

**THE CONSTITUTION OF SUBJECTIVITY IN THE
NARRATIVE OF BECKETT'S, 'UNNAMABLE'**

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DECLARATION

Certified that the Dissertation entitled THE CONSTITUTION OF SUBJECTIVITY IN THE NARRATIVE OF BECKETT'S UNNAMABLE, submitted by George Varghese K, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy, has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University and is his own work.

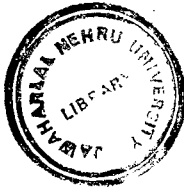
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INTRODUCTION

Beckett's Unnamable, the last fiction in the Trilogy series, can be called a "veritable piece of modern madness", due to its unique narrative patterns, and idiosyncratic style. This novel maintains its affinity to the two other novels in Trilogy on such aspects like first-person narrative, plotless structures, violation of syntactic and semantic decorum, as well as the peculiar stream-of-consciousness method of narrative that is employed.

Trilogy consists of two other novels, excluding Unnamable. The first two are Molloy and Malone Dies. Through these novels Beckett reveals a peculiar fictional space, which can be rightfully called 'modern'. One of the formidable problems Beckett faced was finding an identity for himself, in the realm of fiction in an area which was already revolutionized by, Joyce, Proust and Kafka. Beckett is forced to resort to a conscious and highly stylized art in the tradition of Joyce and Proust. Its leitmotif is existential agony and paralysis. It is peopled by some incommensurables and pseudo-selves who are fruitlessly searching the meaning of their existence. Existence for him is a kitten trying to catch its own tail". It is a futile

quest ultimately. One of his most favourite metaphor for man's existence is taken from mathematics. Beckett says that man is like $\sqrt{2}$ which is an irrational number. We know that it exists somewhere between 1 and 1.5, but we can never reach it. It is a function which exists, but can never be known fully. Similarly man, like root 2 exists somewhere as a function, but can never be reached in his ultimate meaning, nor can be equal to himself.

It is this fundamental theme that is powerfully treated in his plays and novels. One principle which he always followed in his aesthetic practice was the notion of reality as chaos. Conventional art was always opposed to the chaos of reality. So it developed forms to order this chaos into lifeless structures. Art is fundamentally opposed to reality. Beckett in turn is opposed to such Procrustean forms, which are mimetic, mechanical and rational. By championing a non-formal art, Beckett does not mean that there will be no more form in art since now. But it will be a new form which can accommodate the chaos of reality with maximum authenticity and internal freedom.

The elements of this manifesto are reflected in his fictions. Molloy is juxtaposition of two symmetrical narratives proffered by Molloy and his alter ego Moran. In its unfoldment, one finds gruesome images of decrepitude

of discourse grammar, and syntax, Beckett aims at a different sort of fiction. A fiction that, like Joyce's, tries not to communicate something through language, but to proffer the unique nihilistic pleasure of destroying language's capacity of representation in and through language itself. Hence a meta-criticism is impossible.

The first problem that confronts us is the total content of the novel as the speech or 'logorrhoea' of a single character named Unnamable. Then its dividing of itself into itself and the minimal range of words that are used in this process. Most of the words are centred around pronouns and deictic forms. There are no referential events in the story, except the sight of the processes of Unnamable's schizoid splits. In its long narrative there are a few imaginary stories which create the illusion of a real, referential situation. These in turn are the result of Unnamable's delirium, and nothing else.

Unnamable defeats all attempts of conventional empirical criticism based on a meaning-catching process. On the other hand philosophical criticism also fails since it cannot function without the concept of a unified ego which can be articulated within the space of its logical paradigms. A structuralist paradigm

too, meets with the same fate as it also depends on certain segments of signification, which are objectively and consciously mobilized in its symbolic theoretical space. This state inevitably leaves us with few alternative paradigms, like semiotics and its post-structuralist variants. A conventional semiotic analysis strictly based on the principles of linguistics like 'binarism' also fails here since syntactically the narrative cannot be divided into meaningful narrative units. It is one long unparagraphed monologue. It is only after taking into consideration, all these constraints, that I have proposed an alternative paradigm.

The paradigm I have applied is based on the post-structuralist premises of Lacan's psycho-analysis. Lacan's trajectory is constituted of a reading of structuralism into the Freudian problematic. The crucial point of emphasis in Lacan is speech. His thesis on psychoanalysis is based on the relation between language, subject and reality. He offers a viable mode of analysis, for the constitution of 'subjectivity' and 'speech' in a symptomatic unity. Since Unnamable's existence is in speech, and its progression only through pathogenic ruptures, Lacan's system is the most suitable for the analysis. I have reached the conclusion that, Unnamable's monologue is a symptomatic

gesture of a deeper malady of psychosis. The question that immediately arises is that, how can a model from a different discipline like psychoanalysis can be applied in constituting literary subjectivity. This I have attempted in the light of the modern concepts of 'textuality' and discourse, which was developed by French semioticians and post-structuralists. These new concepts have erased the fetishized boundaries of 'work' and have replaced it by 'text' which is a much more flexible concept. It has escaped the 'closed' boundaries of text to merge with other discourses in its vicinity. The concept of 'discourse' has subverted such notions of ideal discourse in literature based on plot and verisimilitude. It rightfully asserts the autonomy and freedom of modern literary discourse in its effort to embody other adjacent discourses.

The first chapter is an introductory chapter. It presents and describes, the nature of Beckett's art and modernity. It also presents "Unnamable" and its textual peculiarities in relation to the other novels in the Trilogy.

The second chapter is an overview and critique of two critical paradigms applied to Unnamable based on the premises of Hegel's idealist metaphysics and

Sartre's existential ontology. St. Johns Lance Butler inevitably commits an oversight of two discourses, when he literally equates certain lines of Hegel and Beckett which have only vague syntactic resemblances. L.A.C. Dobrez, who applies a Sartrean model, in turn has made a more serious attempt to reduce the Unnamable to a more inclusive subjectivity of en-soi-pour-soi (in-itself-for-itself) which is equivalent to the position of God in Sartrean system. He puts forward the thesis that Unnamable occupies a position of an "Original Being" in Beckettian Oeuvre as the unity of 'Being-Nothing'; in which all other Beckettian themes are centered as well as all of them achieve origin, meaning and identity.

The third chapter is an analysis of Unnamable's discursive specificity, in relation to the fictional space, subjectivity and narrative time. In this attempt, a contrast with modern narrative fictions becomes inevitable. I have attempted to contrast Unnamable, especially its temporal scheme with that of Proust, Joyce and Virginia Woolf.

The fourth chapter is on methodology, which is the prelude to my post-structuralist positions in the reading of Unnamable. A complex text like Unnamable

demands, a more comprehensive paradigm, and its well propounded philosophical premises. Hence I have discussed in detail the terrain of structuralism, with special emphasis on the structuralist subjectivity, problems of history and 'historical unconscious', as they were developed by Levi-Strauss and Althusser. I have here pointed out the possible structural positions in the reading of Unnamable and a critique of its scope. The chapter ends with the critique of structuralism by Derrida.

The last chapter is a 'reading' of Unnamable than 'criticism'. Criticism, I believe is a much more ideological operation, which presupposes a certain degree of distinction and distance from the text which is read. With post-structuralism and deconstruction, the text has turned to be a methodological field in which both text and reader work on each other. We are demanded of the surrender of a Conscious Subjectivity to merge with the labyrinthine interstices of the text. This experience is more real than an anatomic operation of criticism. Moreover the paradigm I have applied, does not suit a meaning-extracting criticism. It just tries to fix the conditions and possibilities of a discourse such as that of Unnamable's. I have read the text in the light of Lacanian positions on

subjectivity, speech, imaginary, real, symbolic, unconscious and the other. An earlier attempt of reading Molloy with Lacanian paradigm was made by Thomas Ceausinaue. My attempt in turn, to read Unnamable is a logical conclusion of this new way of reading Beckett's Trilogy with more modern conceptual insights.

CHAPTER - I

THE DESIRING MACHINES OF TWILIGHT

CHAPTER - I

'Unnamable', the last novel of the Trilogy is the very apotheosis of Beckett's trenchant preoccupations with surfictions and subfictions. It faithfully emblemizes the heretic notions of an anti-art, which he relentlessly championed throughout his career as a playwright and novelist. This novel constitutes, the heightened drama in the consciousness of a manic monologist desperately searching for identity, through a process of self-generated splits into various avatars, and imaginary identifications. This schizoid process obviously fails at the end and leads the text to the vicinity of a more abstract realm. The textual surface is replete with treadmill movements of slidings, digressions, negations, ruptures, etc which counterpoint the schizoid theme that is treated in the text. The schizoidism we read for, is the amalgamated effect of contrary voices assumed by the subject 'I' in its imaginary circumnavigations through the 'word'. At one moment it talks the sublime logos of a Greek sophist while at the next it becomes an agonized foetus, craving for the bountiful tunnel of the womb. At another time it becomes a globe trotter on one leg, on "its homologous crutch", while in the next it creeps into the sawdust

like a worm. We are indeed stunned by the range and variety of these transubstantiations and still more at the fact that whatever it becomes, the thing 'talks'.

Posited between the illimitable poles of a fundamental ontology, the text never ends though the novel stops. The text begins with the questions "where now? who now? when now?. Unquestioning. I, say I. Unbelieving, Questions, hypothesis, call them that. Keep going, going on, call that going, call that on"¹. The text ends with a similar note, signifying the compulsion of a going on, the continuation of an interminable process of becoming surrogates and wearing of rhetorical masks. "...before the door that opens on my story - that would surprise me, if it opens it will be I, it will be the scheme, where I am, I don't know, I will never know, in the scheme you don't know, you must go on, I can't go on, I will go on....."²

In the discourse of Unnamable both meaning and word mistrust each other. It foregrounds following

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1. Samuel Beckett, Trilogy, (London: John Calder, 1959), p.293.
 2. *ibid.*, p.418^e.

peculiarities: (1) The absence of a unified ego which is replaced by a consciousness which is a set of limit functions; constantly splitting and mirroring itself into itself; (2) a labyrinthine network of word play which constitutes the subject to the point of invading and usurping its being in its totality; (3) the contestation of language within language where words kill words and the created eats the creator; (4) an Oedipal drama proffered by the unique sight of a discourse regressing towards the origin to redeem the original repression it underwent some time in history; (5) a vertiginous ambivalence created between a discursive subjectivity in and through the language and a more objective, referential, subjectivity tangible behind the discourse; (6) and the presence of an uncommon symbolic space in which the previous Beckettian characters tread in a ghostly luminance, oblivious of their role and function.

Beckett's Art

Beckettian artistry is grounded in certain radical assumptions and philosophical positions. His uncompromising credo is evident in the unique design of his antifictions and absurd plays. They are veritable

symbols of a perverse art. Here words have run riot; an oppressive silence reigns often interrupted by the sound of a fart or that of a "peripatetic piss"; where as few grotesque crepescular beings strut, who gleefully observe the forced, spastic movements of a few leftover organs in their body which is the only testament and proof of their existence. Beckett has created mysterious parables and inordinate myths about the twilight of a civilization. His oeuvre is a chaotic synopsis of the death of God, collapse of systems, futility of self search, and above all the faithless truancy of his language that had shirked from man's grasp in which he once wove tales to palliate his 'mortal tedium'. The leftovers in this world are objects of a minimal existence- broken toys of an infantilized civilization and paraphernalias of a humanity rendered clownish (hats, tapes, pencils, bicycles, stones, crutches, urns, dustbins etc.) It is peopled by mad Cartesians let loose into a rudderless logorrhoea; neurasthenics bearing the ineluctable brunt of modern alienation; cryp-to-existentialists unfolding their quotidian journey from "spermarium to crematorium" (Murphy); sadists of lunatic energy pumping into one cunt to avenge another that had ejected them into their accursed births (Unnamable); and seedy

solipsists of maimed trunks making imaginary globe trotings etc. All this is enacted at a suspended point of time, in a metaspace lit by the 'brain colour', in the accompaniment of a somber music of silence, and a demented philosophical humour. The agony, rhythm and meaninglessness of Beckettian universe is pertinently summarised by V.S. Pritchett:

They are lawsuits that never end, vexations, litigations, joined with the tedium, the grayness, the grief, the fear, the rage, the clownishness, the physical miseries of old age where life is on low ebb, the nature stands by smiling idiotically. Why was I born, get me out of this, let me live on less and less, get me to the grave, the womb, the last door, dragging this ludicrous, feeble, winding, broken, old bag of pipes with me. Find me a hole. Give me deafness and blindness; chop off the gangrened leg; somewhere on this rubbish dumb where I crawl there must be the final dustbin; where I can dribble laugh, beg and meander on this end that of the general mystery and occasionally give a toothless, grin over an obscene world or a farcical sexual memory. 3

The opening of art fully to the chaos of life is the major tendency in Beckett's art. The fundamental principles of reality are chaos and flux whereas the essence of art is form and order. One resolution is offered by Artaud - i.e. the elimination of the representation of the distinction between art and life. Beckett's search is for a new form of representation; a form

3. V.S. Pritchett, The Trilogy in Samuel beckett - The Critical Heritage, (London: R.K.P., 1979), p.195.

which contains the chaos of reality. The artistic dangers are first in remaking the chaos into something rational and orderly and thus changing the chaos by applying some convenient systems to the 'mess' or pretending to understand and explain it; and secondly by losing representation altogether. Beckett is more concerned with the resolution of the contraries of form and chaos, art and reality to emerge with a transcendent form rather than resorting to either one of them. Beckett expatiates this in an interview:

What I am saying does not mean that there will henceforth be no form in art. It only means that there will be a new form and this form will be of such a type that it admits the chaos is really something else.....To find a form that accomodates⁴ the mess, that is the task of the artist now.

The function of the artist is not to fit reality into pre-conceived forms. Art is always in the process of manipulating reality into the intelligibility of cause and effect which it is not. Beckett's art thus shows an escape from reification, moving towards an essentialist abstraction; towards simple and universal. We find it nearing a certain form of anti-emotional

4. Samuel Beckett, cited by Tom Driver; Samuel Beckett: The Critical Heritage, (London: R.K.P., 1979). p.219.

effect which Brecht achieved with his concept of alienation and historicising. It moves towards a patterned disconnection of motifs which are not arranged in a cause-effect chain but by the application of an inherent logic. This process often entails conscious destruction of logical connections, fracturing of a consistent narrative, the abandonment of a linear narration and incorporation of more abstract and universal patterns of music and numbers. The works' evolution finally becomes a form of devolution, a denouement of spirals, so much so that it marginalizes the conscious, autobiographical and empirical.

The most important aim in his compositional structure is to develop intrinsic forms, some alternative patterns or relations to substitute the causal logic, narrative representation and verisimilitude. Beckett searches for a form not imposed into the text from outside, but one which organically grows out of the text's discourse itself. He emphasises on the absence of relationships, rejection of conventional fictional discourses based on formal patterns such as Acts and Scenes etc.) and even the inclusive consciousness of an ordering and unifying the narrative ego. He rejects even a Joycean model of stream of consciousness

and substitutes it by a movement of imageless signifiers since the former too implies a certain form of 'perspectivism' based on the concept of a rational cogito. Gontarski identifies three main elements in Beckett's craft.

- "(1) Deleting detail explanations and often connections.
- (2) Rejecting consciously and destroying those artificial, man-made expressive systems of chronology and causality.
- (3) Creating an alternative arrangement of internal relationships that will emphasise pattern if not order."⁵

Beckett handles language and its tropic resources to suit this technical iconoclasm. His avowed subscription to a decentered narrative makes him manipulate the textual discourse to defy any attempt to pose a 'meta-language' on its 'object language'. It brings to our consideration the way fiction takes upon itself; questions its status as self-referring constructs contrasted to the autonomous play of language. It is a questioning that questions itself that is at the heart of this black comedy where the narration undertakes a futile quest to find its own meaning in and through itself.

5. Gontarski, S.E., "The Intent of Undoing in Samuel Beckett's Art", Modern Fiction Studies, Vol.29, Number 1, (USA: Purdue Research Foundation, Spring, 1983), p.20.

In Beckett we find the aggressive gestures of a language progressively alienating itself from the procrustean grip of the author and strategically situating itself in the autonomous realm of signifiers. In Beckett language proves its potential for proliferating independent meanings through its signifiers which are more akin to the chaos of reality in contrast to the partisan and fragmentary meaning it produced under the ideological ballasts imposed upon it by conscious and conformist authors. It is this belief that makes Molloy utter his relation to reality through the word. "Yes, even then, when already all was feeding waves and particules, there could be no things but nameless things, no names but thingless names: I say that now, but after all what do I know about them, now when the icy words hail down upon me, the icy meanings, all the world dies too, foully named. All I know is what the words know."⁶

Trilogy and Unnamable

Beckett's Trilogy consists of three novels, Molloy, Malone Dies, and Unnamable. All are first

6. Samuel Beckett, Molloy, trans: Patrick Bowles with the author, in Three Novels by Samuel Beckett, (New York: Crone Press, 1965), p.31.

person narratives. While Molloy is an exception, with two characters, both the other novels consist of single character engaged in abysmal games with in their long winding soliloquies. The stark economy of these novels regarding events and characters can be accounted for in the light of the kind of existential themes Beckett treat in them. For Beckett existence means existence in an irremediable present, a bane from which nothing could salvage, not even death. Death is not a preferable alternative to the existential "angst", 'why', 'what', and 'how' of this inescapable 'thrownness' into an ineluctable existence is his permanent theme. Here opposites vanish. Meaning and meaninglessness become one, a mute uniformity results. We are proffered the sight of existential squirrels boring deep and deep into the recesses of their 'monadic' existence. Every principle, identity, and movement in his work has a direct bearing on this belief. He subscribes this belief to the doctrines of Bruno, who had a deep influence on him. In the Joyce article he points out:

There is no difference, says Bruno, between the smallest possible cord and the smallest arc, no difference between the infinite circle and the straight line. The maxima and minima of particular contraries are one and indifferent.

Minimal heat equals minimal cold. Consequently transmutations are circular. The principle (minimum) of one contrary takes its movement from the principle (maximum) of another. Therefore not only do the minima coincide with the maxima, maxima with maxima but the minima with a maxima in the succession of transmutations. Maximum speed is a state of rest. The maximum of corruption and the minimum of generation are identical in principle. Corruption is generation. And all things are ultimately identified with God, the universal monad, Monad of monads.

Art opposed to artless is irrelevant in this context. Being and Nothing coincide. Expression in art is as much a failure of expression; "the expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, together with the obligation to express".⁸

In *Molloy*, the first novel, the vanishing of opposites into one another in its existential mutation can be clearly seen when the second character, progressively gets shorn of all attributes of a conscious citizen and finally reduced to the predicament of his alter ego, Molloy, a neuter organism who resembles something of a subhuman. Molloy, a complex novel is the 'bicyclical'

7. S. Beckett and others, Our Examination Round His Factification For Incamination of Work in Progress, (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), p.6.

8. S. Beckett, Proust and Three Dialogues with Georges Dathuit, (London: Calder and Boyers, 1970), p.103.

tale of two quest-heroes, searching for undefinable destinies of redemption. The novel is divided into two first person narratives of equal length. The first tale consists of the adventures of Molloy, a cripple, and tramp, beginning a long journey to alleviate sheer tedium of an insipid existence, towards his bed-ridden incontinent or perhaps dead mother. The nostalgic striving of Molloy can be symbolically interpreted as a wish to return to the primal security of a womb existence from the tumult of a modern existence. Molloy never reaches the idyll of a primal existence but somewhere into "room-womb" of his mother where he writes his story in the first person narrative.

The second half of the novel is narrated by Molloy's opposite, the honest, highly moral and socially conscious citizen, Jacques Moran, who is deputed by authorities to search Molloy in a spy-like fashion. The reason is ambiguous. A supreme parodic twist turns this spy-story suspense into a Kafkaesque, existential search, at the end of which Moran becomes a debilitated prototype of Molloy himself. Both narratives are written in the first person by individuals who have lived through these experiences. As an anti-novel we observe its intimate affinity with the tradition

of Rabelais, Sterne and Joyce. This novel is an ironic reversal of the novel of quest-hero patterns. In the quest-hero's search the movement is from darkness towards light, from ignorance to knowledge or from chaos to a spiritual sublimity. Beckett reverses it to present us with two decomposing clowns, who with the progression of narrative, slide into the irretrievable depths of darkness. The symmetrically arranged narrative functions as ironic parallels since each mirrors and comments on the other. Each coposit dialectically with other finding its meaning in and through the other. One becomes in one and single movement the 'other' as well as the 'other' of the 'other'. This internally reflecting work is a supreme satirical narration of universal man's futile yearning for achievements and accomplishments, amidst a civilization that has suddenly grown old.

The second novel of the Trilogy is Malone Dies. It is the first person account of the last hours of a dying invalid. The action is set in a room whose shape is known and whose contents are visible. The room, however, is an undifferentiated building in an unknown street in an unknown town. Malone is mute and at least partially deaf. His legs and head are paralysed, but he can write, feed himself and control

the objects in his vicinity with the help of a long, hooked stick. His material needs are taken care of by an old woman who brings his food and removes his chamber pot. However, about the two-third of the book the old woman stops coming. And losing his stick, Malone becomes a self-centred being. Like the Unnamable he engages in imaginary creations of various other lives, hoping in this way to placate the torment of his last hours. One of the imaginary being he creates is Scapo Saposcat, a name meaning knowledge of dung or injury. This personage, a metaphor for mankind is later renamed Macmann or son of man, that is Christ. In the course of the tale he degenerates from a dialatory scholar to a friendless tramp, and then to an inmate in an asylum. His tale is an inverted parable of expiation and suffering and he is not only a Jesus, but also a Job.

In the larger design of the Trilogy 'Malone Dies' occupies a mediatory position between two pole-ends, Molloy and Unnamable. In its narrative techniques and stylistic specificities it is a synthesis of elements taken from both the other novels. For Malone is like Molloy, a namable being, a man aware of his former existence and capable of apprehending and living his earthly conditions. He is a being of earth, conscious

of his surroundings and possessions, and capable of satisfying elementary human needs like digestion and defecation. But in a deeper epistemological existence it more and more comes to resemble Unnamable. Molloy tells his own story, while Malone tells others' stories. Like Unnamable it occupies a more remote realm of existence, somewhere near death and tells parables of others to himself, to palliate the tedium inevitable in a monotonous waiting for death.

A literal interpretation can logically fix the order of progression from Moran to semicripple (Molloy) and further to Malone who has lost the use of his legs. At the end of the novel Malone may not be passing into death, but into the condition of Unnamable.

Unnamable, the last one in this series is the organic and logical culmination of radical fictional techniques Beckett employs in Molloy and Malone Dies. Though Molloy is an existential prototype he is posited amidst a tangible scene of human space and time. Malone definitely retreats into a much more self centred imaginary world of words and fables, but, nevertheless, he is not totally devoid of some fundamental human traits like eating and defecating. Unnamable is the finale, of the fictional techniques which were slowly

spewing of words, saturated with an ocean of comas, metaphors, apostrophes and verb tenses. His is an irreducible ego, a disembodied voice, asserting its verbal existence by deploying all the resources of rhetoric like ellipses, orders, prayers, threats, reproaches, reason etc. This child of words, says: "I am in words, made of words, others' words, what others? This place too, the air, the walls, the floor, the ceiling, all words, the whole world is here with me; I am the air, the walls, the walled in one...."¹⁰

The principle of the whole progression of narrative is a certain definition of the self by words or rather by signifiers initially; then a surreptitious slip into the signifiers that objectively defined it; then through them looking back into the original position; again it inturn defines this second identity and so on. These processes of looking/looked at, signification/elision, creation/killing, or to say all the verbal transsubstantiations drive the narrative, with a taut and jerky rhythm to a point of stasis where the last refuge of words also fails. Text is abandoned by the voice to merge with a realm beyond of primal silence.

10. Samuel Beckett, Irilogy, (London: John Calder, 1959), p.390.

The fictive identities of Unnamable proliferated in the masks of words show least reverence for a meaning-based rhetoric. In its autonomy and negating postures, the narration fictionalizes itself, and the failure of this fictionalization becomes another fiction and so on. Orders of form, content, meaning, expression etc. become a paradox before this failed narrative. In fact narrative categories undergo a paradoxical process in this fiction. Vivian Mercier wrote concerning this question:

The Unnamable's internal monologue may go on to infinity, for all we know. If it were to, we might describe this novel as a curve having one of its axes as an asymptote. In other words, as Y (the length of the novel) approaches infinity, X (the content of the novel) would approach nearer and nearer to zero. Content zero, length infinity - these¹¹ are the mathematical limits of this novel,

Unnamable is the preamble, the story of a story telling, he asserts in the beginning. Two opposing forces drive the narration. On the one hand, the inherent efforts of Unnamable, to stop the monologue and, on the other, the impossibility of it to stop. He attributes

11. Vivian Mercier, cited by Frederick J. Hoffmann, Samuel Beckett Now, ed. by Melvin J. Friedman, (USA: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), p.54.

this impossibility to the structures imposed on him by a sort of metaphoric 'other', a patriarchal fascist and his minions. We can never know who exactly is this 'Other' who controls the garrulous existence of Unnamable. Unnamable himself is unable to clearly identify this external force, gets only vague visions once in a while. He calls it by various names like 'Master', 'Other', 'Basil', etc. Opposed to this objective force is Unnamable's fissured self; and they enter into a dialectical relation where the 'Other' coerces Unnamable to assume an identity, which he assumes under certain names like Mahood, and Worm but only for a while. In a particular identity Unnamable tells make-believe stories which are confessions of torment and torture. After some time, for reasons not evident, he will change his identity to another name to tell a different story. He attributes this to "Others" work. This explanation cannot be relied upon. The change of identity is nothing, but a whimsical 'naming'.

Decidedly Basil is becoming important, I will call him Mahood instead, I prefer that, I am queer. It was he who told stories about me, lived in my stead, issued forth from me, lived in my stead, issued forth from me, came back to me, entered back into me, heaped stories on my head.

12. S. Beckett, Trilogy, (London: John Calder, 1959), p.31.

another lie in which the latest narrator finds himself imprisoned. To grow in this existential prison Unnamable has to undermine words by verbal games in the shifting ground of language. The novel's well known questions in the beginning - Where now? Who now? When now? - give rise not to answers but to playful manipulations of names, pronouns, verb tenses etc. or other deictic forms of shifters ('now', 'then', 'here', 'there!') that usually serve to anchor the speaker/narrator in time and space but ironically achieves the opposite effect in Unnamable by decentering and desituating its lone subjectivity.

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CHAPTER - II
CRITICAL PARADIGMS AND UNNAMABLE

offshoots, a few attempts have been lately made on Unnamable with certain rigorous philosophical paradigms.

Hegel, Sartre, and Unnamable

1. Hegel's Phenomenology of mind and Unnamable

In an exhaustive work on Beckett's fictions, Lance St. John Butler, brings out an analogical study between Unnamable and Hegel's treatment of consciousness and self-consciousness in the first part of Phenomenology of Mind. In this pursuit, Butler, highlights different movements and moments of Hegelian dialectic, in the first part of Phenomenology like sense-certainty, perception understanding etc. and contrast them with corresponding nodal points in Unnmable. In this attempt he commits grave errors. He literally equates literature with philosophy, his ground being the resemblances of certain utterances of Unnamable with some of Hegel's sentences in Phenomenology. Unfortunately, his undifferentiated oversight, fails to see the function of these moments or sentences he equates, as parts of two entirely different, systems of discourses with their own, exclusive autonomy and intelligibility. Let us look into this in more detail.

Hegelianism represents a grand edifice of abstractions as well as a unique and inclusive method

of philosophizing. In its one and single movement it syntherized the age old riddles of Philosophy, treated under various disparate headings like metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, physics, etc. by proffering a unique unifying method; i.e. the Dialectic. By its ontological logic and historical dialectic it posited, synthesized and constituted the renowned polarities of philosophy like object/subject, mind/matter, essence/being, noumenon/phenomenon etc. as part of the inscrutable unfolding of a transcendentant. Dialectical logic is method, matter, knowledge and movement in one and the same moment and coheres into one single tapestry, the partial dialectic of individual of mundane objects, of history; as well as the transcendentant dialectic of 'Geist' or 'Spirit'.

The principle of the dialectical movement of individual matter is the same as that of the dialectic of 'Spirit', which animates and propels history. Dialectical explanation is grounded on the triadic principle of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. The principle of its movement is 'becoming' through negation. In Hegelian version, all objects establish a relation with their opposites, and through this relation only matter can 'exist' and 'mean'. If black is not there white cannot be intelligible and vice versa. So white

in its individual existence, is rooted in an inherent contradiction. Its existence can be possible only by the existence of its opposite, that is black. As it is in and through this 'other', it is equally an 'other' in its ultimate determination. Hegel will say that, white exists by the negation of a negation by black. That is, white in itself is that which negates its negation by black. But white is essentially no black. Then what is its essence of existence? They are just moments of an eternally changing dialectic; and only in movement or becoming things can be possible and can achieve their ultimate meaning. About this "outwardly-in-it" existence of objects Hegel writes:

Being-for-other and Being-in-itself constitute the two moments of the something. There are here present two parts. (1) Something and Other, (2) Being-for-other, and Being-in-itself. The former contains the unrelatedness of determinateness; something and other fall apart. But their truth is their relations; being-for-other and being-in-itself are therefore above determinations posited as moments of one and the same something, as determinations which are relations and which remain in their unity, in the unity of determinate being. Each therefore at the same time also contains within itself its other moment, which is distinguished from it.

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1. G.W.F. Hegel, Science of Logic, Trans: A.V. Miller, (London: George Allen and Unwin 1969), p.119.

So in Hegelian point of view the positive realm of being is paralleled by a negative realm, a realm of Nothingness, which is identically, same as that of Being. An inverted Platonism is evident.

Then where does this contradiction, which exist only as moments in a movement, move to? Which is prior? Contradiction or movement? Being or becoming? In Hegel both are the same or moments of the logic of an ultimate movement (Geist), which in turn is nothing other than the realization of these individual movement and moments in a dialectical unity. Nothing is prior or posterior. Being and Nothing are identical. The contradiction which is at the heart of the thing is owing to its determination by opposite; in other words it is its restless wish to merge with the opposite. The 'Other' is also a contradictory being. Then what is the teleology of these play of contradictions? Hegel advances the thesis that individual contradictions are part of a larger contradiction; contradiction between two ontological moments; that is contradictory moments of the contradictionless (Geist). That is to say every movement in matter and history wishes to escape its contradiction and merge with the contradic-

tionless, which is the Spirit which is nothing but the dialectical unity of all these individual movements in history. Spirit is an originary, limitless, boundless, internally undifferentiated entity, which in a process of understanding itself differentiates and unfolds through history and time. The principle of its unfoldment is contradiction. That is to merge ultimately back into itself; to reach its moment of ultimate self-consciousness, which is same as that of the contradictionless origin from which it started. Hence the ultimate contradictionless Geist into which every matter runs is itself the final moment and result of the contradiction between its limit moments. This is the Hegelian logic, the snake with its tail in the mouth. Here for Hegel, history is not a chronological history, but the logical history of Spirit's ultimate design; the dialectical games of the supreme contradictionless contradiction.

Hegel posits this schema, into the Kantian problematic of epistemology, which is dealt with in the first part of 'Phenomenology of Mind'. For Kant knowledge presupposes a transcendental subject, with a unified mind which is actively engaged in the epistemological process. He escaped Cartesian Skepticism, by asserting the primacy of the active nature of mind. Mind comes to know through processes relating to its

various faculties. So there are various levels like sensation, perception, understanding, knowledge, etc, ending ultimately with Reason which are counterparts of the properties of nature. But in Kant one finds the contradiction between the ultimate nature of things and the limited faculty of human mind. Kantian mind is a sort of tribunal judge, judging over the news brought by its various deputies. Hegel poses two problems. What is the definition of an ideal mind in Kant? It is nothing other than that of a mediocre German. Second question; can the knowledge of the ultimate nature of things be possible? Kant, never dared to venture into the reality of a noumenal realm behind phenomenon. He rather escapes the question stating that it can be known by Reason ultimately and never explains the nature of this process. Hegel traps him here. Then are there two minds in one; one for phenomenon and one for noumenon? So much for the fissure of Kantian mind.

Hegel's scheme is dialectical; that is, knowledge is a relation. It can know itself, only by becoming conscious of something outside it. This something is also irrelevant without the knowing of it. A shade of Berkeleyanism is evident here; esse est percipi.

Like Kant, this consciousness also has different levels of becoming conscious of, exactly corresponding to the, various levels, of the nature of things, such as essence and appearance. So the ultimate nature of things are knowable, in mind's progression from one level to other, corresponding to the correlate levels of object. The progression of these levels of mind is same as that of Kant; which start with sensation and continues through perception, and understanding reaching Reason finally. The lowest level is that of sense certainty. Here object appears to subject in its being as mere appearance. It is an immediate appearance. It is an undifferentiated appearance, where it projects a plenitude of sensory properties. The knowledge of subject correspondingly is immediate. It is just a hazy vision of chaotic emissions. In this immediate phase, subject's knowledge of himself is also hazy like object, since his consciousness is the consciousness of the 'other'. Hegel moves on to the next level of perception.

In this phase of perception, the undifferentiated universals, of sensation, like colour, smell, etc. are particularized. These universals should be perceived as part of one object. That is as whiteness or sourness

existing in salt, which is one of Hegel's famous examples. It should exclude all other whitenesses and sournesses, to exist in one particular object, which is ultimately an aggregate of all these properties in a particular proportion. In this process, the particular object's identity, is through the negation of all other objects and universals. Hegel goes deeper. Even in the unity of the object itself we can see the play of internal negations. That is, the whiteness of salt is immediately opposed to the sourness of the same salt. Then what is this object? It is a congeries of opposing forces, united by a particular force (dialectical force), which paradoxically at the same time unifies and disperses these opposing forces in a dialectical way in the surface of the object. It is a force where negative equals positive.

Again negation sets in. Then what are the specificities of the universals like blackness and sourness? They also have their identity in their opposites. That is white is white because it is opposed to black, as mentioned earlier. So the whiteness of the object is at the same time blackness dialectically. In its essence white is black or paradoxically the

positive object at the phenomenal level is a negative object, in its essence. As Hegel points out: ✓

This second supersensible world is in this way the inverted world.... According to the law of this inverted world, what is like in the first world is unlike to itself, and what is unlike in the first world is equally unlike to itself, or it becomes like itself.²

Correspondingly mind also differentiates itself. In its sense-certainty level it doesn't have the true knowledge of the object, nor of itself. At the level of perception, when it perceives the object through differentiation; the very same differentiates the mind too as different from the object of perception. So the knowledge becomes not only the knowledge of the object alone, but also that of the mind which is knowing this object. Hegel points out in this connection,

Consciousness is then at the same time aware that it reflects itself also into itself, and that in perceiving the opposite moment, the 'also' crops up. This moment, however, is the unity of the thing with itself, a unity, which excludes distinction from itself. It is consequently the unity which consciousness has to take up on itself.³

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2. G.W.F. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, Trans: A.V. Miller, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp.96-97.
 3. Hegel cited by Lance St. John Butler, Samuel Beckett and the Meaning of Being, (London: Mac Millan Press, 1984), p.131.

fissured identities, which are self-created for producing imaginary stories about itself. In its spew of words what we observe is a psychotic's repetition mechanisms and distortions of linguistic codes rather than a dialectical mind's progressive epistemological process. Hegel's mind, though constituted at different levels, ultimately has a unitary character. These differentiations are abstract conceptualisations. These are constituted for the logical organization of epistemological process in a dialectical manner. In Hegelian logic, logic has only being, not existence. The logic of the principle of the movement of nature, is the same as that of the principle of the movement of thought. In this identical relation, logic does not have a separate existence in between, Nature, Spirit or Mind. It simply is the form of their comprehending and constituting each other. The different moments in the epistemological process are not different empirical levels but a paradoxical 'unity-in-diversity' and 'diversity-in-unity'.

Butler's thesis on Unnamable is evident when he equates two excerpts from Unnamable and Phenomenology. From Unnamable he quotes:

Ah yes, all lies, God and man, nature and the light of the day, the heart's outpourings and the means of understanding, all invented,

based by me alone, with the help of no one, since there is none to put off the hour when, I must speak me (Trilogy, p.306)."⁴

This is equal to the following portion in phenomenology.

self consciousness is thus only assured of itself through sublating this other which is presented to self-consciousness as an independent life... Convinced of the nothingness of this other, it definitely affirms this nothingness to be for itself the truth of this other, negates the independent object and thereby acquires the certainty of its own self. (Phenomenology of Mind)⁵ .

Butler opens his analysis by declaring that if Murphy is Cartesian, Unnamable is Hegelian. But he accepts the fact that, these profound Hegelian insights of Unnamable is only when he doesn't play the games of language. He writes,

Beckett's version of the negation of the other and the affirmation of the self by self-consciousness is present more or less passim in the Trilogy as one of the 'profounder' mode of narration, adopted when the games no longer serve.⁶

Butler clearly agrees that he cannot constitute the dialectic between the two identities of Unnamable;

4. Trilogy, cited in Lance St. John Butler, Samuel Beckett And The Meaning of Being, (London: Mac millan Press, 1984), pp.141-42.

5. Hegel cited by Lance St. John Butler, *ibid.*, p.142.

6. *ibid.*, p.141.

i.e. between the game-playing self and the non-game-playing self. More precisely, between the Unnamable of verbal signifiers and the Unnamable of signifieds (speaker of Hegelian logos?). Unnamable's identity is elsewhere.

Unnamable, objectifies itself through words. In its objectifications, it creates many identities by situating itself in different story situations. In these self-projections, it looks at its own identities time and gain and says that the other is false each time. This can definitely be equated with the Hegelian moments of **consciousness**. **That is to say, at the level of self-consciousness, subject achieves the rare insight that all positive objects are in fact negative in their essence.** But in the case of Unnamable, it is not so. It always moves into the other which it has created and without any obvious logic declares, that the original position from which it moved is nothing. In its ever-spiralling movements, it makes numerous identities and nullifications. So it is not a Hegelian consciousness in and by itself abstractly knowing its exclusivity by realizing the nothingness of other, but a split schizophrenic's gesture of vicarious identifications with numerous imaginary beings. Here we find subject 'objectified', and object 'subjectified',

not as in the abstract dialectic of Hegel, but as in the delirium of a psychotic. Unnamable is not a dialectician but may be a dialectician went mad.

2. Sartre and Unnamable

A serious attempt to constitute Unnamable, in the existential categories of Sartre is undertaken by L.A.C. Dobrez in his book Existential and its Exits. It is obvious that, Unnamable precarious and inessential existence, in a collection of disjointed words, makes such an attempt possible. Dobrez, in this attempt, takes two positions regarding the nature of Unnamable's Being. Firstly, he defines Unnamable in a sort of negative relation to the normal subjectivity in Sartrean existentialism. That is, by defining Unnamable's ego, as not Pour-Soi (for-itself), which is the normal category of ego, in Sartre. Neither does he equate Unnamable to the opposed position, that is Ensoi (in-itself) which represents the world, and objective reality. 'For-itself' or consciousness is ironically a negative category in Sartre, while in-itself or objective reality is positive, and plenitude of Being. Unnamable is beyond or beneath the Sartrean in-itself and for-itself. Dobrez puts forward a different thesis

that Unnamable is a conjunction or site of the realization of both these categories - pour-soi and en-soi in a particular way. The subject and world, merge in Unnamable. The equation for Unnamable is for-itself-in-itself. Ironically this is the position of God in Sartrean system. Only in God consciousness and reality merge into one; the existence of consciousness and being of world can find a singular expression only in God. He is for-itself-in-itself. Only God can exist and be. For Dobrez, so is Unnamable.

For Sartre, like Hegel and Husserl, consciousness is 'consciousness of' something. With the change of something consciousness also changes. So the active consciousness which is changing, ultimately is a nothing an emptiness, a void. Opposed to this consciousness, is the 'something' that is reality which according to Sartre is positive and has being. Thus, the consciousness can relate to Being only in a negative manner. Nothingness negates Being. So when consciousness, identifies an object, say chair, it also implies a no-chair, because reality is not chair alone. So consciousness's activity is a constantly negating one, like identifying this is not chair, not table, nor window, etc. and so on. It is like a corrosive

substance fissuring and cleaving Being. So the more the consciousness acts on Being, the more latter gets negated. Nothingness separates Being with thin films of nothingnesses. So Sartre says, "Nothingness lies coiled in the heart of Being - like a worm."

In-itself or en-soi is not the property of reality or matter alone. Mind also gets objectified when for-itself looks into its own consciousness. As self-consciousness it can conceive its own mind only as an object, since any consciousness is a consciousness of something. The property of pour-soi is negation and differentiation. So when it becomes its own object, it undergoes a self-negation. But what is negated in-itself should also have a tangible object character. Then what is this object that exists in mind which is turned to itself? Sartre will say, it is the image of oneself or the self-image. The more for-itself relates to self images, which are en-soi, the more for-itself negates these en-soi or self images. So the self-image and true consciousness can never coincide. The more for-itself tries to fill the void, more it will get impoverished. These image creations which distends and impoverishes oneself, gives rise to a pretentious existence which Sartre calls "bad faith".

Dobrez makes an immediate connection between the irreducibility of for-itself to in-itself in the case of Unnamable. Unnamable constantly rejects all identities it assumes. This process is equivalent to an en-soi like subjectivity lying beneath, negating the process of differentiation by a pour-soi at the surface. Both en-soi and pour-soi are parts of the same subject and in their mutually negating process, is constituted the principle of Unnamable's progression. It is the impossibility of rendering any identity by the negation of en-soi by pour-soi, that is revealed as the splitting process in Unnamable. There is always a lack and Unnamable's pour-soi tries to fill it, But en-soi will negate it, creating another gap. As Dobrez points out,"

.....Unnamable may be regarded as behaving like Sartrean consciousness, a hole separated from itself and all things by itself and to neither itself nor anything else. It denies all positives.

And he quotes from Unnamable,

No number of delegates, no amount of positivity, no image will ever suffice to reveal a void: I knew it, there might be a hundred of us and still one would lack the hundred and first; we will always be short of me.⁷

7. L.A.C. Dobrez, The Existential and its Exits, (London: Athlone Press, 1986), p.66.

Dobrez even goes to the point of arguing that Unnamable is a Primordial ground, a theological origin from which all other works originate, and find meaning. He asserts the possibility of the presence of a God, a Being-Nothing in Beckett. This is in contrast to Sartre's atheistic philosophy, where God is dead. Dobrez designates Unnamable as irreducible. He asserts that:

the Irreducible's negativity does not exclude a certain positivity since after all the Irreducible is and so has been defined as a Being-Nothing. In that case we may say that God is possible in Beckett's universe, or rather than what is impossible for Sartre is impossibly there for Beckett. While no tramp can teach it, no voice utter its name, the Irreducible exists, for without its presence the whole Beckett system of things would collapse.⁸

Dobrez argues that in Unnamable, the freedom and determinism coalesce. That is, it contains the immanence of the being of past, as well as the transcendence of the being of future. Pour-soi has only future while en-soi has inturn only past. Pour-soi is equivalent to, consciousness, nothingness and future. Sartrean man is ironically one of future but tries to get reduced to the beingness of en-soi, that is into the past.

8. ibid., p.70.

This he achieves only with death. Till then it is a futile quest. But this fusion is impossibly possible in God. And so is Unnamable, as origin, unfoldment and return of all other Beckettian themes and characters.

In applying such a Sartrean paradigm, Dobrez employs certain erroneous equations. This is owing to his failure to see the exact nature of Unnamable's subjectivity. Though Sartre with the thesis of pre-reflective cogito tried his best to disengage himself from the Cartesian cogito he ultimately fell into its traps. For Sartre consciousness is real and subject unified. It may seem fractured when we look at its two different identities like *pour-soi* and *en soi*. But it is not so. Like the Freudian subject which is divided into the unconscious and the conscious; this fissure is only a conceptual difference objectively imposed. Freudian conscious is only conceptually split, except in pathological situations. It functions, as a unified subject with the twin principles of reality and pleasure. Sartrean subject also is only conceptually split. To be more precise, it may seem one-sided in a sense since its principle of movement is grounded in *pour-soi* which moves by a futural principle. But *en-soi* is also present at each moment paradoxically.

En-soi is ultimately being and being of past which is opposed to pour-soi's nothingness and movement to future. Then how can both coexist. There lies the difference between philosophy and psycho-analysis. In contrast to psycho-analysis, the philosophical subjectivity of Sartre is an ontological subjectivity. En-soi is present as an ontological category in Sartre. A category that bears the irremediable, irreversible reality of one's past in relation to which the subject moves into future. If pleasure is the motive principle in Freud's subject it is the principle of future that propels the Sartrean subject.

Then what is Unnamable's ontological status? What is the principle of its constitution, integration and disintegration? In Sartre, time and history are real. For Hegel, Being and Nothing are identical opposites, and hence cannot resolve either one's immediate dialectical nature of Being of Nothingness or Nothingness of Being in and by themselves. Hegel solves this by positing the dynamic category of "becoming" in their midst, which mediates both the identical opposites, which are helpless in themselves to resolve their contradiction of identical oneness-in-difference

or difference-in-oneness. Through "becoming" it incorporates the character of both; but becomes a third, different from both, which yet contains the properties of both. It is "determinate" being with a specific nature. Everything including history changes according to this principle. There is no priority of Being over Nothing. They are both co-equal, co-present and co-temporal. But not in Sartre. In Sartre Being is prior and is already present. Into the midst of its undifferentiatedness, consciousness or nothingness is posited and hence the process of subject as well as movement of history, through former's activities. This we have already seen.

Is there such a priority of Being as en-soi's history present in Unnamable. I do not think so. If Sartrean movement is a human movement; a man's conscious movement in reality; Unnamable's is a verbal movement in the confines of an imaginary world. It changes not in a Sartrean fashion but in a Hegelian way, if at all. 'I' the ground subject exists as a process in Unnamable. This process is not that of a pour-soi, trying to become an en-soi guided by a futural principle. En-soi is past, whether of human being or of world. Things have deposited these irreversibly.

It is a real past. Any event of present or future can only be crafted or added to this reality of past. But Unnamable is not so. There is no depositions of past in its 'non-eventness' or eternal 'presentness'. For Sartre, the consciousness lives in a real world, and the choice of altering an identity or assuming another life is a conscious choice. Between choices, there is time and a 'lived' life. Even if one assumes a past life again, qualitatively it is different, in the temporal perspective. This irreversibility is absent in Unnamable. Past and future interpenetrate without any logic. We cannot form a logic from the progression of the narrative and conclude that Unnamable cannot live a past life or assume a past identity again. It was Basil for some time, then it became Mahood, then Worm. And even Worm is something else. As the 'I' says,

perhaps it is by trying to be Worm, that I will finally succeed in being Mahood.... Then all I will have to do is be Worm. Which no doubt I shall achieve by trying to be Jones. Then all I have to do is to be Jones....Worm, Jones, it is between three of us now and the devil take the hindmost.

Time and again, Unnamable asserts that 'I am in words' or 'I invent my memories'. This is in contradiction

nothing passes over in to being, but being equally sublates itself and is rather transition into nothing; it is ceasing-to-be. They are not reciprocally sublated - the one does not sublata the other externally - but each sublates itself in itself and is in its own self, the opposite of itself.⁹

So to constitute, Unnamable we cannot apply a pseudo-Cartesian existential subjectivity. It needs a different paradigm, where subject's position as an atemporal category, as well as its position in words, can both be together constituted in a unity. This will be attempted in the following chapters.

9. G.W.F. Hegel, The Science of Logic, Trans: A.V. Miller, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1969), p.106.

CHAPTER - III

DISCOURSE AND SUBJECTIVITY IN UNNAMABLE

CHAPTER - III

Subjectivity in Beckett, can be properly constituted only in the context of the nature of the fiction in which his characters operate. We can discern, slow shifts of emphasis in the physical, mental and temporal aspects of the subjects, with the progression from the early to the later fictions. Despite their technical iconoclasm, the earlier fictions like 'Murphy' and 'Watt' reveal a fictional world, with semblance of reality. There is the presence of a tangible world, against which the characters are posited. Like a realist text, there are chains of incidents through which the characters pass and which they experience. The novelty of the text, in fact, lies in the incongruities that arise in the character-world relation. In a sense it is the problem of a defective epistemological process; a virtual satirizing of the Cartesian paradigms which fail in grasping the mess and flux of reality. This precarious object-subject balance progressively gets unsettled, and when it reaches the Trilogy, we find a complete devolution of this relation. As Hugh Kenner points out:

For the Unnamable is the final phase of a Trilogy which carries the Cartesian process

backwards, beginning with a bodily career and ending with a bare cogito. This reduction begins with a journey (Molloy's) and a dismembering of the Cartesian centaur; its middle term (Malone Dies) is a stasis, dominated by the unallayable brain, and the third phase as neither the identity of rest nor that of motion, functions under the sign neither of matter nor of mind because it evades both and concern itself endlessly to no end with a baffling intimacy between discourse and non-existence.

With the later novels the accent comes to be laid upon the internal anguish of modern existence and the problems of linguistic masks that man interposes between himself and the world to escape latter "in bad faith". It is the world of Heidegger and Sartre; the world of beings and its 'thrownness' into a harsh existence; a world in which man struts to the tunes of the capitalist deity; a world where even language has fallen (Das gerede). And what remains is a meagre personality of a vanquished existence through self nominations; a being in dirty logos. Here art also fails, or it is the story of this failure. Beckett's crisis is pointed out by A.J. Leventhal that" (1) Nothing is (2) If anything is, it cannot be known (3) If anything is, and cannot be known, it cannot be expressed

1. Hugh Kenner, The Cartesian Centaur, ed. by Martin Eslin, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1965), p.59.

in speech. It is this third proposition with which Beckett wrestles. Speech, the written word, is his (medium) and it is its inadequacy which haunts him. How to express the inexpressible."²

Beckett's fictions, are deployed around the characters' development as such, and the peculiar vicissitudes in their destiny. In contrast to the traditional fictions which dwelt upon the themes of subject-environment opposition; worked out through a chronologized plot structure, Beckett's fictions are veritable examples of a different discourse centered on the strategic manipulations of contradictions in the body/mind relation, worked out in a temporal space. Body and the body-centered discourses are asymptotically intertwined with the mind and its vicissitudes. In the progression from Murphy to Unnamable, we find the slow marginalization of the body machine, to give primacy to the logical machine, the mind. Unnamable with its limbless, lidless, hairless trunk bathed in the stream of tears, surviving in its loquacious web is a grotesque assault on man's complacent conception

2. A.J. Leventhal, The Beckett Hero in Martin Esslin (ed) Samuel Beckett; a collection of critical essays (Engle wood Cliffs, Prentice - Hall, 1965), p.46.

of body as the site and sign of a rational existence. Beckett works out the disfigurement of this 'ignorant valet', of mind, with a perverse intensity. Like the progression from Cartesian cogito to existentialist resignations, the disintegration of the body also starts from a Cartesian ground. As Kenner observes "the Beckett protagonists would accord the classic resolutions of the cartesian doubt a less apodictic weight than Descartes and not to believe this conclusion that the body" a machine made by the hands of God is incomparably better arranged and adequate to movements more admirable than is any machine of human invention. Unlike that of Molloy, the Cartesian body seems not subject to loss of toes or arthritis of the wrists.³

The stoic irony Beckett expresses in the denunciation of body is a metaphoric reaction against a capitalist regime; which had subjugated modern man's body; inscribed its injunctions on it; tamed and regimented it to suit its production needs; and thereby changed it into an alienated repetition mechanism; no different from the orderly rhythms of its perfect machines. It is the pathos of these desiring machines that Beckett produces by representing it in the absurd mimes of a few paraplegs, moribunds, and invalids.

3. Hugh Kenner, *op.cit.*, p.54.

Time and NarrativeSubjectivity and Fictional Temporality in Proust, Virginia Woolf Joyce and Beckett.

The relation between subject and time is another important aspect in modern fiction. In modern fiction, the classical unities, verisimilitude, meta-language cause-effect narration, and realist chronology are grossly violated. Instead, modern fictions consecrate tendencies like disjunctive patterning of events-autonarrations for grounding the fluidity and plenitude of mental processes; arbitrary temporal patterns inherent in these mental experiences; and rejection of inclusive centres of intelligibility like heroes and heroines from whom the discursive field could be articulated and homogenized. The novels of Proust, Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Beckett etc. are supreme testaments of this neurotic style.

As mentioned earlier one conspicuous feature of these fictions is the undermining of a traditional time-subject-event based organisation. Most of their novels are narrative discourses in which the characters recapture the experiences of the events they have undergone in the past or are undergoing in the present.

In this process application of an Aristotelian aporetic time, based on the correlation of the principles of space to duration of time proves a failure. Instead it is a time in its pure duration; a time most approximate to being's subjective and intimate experience of reality; a time in consonance with beings' primary constitutive existence in language that is needed. Henri Bergson, the French philosopher who had a tremendous influence on their writings, comments as follows in relation to these problems:

"All through the history of Philosophy time and space have been placed on the same level and treated as things of the same kind; the procedure has been to study space, to determine its nature and function and then to apply to time and conclusions reached. The theories of space and time thus become counterparts of one another. To pass from one to other, one had only to change a single word 'juxtaposition' has replaced 'succession'....when we⁴ evoke time, it is space which answers our call".⁴

He continues by preferring a new conception of time.

The intuition we refer to them bears above all upon internal duration. It grasps a succession which is not juxtaposition, a growth from within, the uninterrupted prolongation of the past into the present which is already blending into the future. It is the direct vision of the mind by mind - nothing intervening, no refraction through prism, one of whose facets is space and another language.

4. Henri Bergson, The Creative Mind (USA : Citadel Press, 1946), p.14.

5. *ibid.*, p.32.

This new conception of time and the imaginative recapturing of events in past or present according to this non-metrical pattern is not without problems when related to its application in the narrative texts. Here, the reader producing the text is confronted by three problems; the time of the real events that one narrates, time of this narration in texts' material progression as discourse, and the time of the events narrated after mutations it undergoes in the creative mind of the character. Hence a multi-levelled temporality results in the production of the text. This problem is explained as follows by Christian Metz in his work on film language.

Narrative is a ... doubly temporal sequence.... there is the time of thing told and the time of the narrative (the time of the signified and the time of signifier). This duality not only renders possible all the temporal distortions that are commonplace in narratives. .. More basically it invites us to consider that one of the functions of narrative is to invent one time scheme in terms of another time scheme.⁶

A narrative fiction offers the presentification of events that are not perceptible to the reader. It is in the very act of the process of presentification

6. Christian Metz, Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema trans: Michael Taylor, (New York, OUP, 1974) p.18.

that the 'thing narrated' and the 'narrating of the thing' are distinguished. It is therefore a phenomenological act, since narrating is the narrating of something, which itself is not. From this basic distinction derives the incongruities between two times; the discursive time and the 'real' time of reality. However, the thing narrated is part of the life process itself which is recaptured and consecrated in the textual discourse. Since it is the life processes that is ultimately narrated; by sheer logic we can conclude that, the richer the life the purer will be the narrative.

If time-narrative relation is articulated on such a one-to-one phenomenological logic, many problems in modern fiction would not have arisen. This univocal logic observed in the narrative temporality can be applied only in epics and conventional linear narrations of realist texts. In modern fiction this practice is subverted along with the 'revolution of word' and the concept of plot-structure.

Since modern fiction is committed more to signification than meaning, the accent lies on an autonomous textual logic through which events in the text communicate themselves. The disjunctive and idiosyncratic patternings defeat any attempt to metricize

the chronology of the text from a privileged axis. Here "things have fallen apart" and "Time is out of joint".

The sheer impromptu logic observed in the arrangements of episodes and events render to the signification a character akin to quantity-quality opposition of the Hegelian dialectic. Since the signification is not the meaning of the rationally reduced episodes, it inevitably lies in the objective level of the quantity of the episodes arranged in an arbitrary permutation. The aesthetic hence lies in the quality of the quantum of events arranged according to a self-defined, internal logic deriving from the events themselves supplemented by other fictional elements. Paul Ricoeur explains these features in relation to his study of narration and time.

"The arrangement of scenes, intermediary episodes, important events, and transitions, never ceases to modulate the quantities and extensions. To these features one added anticipations and flashbacks, the interlinkings that enable the memory of the vast stretches of time to be included in the brief narrative sequences, creating the effect of perspectival depth, while breaking up the chronology. We move even further away. From a strict comparison between lengths of time when, to flashbacks, are added the time of remembering, the time of dreaming, and the time of the reported dialogue, as in Virginia Woolf. Qualitative tensions are added to quantitative measurements."

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7. Paul Ricoeur *Time and Narrative*, Vol.2, Trans: Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, Chicago; The University of Chicago Press, 1985), p.80.

Problems about narrative time arises in Beckett's later fictions and plays. In this sense earlier fictions like *Murphy* and *Watt* are preamble to a more complete experiment like *Molloy* and *Unnamable*. *Murphy* is a caricatured metaphysician, who brings both theological and metaphysical issues to the simple device of body. Eternally brooding over metaphysical issues concerning the body and mind, he virtually represents the literary prism through which an effete philosophy refracts into its clownish shades. The philosopher clown racks his brain over the 'quantum of wantum' principle of humanity and often engages in counting the specks of dust in the beam of light he has forced to sweep into a dust pan. 'Watt' which follows 'Murphy' is an epistemological farce. What 'Murphy' tries to accomplish by rhythms and stillness, 'Watt' seeks through talk. His kind of rationality is a stuck-needle Cartesianism, in which the possibilities of language and reason are exploited nervously and fervently. He is the predecessor of *Unnamable*. He is an untiring logic machine which dutifully permutes endless logical combinations of scanty forces.

All these novels till *Molloy* deal with the satirising of a logocentric western philosophy by

exploiting the oddities and peculiarities in the hero's mind body constitution. Despite a tangible fictional space, they bring in complex issues regarding narrative time. It is with the later plays and fictions like Waiting for Godot and Trilogy, the gross violations of "isochrony" set in. In the works of Proust we have inclusive consciousness of the hero-narrator, a surrogate of author, who retrieves, orders and compresses the events in his past. Though he plays 'anachronic' games with time like 'prolepsis', 'analepsis'; and their combinations⁸, his ego is a 'present' ego, in which all events in past are present in a retrospective synthesis. The proleptic and the analeptic are the governing figural presences. In Proust's Remembrance of Things Past, there are games with time by combining both these concepts. We find future functioning in the past-i.e. a future event, in past which also has

8. Gerard Genette in his study of Proust's narrative techniques classifies, play with time, under concepts like "analepsis" and "prolepsis". "Analepsis" is equivalent to retrospection of past events in a narrative situation. "Prolepsis" is anticipation of events in future. Gerard Genette, Narrative Discourse, Trans: Jane E Lewin (U.K., Cornell University, 1980), p.40 ff.

already become past, according to the 'present' point of time from which the narrator speaks. In Proust's text there are profuse examples of the past-future, and present-past-future interpenetrations. In Proust time is meaningful, as an ordering category, though there are numerous fictive 'games' within it.

Even in a stream of consciousness novel like Mrs. Dalloway which exploits the contradiction between the objective time and subjective time there is the presence of a 'time' as such. In the novel time is present as a concept or at least as a dialectical ground in which the two notions of time become possible and get expressed. Hence the menacing ring of Big Ben, in its set hours. As Ricouer points out,

What is important is not the reminder of the hour, striking at the same time for everyone; however, but in the relation that various protagonists establish with these marks of time. The variations in this relation, depending on the character and occasion, themselves constitute the fictive temporal experience that the narrative constructs with such extreme care in order to be convincing to the reader.

In Joyce, we find more abstract and ideologized time. Joyce's writing is about writing itself. "His writing is not about something; it is that something

9. Paul Ricouer, op.cit., p.105.

itself" (Samuel Beckett). The mesh and mixture of Joyce's text with its neurotic destruction of the credibility and possibility of language and representation through it, is a much more meaningful reaction against the tyranny of meaning. It is writing about the anti-writing; the experience of the destruction of language through which writing is possible. But it is a conscious destruction. Here word and text have memory ('memmormee'). Ulysses famed for its compression of the Odyssey myth to one day, however requires a different time pattern to constitute it. One incontestable fact about Ulysses is a certain conformity in its structuration to the ordering principle of Homer's Odyssey. Except for this formal principle the content, the structure and the temporality change in Ulysses. Myths are universal and trans-historical constructs. They are autonomous systems, like language, constituted of binary oppositions of 'mythemes'. 'Mythemes' function like 'Lexemes' in language. Variations in its distribution can give rise to different significations. But as Levi-Strauss mentions, these variations in the meaning can be attributed to a "mythical unconscious" like that of Freudian unconscious; from which they are mediated by various processes before projecting into the surface text. This mythical unconscious is universal. Variations

of myths in different communities are just transformations in their production which change according to time and place. Ulysses is a counter myth, that tries to explode myths of writing in the past. Ulysses subverts through its destructive textual syntax, the myths of the logocentric writing of European culture, its familial relations and the duplicitous rationale of its sex. It puns on all the privileged discourses (Biblical language, geneological language, familial language, fable language, realist language, political language, scientific language etc.) while itself posing as an unencodable counter-myth. In its interstices it imbricates, Bloom, Stephen and Molly, an unholy trinity; the parody of cultural archetypes; caricature of the 'daddy-mommy-me'¹⁰ solution which existed in various forms, from Oedipal myths of Greece (via) Christianity to modern Freudianism.

Even in Ulysses we have a sense of time, a sense of writing. Finnegans Wake and Ulysses are as large as history in its ambitions. Each pun and parody is laden with a counter meaning. In its puns and neographisms the words and discourses don't become non-meaning. Each bears on its neck, numerous tags of various possibilities of what it could also have meant to be. In the gap between its being and possible

10. Gilles Deleuze, Anti-Oedipus, (London: The Athlone Press, 1984), p.8.

being, Joyce says the story of the subjugation of signifiers in western history; at large, the power deployments in the history of western discourses. 'Armorica', unhappitents of the earth', 'unglish' 'O Loud, Hear me', 'Tinbad the Tailor, Minbad the Mailer, and Whinbad the whaler' are not mere puns but mythemes in a counter-myth, the structural components of "self-penned nighty novels" in the closing ceremony of a civilization. In the counter-myths posited against the original myths of a civilization, we experience a sense of history and time. There was an original repression. And these texts have memory.

Articulation of Stasis - Time and Subjectivity in Beckett's Trilogy

In Beckett's later novels there are no alarming Big Bens; nor words that 'speak' time; nor Marcells in reverie. We are confronted with some 'pure signifiers' of history; pure signifiers' like tramps, beggar-like creatures, invalids etc. surrounded by stones, dead trees, crutches, and sticks. Probably for Beckett they represent the universal history, since no period of history was devoid of them. As in Hegel's logic, where pure Being can be identical only to pure Nothing, in Beckett these pure Beings are identical to pure

Nothing. Since they are so pure, they can exist only in pure time, which is no time. For Hegel, pure light is invisibility, which is logically equivalent to darkness. Again for Bruno minimal heat is minimal cold. Like them for Beckett, pure existence is pure non-existence or pure poverty is same as pure sublimity. In these polarities time cannot signify. It rather becomes indifferent. Pozzo succinctly substantiates this thesis:

Vladimir: Dumb? Since when? Pozzo: (suddenly furious); It is abominable. When? When? One day, isn't that enough for you? One day like any other day, he went dumb, one day I went blind, one day we will go deaf, one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second, isn't that good enough for you? ¹¹

In the monologues and repetitive gestures, of Molloy and Moran, time seems to be suspended. 'Molloy' is bound in cyclical patterns and movements within oneself which reminds Beckett's dictum "existence is a kitten chasing its own tail". Molloy goes out for a journey towards his mother. The content of the first part is the description of this journey which he never completes and the destination which he never reaches. It may have the symbolic meaning of a journey

11. S. Beckett, Waiting For Godot, (London: Faber and Faber, 1955). p.48.

back to the bountiful security of the womb. But ironically it is in his mother's room (or room-womb), where mother is only a metaphoric presence, he writes about this journey. The episode of stone-sucking, where he repeats constantly the same act is again symbolic of this cyclical or circular existence; of trying to catch one's own tail, which time cannot differentiate qualitatively from one another. Another feature in the novel is the movement of oneself to something already in himself. Moran sets out for a journey in search of Molloy, and finally becomes Molloy, who was already in himself. His is the same as Molloy's metaphoric journey into his mother's room, where he could become himself and have the objectivity and security for recording this story of movement itself. Moran moves into Molloy's condition, which in a sense is becoming his real condition. This movement of Moran into himself qua Molloy is another cyclical self-revelation. In these cyclical patterns, time cannot be a condition of becoming of matter in the Hegelian sense nor time can be the absolute a priori, of the form of things which enable the perception of reality. Here it is the time of "unbecoming" of what is: a counter history; a negative movement towards a symbolic origin. Here time coils into itself and

create the illusion of beginning and end, like a snake by its tail in the mouth as in the Hegelian cosmic dialectic.

In Malone Dies, we find a dismantled Cartesian, resigned from his bodily preoccupations; waiting for his death and telling tales to himself constantly. If in Molloy the movement is articulated in a present-past or past-present conjunction; it is a future-present that operates in Malone Dies. Ludovic Janvier writes about this phenomenon as follows:

Moran and Molloy, from the perspective of their oral present look towards the days of wandering they lived until then. The narration was but present-past indicating what had been. Moran and Molloy told their beginnings. Malone on the contrary wants to indicate that which he has not yet lived. He looks toward that near future in which his present allows itself to be drawn: Malone Dies.¹²

Malone's present is realized in a future present. It is a possible future.

Unnamable: Temporality of Word

With Unnamable, we move one step further. Unnamable is constituted in the unknowable present

12. Ludovic Janvier, cited by Raymond Federman, Beckettian Paradox, Melvin, J. Freidman (ed.), Samuel Beckett Now, USA: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p.116.

of a symbolic space. It metaphorically abounds in its signifying space all the tendencies, themes and techniques already present in previous fictions.

As Frederic J. Hoffman points out:

In this last named novel, the Unnamable who is either each of all the others or the creator of all of them, are no-name; thinks his final creation as Worm. And in Worm all of the implications in the other names are contained: the M of Mort, the W of Watt, the M (which is here, the last letter of a word that represents the full-span from Womb to Tomb or from spermarium to crematorium). If the Unnamable is the creator of all these, he is also linked to not exnihilo, or the God-given 'godhead' of what Joyce calls this 'farraginous chronicle'¹³

Unnamable is a forest of abstractions in the deictic forms of shifters like I, You, They, We. In it all other tendencies of previous fictions are present but with a difference. There is a journey of Molloy, but in the circular motions of Mahood around his family. This time pattern is highly complex in Unnamable. Since there are no referential events of reality, one cannot reduce th temporality to a human time and human world. The experiences of Unnamable are rooted

13. Frederich J. Hoffman, The Elusive Ego, Melvin J. Fredman (ed.), Samuel Beckett Now, (USA: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p.40.

in its non-events and verbal anomalies: we are compelled to look for Unnamable's pattern in the language, and the possible symbolic openings it offers.

Unnamable occupies a symbolic realm animated by abstract beings. Some are Beckett's earlier fictional characters (Murphy, Malone, Molloy etc.) who are placed at a determinate distance constantly revolving around him in an orbital motion. Then there are other imaginary beings like Mahood and Worm who are mere 'names' and psuedo - projections, Unnamable creates out of himself. Again there is a constant reference to an 'Other' or a 'Master' and his delegates who are constantly driving him into speech, which he does with self-spite and reluctance.

The movement of the narrative shows abrupt structural disjunctions in its attempt to hold together Unnamable's narration of various stories involving these imaginary beings. These stories which he tells to himself, to trap himself, he himself negates in the very next moment of enunciation. These stories have different characters and different time patterns. For example, in the Mahood phase, he nominates himself with super human attributes; with domensions of cosmic largeness and ontological time.

At the particular moment I am referring to, I mean when I took myself for Mahood, I must have been coming to the end of world tour, perhaps not more than two or three centuries to go. My state of decay lends colour to the view, that, perhaps I had left my leg behind in the Pacific.¹⁴

One can observe the circular patterns, of his fictitious meanderings as the metaphor of his being itself. He is a narcissist who is already charmed by the image of himself in a verbal mirror from which he cannot escape. The looking/looked at of a existence constitutes the essence of his existence. His introspections are grounded in a circular logic. For example though he constantly tries to anchor himself in a stable first person position of "I" he is compelled to incarnate into a third person position of 'he' to look back into himself in the very next moment. In the Mahood episode, he is a contradictory invalid/superman, revolving around his family with the precision of planetary motions around his family after the coming back from a global navigation. Here his movements are constantly watched from a rotunda in which his family is housed. They keep a constant vigil on him, turn by turn through the holes of the rotunda

14. S. Beckett, Trilogy, p.19.

with the help of search-lights. He is at the circumference, where as the family is at the centre. This gaze from centre to circumference is reversed in the next phase of a sibylline incarnation into Worm. Here he occupies the center, where he looks at the people or being looked at by the people who come to the restaurant. Again there is another symbolic space; in which Malone and other Beckettian characters inscribe a circular motion around him, with absolute precision.

In these circular shaped stories and events narrated by a ground subject 'I' anachrony sets in. In these stories of 'I' splitting into its alter egos of deictic shifters ('I', 'He', 'We', etc.) there is only the pure 'time' of the signifiers' own games with themselves. In the patterns like Mahood and Worm stories, ambivalence sets in. Mahood is constituted of super human dimensions where time is in centuries and space as large as that of the world. But he is opposed to a family of human dimensions in the real human world, whose members ultimately succumb to a ridiculous death by Sausage poisoning. In his next incarnation he resembles the Sybil of Cumae, who was put inside a belljar. Like Sybil he is fated to eternity, though his body shrinks and decays. He is placed in

a bleak human situation. He is hanged in front of a restaurant, where he holds up the menu for visitors. Here an imaginary or mythic being which resembles the Sybil is thrown into a mundane situation of every day world. However, it is also another form of "existence". Beckett is always concerned with different stories. Any violation of temporal sequences is not felt at all in these human/super human or imaginary/real oppositions since these are purest violations. The text itself is a story of negations and violations and in any story in which time is violated is in turn negated in the next story which comes after. We are caught up in such negations of negations. But unlike Hegelian dialectic here a negation of negation does not lead to an affirmation. This is because there is no unified ground or consciousness in the text which can represent or know these negations; the negation by an 'other' or conversely one's own negation in an 'other' which lead to either a beingness of nothing or a nothingness of being. What we are offered is the reality of a negating dialectic between the split identities of a subject within himself which is neither a being nor a nothing. It is a sort of indifferent process. Often we cleverly lay our traps to catch

the essence of this process in words. But it is of no avail. They are only words or has meaning of empty words only, the subject will say. Again if we try to catch this thing in its 'wordy-gurdy itself' it will escape saying that I am a wordless thing. It will then trans-substantiate into Murphy, Molloy or Moran, who are but relics of another fictional world; incommensurables and victims of pure poverty and no time in past Beckettian experiments.

In these pure violations time cannot exist as form of the reality of either being or being of nothing. It is sheerly indifferent. It is all time or no time. The most reliable words are that of Unnamable himself:

Why time doesn't pass, doesn't pass, from you, 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 the ancient dead and the dead yet unborn, why it burns you gram by gram neither dead nor alive, with no memory of anything, no hope of anything, no knowledge of anything, no history and no prospects, buried under the seconds saying any old thing, your mouth full of sand, Oh I know it is unnatural. Time is, one thing, I another, but question may be asked why time does not pass.....¹⁵

15. Samuel Beckett, Trilogy, p.393.

In these jumble of times 'like words' time, human time, ancient time, dead time, dead and yet unborn time, symbolic time, Malone's time etc. time is logically all time, or by the same logic no time at all. This is similar to Vivian Mercier's comparison of Unnamable to an asymptote of length-meaning correlation. When the text tries to become lengthy in its signifiers its meaning gets reduced to nothing. We have to fix its narrative contours again, with the concepts of the diegetic and, narrative space, the narrating voice of subject, and the time-subject correlation.

(1) The narrated or diegetic space is pure imaginary space, undergoing a constant creation and negation. The mechanism behind this creation-negation process lies in the games subject play in these signifiers, to constitute itself and not the stories it creates. That is, after creating a story and participating in it for a while, the subject negates or questions not the story as such, but the authenticity of itself creating the story; and thereby indirectly nullifies what it has created and inturn what has created it. Story remains as an unwanted progeny, while the subject moves on to its next fictitious ventures.

The narrative space thus created through these imaginary processes, is the result of a compulsion,

a sort of incitement from an ambiguous 'Other', Unnamable says often. The subject Other dialectic is a pervasive process that operates at all levels. This 'other' may be one of his Schizoid incarnations which becomes a delegated essence itself to know its own intrinsic essence; which in turn is nothing but a paradoxical knowledge of its own possibility of becoming its 'Other' as extrinsic. Unnamable speaks of an 'Other' and its delegates constantly making him speak, and thereby 'to exist in speech. Throughout the text this 'Other' never attains a real identity, but exist as an imaginary projection of Unnamable himself. This 'Other' exists conclusively in the private world of Unnamable, as a 'Symbolic' other which drives him into speech and existence. He has meaning only in the context of Unnamable's own autosymbolism. In fact he pervades the Unnamable fully. It is this Other's language that Unnamable speaks it asserts time and again. It is through this Other's language he constitutes himself to know the constitution of himself as well as the 'Other'. The presence of the 'other' as the condition for the wishing of his absence, paradoxically is the same as that of the wish for his presence as language; since only

in this presence as language, or only through 'Others' language, can Unnamable wish the Other's absence. In the text, since the wish for absence can only be registered through the Other's language, Other's presence/absence becomes the condition of subject's existence in an through the language and his paradoxical desires. It is this verbal existence in language, and only as language; or as Other-in-subject and subject-in-Other, that constitutes the complexity of the novel., No narrative categories except those which can explain the conditions of a 'linguistics of speech' can explain this complexity.

2. The narrative is about that which makes it narrate. There is total absence of a referential background behind the narration, and this is reflected in the narrative voice. Here the questions of reality/narrative, form/content, signifier/signified etc. become irrelevant or rather all are merged into the unilinear, aberrant discourse of Unnamable. In its disjunctions, insane fantasies, narrative repetitions, and autosymbolisms, one should look for a different logic. This logic is not that of an empirical concoction of a forced meaning into a logical narrative surface which inevitably can be read and consequently sealed

off by an 'yes' or a 'no'. On the contrary this search should be for constituting the text in its autonomy balancing both the internal reasons and external conditions, which make the production of such a discourse possible.

3. It is in the time of 'language' that Unnamable exists. Language is a synchronic system which diachrony cannot ravage. But in its permanence it also shows history's own possibility of permanence only through things like itself. As pure signifiers, the text of Unnamable shows such a largeness and permanence. It is a Semiotic Construct, which signify time, language, and subjectivity in a different form.

Maurice Blanchot, one of the perceptive French critics evaluates this feature of Unnamable as follows:

Perhaps we are not dealing with a book at all, but with something more than a book, perhaps we are approaching that movement from which all books derive, that point of origin where doubtless, the work is lost, the point which always ruins the work, the point of perpetual unworkableness with which the work must maintain an increasingly initial relation or risk becoming nothing at all.¹⁶

16. Maurice Blanchot, Samuel Beckett; The Critical Heritage, Lawrence Graver and Raymond Federman, (ed.), (London: R.K.P. 1979), p.120.

CHAPTER - IV

STRUCTURALIST REIFICATIONS : PROBLEMS
IN THE READING OF UNNAMABLE

CHAPTER - IV

From the analysis of the text's narrative features using different categories and critical paradigms, following conclusions can be reached concerning the relation of subjectivity to narrative structure.

1. The long unparagraphed first person narrative with minimal range of words, emphasis on the first person-third person shifts enacted within one and the same subject 'I', and the intense violations of grammatical decorum, reveal to us a peculiar, "grammaculate" subject. It is propelled by a compulsive desire to speak, and through speaking alone exist.

2. Absence of events bearing resemblance to reality except two or three imaginary stories, which constitute not more than 20 pages out of 120, leaves us perplexed before its pathological, long winding, and narcissistic monologue constituted in pure words alone. It is a mosaic of verbal nihilism and author depends on the games of signifiers, and chains of tropes, to create this complex narrative.

3. Another feature is the essential 'non-eventness' in the narrative's progression. The only events present are negative. They are nothing but negations of Unnamable by itself. For Beckett, art is a via negativa. So

the nature of Beckett's narratives can be evaluated only by his affinity to something like, Heidegger's positions. For latter art is a convenient lie to tell the truth of Being that has already 'fallen'.

4. Unnamable creates a unique narrative time. Here there is not time, except that of Unnamable's contradictory words and imaginary stories. These imaginary stories are fantastic concoctions of a schizoid subject about planetary motions, globetrottings, and sibulline diminishments, and create a fluxional and chaotic time scheme. The imaginary chains of a first person 'I's masochistic devotions, create total 'anachronic' violations.

5. The failure of any critical paradigm based on a "rational cogito" for constituting Unnamable • prodigious and vengeful self-splits.

6. Another feature is the absence of a locus or a tangible site, even an imaginary fictional space where things occur. Unnamable negates everything on its way and creates total ambiguity about the positionings. If at one moment he is in his own skull, the next moment, he is found in his mother's entrails. He will then shift to his 'Isolde's breast and later go out for a global journey. And later he comes back to a self-imposed quarantine in a bell jar. In all these, no logic concerning

the principle of movement in space or time can be observed.

7. Its ontological limits are outside the text's immediate confines. There is no evidence that Unnamable's fictitious journeys end in the text. It ends with a compulsive gesture, 'to go on', in its loquacious existence. This unending monologue with gaping narrative gaps inside it defeats application of a meaning based criticism to it.

8. Another problem is the impossibility in applying a "metalanguage" on Unnamable's "Object language" As mentioned earlier, we cannot write the story of Unnamable, using another language. It is in pure words or it may be the story of these very words as such. If at all there is a signified or meaning in the text this lies in the tropic play of words on each other.

9. As in Joyce, the narrative undermines the capability of representation by language, and this destructive act itself becomes the aesthetic effect the text proffers.

10. Presence of cyclical rhythms and structural gyrations, is another feature. There is no linear continuity of a plot-based progression in the text. If at all, we can fix some minimal narrative units, they are nothing but disordered, small structures,

juxtaposed adjacently. Narration is the progression through such juxtaposed events, which have only arbitrary connections.

In the light of above mentioned features it becomes evident that a different paradigm, other than empiricist, philosophical, structural, should be used in the analysis of Unnamable's complex narrative.

The first problem that should be considered is the monologue of Unnamable himself. This monologue is a torrential movement through some imageless words, constantly breaking the first person identity of the monologist himself. It breaks the authenticity and identity of monologist himself, in order to enact a verbal drama by dividing the self in to itself. It resembles a mimetic, morality play in the one and single subject. The crucial situation usually has a two-fold direction. Firstly it can be directed towards the referential object of the speech about which one speaks and secondly towards another's discourse, which incites the reaction in the speaker to speak. Here there is no tangible other or object of speech in a literal sense. There is only a pure self and its pure aberrations in pure words. The event of this monologic drama, to exist as a legitimate literary piece, should draw its

specificity from a discursive system. Otherwise it is a mere rabble of words. Hence the necessity of a system of discourse in which this can be constituted.

The category of 'discourse' which has lately emerged with French structuralists and Post-structuralists, has revolutionized the outdated concepts of a compartmentalized, and segmentalized writing practice. So one no longer speaks of writing a monolithic, and impervious artefact like 'work'; say a novel, which immediately becomes a sort of 'salable' private property, subjected to the mechanics of a market economy. The petrification, or reduction of a unique aesthetic experience to a utilitarian object in a market economy has rendered art an inevitable bourgeois character. Modern writers have subverted this bane of art by devising new practices in the production of literary texts, grounded in new techniques and ideologies. Hence one witnesses the emergence of anti-art and anti-novels. Literary production has already broken out from its imprisonment in finely bound worlds, to merge with numerous adjacent, enunciative fields. The conventional notion of a plot-based literary writing is no longer relevant. In an age of Surrealism, and absurd theatre one cannot speak of verisimilitude or decorum. The Reason which hitherto spoke in literature

under guises of technical decorum and intelligibility was nothing but a manacle put around creating writing. This institutional sanction which often, stamped writings of revolutionary potential as madness and heathenism, was the stage of the strategic deployments of those in power. Modern writers want to explode these legitimate forces, and reveal reality in its essential nakedness and chaos. Hence there is a Dali, a Breton, and an Artaud. Hence the possibility of 'solar anuses', 'viscous times', the halo of torn shoes and divinity in a rotten tomato. Also the possibility of Unnamable.

Textuality and Unnamable

We do not have to search for a specific genre to classify Unnamable's defiant garrulity. It should be reduced to the character of its discourse itself. It is evidently a maniac's maddened monologue. Rather than turning the text into a faithful covenant between reader's reading and writer's writing, it should be constituted in its autonomy, as a body of signifiers capable of immense range of productions. The text's essential character is its peculiar eventlessness in "word" events; and this needs the logic of a particular enunciative or discursive domain to constitute it.

And only according to the rules of transformation of this discursive domain can Unramable be understood. [These are not the empirical categories of a conventional criticism] Michel Foucault, the immensely influential historian, points out in this relation:

.... But they can exist and are analysable only to the extent that these sentences have been "enunciated"; in other words, to the extent that they are deployed in an enunciative field that allows them to follow one another, order one another, co-exist with one another, and play roles in relation to one another. Far from being the principle of individualization of groups of 'signifiers' (the meaningful 'atom', the minimum on the basis of there is meaning), the statement is that which situates this meaningful units in a space in which they breed and multiply.¹

In such a concept of discourse, where narrow ideological notions about words and writing are transgressed, a new approach to text itself should be formulated. This is not the treatment of an old object with a new approach, but the constitution of a new object a new concept of text itself. This object is not strictly linguistic. It is more of a semiotic object in which language is not used as a servile medium to "express"

1. Michel Foucault, The Archeology of Knowledge, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), p.100.

a meaning anterior of it, but one in which words glitter
of
in the plenitude of their significations.

Problems of Textuality and Unnamable's Text

'Text' should be differentiated from 'work'.
'work' is a finished object, with its own materiality
of word order and sentence order, inscribed in a particular
mass and which occupies a definite physical space.
But text on the other hand is a methodological field.
The work can be pointed out lying somewhere. But text
has its sculptured segments in the abstractness of
language. So if a work can be read for meaning, a text
inturn should be produced. Roland Barthes uses the
word 'significance' instead of 'signification' for
the act of production of meaning in the text. According
to him text overflows the lawful meaning intended
by the author. The text is a sort of productivity.
It is a theatre where the producer and reader confront
each other with more freedom and creativity.

The 'significance' presupposes an infinite
labour in language. The text does not coincide with
the rhetorical, structural or linguistic components
in it. Its restless energy and intangible mobilities
denote an active. Semiotic space with certain signboards
which inturn help the reader to fearlessly travel in

it. In this active consumption of the text subjectivity is lost, a lack is felt, and hence it becomes a lost-object-search or a veritable 'jouissance'. In this process the text works on him, undoes and deconstructs him. Barthes explains this game of 'signifiante' as follows:

'Signifiante' - the glow, the unpredictable flashes of the infinites of language - is at all the levels of work without distinction; in the sounds which are thus no longer considered as units meant to determine the meaning (phonemes) but as drive movements; in the monemes, which are not so much semantic units as networks of associations, produced by connotation, by latent polysemy, in a generalized metonymy; in the syntagms where impact, where intertextual resonance, is more important than the lawful meaning; where readability is either overflowed or overlaid by a plurality of logics.... closely resemble the dream-work such as Freud began to describe. 2

According to Julia Kristeva, the text resembles a Freudian dream rebus. The "phenotext", which is almost an equivalent to the Freudian conscious, is the surface, in the material totality of signifiers. This is mediated from a terrain beneath, the surface text which she calls the "genotext". This is like the

2. Roland Barthes, Text, Discourse, Ideology, Robert Young (ed.) Untying the Text - A Post-Structuralist Reader, (London: RKP, 1981), p.40.

Freudian 'unconscious' which determines the 'conscious' through many mediatory processes. It is the ground of infinite, signifying processes, which transfers, its messages to the surface text after processes which resemble 'displacement' and 'condensation' in the Freudian unconscious. Also there is the concept of 'intertext'; which means the essential "binary" opposition of a text against a multitude of other texts and discourses, through which the text achieves its aesthetic as well as ideological specificity. This is almost equivalent to a Freudian super-ego, which is the objective milieu that envelopes man.

In the 'productive action' of reading the text, the reader, literally reads in to the text many other things. Reading is not a passive consumption. There is no innocent reading as such. Hence there can be possible a reading back of Freud's Oedipus in to Sophocles' Oedipus Rex or a new reading of Sterne from the site of Joyce. The concept of textuality, necessitates, a new ideology of reading. This reading is not for meaning or pleasure alone. To be more precise, this reading imputes certain values on the text, by reading it. This value can be imputed only by a conscious "reading or a reading 'into'; and also by identifying the discursive

domain, and its mechanisms, which proliferate, disperse and control the production of concerned discourse. The notion of such a discursive truth in contrast to the 'real truth' is expatiated by Foucault:

A value that is not defined by the truth and not gauged by the presence of a secret content; but which characterizes, their place, their capacity for circulation and exchange; their possibility of transformation not only in the economy of discourse; but more generally in the administration of scarce resources. In this sense discourse ceases to be what it is for its exegetic attitude; an inexhaustible stream from which one can always draw a new unpredictable riches....., from the moment of its existence.... poses the question of power, an asset that is by nature , the object of a struggle, a political struggle.

The text ridden with a multitude of such subliminal processes, often inscribes its polysemic significations as symptoms. A conscious reading, or 'reading into', is an active process. It is a "symptomatic reading" (Althusser) which looks into what the text does not say while saying it. Behind the texts' disarming, and innocuous gestures on the surface one can identify various, not so innocent elisions, omissions, and deferments.

Unnamable with its gross textual transgressions, forces us in to such a reading. In this text, no clear-cut meaning is embedded. In its games with itself, it reveals a symptomatic surface, with pathological inscriptions. So the text, in its processes of symptoma-

tisation should be read for what it does not say while saying it. This is evident from the nature of its discourse. In its evercontinuing assertions, and negations, it destroys all the possibilities for the deciphering of a transparent meaning. Hence in these patterns, of revealing/hiding, creating/destroying, we have to read for what the text does not say while saying it. Against Unnamable's simulations, we have to deploy strategic weapons. This is a "conscious" reading; an active involvement; an instrumental labour; and a strategic foray into the narrative's undersides, with conceptual insights derived from other disciplines and discourses.

The necessity of strategic reading of Unnamable, inevitably necessitates well-framed conceptual insights. This reading needs a set of tools that can constitute and give significance to the violent dissonances of the text in its essential arbitrariness. This points to the fact that a method should be evolved for its reading by taking into account the autonomy of the text in its aggressive postures repetitive rhythms. So the question becomes can there be a set of non-conceptual concepts, or a non logic which can permeate the interstices of Unnamable's chaos, and diagnose the causes behind its

insane repetition mechanisms? To be more precise, can a new theory be applied to this essential rabble of words or this "signifier" existence can it be logicized by subsuming first under a legitimate discursive domain and then render it meaning, authenticity and autonomy?

The text of Unnamable cannot be approached with a meaning-based ego-cogito criticism. This is because the subjectivity of Unnamable is a dialectical unity in and through schizoid processes, which is made explicit in the unparagraphed streams of its "wordy-gurdy". Narrative categories like structural units, rhetorical patterns or signifying segments, cannot be applied to order and interpret the text. So we have to resort to a 'reading', of the text instead of "criticizing" it using conventional concepts.

'READING INSTEAD OF 'CRITICISM'

Problems of a structural reading of Unnamable

The 'reading' of Unnamable is not to bring out the truth or intention behind Unnamable's existence. It is not an anatomic relation to be established with the text by a conscious criticism and bring out for oneself, what Unnamable literally and ultimately means.

Instead it is to release, Unnamable to its true being, and allow its existence by and through this being alone. This means a "reading", rather than a meaning-hunting process, which can fix the context and condition under which Unnamable's existence is possible. It is the specificity of the text's narrative in its speech, internal forces and rules that produce and regulate its discourse. The constitution of Unnamable in and through the conditions of its discursive terrain is logically equivalent to the solution of the problems of subjectivity, time and other features of the text in its structural conditions itself. Hence the crucial questions of structural subject, structural time, and structural unconscious arises here which are the central problems of French structuralism and its post-structuralist variants. Unnamable's possibility of being in and through language can be analysed only through a post-structuralist analysis of subjectivity, temporality and semiosis. More specifically, this depends on the analysis and constitution of the unique feature of its existence in speech as such; its Being of being, by a relevant post-structuralist paradigm. This necessitates a discussion of post-structuralist positions from

Levi-Strauss to Lacan's reading of Freud. I will attempt a reading of Unnamable through Lacan.

Structuralism is a comprehensive method that can be applied to various disciplines. It was evolved by the converging of insights from various intellectual streams. In its theoretical space we can observe various elements like the fundamentals of Freudian unconscious, binarism of Dr Saussure, 'Being' of Heidegger, positions of Russian formalism, etc. Structuralism represents a procrustean synthesis, a methodological paradigm that can comprehend the many faceted aspects of human for the reality in its totality and diversity. It also represents an attempt for the subversion of the hazy metaphysical tradition of Europe which functioned under the unreal, and theological metaphors like consciousness, Being, Reason etc. Another target of its attack is the pseudo-Cartesian disguises of phenomenological reductionism and existential ontology. Yet another target is the Hegelian-Marxist historicist prophesies. Its well differentiated theoretical boundaries are constituted by positions like, the abandonment of all reference to an egologi to a Unified subject, a historicism based on the privileged reference to an origin, absclutized 'arche'⁴ etc.

4. Jacques Derrida, Writing And Difference; trans: Allan Bass, (London: R.K.P., 1981), p.229.

Firstly structuralism grounds its positions in an anti-historicist perspective which has clear affinity with De Saussure's conception of a linguistic system. For De Saussure any linguistic system is a system of signs. Sign is constituted of an acoustic 'image' of 'signifier' plus a referent concept, of 'signified'. The signified, or the referent concept relates itself to events in reality which are embedded in temporal and spatial aspects. But in the unity with the signifier in the process of signification, or in the functionary as a sign, 'signified' transcends the spatio-temporal aspects of reality. It becomes a concept as such. The signification becomes meaningful not because of its reference to the diachronic 'signified' directly but because of the signification in the sign system. The sign system's main feature is the opposition between its components. So from the phonemic, sentential, to discursive levels, language as a sign system is constituted of oppositions. Each sign has a value in this total system, because of its position within the system. It is the processes in this value-laden system that generates meaning; not the real events which it in turn abstractly represents. Applying this paradigm directly into human history, Levi-Strauss came to the conclusion that many of the historical events should not be reduced to its diachronic progression,

but return to its structural and systemic specificities. That is, any event in history should be placed in a structural context of opposition to events in its immediate vicinity; in a synchronic perspective to decipher meaning. As Althusser pointed out in this connection, history thus becomes the "inaudible and illegible notation of the effects of a structure of structures". But Levi-Strauss was confronted with another problem. Since his system is constituted of oppositional structures, any historical structure at a particular time should maintain an opposition to other micro as well as macro structures which have their own individual history and materiality. The problem again becomes, how to integrate these substructures into a totality, and evolve a macro logic for history. Levi-Strauss inevitably falls into another historicist trap. His solution resembles a theological Hegelianism as it is evident from his opinion on this aspect.

What has been called "the progress of consciousness in philosophy and in history" corresponds to (a) process of interiorization of a rationality which is pre-existent in two forms: the one immanent in the universe, without which though could not succeed in catching up with things and no science would be possible;

and included in this universe, an objective thought which functions in an autonomous and rational manner.⁵

But Levi-Strauss escaped the imperilling kinship to a Hegelian dialectical 'Geist', by a clever intellectual rope-trick.

Levi-Strauss transposed this immanent 'objective thought' from the Hegelian idealism to a Freudian problematic. This objective thought functions by the logic of Freudian unconscious. Freudian unconscious is a repressed space, existing in a present absent logic in man's life. As the space of repressed wishes, it is a real space. But its reality is manifested only through consciousness, language, and dreams, in intermittant flashes. The breaking of its repressed equilibrium leads to pathological conditions. The consciousness most often fails to understand the working of the unconscious. Likewise the "historical unconscious" is a present/absent phenomenon. It projects itself to the surface of history in very many institutional formations, like kinship patterns, myths, political insitutions, religion etc. Some times it can lead to pathogenic formations, and hence many disruptive changes that occur in history.

5. Claude-Levi Strauss, cited by Bobscholte, From Discourse To Silence: The Structuralist Impasse; Mout on (ed.) Towards A Marxist Anthropolgy, (London: Mouton Publications, 1979, 1979), p.32.

This synchronic, and 'unconscious' visualization of history inevitably has to constitute the position of man as its active subject. In the synchronic juxtaposition of structural segments, notion of subject or man as the centre of things or determinant of history, inevitably becomes a contradiction. As Foucault and Althusser declared, history has no subject. Having neither subject nor centre, a totalization of history in anthropological terms becomes impossible. What we need is a detotalization of the semblant unity of subject into the unconscious structures of history, which are universal and timeless. Subject is in fact the effect of certain historical structures objectively imposed on him. Althusser pointed out the epistemological status of man as follows:

In the knowledge production, the 'subject' plays not the part it believes it is playing, but the part which is assigned to it by mechanisms of the historical process.⁶

Structural paradigm is a universal paradigm.

It can be applied to text and its specificities. By applying such a paradigm to the text we can constitute it as a synchronic collection of signs alienated from any authorial intentions, revealing the autonomy of its eventness, and existing through certain structures.

6. Louis Althusser, Reading Capital cited by Pierre Macherey, A Theory of Literary Production, trans: Geoffaley Wall, (London: RKP, 1978), p.

So the meaning of the text lies not in the literal semantic truths but in the conjunction of structures within the text and the structures of reality outside. The structures of external reality are counterpointed by the internal structures within the text which constitute its characters, codes and stories. Looking into the text, we can find that, the events, narrative or characters achieve ~~their~~ signification not in the rational truth or allegorical meaning they represent, but in the very mobile constitution of text through well-wrought grids of structures.

In the case of Unnamable, such a reading is more relevant than an empiricist or philosophical reading. Since its identity is broken, with every movement, the decipherment of it as a tangible truth is impossible. We have to define Unnamable in relation to its internal structures and its structural "Other". That is, Unnamable not an 'ego-cogito' character controlling the movement of his own discourse, but as the 'effect' of the interplay of structures enveloping him from outside and those embedded within the text. The object of our reading of the text is not to dismantle the subject or discourse to its anterior and diachronic ground, but to constitute it in its 'presented' obviousness.

and structures, along with holding it towards the textual "unconscious".

The strategy of the constitution of a 'structural object' in discourse, in contrast to the dismantling of its unity into fragments by meaning searching practices, is pertinently highlighted by Levi-Strauss as follows:

When we make an effort to understand, we destroy the object of our attachment, substituting another whose nature is quite different. That other object requires of another effort which in turn destroys the second object, and substitutes a third - and so on until we reach the only enduring presence, which is that in which all distinction between meaning and absence of meaning disappear: and it is from that presence we started in the first place.

What can be the narrative structures in which Unnamable can be anchored? In a structural model of Levi-strauss, Vladimir Propp or Roland Barthes, there are identifiable units, codes, or levels, by which narrative can be differentiated and organized into signifying segments. Obviously they do not follow an empirical or predicative logic in their "structuralizing".

7. Levi-Strauss, cited by ...Bob Schlote, op.cit., p.50.

These units are much more flexible and have more rigour in capturing and condensing the polysemic dimensions of a narrative. But in their interpretation based on transformation processes, these categories are more or less turned in to petrified monoliths, which often come to resemble its empirical substitutes.

In the interpretation process, a degree of autonomy and stability is initially presupposed in the structural units, for the segmenting of the text. These stable unit often create contradictions with, the more free play of the correlating processes in the second phase in which the meaning is generated. This is evident in the Propp's concept of 32 actant functions he developed in relation to the analysis of Russian folk tales, Levi-Strauss's 'mythemes' in the analysis of Indian myths or Roland Barthes 'codès'. About this 'empiricization' of structuralism, and the "structurality of the structures", Derrida has pertinently pointed out in Writing and Difference:

Thus the relief and danger of structures appear more or less clearly when content, which is the living energy or meaning is neutralized. Somewhat like the architecture of an uninhabited or deserted city, reduced to its skeleton by some catastrophe of nature or art. A city no longer inhabited

not simply left behind but haunted by meaning and culture... Structuralist consciousness is a catastrophic consciousness, simultaneously destroyed and destructive, deconstructing, as is all consciousness, or at least at the moment of decadence.⁸

As Derrida points out the menace of structuralist practice lies in its erection of column-like segments in a text, under the concepts of mythemes, functions, codes etc. In between these inflexible structures there are fissures, through which the fluidity of signification escapes. This is due to the 'construction' of the structures according to identifiable signifying units, based on a 'signified' logic instead of a signifier logic.

Unnamable defeats such a structuralist project. It is a very antithesis of such a dogmatic structuralist consciousness or subjectivity. In its discourse, no such identifiable column-like levels of signification exist. It is constituted of pure deictic forms of signifiers, and so the structuralist net cannot catch its codes, functions, or hermeneutic levels. It is a veritable game of positioning and transpositioning, permutations and combinations of a minimal number of signifiers, which are synonyms of pure poverty of meaning itself. But the poverty of a 'signified' signification is made up for by the plenitude of 'signifiers'. So the question becomes;

8. Jacques Derrida, op. cit., p.5

can the signifiers, without paradigmatically descending into its signifieds for the generation of 'meaning'; within themselves constitute a different kind of meaning by syntagmatic interrelations? Is there the possibility of a signifier/signifier chain constituting a different sort of 'signified'? And this is the threshold of post-structuralism.

Premises of a Post-Structuralist Reading

Post-structuralism maintains an organic relation to the theoretical terrain of structuralism. It is only a re-inscription of structuralist categories in a different theoretical logic. Post-structuralism maintains a different logic regarding the signifier/signified relationship. It rejects the inevitable 'closure' in the structural conception of sign and text. The structural 'closure' means the inevitable reification of text, into different units or codes of signification. This is detrimental to the free play of signifiers. The logic of the arbitrary territorialization of signs into enclosures of conceptual units, dwells absolutely with the whims of a critic or subject working on the text. Structuralism could not offer a logic for this logic.

Post-structuralists like Derrida and Foucault rejected such a structuralist practice. Instead they pitched their theory at a more fundamental level of sign logic. Derrida propounded a different perspective of Saussurean system by building a new 'bricolage' or combination of the structural categories, and by affirming the autonomy and freedom of sign. Shaped in the same problematic of Saussure, he slightly tilts the epicenter of emphasis of a more fundamental level of 'opposition'; which is the 'leitmotif' of Saussurean system. This results in a conscious self-interrogation of the system by itself; a mirroring of its own internal space into itself. Derrida emphasizes that the motif of opposition in the Saussurean system works at all levels. Since his system works in and through pervasive pattern of oppositions any arbitrary binding of meaning into segments or grids to facilitate production of meaning results in a contradiction with itself. It becomes an ideological act; recurrence of a logocentrism. The inherent nature of sign, Derrida conceptualizes as a 'trace'. That is, any sign achieves its specific meaning, in opposition to another one. In this process it bears a 'debt', a dialectical one, to the 'Other' for its meaning. That 'Other' will in turn depend on another 'Other' for its meaning. The third and the first together

can again constitute another productive opposition. So Derrida points out that at the signifier/signified oppositional level also there is an ever-recurring, ever shifting, ever postponing play of oppositions. Derrida calls it 'trace'. "Trace" means that all signs, since they contain the specificity of a being-for-itself, also logically contain a being-for-another at the same moment, and this process each becomes the 'trace' of another. So each sign in its "circulating" circuits in the system is as large as the system, itself theoretically. Sign is ontic-ontological in its constitution.

Derrida enunciates its specific functioning by using a concept he calls 'Differance'. This is a neogram combining two words - 'difference' and 'deferment'. Differance is a sort of spatial metaphor which denotes the nature of opposition in the sign system spatially. Derrida will say that each sign, or concept differs from the other, in the sign systems and hence achieves specificity within the system. As in Hegelian logic this difference has no existence of its own, but has a being, a present/absent being as a relation or as an interface between two signs. Since the trace of each sign is correlated to other and vice versa, logically

one can conclude that, the meaning of a sign is spatially 'differed', throughout the system. If difference denotes a spatial dimension, deferment, in turn, signifies the temporal aspect. The ultimate meaning of a sign can never be reached, since it is differed throughout the system of language. This also has a temporal dimension. That is, in the temporal existence of language, the reduction of a sign to its perfect meaning cannot be achieved at any time in history or future. It is a constant deferment, a postponement. So difference and deferment which mean 'not here' and 'not now', together constitute the essential nature of a sign. Hence Derrida's neographism: 'Differance' by combining both these words. It is not even a concept. It is outside linguistic system. If it is within the system, it may also be bounded by the 'traces' of signs. It also may move towards its 'presence' to achieve full meaning. Derrida explains this process as follows:

It is because of Differance that the movement of signification is possible; only if each so-called 'present' element appearing on the scene of presences is related to something other than itself; thereby keeping with itself the mark of a past element and already letting itself be vitiated by the mark of its relation to the future element. This trace being related no less to what is called the future than to what is called past, and constantly what is called the present

by means of this very relation to what it is not: what it absolutely is not, not even a past or a future as a modified present.... that I propose to call archi-writing, archi-trace or differance which (is) (simultaneously) spacing (and) "temporalization".⁹

As I have discussed above the post-structuralist concept of differance, is a viable concept in the analysis of Unnamable. Its textual surface evinces an elusive play of shifts and postponements. It is a constant differance of the subject's identity in signifiers throughout the narrative, and therefore overflows the text's closure. It is through a constant process of differance and deferment that Unnamable exists. So Unnamable's subjectivity, and its constitution is the effect of a self-created differance by mobilizing its own split identities. But, another problem that arises immediately is about the character of this 'differance' and the constituting ground of this ever differing processes. Another question is about the site, or discursive domain in which the process of Unnamable's differance can find identity and legitimacy. In this context, I would like to assert that Unnamable's incessant

9. Jacques Derrida, Margins of Philosophy; trans; Alan Bass, (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1982), p.13.

logorrhoea, is emblematic of a schizoid characters meaningless(?) rabble. If we outrightly reject this fact as meaningless, it is then the rejection of text itself as meaningless. Conversely, if the text has legitimacy as a literary discourse, then, this mad discourse also has its legitimacy and literary effect. This demands the sanctioning of Unnamable to exist as such in its being and on the other hand formulating the conditions and contours of a 'mad' disease like Unnamables's to claim the 'literality' or 'literalness' of a literary discourse. So what is common between this mad rabble and literature? Obviously the fantastic constructions, the gruesome images, and disjointed metaphors of Unnamable have a dark glow; a diabolic force. It is not strange to a civilization familiar with Surrealism and Theatre of Cruelty: If it is madness only, does the question concerning the possibility of ordering it into some paradigm arise?

Madness always spoke. It was always repressed too. But many a time it spoke reason and had threatened the complacency of centres of power. It was always excluded from the mainstreams of social discourses through various mechanisms. As Michel Foucault in his provoking history of madness pointed out, these

mechanisms ranged from physical confinements of asylum, to the logos of religious discourses and philosophy. But only in literature, it found a rupture to peep forth, and utter its nihilistic truths once in a while and vanish. Was Hamlet really mad? Was not Lear's fool more wise than many of the statesmen?

The problem of madness in the background as an appendage or an ironic parallel to the myth of reason, in the literature of past, find a pivotal of foregrounding with modern literature in conformity with its bohemian discourses. The surrealistic trances, symbolist images, Kafkaesque searches, 'mollylogues' of Joyce etc. are metaphors of unfettered madness 'truth' discourses. One of its fullest treatment is Beckett's Unnamable. Its schizoid incarnations are not to be read for literal meaning or a literal criticism, but should be seen as a semiotic synopsis of modern alienation. And it needs a constitution in its internal logic.

Frued and Word

The next question that confronts us is what is madness? What are its objective conditions of existence? Why do we, the 'seats of reason', often appear mad to others? The answer to this can offer us a key to the enigma of Unnamable.

It was with Freudian psycho-analysis that madness (neurosis psychosis) found a new constitution totally different from the behaviouristic, and anatomo-clinical approaches, existed till then. With the discovery of 'unconscious' a Copernican revolution occurred in psychology. Subjectivity was reconstructed in the new light of a structural paradigm and mediations. Freud found that the repressed drives in the unconscious often broke forth into the ego as affects, and its abnormal precipitation led to pathological conditions of neuroses and psychoses. He solved this with a peculiar method called 'free association'. Instead of using crude methods like hypnotism, which suspended the rational consciousness of the patient he allowed the patient to speak freely. For Freud, this free speech or "free association" became the ground of diagnosis.

Freud could find, certain omissions, fissures and cover-ups in these chains of discourses. He literally read through these discourses like a text, to find its ulterior meanings, which inturn derived from the dissonances in the unconscious. His cure was also simple. He made the patient verbalize the repressed wishes in the unconscious, which till then were unknown

to him. This could be achieved only after breaking one's well-guarded ego defences. The treatment of Anna O', a hysterical patient by his colleague, Breuer, was a path-breaking event in the history of psychoanalysis. Her hysterical paralysis in the arm was cured when she was just made to recall the incident when it occurred and talk it through. With Freud madness, talk and unconscious together formed one intimate process. Madness is a process in which the person subverts all the normal codes of language, and undergoes a self-displacement in terms of subjectivity, which is objectively imposed on him by the society by assigning him a position in language.

An immediate question that arises is the relation between language and the history of a person in the concrete life process from birth to death. The unbearable incidents in one's life is repressed into the unconscious. They surface as symptoms after a certain point of saturation. But when it is re-lived or re-enacted in the words, the symptoms are cured. This inevitably leads to the conclusion that language can compensate for contradiction or 'lack' in reality. That is, language lies parallel to reality, and is the abstract and microcosmic representation

of it with all its properties. So what is lacked in the real can be made up in the symbolic. The ultimate moment of break-down occurs when both reality and its symbolic substitute, the language, fail together. This is the condition of psychosis. Even here speech or language in a 'discoded' form exists. "Word" in psycho-analysis is the primary constitutive reality of the subject. This is like Heidegger's Being comfortable in the "home of language". One should not confuse with parallel constitute language with an alphabetic language. It is a sort of meta language with its own internal logic, and circulates in dreams, myths, legends etc. It is rooted in sexual differences and early childhood experiences.

CHAPTER - V

A POST-STRUCTURALIST READING OF UNNAMABLE

CHAPTER - V

The primacy of language as the abstract complement of reality; the constitution of subjectivity in and through language; the normality and abnormality defined by the position occupied by the subject in language and discourse by certain objective criteria; the negation of this constitution reality by occupying a position of alterity and this leading to the exclusion of subject from the normal position in society etc. are some of the conclusions reached by a survey of psycho-analysis. These positions can help us to frame a new psycho-analytic poetics which can be applied in Unnamable. It is in and through its discourse that Unnamable is defined. Its subjectivity is a process; a process of displacement in signifiers, according to a logic (or non-logic?) that is, immanent in the discourse's self unfoldment and self-definition of itself to itself. Each of Unnamable's attempt to repudiate 'Other' and its coercive injunctions, are symbolic of a more fundamental attempt to negate the 'Other's' language and the assigned role to which Unnamable is forced by it through its language. Again in this illegible jumble of words with all its tropic

chains, we can read a dialectic of subject and 'Other', one and language, culture and oneself, through certain fissures and symbolic articulations. We have to advance a little further into the story of word itself; of pure word, equivalent to the Logos of God which was creation itself in the beginning. It is also the story of how this Logos was turned into a tyrannical bane on modern man, in which he is undone and dissolved to a negating existence and made to repeat its drone litanies for a mere existence. Lacan says this story of 'word'.

Lacan's Psycho-Analysis and Problem of 'Speech'

Lacan's trajectory is constituted of a reading of structuralism into the Freudian system. The primacy of speech and the text of speech in Freud constituted a flexible interface with multitudinous aspects of human existence. This primacy speech and language logically necessitated a re-examination of psycho-analysis from the point of view of linguistics. Lacan is the exponent of a linguistic interpretation of Freud. It is not an unimaginative application of Saussurean paradigm into Freud. Lacanian reading is a supreme moment of conjunction and incorporation of very many other philosophical themes like 'Other' of Sartre, 'Desire', and 'master-slave' dialectic of Hegel, Being

and 'aletheia' of Heidegger, Formalism of Jacobson, etc. along with Saussurean paradigm into Freud. Lacan is not an 'ideologue' in the strict Sartrean sense, who finds his identity, in the shadow of Freud nor by speaking for him. His reading is the virtual representation of a fully developed system where we can see a unique attempt being made to correlate the dichotomy of object and subject into optimum unity. The analysis of the mechanisms of speech and its relation to subject, is the constitutive thrust of the Lacanian system. This will enable us to attain a deeper understanding of Unnamable's speech and existence.

Lacan's paradigm is based on three key concepts - subject, world and speech. In Lacan's system these are counterpointed with epistemological positions of imaginary, linguistic and syntactic. Lacan begins at the "beginning" it self. The first problem he discusses in Ecrits, the collection of essays he wrote in fifties and sixties, is about the mirror stage in which the child comes to recognize its 'moi' or 'ego' as a process and through which he differentiates himself from the world as an 'I'. Lacan's subject functions through imaginary identifications with 'Other'. This 'Other' changes from stage to stage, as the child grows and along

with this ... imaginary identifications also change . The mirror stage occurs between 6th and 18th month. Till this stage the child cannot have a separate identity from the mother's body. It is fused with the breast. Its body is one with 'Other' or logically is 'Other'. It has no separate identity. According to Melanie Klein, it is the presence and absence of breast that constitute child's ambivalent relation to the world. That is, breast is the object of satiation when it feeds, as well as object of pain when it is withdrawn. This presence/absence of a single object, makes two identities possible. When the child is hungry, it cries which is its sign for the need of the breast (presence), which is equally the sign of its obverse, that is the absence of the breast. Crying is the common sign for the condition of hunger, as well as the demand for breast which is absent. This ambivalent presence/absence is at the root of child's entry into the symbolic, first as a cry and then as language. Language, thus is the result of a lack.

This stage is succeeded by the mirror stage. In this stage child looks into other's body in its totality as a 'gestalt' and this offers a mirror reflection of its own body. Its own body, till then existing as

an appendage of another's (mother's) body, can find its totality or unity in the 'gestalt' offered by other's body. Lacan calls this 'specular image' of oneself. According to Lacan a child cannot grow ~~without~~ this imaginary identification with 'other'. Lacan substantiates it by citing one of his friend's work on a chimpanzee put in a cage separated from its species. No animal can grow without seeing one of its species. This was his thesis. The chimpanzee did not grow initially. Then his friend put a mirror inside its cage. The experiment turned out to be positive. Seeing its own reflection in the mirror put in the cage, the chimpanzee started growing. Out of this experiment Lacan formulated his thesis of mirror stage. One can achieve totality and unity of oneself in both physical and mental aspects only in and through 'Other'.

Lacan's next problem was man's entry into the symbolic realm of language. Lacan was struck by the fort/da episode cited by Freud in the Beyond Pleasure Principle. Freud watched his grand son playing with a toy tied to a string. He uttered a word "fort" for its presence and "da" for its vanishing into another room. The very same words he used for the presence

from mother is compensated by the "imaginary"; that is by the imaginary identification with another reality. The father's access to mother, his dominant position, as well as his representation as a negative symbol of reprimand against child's wishes is rooted in the reality of his possession of 'phallus'. 'Phallus' then becomes a structural 'object' which is exchanged between three poles - father, mother and child. Its possession, or loss constitutes the symbolic position of subject in reality. According to Lacan it is not an image, concept or even a symbol. 'Phallus' is a 'signifier'. It is a playful signifier positioned at the apex of culture, and anyone falling under its shadow, is defined, assigned and signified. Thus father's possession of 'phallus' makes him dominant. Hence child's initial rivalry later makes him solve this problem by an imaginary identification with father, or to "become" the father who has the "phallus". In this metaphoric process, he enters into an imaginary identity with the symbolic essence of father who 'speaks' language and says 'yes' and 'no'. 'Yes' and 'no' represent the sanctionable and objectionable in society and constitute the essence of law. Law is the ordering principle of society, and culture at large. So entry into language

also means the entry into culture and the interiorization of its norms and mores. In fact the basis of this lies in lack and imaginary identification with 'Other'; the paternal metaphor; the Name-of-the-father. This is the conjunction of two Lacanian motifs - 'lack' and 'Other'. This conjunction engenders an essence of law, that is represented by father, and words through the symbolic castration of the child.

Another important position in his system is that the "unconscious is structured like language". The enigma of what ultimately, is the content of unconscious, is solved by offering a linguistic paradigm of unconscious. It consists of a mobile army of signifiers, which are the representation of the repressed signifieds. This means the insatiable drives in man's life which are the real signifieds are turned into affects and then repressed into the unconscious. These signifieds repressed into unconscious, never perish but get transformed into energetic notations of signifiers. They constitute a form of language that surface into the consciousness as dreams and neuroses. Through this the lack in the real signified of life-process is compensated by imaginary projections into 'signifier' realms of dreams and neuroses. Lacan's thesis is that the transference of these signifiers into consciousness observe a law

same as that of the tropic processes in language such as metaphor and metonymy. Freud in his Interpretation of Dreams explains the dream formation using certain concepts among which two concepts are very important. The manifest dreams that surface into the consciousness, from the dream thoughts of unconscious, undergo certain censorships and modifications. The dream thoughts in unconscious are repressed as unbearable affects. But these wishes never die but always try to find expression through oblique means. This is made possible by certain censoring processes and metaphoric dilations which Freud called displacement and condensation. Displacement means a different idea that has a sort of partial relation to the concerned wish, will be projected into unconscious instead of the original repressed one. By condensation he meant that a substitute idea, which has a representative relation to the original one is articulated in the consciousness instead of the original repressed one. In Lacan's terminology he substitutes displacement by metonymy and condensation by metaphor. Metonymy is a representation of an idea or object by another object partially related to it. A famous example is 'sails' standing for ship. Metaphor in turn substitutes another word for the one that it represents.

It has close resemblance to the represented idea or object. Since metonymy and metaphor are constituted of signifiers; or relation between signifiers only, this is a clue to understand man's subjectivity as it is constituted in language.

The unconscious is neither primordial nor instinctual; what it knows about the elementary is no more than the elements of the signifiers.¹

Since the unconscious is the permanent reality "the thing that talks even when one sleeps"; and since the nature of its shifts being similar to tropes in the language such as one idea is not in itself, but in a represented one; the subject is not where he thinks himself to be. Hence the possibility of Lacan's dictum that "I think where I am not, therefore I am where I do not think"²



The second problem that arises in this connection is that what is the objective force that works behind this shifting identities in signifiers? Or what is the process behind the "subject being spoken rather than speaking"³ Lacan's answer is 'Other'. The 'Other'

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1. Jacques Lacan, Ecrits, (London: Tavistock Publications, 1977), p.120.
 2. ibid., p.166.
 3. ibid., p.66.

is a symbolic construct. If subject's interior processes work through imaginary, it is mediated to the real through the symbolic. The real is often elided in the fantastic relation that subject establishes with the 'Other'. This 'other' closely resembles the 'Other' of Sartre ("the other is a hole in me", "hell is the other") as well as Hegel's other' in the master-slave dialectic. Hegel's "Other" functions as the dialectical 'other' through which one achieves one's identity. In human society this is mediated through the concrete objects of utility which both desire at the same time. So the mutual recognition is transferred to a mediatory recognition through an object. This means one desires a thing which another also desires; the object in between. Hence, the relation becomes an abstract "desire" of desire". The 'Other' in Lacan is a symbolic 'other' constituted of law under the Name-of-the-father. It is one's inherent tendency to identify with the father (the phallic), who in turn represents the law and symbolic order. This constitutes "one's" other, that is, a symbolic 'other'. Hence one's activities are directed by this desire for conformity to symbolic 'other', which is primarily achieved through speaking its language.

It is the rational position that one occupies in the symbolic order, which gives him a normal identity. The 'other' determines one's subjectivity by assigning him a position in symbolic order, which is primarily a subjective position in language. So one is rather being acted upon than acting or determined by the 'other', than self-determining. As Lacan elaborates ,

If I have said that the unconscious is the discourse of the 'Other' (with capital O) it is in order to indicate the beyond in which the recognition of desire is bound up with the desire for recognition. In other words this other, the Other that even my lie invokes is the guaranter of the truth in which it subsists. By which we can also see that it is with the appearance of language the dimension of truth emerges.⁴

For Lacan a pathological condition like Psychosis means the breakdown of the symbolic order which integrates the subject's functions. The paternal or constitutive metaphor of father is fractured, and along with it the symbolic order too. Due to the failure of the paternal metaphor, the psychotic is induced to create a "foreclosure" against the Name-of-the-father. Since the Name-of-the-father could never be successfully repressed, the solution to the conflict is the rejection of it along with the whole of symbolic order. So distortion in language

4. Jacques Lacan, *ibid.*, p.67.

sets in at this point. The image of language becomes delusional, since the subject cannot differentiate between 'signified and signifier' or real and symbolic. Both coalesce in his discourse arbitrarily. This process resembles what linguists call autonomous messages which means that in discourse there are only messages about words instead of words that are used to represent things. This condition of schizophrenia was pointed out by Freud himself.

The dream-work too, occasionally treats words like things, and so creates very similar 'schizophrenic' utterances or 'neologisms'. But there is an important difference between the two "languages". In (schizophrenia) what becomes the subject of modifications by the primary process are the words themselves in which the preconscious thought was expressed; in dreams what are subjects to this modification are not the words, but the thing-presentation to which words have been taken back.

Lacanian system offers a viable paradigm to constitute the 'logic' of Unnamable's narrative. It is the monologue of the subject himself. The nodal axes of Lacanian system is grounded around a more post-structuralist notion of language, subject, and reality.

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5. Sigmund Freud, Complete Works, Vol.XIV, (London: Hogerth Press, 1953), p.229.

The attempt made here is not a meaning-searching criticism, since it is impossible in the narrative of Unnamable. Instead what is attempted here is a reading of narration for its conditions of existence as a literary text. It is a reading for the specificity of the conditions under which Unnamable produces its delusional monologue; a mesh and mixture of ruptures, intensities, obsessions, desires, body fragmentations, withdrawals, 'baby talks', logos, etc.

The Lacanian principles that guide this reading are as the following:

- 1) Unconscious is the discourse of the 'other'.
- 2) One is not where one thinks to be. So one is where one does not think.
- 3) Symbolic 'other' or the Name-of-the-father and its breakdown in psychosis.
- 4) Specular image of the unity of body and its disintegration under 'psychosis'.
- 5) The desire to talk as metonymy which is distorted in psychosis. This hallucinating discourse is a form of existence itself since words turn in to object.
- 6) The psychotic break-down in which the signifier does not refer to the signified, but signifiers

themselves become signified for each other. Words themselves become objects for representation rather than, through which things are represented.

- 8) Presupposition of an 'Other' as a precondition of any talk. In psychosis, since the 'other' cannot be identified, the 'self' itself turns the object. So self is alienated into a void, where one's talk is reflected 'back from this imaginary construction in void. But each reflecting back instigate another reply, which is another alienated objectification of subject, and this chain of process go on infinitely. This chain never ends. As explained by Lacan:

Not the frustration of the desire of the subject, but frustration by an object in which his desire is alienated and which, the more it is elaborated, the more profound the alienation from his 'jouissance' becomes, for the subject.⁶

The essential 'non-eventness' and "non-temporality" render a uniformity to the narrative. The progression of the analysis, can logically begin at any point in the narration. A psychotic code which is the distorted

6. Jacques Lacan, op.cit., p.42.

version of a normal is the one that Unnamable uses in his delirium, with his characteristic visionary gleams, abrupt negations, and bodily discourses.

The 'preamble' of the real story which Unnamable first speaks stretches through the first seventeen paragraphs. Then onwards it is one long unparagraphed monologue. This precludes any division of the narrative into structural segments. The absence of a linear progression forces us to look for the movement of the narrative in its cyclical patterns. 'Cyclical' or 'circular' is a sort of leitmotif that is present throughout the narrative. An affirmation is always negated to reach the initial position again. This in turn is again negated, and this process goes on. The principle of this structural progression can be anchored only in the subjectivity of Unnamable which consists of an erring voice; its vision of imaginary characters; and the hallucination about its own body. The first clue about its specificity is uttered in the beginning itself as a sort of metacommentary by Unnamable himself.

I cannot be silent. About myself I need know nothing. Here all is clear. No all is not clear. But the discourse must go on. So one invents obscurities. Rhetoric. 7

7. Samuel Beckett, Trilogy, p.296.

These sentences which are at the beginning of Unnamable is a synoptic representation of three themes: (1) Unnamable's forcible existence in speech and lack of reference to another tangible cause (2) Its pattern of cyclical progression constituted of an affirmation/negation chain and (3) The essence of Unnamable's rhetoric as invention.

A severe constraint imposed by the narrative, is that of making us depend on Unnamable's words alone for interpretation. In its obscure logic and counter logic one should not look for literal truths in one's own terms but, what each movement of utterance means for Unnamable.

In the beginning itself another Lacanian theme is introduced. This is Unnamable's assertion that it is not about himself he speaks about, but something else that is spoken through him. He is not where he thinks to be. He is somewhere else.

These things I say, are no longer, are not yet, or never were, or never will be, were not here, are not here, will not be here, but else where. ⁸

It is further elaborated as follows:

I shall not say 'I' again, ever again, it is too farcical. I shall put in its place whenever I hear it, the third person, if I think of it....Where I am there is no one but me, who am not. ⁹

8. ibid., p.303.

9. ibid., p.358.

These two sentences make clear, the similarity to Lacanian positions regarding the fundamental nature of subjectivity. Unnamable's utterance is literally equivalent to Lacanian dictum:

I think where I am not, therefore I am where I do not think. ¹⁰

This fundamental clue to Unnamable's position and perception of its own subjectivity, which follows a logic of Lacanian subjectivity, can be supplemented again by other insights of Lacanian system. A point which I would like to mention in this context is that, this is not an attempt to literally equate Unnamable's words with that of Lacan.

There is undoubtedly a split in the heart of Unnamable's subjectivity. This split leads to the psychotic distortions of normal codes. But the fact is that, within its schismatic nature, we can identify a logical, and rational nature on one side and an irrational and hallucinatory nature on the other side. It is the dialectic between these split positions of rational/

10. Jacques Lacan, op.cit., p.166.

irrational, logical/illogical that constitutes the play of verbal games. If any one of these identities were either rational, or irrational, then it can lead to two positions. On the one hand to the meaninglessness of madness which has least dramatic conflict or, in the opposite case to the prosaic confession of a rational mind. It is only a dialectic between the opposed natures within the split that can reveal the dramatized agonies of Unnamable.

The game of the narration draws its force from these splits mutually 'objectifying' and 'subjectifying' each other. In each moment an assertion is made and negated, to constitute another cyclical structure of this objectification/subjectification between them. This play offers the rational/irrational signification of Unnamable's narration, which turns ambivalent ultimately.

The next moment of Lacanian system in Unnamable is the concept of 'Other' which is treated under different metaphors, as 'other', master, 'satrap', 'Moran's boscage', etc. Like Lacan's symbolic 'other', Unnamable's 'other' is what forces him to his tortuous speech-existence. Other is the coercive reality which Unnamable wants to transgress, but cannot. This can be possible only by destroying it through the symbolic system it institutes.

Unnamable alludes to the relation between itself and the "Other" as follows:

I have never spoken enough to me, never had pity enough on me, I have spoken for my master; listened for the words of my master never spoken. Well done my child, well done, my son, you may stop, you may go, you are free, you are acquitted, you are pardoned, never spoken. 11

This above sentence is a pointed example of the play of differance by which Unnamable establishes its relation to 'other'; the master that makes him speak. The play of ambivalence in this differance is evident when Unnamable accepts the fact fact, it is the master who coerces him to speak; speaks to him to speak, which is not spoken. This presence/absence of the master, or the differance of his reality is the unique example of Lacanian psychotic's dilemma; a wish for the absence of the 'other', realised through a 'present-absence'. This inevitably occurs at the brink, where the symbolic order meanancingly turns inverted before psychotic's vision.

Unnamable's existence in and through the 'other' or in 'other's symbolic system is again highlighted: "I am in words, made of words, other's words" (Trilogy, p.390). This ambivalent relation to 'other' is highlighted

11. Samuel Beckett, op.cit., p.312.

time and again. This vision of 'other' slowly crumbling before Unnamable's wishful hallucinations is evident when he says:

And now let me see what news, there is of worm, just to please the old bastard. I will soon know if the 'other' is still after me: But even if he isn't, nothing will come of it, he won't catch me, I won't be delivered from him, I mean....¹²

The play of differance in the present/absent condition of 'other' is again evident in the mutually negating statements: "he won't catch me, I won't be delivered from him..."

Another Lacanian theme is the disintegration of the specular image of the body or the fragmentation of the 'gestalt' conception of one's own body. This process of a progressive fragmentation of the bodily image is a recurring theme in the narrative of Unnamable. There is a sort of speech/body opposition working throughout the narrative to finally subjugate the body at the expense of voice. This parallels metaphorically the Lacanian emphasis on speech as a sort of body, or the mass of voice as a body. This is evident in a movement from the presence of a corporeal body of Unnamable

12. ibid., p.34

in the beginning, which slowly disintegrates and finally gets reduced to a voice alone, or becomes a "voice body". This is the play of a body difference. About Lacan's "speech-body" Michel Decerteux writes:

Speech must create its own body, a body missing in the "world" in which truth is misunderstood.. Speech must give birth to a body which it defines in its entirety...in the christian genesis of the New Testament, speech gives birth to a body. It is word which becomes flesh: a fiat. It is from this difference that the ¹³lacanian project already takes its bearing.

One can find a pattern of the disintegration of a specular unity of body from a full-bodied and seated Unnamable in the grey-lit symbolic space in the beginning to a "thin sheet of voice", between itself and world in the end. In between, it turns into a shrinking sybil in a jar, the one-legged Mahood, trotting around the world, a drying sperm in the sheets of an innocent boy, a round fleshy talking ball, etc. The difference which plays at the heart of this bodily description through affirmation and negation is still another sign of his erring vision of himself:

For I feel my tears coursing over my chest, my sides, and all down my back. Ah, yes, I

13. Michel decerteux, Heterologies, Discourse on Other, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), p.62.

am truly bathed in tears. They gather in my beard, and from there, when it can hold no more - no, no beard, no hair either, it is a great smooth ball, I carry on my shoulders, featurless, but for the eyes, of which only the sockets remain. 14

We observe the play of difference at two levels. That is each moment of proposition is opposed by a negation, as well as this pattern in turn opposed to higher levels. Hence the immediate description of beard is negated - "no, no, beard". This bodily decomposition at the beginning is opposed to its dissolution into a body of voice, a thin filament that separates the subject, from the world.

That is what I feel, an outside and an inside and me in the middle, perhaps that is what I am, the thing that divides the world into two, on the one side the outside, on the other the inside, that can be as thin as foil, I am neither one side, nor the other, I am in the middle, I am the partition, I have two surfaces and no thickness....I am the tympanum, on the one hand the mind, on the other the world, I don't belong to either. 15

Another aspect of the text which has resemblance to Lacanian theme is the schizoid's imaginary identifications. Since the paternal metaphors are dead the psychotic is withdrawn from the chain of signifieds of reality

14. Samuel Beckett, Trilogy, p.307.

15. ibid., p.386.

to signifiers of language. The signifier, which becomes the object of psychotic, again undergoes distortion and is worked upon by giving free rein to its tropic potentials. This results in the fantastic identifications in delirium, with timeless and spaceless realities. Gilles Deleuze points out this phenomenon as follows:

Everything comingles in these into becomings, passages and migrations.....I am becoming God, I am becoming woman, I was Joan of Arc and I am the Heliogabalus, and the Great Mangol, I am the China man.....phenomena of individualization and sexualisation are produced in these fields....we never stop migrating, we become other individuals as well as other sexes.....¹⁶

It is these imaginary identifications that are behind subject's various incarnations into Mahood, Worm, etc by the logic of an arbitrary naming, or by giving a proper noun.

But it is time that I gave this solitary a name, nothing doing, without proper names, I therefore baptize him Worm. ¹⁷

These names become timeless incarnations of a split schizo, who is Mahood, crouching in a bell-jar, at one moment, and then abruptly travelling to

16. Gilles Deleuze, Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, (London: Athlone Press, 1977) pp.84-85.

17. Samuel Beckett, op.cit., p.340.

Pacific at the next moment etc. This is evident in Unnamable's utterance:

Perhaps it is by trying to be Worm that I will finally succeed in being Mahood. I hadn't thought that then all I will have to do be Worm, which no doubt I shall achieve by trying to be Jones. 18

It is this schizoid process by which that Unnamable moves in different identities; each trying to be the object of the other; this last one in turn becoming the object of another, etc. In these imaginary tales words get alienated from itself constituting a lack; which it in turn tries to fill up by the imaginary 'jouissance' of a psychotic's displacement in signifiers. The proliferation of imaginary identities; turning of words into objects; failure or the death of paternal metaphor; the internal messages of Unnamable to himself are at the base of Unnamable's narrative etc. Hence it cannot stop the process of words getting alienated from itself, or itself becoming an impossibility by ending its speech. So it is fated to existence. So, "where I am, I don't know, I will never know, in the silence you don't know, you must go on, I can't go on, I will go on". 19

18. ibid., p.342.

19. ibid., p.418.

CONCLUSION

Beckett's art of poverty, reductionism, movement-in-Stasis, and word-games is uniquely embodied in Unnamable. It is evident that it has surpassed the complexity of all other works in Beckett's oeuvre. Its complexity derives from the dialectic it mobilises between various levels of oppositions in the narrative. Some of these levels of oppositions are body/speech, subject/other, word/true, ego/subject, presence/absence, etc. In its imbrications of these oppositions in stunning combinations, any ordinary 'gaze' is rendered myopic.

As is evident from the analysis the subterranean forces working under the narrative's surface do not establish a one-to-one relationship with the surface text. The textual 'unconscious' is constituted of certain metaphoric oppositions as mentioned above. Its complex mediations to the surface in the insane speech of Unnamable can ^{be} deciphered only through a conscious and methodological reading. This stammer of half-formed thoughts and words cannot be read with an empirical logic.

I would like to state that in the use of Lacanian model, in this reading is in 'no sense' perfect and all-comprehensive. It has its own short-comings. Theory

cannot be a literal equivalent of the text. It is a convenient set of concepts to grasp certain essential forces and conditions within the text, as well as outside which makes the production, existence and legitimacy of the text possible. In this sense my humble attempt is a very partial effort to constitute some of the fundamental opposition and levels of the text, which are of course not monolith like meaning, communicating with other such semantic monoliths. I have analysed it as mobile sites of certain signifiers which exchange and transform structurally and semantically makes possible the production of the semiotic, significative aspects of the text. This anchoring points of signification bear a resemblance to certain nodes of Lacan's conceptual problematic. This also point to the fact that the analysis of modern subversive fictions can be possible only through applications of such paradigms from adjacent fields of discourse.

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