a phrase or a statement and incorporates it in the composition of *The Unnamable*. Such referencing to the Notes better shows their function as scholarly background to Beckett's creative writing. Also, I will deal with the Notes as part of the genetic dossier for *L'Innommable/The Unnamable*, that is, if there is any revision happening in the manuscripts; when does an allusion to the Notes come in, and is there significant deletion or reworking going on around these points? In other words, the question is how the Notes become part of Beckett's problem of composing a particular passage. By discussing such examples in some depth, we can understand to a certain extent what is happening during the writing process, and what we learn from these particular inclusions, exclusions and revisions. For that purpose, I will need to refer to the French version of the novel as well.

It is crucial here to recall the interruption of Beckett's own therapy with Bion²⁶. As discussed before, Beckett grew more and more skeptical and distrusting toward the promise of a total cure by Bion, and more generally by psychoanalysis, and treated his insistence on continuing the therapy with disdain. In this regard, the key point to take into account is that the therapy had made Beckett 'live up to the specimen that these 2 years have taught me that I am' (Letter to MacGreevy, 16 January 1936, qtd. in Nixon 45). This points to an ambiguity around the term 'specimen': psychoanalytic language is supposed to describe an individual's psychic condition with maximum objectivity, but that condition can also be made conscious by the individual as a means to resist the therapy. Indeed, some patients tend to make themselves well informed with the specialized jargon, the concepts, and theories of psychoanalysis – so much so that they counter the therapeutic effects desired by the psychoanalyst²⁷; thus, by doing that, these

26 See especially Beckett's letter to MacGreevy 16 January 1936, and the diary entry of 8 December 1936.

27 Beckett was not exempt from this behavior. He initiated an extensive study of prominent figures in psychoanalytic trends of the time alongside his therapy with Bion.

patients seek to avoid avoid being regular psychoanalytic ‘specimens’.²⁸ In other words, when the language of psychoanalysis is well understood and used by the patient for self-description, there arises in him a certain degree of opposition and sometimes rivalry against the analyst. That is to say, one cannot be both a ‘specimen’ and able to consciously describe one’s condition in clinical language without changing that condition even as one is describing. Thus, there must be a distinction made between ‘trying to live up to being a specimen’ of a particular kind and simply being one – a specimen observed in the laboratory is not changed by the observation. Therefore, there is a kind of excess or mismatch here between ‘being a specimen’ and the inauthentic ‘living up to being a specimen’, which signals Beckett’s doubt for and distrust of his therapy, and his resistance to it. In the letter to MacGreevy, he continues to observe that, ‘the word is not out before I am blushing for my automatism’ (ibid, p. 45). The word ‘automatism’ has both a psychoanalytic and an artistic dimension to it. The former refers to the process of free-association, the ‘talking cure’ itself, whereas the latter implies a term used by surrealists such as Andre Bréton to refer to the creative process of surrealist art.²⁹ Beckett did not want to resume his therapy partly because he may have felt that a ‘total cure’, as ‘opined’ by Bion, could make him into a mere specimen, rather than an artist.

This background gives great weight to the act of introducing the language of *textbook* psychoanalysis into *The Unnamable*. Although Beckett does this systematically in his later writing including *L’Innommable*, his use of this language becomes more and more implicit as he matures in his creative process. Whereas textbook psychoanalysis assumes an understanding of the subject as a ‘specimen’ suffering from different types of psychosomatic disturbances, it can also be used creatively to signal a resistance or ambiguity toward this language. This contextualizes the central idea in *The Unnamable*, that there are no words for this voice: ‘Having nothing to say, no words but the words of others, I have to speak’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 28r). In fact, the voice seems to be resisting the notion that its words are even the attributes of *its* mind. Having no control over its speech, it speaks the words of others from the void to the walls

28 See Wilhelm Stekel’s *Psychoanalysis and Suggestion Therapy*.

29 A similar instance can be the ‘Yeatsian pursuits and theorizations of automatic writing’ (Fordham 11), though here automatism is connected with the writings of mediums as an attempt to contact the spirit world for inspiration.

that engulf it. Interestingly, the first English MS title for *The Unnamable* was ‘Beyond Words’ which informs the tone of the voice throughout the text. However, in the language of textbook psychoanalysis, words are considered symptoms of the subject’s unconscious mind, in preparation for treating the patient as a specimen. But the question is to what extent these words that are poured out from a wounded mind are to be trusted, when the *id* is still a ‘hidden force, beyond the border of the self’ (Fordham 11).

On the one hand, as I have shown in Part II, the various conditions that the Unnamable seem to suffer from are indeed clarified by psychoanalytic language. So far, then, I have discussed the voice precisely as a ‘specimen’, as an extremely complex, multi-faceted psychoanalytic case study. There is no doubt that this psychoanalytic language fundamentally informs this text. But in this chapter, I will be discussing a few examples of explicit incorporation of material from the Notes in light of the ambiguity and possible resistance toward the idea of being a ‘specimen’, toward being classified in psychoanalytic language. There are certain points where psychoanalytic jargon appears at the surface of the text even if one needs the Notes to see this clearly. These moments become especially interesting from a genetic point of view: what happens when Beckett introduces textbook psychoanalysis at specific points in the composition process? Are there revisions? What is the full context of this moment within the text? What difference does each instance make in our understanding of the composition process? In other words, what effect does the introduction of the language of textbook psychoanalysis have in each particular instance?

Last but not least, it should be noted that Beckett ultimately sees the process of endless rewriting of ‘selves’ as itself more fundamental than any psychoanalytic language. In light of this, it would be apposite to bring in Finn Fordham’s perspective on writing the ‘self’, which counters the Romantic tradition of seeing the individual as the foremost source of ‘value and meaning, the producer and controller of its own sense of itself’ (ibid, p. 11). Instead, he posits a different attitude toward the process of composing or producing a text that ‘locates the origin of the drives behind composition as originating somewhere other than the self’ (ibid, p. 11). The unnamable voice’s enunciation that there are no words for it entails that there is something this language will never finally capture as long as words belong to the unknown: ‘Writing emerges from somewhere unknown [...] and a renunciation of the conscious self as an origin is required

for such a process of emergence to take place' (ibid, p. 11). Thus, the voice asks itself: 'Where do these words come from that pour out of my mouth, and what do they mean' (Grove Press Edition, p. 92r).

I would also like to recall Fordham's idea that '*the self* is not a presupposition, but a consequence, an effect, a product of *textual construction, of writing processes*' (15, quoted in Part I). In this perspective, the self becomes just one more linguistic form to be played with, manipulated, renounced and redone: 'The renunciation of the self in this process is a renunciation of conscious intention and also a surrender of any clear concept of the product: the goal of writing is instead the process itself, a particular *way* of producing' (ibid, p. 11). It is exactly this 'particular way of producing' that makes Beckett's writing, here *L'Innommable*, notoriously hard to unravel. Nonetheless, the Notes provide us with clues and starting-points.

I. 'Dungeons in Spain': Distorting the textbook creatively

Beckett's artistic process became more important to him than achieving any 'total cure' by the time he interrupted his own therapy with Bion. For him, the artistic process 'must go on' (Grove Press Edition, p. 142r), even if the 'on' is through a 'no', that is, the systematic denial of any language that could be used to describe *The Unnamable* ('Beyond Words' - This title phrase also appears once in the text itself (ibid, p. 70r)). It therefore becomes especially interesting to return to a concept from the previous chapter, the 'prison psychosis', and especially the word 'dungeon'. This word is used in a very rare reference to Beckett's own condition and therapeutic process in the 'Psychology Notes':

An important characteristic of the hysterical disorder is the excessive development of fantasy at the expense of adjustment to reality. Thus it becomes practically irrelevant whether a given traumatic memory recovered from the unconscious corresponds with a fact or not, the effect on the patient is the same.

Dungeons in Spain. (Mine own.) (TCD 10971/8/21).

As both James Knowlson and Feldman point out, the original Ernest Jones text has 'Castles in Spain' (Feldman 141). Jones describes these as merely fanciful. But Beckett is relating his own

kind of ‘extensive development of fantasy at the expense of adjustment to reality’ – not least in his own writing – not to romantic ‘castles’, but to an obsession with ‘dungeons’ instead. As Feldman points out (ibid, p. 141), the phrase also appears in *Murphy*. At one point in the novel, content with the ‘brotherhood’ he believes to have gained with the patients, the eponymous character concludes that he has found his ‘pleasant’ refuge in the ‘Magdalen Mental Mercyseat’ hospital: ‘With these and even less weighty constructions he saved his facts against the pressure of those current in the Mercyseat. Stimulated by all those lives immured in mind, as he insisted on supposing, he laboured more diligently than ever before at his own little dungeon in Spain’ (*Murphy*, pp. 100-2). This gives further evidence that ‘dungeons’ was not simply a neutral word for Beckett, but one that he had used creatively before and associated with something central to his own creative process.

It is crucial to note here that ‘adjustment to reality’ would entail a successful outcome of the talking cure, but also perhaps an undermining of the creative process. As Fordham argues,

the goal of self-projection [adjustment to reality] may moreover obstruct the aim of textual production – too great a sense of self-consciousness prevents composition; what is finally produced will turn out to be inauthentic, taking the producer further away from the goal of self-knowledge and self-expression (11).

If Beckett were to dismiss his fantasies as mere ‘Castles in Spain’, he could not continue to write from within his own ‘dungeons’.

In *The Unnamable*, the word is used in the context of having someone else’s language imposed on the voice, having words put into his mouth, being ‘possessed of no utterance but theirs’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 91r). ‘They’ are trying to ‘clap me in a dungeon’; but it is precisely by writing about ‘dungeons’ that the voice contrives to avoid ‘their’ language, which insists on casting his fantasies as mere ‘Castles in Spain’:

They'll clap me in a dungeon, ~~I-xx~~ I'm in a dungeon, I've always been in a dungeon, I hear everything, every word they say, there is no other sound, as if it were I speaking, ~~alone~~ ^{to myself}, out loud, in the end you don't know any more, a voice that never stops, where it's coming from ([MS-HRC-SB-5-9-2](#), p. 43r).

In this particular passage, this moment when the textbook language is introduced in the text is perhaps the climax of the distance that the voice is taking from that language. In other words, through a huge reversal of the language from ‘castle’ to ‘dungeon’, the voice is distancing itself from and resisting the textbook language.

The state of the unnamable voice clapped in a dungeon by ‘them’ signals an act being perpetrated against its will. As expected, it then immediately finds itself in a dungeon, and concludes that it has ‘always’ been in one. As discussed in part II, this might be the world at large that represents a dungeon for the voice, or it might as well be the psychoanalytic room where it is walled and spoken to. It is worthwhile to compare the above version with the Grove Press Edition and the French. The first three lines in English are distinctly different from those in French: ‘Ce sera le cachot, c’est le cachot, ça a toujours été le cachot’ (Minuit 1971). Beckett has adopted a free translation method for this; otherwise, a precise translation of the line would be, ‘It will be the dungeon, it is the dungeon, it has always been the dungeon’. This accounts for the hesitant line in the above version as Beckett does not translate it from the French precisely word by word. This may indicate that Beckett is uncertain, but also meticulous about choosing the right words at this point. The hesitant line reads, ‘I’m in a dungeon’, emphasizing not only the dungeon, but also the ‘I’ that is in it, which the French version is lacking. There is also a revision from the French, first translated as ‘alone’ and then changed to ‘to myself’. Here, Beckett is translating from the French word, ‘seul’ meaning ‘alone’, which he then modifies into ‘to myself’ for later editions, including the Grove Press (p. 91r). As the emphasis above is shifted to the ‘I’ in a ‘dungeon’, here the ‘self’ is highlighted as the voice talks to ‘*myself*’ rather than ‘alone’. This may account for a semantic discrepancy between the two. That is, the receiver of the voice in the former is the ‘self’ since it is addressing itself – even though ‘they’ are present – whereas in the latter case of its being ‘alone’, the voice might be addressing some ‘other(s)’ even if ‘they’ are not present. In both cases, though, the voice is speaking ‘out loud’ and ‘never-stopping’, which again hints at the ‘talking cure’ informing the text as a whole.

It would be conducive to this discussion to look also at what comes before and after this passage where the language of textbook psychoanalysis appears. Beckett pictures a totally familiar atmosphere where the unnamable is being treated as a specimen: ‘I must doze off from time to time, with open eyes, and yet nothing changes, ever’ (ibid, p. 91r). The term ‘must’

implies an obligation exerted upon the Unnamable from an external authority, 'from without' (ibid, p. 90r). But his complaint that 'nothing changes, ever' is an opposition, a resistance against the idea of becoming a 'specimen'. Then he parodies the way he is treated by his manipulators: 'They shut me up here, now they're trying to get me out, to shut me up somewhere else, or to let me go, they are capable of putting me out just to see what I'd do' (ibid, p. 91r). What comes next is one of the most explicit moments when the voice is contemplating its 'observers' who seem to be analysts observing their analysand during the talking cure in a therapeutic session: 'Standing with their backs to the door, their arms folded, their legs crossed, they would observe me' (ibid, p. 92r). Before the mention of dungeons, the voice had already poured scorn on the 'dirty pack of fake maniacs, they know I don't know, they know I forget all they say as fast as they say it' (ibid, p. 90r). There may be a hint here of an asylum setting, as in *Murphy*; only here the voice does not admire the inmates and try to become like them as Murphy did, but instead asserts that they are 'fake' (as opposed to the voice's own more extreme suffering perhaps). The pun on 'patient' is telling in this context, which is likened to an 'object', something to be observed and manipulated as if in a laboratory: 'A little fit of impatience [sic], on the part of the patient. Thank you. That is the immediate object' (ibid, p. 89r). But except for 'tossing', 'turning', and 'rolling on the ground' (ibid, p. 89r), there is 'no remedy' for the patient, 'anything at all, to relieve the monotony' (ibid, p. 90r).

For the voice, even 'these little pauses are a poor trick too' (ibid, p. 90r). The pauses here resemble those which the patient usually has in a talking cure when it is obliged to imitate 'their words'. It concludes that as long as 'they go silent, so do I. A second later, I'm a second behind them' (ibid, p. 90r). The voice seems to remember a 'second, for the space of a second' since every second is a respite 'long enough to blurt it out, as received, while receiving the next, which is none of my business either' (ibid, p. 90r). In fact, the word 'respite' appears three times in *The Unnamable*, twice in this same context about two pages later: 'Respite then, once in a way, if one can call that respite, when one waits to know one's fate, saying, Perhaps it's not that at all, and saying, Where do these words come from that pour out of my mouth' (ibid, p. 92r).

Going back to the line above, the phrase 'none of my business' suggests that the voice sees itself as detached from *their* business, showing lukewarmness and disinterest in it. Later, it speculates that 'they are not interested in me, only in the place, they want the place for one of

their own' (ibid, p. 92r). Then its sarcasm falls on *their* 'happy speculation' like a happy ending of a story since there is no other way for them to end the story except on a happy note: 'What can one do but speculate, speculate, until one hits on the happy speculation. When all goes silent, and comes to an end, it will be because the words have been said, those it behoved to say, [...] they have to be ratified by the proper authority' (ibid, p. 92r). The words uttered by the voice seem to be invalid as long as they are not authenticated by the 'proper authority', what it sometimes calls 'masters'. Here, Beckett creates a triangle, that is, the voice, the messenger, and the master, who clamour for the validation of the words, while they are being enunciated by the voice, and whether they must stop or continue: 'they bring him the verbatim report of the proceedings, [...], it's he who chose them, in the meantime the voice continues, while the messenger goes towards the master, and while the master examines the report, and while the messenger comes back with the verdict, the words continue', but these words are only 'the wrong words ['invalidated as uttered']', until the order arrives, to stop everything, or to continue everything' (ibid, p. 92r).

It is crucial to note the panoply of distancing, resistance, skepticism, and farce toward the language of the talking cure as a means of remedy in this context, which is implicitly pictured as authoritarian, manipulative, degrading, and not least non-palliative in an environment – a dungeon – where the voice is 'given y^o talking, or condemned to talk, [...], out loud, without ceasing' (ibid, p. 91r). With the palliative 'without' having failed, therefore, the Unnamable turns 'within' seeking a 'palliative for what he is, through no fault of his own' (ibid, p. 90r). No wonder Beckett introduces the explicit language of textbook psychoanalysis alongside a wide range of other, more implicit allusions to psychoanalytic terms in the surrounding pages. The voice rails against the masters for having forced it into a dungeon where it is condemned to ceaseless talk in solitary confinement. The harsh treatment of mental patients is surely not an irrelevant association here.

II. Dreams: trains and travels

There is an important passage in *The Unnamable* where the narrator speculates on the significance of 'love', 'trains', 'stations' and 'platforms' and so on. He relates that

...there's a story for you, that was to teach me the nature of emotion, that's called emotion, what emotion can do, given favourable conditions, what love can do, well well, so that's emotion, that's love, and trains, the nature of trains, and the meaning of your back to the engine, and guards, stations, platforms, wars, love, heart-rending cries (Grove Press Edition, p. 133r).

At first sight, it would be unintelligible what relation 'love' can bear on 'trains' or 'stations', and what 'the meaning of your back to the engine' might be. All the same, as first pointed out by Matthew Feldman (2006: 31), this last phrase appears in Beckett's notes on Rank who elaborates on the dream of traveling in *The Trauma of Birth*, and which further sheds light on 'love' and 'emotion' alongside 'train':

Dream of travelling; such details as missing the train, packing & not being ready, losing luggage, etc., so painfully realised in the dream, can be understood only when one interprets the departure as meaning separation from the mother, & the luggage as symbolising the womb, which as we know is replaced by all kinds of vehicles. Every forward movement in the dream is to be interpreted as regressive. Cp. disinclination of many persons to *travel with their backs to the engine*, & *sortir les pieds en devant* (TCD MS 10971/8/35) [emphasis added].

Beckett's insertion of 'and the meaning of your back to the engine' occurs for the first time in version 4 of *The Unnamable*, his first translated version from French into English where he incorporates the above line directly from the *Notes*. In the first French version of *L'Innommable*, there is no mention of the 'train' or 'stations' whatsoever, but 'emotion' and 'love' appear in the statement: 'voilà une histoire, c'était pour que je sache ce que c'est que l'émotion, ça s'appelle l'émotion, ce que peut l'émotion, ce que peut l'amour' (*L'Innommable* Segment 2325.2, version 1 (MS-HRC-SB-4-1, p. 69r)). In the 2nd and 3rd versions, as well as in the 1971 Minuit Edition, however, Beckett adds a few more lines to this passage, among other changes, and employs the words 'les trains' and 'les gares' but not the inserted phrase above:

en voilà une histoire, c'était pour que je sache ce que c'est que l'émotion, ça s'appelle Emotion, ce que peut l'émotion, ce que peut l'amour, alors c'est ça l'émotion, pour que je sache ce que c'est que les trains, les chefs de train, les gares, les quais, ~~les guerres~~ la guerre, les cris déchirants, ça e'est ~~la belle~~ doit être la belle-mère (version 2 (MS-HRC-SB-4-1, p. 68v)).

There are apparently a few slight revisions, that is, insertions and omissions, from version 2 to version 3 (and into the 1971 Minuit Edition), but none between version 3 and the 1971 Minuit

Edition. Despite the insertion of the phrase ‘données des conditions favorables’, ‘le sens de la marche’, and ‘l’amour’ besides some other minor modifications from, say, ‘Emotion’ to ‘l’émotion’, ‘pour que je sache ce que c’est que les trains’ to ‘ce que c’est que les trains’, and finally from ‘ça e’est la bell doit être la belle-mère’ to ‘ça doit être la belle-mère’, there are no references to the ‘one’s back to the engine’:

en voilà une histoire, c’était pour que je sache ce que c’est que l’émotion, ça s’appelle l’émotion, ce que peut l’émotion, données des conditions favorables, ce que peut l’amour, alors c’est ça l’émotion, ce que c’est que les trains, le sens de la marche, les chefs de train, les gares, les quais, la guerre, l’amour, les cris déchirants, ça doit être la belle-mère (version 3 (Minuit 1953))/ (version 8 (Minuit 1971)).

In other words, ‘and the meaning of your back to the engine’ never appears in *L’Innommable*, but only in *The Unnamable* thanks to the Notes.

The unnamable voice seems to be reciting a ‘pensum’ in this passage: love, emotion, train, station, and so on. But why is it being introduced at this particular point in the text? In fact, a short subplot of love and loss precedes this insertion, which relates to and accounts for the introduction of this ‘textbook’ language in the text. Here, the voice finds itself relating the story of two lovers loving each other when he dies at war: ‘They love each other, marry, in order to love each other better, more conveniently, he goes to the wars, he dies at the wars, she weeps, with emotion, at having loved him, at having lost him, yep, marries again, in order to love again, more conveniently again’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 133r). The circular language resembles that of an earlier story about a dog³⁰ ‘crawling into the kitchen and stealing a crust of bread’ when ‘cook up with I’ve forgotten what and walloped him till he was dead, S^s[^s]econd verse, Then all the dogs came crawling and dug the dog a tomb and wrote upon the ~~tombsto~~ tombstone for dogs and bitches to come, third verse, as the first, fourth, as the second, fifth, as the third’ (ibid, p. 102r). Further on, we see more of this parodied circularity in the passage above concerning the lovers. Having married a second love simply ‘in order to love again’, she now finds herself capable of loving again: ‘they love each other, you love as many times as necessary, as necessary in order to be happy, he comes back, the other comes back, from the wars, he didn’t die at the wars after all’

30 See also *En attendant Godot*, act II, p.1.

(ibid, p. 133r). At this point, the word 'station' is introduced since it is where she has to go to meet her love who is coming by the 'train'. But 'he dies in the train, ~~with emotion~~ of emotion, at the thought of seeing her again, having her again, she weeps, weeps again, with emotion again, at having lost him again' (ibid, p. 133r). Different concepts meet and merge in this condensed line, from 'station' and 'train' to 'death/loss' and 'weeping' to 'love' and 'emotion' as its manifest content. The latent content is 'separation': the scenes of 'travel' and the journey back to the 'womb'.

As mentioned above, if according to Beckett's notes on Rank, 'the womb [...] is replaced by all kinds of vehicles' (TCD MS 10971/8/35), then the lover who dies in the train resembles a 'stillborn', a child that she cannot have. But she cannot have her other love either: 'yep, [she] goes back to the house, he's dead, the other is dead, the mother-in-law takes him down, he hanged himself, with emotion, ~~at~~ at the thought of losing her, she weeps, weeps louder, at having loved him, at having lost him' (Grove Press Edition, p. 133r). The voice seems to be distancing itself from this kind of story-telling by taking on a more ironic tone as it proceeds along with its 'fable': 'there's a story for you, that was to teach me the nature of emotion, that's called emotion, what emotion can do, given favourable conditions, what love can do, well well, so that's emotion, that's love, and trains, the nature of trains, and the meaning of your back to the engine' (ibid, p. 133r). It cannot conceive of the nature and the meaning of the story it is relating, and once again begins to mix identities with uncertainty: 'that must be the mother-in-law, her cries rend the heart as ~~he~~ she takes down her son, or her son-in-law, I don't know, it must be her son, since she cries' (ibid, p. 133r). But all of a sudden its obsession turns to the 'bolted door' and to who has locked it: 'and the door, the house-door is bolted, when she got back from the station she found the house-door bolted, who bolted it, he the ~~bett~~ better to hang himself, or the mother-in-law the better to take him down, or to prevent her daughter-in-law from re-entering the premises' (ibid, p. 133r).

The voice's enunciation of 'there's a story for you' is repeated three times in this passage. The first was to teach the unnamable voice the nature of 'emotion', 'love', 'trains' and 'the meaning of your back to the engine'. The second time this appears is when the voice has another take on identities, after which he questions its 'reasoning' for 'certainty', concluding that it (the story) was to teach it how to reason: 'there's a story for you, it must be the daughter-in-law, it

isn't the son-in-law and the daughter, it's the daughter-in-law and the son, how I reason to be sure this evening, it was to teach me how to reason, it was to tempt me to go, to the place where you can come to an end' (ibid, p. 133r). The last time 'there's a story for you' is mentioned is right after his double-obsession with the 'bolted door': 'it's the door ~~that~~ interests me, a wooden door, who bolted the door, and for what purpose, I'll never know, there's a story for you, I thought they were over, perhaps it's a new one, lepping fresh, is it the return to the world of fable' (ibid, pp. 133-134r). But the story is not 'the return to the world of fable, no, just a reminder, to make me regret what I have lost, long to be again in the place I was banished from, unfortunately it doesn't remind me of anything' (ibid, p. 134r).

It is evident that the Unnamable does not want to succumb to what these stories are there to teach. Presented as both a parody and evidence, the language of 'textbook' psychoanalysis is to make him compatible to this sentimental tripe. But he deflates the effects of its uncanny promises and luring temptations to lead him to a place 'where you can come to an end' (ibid, p. 133r), a dead-end. Partly, the effect of this dead-end is formally and aesthetically produced through the circular language in this context. In fact, as mentioned above, Beckett faced this dead-end with the promises of psychoanalysis, such that when seeing no improvements, he discontinued his therapy with Bion. Interestingly, this fact is touched upon right after the mention of 'coming to an end': 'I must have been a good pupil up to a point, I couldn't get beyond a certain point, I can understand their annoyance' (ibid, p. 133r). Possibly, 'their annoyance' has some echo of Bion's annoyance with Beckett who did not follow his advice of resuming his therapy with him despite his insistence.

III. Menstruation & Spermatozoon

At one point, the Unnamable asserts that 'the slut has yet to menstruate capable of whelping me, that should singularly narrow the field of re-a-search, a sperm dying, of cold, in the sheets, feebly wagging its little tail, perhaps I'm a drying sperm, in the sheets of an innocent boy, even that takes time, no stone must be left unturned' (Grove Press Edition, p. 102r). As it turns out, the slut, having replaced 'the bitch' in an earlier version (MS-HRC-SB-5-9-3, p. 08r), refers to the vagina that has to menstruate before it can 'whelp' him. The birth subtext is illuminating in this passage,

and the ‘sperm’ terminology adds to this, as we shall see. It is interesting to trace the menstruation and birth images that Beckett creates here back to Rank’s *The Trauma of Birth*. The following line appears in Beckett’s notes on Rank: ‘Birth actually only a menstruation en masse’ (TCD MS 10971/8/34). In fact, the line ‘the slut has yet to menstruate capable of whelping me’ does not appear in the French versions:

la mère ^{garce} qui me déconnera, voilà qui devrait singulièrement restreindre le champs des recherches, un sperme qui meurt, de froid, dans les draps, en agitant faiblement sa petite queue, je suis peut-être un sperme qui ~~meurt~~ ^{sèche}, dans les draps d'un gamin, j' c'est long, il faut tout envisager (Segment 2190, version 1 (MS-HRC-SB-4-1, p. 33v)).

This passage appears in the 2nd version as:

la garce qui me déconnera, voilà qui devrait singulièrement restreindre le champ des recherches, un sperme qui meurt, de froid, dans les draps, en agitant faiblement sa petite queue, je suis peut-être un sperme qui sèche, dans les draps d'un gamin, c'est long, il faut tout envisager (version 2 (Minuit 1953)).

This also appears in the final French version (version 7 (Minuit 1971)) without the inclusion of the inserted line in the English versions of the text from Beckett’s notes.

Similarly, the term ‘spermatozoon’ appears once in the Notes and once in *The Unnamable* with a minor modification from the plural to the singular. The short phrase in the Notes states: ‘Spermatozoa dream (Silberer), regression to spermarium’ (TCD MS 10971/8/35). The fact that Beckett uses the term ‘spermatozoon’ both in *L’Innommable* and in *The Unnamable* makes the connection to the Notes even stronger: he may well have consulted his Notes directly not only in the translation of *L’Innommable* into English, but also during composition of the original French text. The term appears in all the versions in both languages: ‘Oyez, oyez, I was like them, before being like me, oh the swine, that's one I won't get over in a hurry, no matter, no matter, the charge is sounded, present arms, corpse, to your guns, spermatozoon’ (Grove Press Edition, p. 102r). In the first French version, the sentence appears as follows: ‘Oyez, oyez, j'étais comme eux, avant d'être comme moi, merde alors, voilà une vacherie ^{dont je ne reviendrai pas de sitôt, à} laquelle je ne m'attendais pas ^{qui me laisse-baba,} c'est bon, c'est ~~bon~~ ^{parfait bon}, l'assaut est donné, debout le mort, ~~à vos armes~~ ^{aux fourches}, spermatozoïde’ (MS-HRC-SB-4-1, p. 33v). Similarly in the final French version, despite some lexical modifications, the term ‘spermatozoïde’ still lingers.

Digging back into Rank's *The Trauma of Birth* whence Beckett has noted the above line, we can find further insights into Silberer's dream symbolism, what Rank believes is 'illustrated by Silberer in excellent examples of "spermatozoa dreams," to go back into the father's body' (Rank's footnote: 'Silberer, "Spermatozoentraume" and "Zur Frage der Spermatozoentraume," *Jahrb.*, iv., 1912') (Rank 83). Rank believes that these are 'phantasies which are partly connected with explanations about sex heard or read of at a later date' (ibid, p. 83), meaning at a later stage of the individual's development. He adds that

if one continued the analysis of these 'spermatozoa dreams' from the point of view here set forth, they would finally prove to be 'back to the womb' dreams which have been remodeled by means of a later acquired conscious knowledge. Often enough, indeed, the so-called 'spermatozoa dreams' prove to be directly disguised 'womb dreams,' since the only way to come again to the mother's body is by way of the father's spermatozoa (ibid, p. 84).

The phrasing of 'whelping' and 'menstruation' which follow the passage where the above line appears in *The Unnamable* fits well with the birth subtext and its possibly direct reference to the 'Psychology Notes' where again the phrases 'Birth actually only a menstruation en masse' (TCD MS 10971/8/34) and 'Spermatozoa dream (Silberer), regression to spermarium' (TCD MS 10971/8/35) appear on subsequent pages facing each other. This makes the 'spermatozoon' reference an additional piece of evidence for the idea that this language is drawing directly on the Notes.

The second time that the term 'sperm' appears is, as we have seen, right after 'whelping' and 'menstruation' are mentioned. Beckett gives a harsh portrayal of 'a dying sperm' in a passage replete with birth and death (womb-tomb) symbolism: 'the slut has yet to menstruate capable of whelping me, that should singularly narrow the field of research, a sperm dying, of cold, in the sheets, feebly wagging its little tail, perhaps I'm a drying sperm, in the sheets of an innocent boy' (Grove Press Edition, p. 102r). It also appears in the French version as 'un sperme qui meurt' and 'je suis peut-être un sperme qui sèche' (Minuit 1971).

The bleak pathos produced here of the Unnamable being a 'drying [and dying] sperm, in the sheets of an innocent boy' relates back to a short passage preceding, and points to another one following this passage, all including birth-death subtexts where the voice piles up accusations against 'all ye living bastards, you'll be all right, you'll see, you'll never be born

again, what am I saying, you'll never have been born'³¹ (Grove Press Edition, p. 102r). This stance is maintained in the latter passage one page after the words 'menstruation' and 'spermatozoon' appear: 'Be born, dear friends, be born, enter my arse, you'll just love my colic pains, it won't take long, I've the bloody flux (ibid, pp. 103-4r). In between, the voice evokes the drying/dying sperm scene by yearning for 'death' soon after 'birth' from a 'wet dream': 'some people are lucky, born of a wet dream and dead before morning, I must say I'm tempted' (ibid, p. 103r).

The voice's possible resistance to the 'textbook' language introduced at this point is implied by its sporadic enunciations of sardonic denials and acrimonious derisions, especially of 'them': 'Oyez, oyez, I was like them, before being like me' (ibid, p. 102r). Then again, it derides its own 'life' which it is 'tempted' to end: 'they want to bore me to sleep, at long range, for fear I might defend myself, they want to catch me alive, so as to be able to kill me, thus I shall have lived, they think I'm alive, what a business' (ibid, p. 103r). The implied reference to 'spermatozoon' dream gains more credibility when the voice mentions the word 'boy' linking the idea of being 'born of a wet dream and dead before morning' back to a drying/dying sperm 'in the sheets of an innocent boy': 'the bright boy is there, for the excellent reason that counts as living too, counts as murder, it's notorious, ah you can't deny it, some people are lucky, born of a wet dream and dead before morning, I must say I'm tempted' (ibid, p. 103r). Further on, the voice speaks of 'stories' from which nothing can be 'got': 'there's nothing to be got, there was never anything to be got from those stories, I have mine, somewhere, let them tell it to me, they'll see there's nothing to be got from it either, nothing to be got from me, it will be the end, of this hell of stories, you'd think I was cursing them' (ibid, p. 103r). Then it openly 'curses' them and 'imputes words to them you wouldn't throw to a dog':

[...] always the same old trick, you'd be sorry for them, perhaps I'll curse them yet, they'll know what it is [sic] to be a subject of conversation, I'll impute words to them you wouldn't throw to a dog, an ear, a mouth and in the middle a few rags of mind, I'll get my own back, a few flutters of mind, they'll see what it's like (ibid, p. 103r).

31 See the Nietzsche epigraph on Silenus in Rank's *The Trauma of Birth* (142). Rank recalls 'the completely changed attitude to death as expressed by the wisdom of Silenus in eulogizing the fortune of being unborn' (142).

The voice abhors and refutes the idea of being a ‘subject of conversation’, a notion that links its stance back to the psychoanalytic subject imputing words to ‘them’ who are watching it suffer with its ‘few rags of mind’. Finally, it decides to pay tribute to them by ‘shitting on them’: ‘I’ll clap an eye at random in the thick of the mess, on the off chance something might stray in front of it, then I’ll let down my trousers and shit stories on them’ (ibid, p. 103r). The passage links up with the Unnamable’s fictional ‘friends’ which the voice imagines are being born through his rectum. This diatribe, among others, in this densely psychoanalytic context is only another bitter denunciation of the ‘textbook’ language by the voice which wishes ‘they’ could mind their own business since what they require of it is impossible: ‘They’ll see what it’s like, that it’s not so easy as it looks, that y you must have a taste for it, that you must be born alive, that it’s not something you can acquire, that will teach them perhaps, to keep their nose out of my business’ (ibid, p. 104r). As far as the unnamable voice lets itself ‘drop among the contumacious’ (ibid, p. 103r), such perennial rebellion persists on in the text.

In *L’Innommable*, Beckett presents us with a language that generates itself through constant negation: indeed, this was the only way that the textual – and creative – completion of this novel could take place. Therefore, he opted for a psychoanalytically inflected language that heralds the ‘talking cure’ that failed precisely *because* this made it possible for the creative process to continue. In fact, the psychoanalytic language in *The Unnamable* is constantly being used from two angles: it underlies very many of the pathological ‘symptoms’ of the voice, and defines it as in many ways a ‘specimen’; yet there is also an excess, an ambiguity, a resistance, and an elision of the language of ‘textbook’ psychology. So much so that the self-in-words becomes a self-in-process, an undoing/redoing voice that can use the language of the textbook like any other, but that can never be fully defined by that language: ‘Having nothing to say, no words but the words of others, I have to speak’ (Grove Press Edition, 28r). It is this excess of the self-as-being-composed-and-undone that makes a completion of the talking cure impossible – but that also makes the creative process possible.

Conclusion

Initially, the idea for this thesis grew out of my article on the topos of the ‘mound’³² in Beckett’s *Happy Days*, *Waiting for Godot*, *First Love* and *The Expelled*. The article examines both psychoanalytic and more etymological resonances of this image in Beckett’s works. It seems characteristic of Beckett’s creative process that specific images and phrases are used and re-used, against an accumulating background of sources, ideas and inter-textual allusions. Beckett’s topoi are always highly complex, and no simplistic correlation between a psychoanalytic ‘source’ and Beckett’s creative deployment should be expected; yet correlations are nonetheless possible and do point to one important ingredient in Beckett’s thinking.

Quite apart from Beckett’s corpus of writing in general, even within *L’Innommable/The Unnamable* itself there is still potential for further analysis from the same perspective I have developed here; a perspective which, I believe, can be extended to further work in Beckett studies. Concepts such as the ‘gaze’ and the ‘mother’ which may be linked to ‘narcissism’ and the ‘womb-tomb’ respectively, can contribute to an even deeper understanding of the text, not least from the psychological point of view. Moreover, color imagery, especially the colors ‘white’, ‘grey’, and ‘black/dark’, can be linked to the Unnamable’s psychoneurotic condition of paranoid delusions or paraphrenia as described in the ‘Psychology Notes’.

There is obvious potential for further research in the genetic study of psychoanalytic, and philosophical, sources in Samuel Beckett’s creative process, especially in relation to the imminent publication of a manuscript edition of the recently recovered manuscript notebooks towards *Murphy* (edited by John Pilling), and the upcoming BDMP module of *Watt* (edited by Mark Byron). These texts are central works in Beckett’s creative development, with the former

³²Reza Habibi, ‘The Topos of the Mound in Samuel Beckett’s Writing’. *American, British, and Canadian Studies*. 21 (2014).

novel especially written during the main period of his note-taking and psychotherapy, and both of them including protagonists spending time in mental asylums. Therefore, further research in the field can better reveal just how central Beckett's engagement with psychoanalysis was to his artistic development.

I believe that the advantages of further work in this area would be many for Beckett scholars. First, they will be able to develop their interest in psychoanalysis and philosophy as intellectual background to Beckett on a sound empirical basis. Second, they will be furthering their interest in close textual analysis and the etymology and creative usage of individual words and phrases as a way into close reading. Finally, the project marries two very important trends within contemporary Beckett studies: namely, the documentary focus on his intellectual sources, and the genetic study of his manuscripts, access to which has improved dramatically through the BDMP project and also the availability of the crucial new *Murphy* notebooks (now open for consultation at the University of Reading, with a transcribed edition soon to be published). Wider examination of these extremely rich, previously inaccessible materials will undoubtedly change the direction of Beckett Studies in general.

Works Cited

Archival sources:

Trinity College, Dublin

Beckett International Foundation, Reading

Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, Austin, Texas

Samuel Beckett Digital Manuscript Project (BDMP: see www.beckettarchive.org).

L'Innommable/The Unnamable. Grove Press Edition, France: Minuit, 1971.

---. *FN1*, MS HRC SB/3/10

---. *FN2*, MS HRC SB/4/1

---. *EN1*, MS HRC SB/5/9/1

---. *EN2*, MS HRC SB/5/9/2

---. *EN3*, MS HRC SB/5/9/3

Psychology Notes: TCD MS10971/7 and MS10971/8. Oxford: Oxford Brookes University, PhD Thesis: 2004.

Other sources:

Ackerley, C. J. and S. E. Gontarski. *The Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett*. New York: Grove Press, 2004.

Adler, Alfred. *The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology*. London: Routledge, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1924.

---. *The Neurotic Constitution: Outlines of a Comparative Individualistic Psychology and*

- Psychotherapy*. Literary Licensing LLC, 2014.
- Anzieu, Didier. *Beckett*. Paris: Seuil/Archimbaud, 2007.
- Bair, Deirdre. *Samuel Beckett*. London: Picador, 1980.
- Baker, Phil. *Beckett and the Mythology of Psychoanalysis*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997.
- Beckett, Samuel. *Happy Days*. Grove/Atlantic, Incorporated, 2013.
- . *L'Innommable*. Paris: Minuit, 1953.
- . *Nouvelles et Textes pour rien*. Paris: Editions De Minuit, 1958.
- . *Worstward Ho*. United Kingdom: John Calder, 1983.
- . *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*. New York: Arcade Publishing, 1993.
- . *First Love and Other Shorts*. New York: Grove Press, 2007.
- . *Endgame*. United Kingdom: Faber & Faber, 2009.
- . *Endgame and Act without Words*. New York: Grove Press, 2009.
- . *The Unnamable*. New York: Grove Press, 2009.
- . *The Expelled*. United Kingdom: Penguin Books, 2011.
- . *Malone Dies*. United Kingdom: Faber & Faber, 2012.
- . *Mercier and Camier*. United Kingdom: Faber & Faber, 2012.
- . *Molloy*. United Kingdom: Faber & Faber, 2012.
- . *More Pricks than Kicks*. United Kingdom: Faber & Faber, 2012.
- . *Murphy*. United Kingdom: Faber & Faber, 2012.
- . *Waiting for Godot*. United Kingdom: Faber & Faber, 2012.
- . *Watt*. United Kingdom: Faber & Faber, 2012.
- . *Happy Days*. New York: Grove/Atlantic, Incorporated, 2013.
- . *Krapp's Last Tape*. United Kingdom: W. F. Howes Limited, 2013.
- Brown, Llewellyn. 'Voice and Pronouns in Samuel Beckett's *The Unnamable*', *Journal of Beckett Studies*, 2 (2011).
- Cohn, Ruby. *A Beckett Canon*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2001.
- Eliot, T. S. *Four Quartets*. United States Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014.
- Feldman, Mathew. *Beckett's Books: A Cultural History of the Interwar Notes*. London: Continuum, 2006.

- . *Sourcing Aporetics: An Empirical Study on Philosophical Influences in the Development of Samuel Beckett's Writing*. Oxford Brookes University, 2004.
- Ferenczi, Sandor. *Contributions to Psychoanalysis*. R.G. Badger, 2016.
- Fordham, Finn. *I Do I Undo I Redo: The Textual Genesis of Modernist Selves*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Freud, Sigmund. *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*. Martino Publishing, 2013.
- . *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Literary Licensing LLC, 2014.
- Habibi, Reza. 'The Topos of the Mound in Samuel Beckett's Writing'. *American, British, and Canadian Studies*, 21 (2014: 41-60).
- Hegel, Georg. *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*. Penguin UK, Jul 29, 2004.
- Jones, Ernest. *Papers on Psycho-Analysis*. Baillière, Tindall & Cox, 1948.
- . *Treatment of the Neuroses*. Baillière, Tindall & Cox, 1920.
- Joyce, James. *Work in Progress*. Donald Friede, 1927.
- . *Ulysses*. Bookpubber, 2014.
- . *Finnegans Wake*. Point Blank Classics, 2013.
- Killingsworth, M. Jimmie. *The Growth of Leaves of Grass: the Organic Tradition in Whitman Studies*. Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1993.
- Knowlson, James. *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett*. Bloomsbury, 1997.
- Mann, Thomas. *Die Entstehung des Doktor Faustus: Roman eines Roman*. Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1995.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm. *Jenseits von Gut und Bose (Beyond Good and Evil)*. Serenity Publishers. 2008.
- Nixon, Mark. *Samuel Beckett's German Diaries 1936-1937*. Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011.
- O'Hara, J. D. *Samuel Beckett's Hidden Drives: Structural Uses of Depth Psychology*. University Press of Florida, 1997.
- O'Reilly, EdouardMagessa. 'Molloy, Part II, Where the Shit Hits the Fan: Ballyba's Economy

- and the Worth of the World'. *Genetic Joyce Studies*, 6 (2006).
- Prince, Gerald. *A Dictionary of Narratology*. U of Nebraska Press, 2003.
- Proust, Marcel. *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Gallimard, 1999.
- Rank, Otto. *The Trauma of Birth*. Kegan Paul, Trench, Turbner and Co., 1929.
- Richardson, Brian. 'Denarration in Fiction: Erasing the Story in Beckett and Others'. *Narrative*, 2 (2001: 168-175).
- . *Unnatural Voices: Extreme Narration in Modern and Contemporary Fiction*. Ohio State University Press, 2006.
- Schopenhauer, Arthur. *The World as Will and Representation*. Dover Publications, 1966.
- . *The World as Will and Idea*. Everyman Paperback, 1995.
- Shillingsburg, Peter L. *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age: Theory and Practice*. University of Michigan Press, 1996.
- Strachey, James. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*. Hogarth Press, 1993.
- Stekel, Wilhelm. *Psychoanalysis and Suggestion Therapy: Their Technique, Applications, Results, Limits, Dangers, and Excesses*. London; Moffat, Yard & Company: New York, 1923.
- Stephen, Karen. *Psychoanalysis and Medicine: The Wish to Fall Ill*. Cambridge U.P., 1933.
- Tonning, Erik. *Samuel Beckett's Abstract Drama*. International Academic Publishers, 2007.
- Van Hulle, Dirk & Mark Nixon. *Samuel Beckett's Library*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Van Hulle, Dirk. *Textual Awareness: A Genetic Study of Late Manuscripts by Joyce, Proust, and Mann*. University of Michigan Press, 2004.
- . *Manuscripts Genetics, Joyce's Know-How, Beckett's Nohow*. University Press of Florida, 2008.
- . *Modern Manuscripts: The Extended Mind and Creative Undoing from Darwin to*

Beckett and Beyond. Bloomsbury Academic, 2014.

--- . 'The Obidil and the Man of Glass: Denarration, Genesis and Cognition in Beckett's

Molloy, Malone meurt/Malone Dies and L'Innommable/The Unnamable', *Samuel Beckett*

Today/Aujourd'hui, 26 (2014: 25-39).

Weller, Shane. 'Staging Psychoanalysis: Endgame and the Freudian Theory of the Anal-Sadistic Phase', *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui*, 22 (2010: 135-147).

Woodworth, R. S. *Contemporary Schools of Psychology*. New York: Roland, 1948.

Worthington, Kim L. *Self as Narrative: Subjectivity and Community in Contemporary Fiction*. Clarendon Press, 1996.

Manuscript Chronology

