Exploring Emptiness: Beckett and Buddhism via Arthur Schopenhauer

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Abstract

This thesis develops a philosophical framework for Samuel Beckett's writings. It does so in the light of the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer's understanding of Eastern philosophy. Beckett read Schopenhauer closely in the 1930s, late 1970s and early 1980s, taking notes from his work in the so-called 'Whoroscope Notebook' of the 1930s and the later 'Sottisier Notebooks' respectively. However, during the 1940s till early 1970s there are no direct references to Beckett's reading of Schopenhauer's philosophy. In preparing his ground-breaking philosophical works, in turn, Schopenhauer studied the Eastern thought of Buddhism and the Vedas. The religious and philosophical framework for Schopenhauer's understanding of Buddhist philosophy – which I refer to below as 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism' – is used to analyse key Beckettian themes, such as emptiness and the 'veil of Maya', which is a Vedic philosophical concept. 'Maya' means illusion, and Schopenhauer's phrase 'veil of Maya' refers to a mask that covers the reality of the world.

In Beckett's work, 'veil of Maya' signifies that the representation of the world 'as it is' remains nothing but an illusion. The combination of both Buddhist and Vedic philosophies are considered due to Schopenhauer's close reading of Buddhist texts and *Oupnek'hat* (a two-volume Latin book containing fifty Upanishads), as is his corresponding understanding of 'veil of Maya' and emptiness.

This background is suggestive of the purpose behind Beckett's employment of the tropes of disintegration and Buddhist emptiness with which he was already familiar in the early 1930s. In bringing together the Eastern philosophical perspective through which Schopenhauer's philosophy is deployed in Beckett's work, this study considers Beckett's interwar and late (post-Nobel) writing, as it was only during these times that Beckett was reading Schopenhauer.

Accordingly, this study focuses on different genres from these years: criticism, fiction, prose and drama. The opening chapter considers Beckett's early criticism, *Proust* published in 1931, with subsequent chapters then moving onto the early novels *Murphy* (1938) and *Watt* (1945), the late 'trilogy', *Company* (1980), *Ill Seen Ill Said* (1982) and *Worstward Ho* (1983), the short prose works, 'The Way' (1981), 'Ceiling' (1985), 'Stirrings Still' (1988), and the dramas, *Rockaby* (1981), *Ohio Impromptu* (1981), *A Piece of Monologue* (1982), *What Where* (1984), and *Quad I & II* (1984). Throughout, Schopenhauer's presence and, in

turn, his reliance upon Buddhist thinking, will be shown to be refracted – with increasing opacity – in Beckett's diverse writings.

This doctoral study is interdisciplinary in that it uses a philosophical framework which provides an interpretative value to Beckett's works. This approach extends to novels, short prose, and later plays to show Beckett's wide-ranging approach to 'unveiling' the 'Maya' through disintegration of the self, itself an aspect of Buddhist emptiness. Consequently, this study considers two major points: first, the genesis and relevance of Schopenhauer's 'Eastern' thought as it relates to Beckett's work; and second, how a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism' lens– alongside the Vedic 'veil of Maya' – provides a crucial interpretation for Beckett's works.

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Jaisae jal thae budhabudhaa oupajai binasai neeth //

Jag rachanaa thaisae rachee kahu naanak sun meeth

As the bubbles in the water well up and disappear again
so is the universe created; says Nanak, listen, O my friend!

Guru Granth Sahib

Abbreviations

Works by Samuel Beckett

(APOM) *A Piece of Monologue* in *The Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber and Faber, 1986)

(BL I) *The Letters of Samuel Beckett Volume I*: *1929-1946*, eds. George Craig, Martha Dow Fehsenfeld, Dann Gunn and Lois More Overbeck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

(BL II) *The Letters of Samuel Beckett Volume II: 1941-1956*, eds. George Craig, Martha Dow Fehsenfeld, Dann Gunn and Lois More Overbeck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

(BL IV) *The Letters of Samuel Beckett Volume IV: 1966-1989*, eds. George Craig, Martha Dow Fehsenfeld, Dann Gunn and Lois More Overbeck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016)

(CI) *Ceiling* in *Company; Ill Seen Ill Said; Worstward Ho; Stirrings Still*, etc., ed. Dirk van Hulle (London: Faber and Faber, 2009)

(C) *Company* in *Company; Ill seen Ill Said; Worstward Ho; Stirrings Still*, etc., ed. Dirk van Hulle (London: Faber and Faber, 2009)

(IDI) *Imagination Dead Imagine* in *First Love and Other Stories* (New York: Grove Press, 1974)

(ISIS) *Ill Seen Ill Said* in *Company; Ill Seen Ill Said; Worstward Ho; Stirrings Still*, etc., ed. Dirk van Hulle (London: Faber and Faber, 2009)

(M) *Murphy*, ed. J. C. C. Mays (London: Faber and Faber, 2009)

(OI) *Ohio Impromptu* in *Collected Shorter Plays* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006)

(P) *Proust and Three Dialogues: Samuel Beckett & George Duthuit* (London: Calder, 1987)

(Q I) *Quad I* in *Collected Shorter Plays* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006)

(Q II) *Quad II* in *Collected Shorter Plays* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006)

(R) *Rockaby* in *Collected Shorter Plays* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006)

(SS) 'Stirrings Still' in *Company; Ill Seen Ill Said; Worstward Ho; Stirrings Still*, etc., ed. Dirk van Hulle (London: Faber and Faber, 2009)

(TN) *Texts of Nothing* in Collected Shorter Prose 1945-1980 (London: John Calder,1984)

(TU) *The Unnamable* in *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, *The Unnamable* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1973)

(TW) 'The Way' in *Company; Ill Seen Ill Said; Worstward Ho; Stirrings Still*, etc., ed. Dirk van Hulle (London: Faber and Faber, 2009)

(WH) *Worstward Ho* (in *Company; Ill Seen Ill Said; Worstward Ho; Stirrings Still*, etc., ed. Dirk van Hulle (London: Faber and Faber, 2009)

(WW) *What Where* in *Collected Shorter Plays* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006)

(W) *Watt*, ed. C. J. Ackerley (London: Faber and Faber, 2009)

Works by Arthur Schopenhauer

(FFR) *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, tr. E. F. J. Payne (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court, 1974)

(MR I) *Manuscript Remains, Vol. I*, tr. E. F. J. Payne (Oxford: Berg Publishers Limited, 1988)

(MR II) *Manuscript Remains, Vol. II*, tr. E. F. J. Payne (Oxford: Berg Publishers Limited, 1988)

(MR III) *Manuscript Remains, Vol. III*, tr. E. F. J. Payne (Oxford: Berg Publishers Limited, 1989)

(MR IV) *Manuscript Remains, Vol. IV*, tr. E. F. J. Payne (Oxford: Berg Publishers Limited, 1990)

(PP I) *Parerga and Paralipomena, Vol. I*, tr. E. F. J. Payne (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974)

(PP II) *Parerga and Paralipomena, Vol. II*, tr. E. F. J. Payne (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974)

(WWR I) *The World as Will and Representation, Vol. I*, tr. E. F. J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, 1966)

(WWR II) *The World as Will and Representation, Vol. II*, tr. E. F. J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, 1966)

Conferences

The outcome of any research is found in its dissemination through publications and conference presentations. A significant part of this thesis was presented at symposia, seminars and international conferences. The following papers have been presented in institutionally-based conferences:

1. 'Beckett, Schopenhauer and Buddhism: Between Willing and Suffering', presented at the *Samuel Beckett: Debts and Legacies* Postgraduate Symposium, University of Oxford, June 2010
2. 'Interpreting "Sunyata": An Archival Perspective on Beckett, Schopenhauer and Buddhism', presented at the *Samuel Beckett: Out of the Archive* International Conference, York University, June 2011
3. 'Understanding Emptiness: Beckett and Buddhism via Arthur Schopenhauer', presented at the Postgraduate Annual Conference, University of Northampton, October 2011
4. 'Beckett's Schopenhauerian Buddhism: East Meets West', presented at the *Beckett and the 'State' of Ireland* International Conference, University College, Dublin, Ireland, July 2012 (read by Dr Feargal Whelan)
5. 'Beckett's Schopenhauerian Buddhism: East Meets West', presented at the *Samuel Beckett: Debts and Legacies* seminar series, St John's College, Oxford University, July 2012
6. 'Samuel Beckett's *Murphy*, the idea of nothing and the disintegrating self: Schopenhauer and the "Schopenhauerian Buddhist'" perspective', presented at the *Samuel Beckett: Debts and Legacies* Postgraduate Symposium, University of Oxford, St. John's College, June 2014
7. 'Samuel Beckett's *Company*: A "Schopenhauerian Buddhist" perspective', presented at the School of the Arts Annual Postgraduate Research Conference, University of Northampton, September 2015

Contents

Introduction

The writings of Samuel Beckett (1906-1989), a leading twentieth-century author and 1969 Nobel Prize recipient are interspersed with literary, philosophical, theological, psychological and critical engagements. One of the most prominent and longstanding areas of exploration in Beckett Studies is 'Beckett and Philosophy', a sub-discipline that remains consistently central to understanding Beckett's influences. This thesis contributes to the scholarly work on 'Beckett and Philosophy' by examining Beckett's well-known debt to the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, through the latter's influence from Buddhism and the Vedic philosophy. Taking research on Schopenhauer's Eastern influences as a starting point, this thesis develops an interpretative framework termed 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism', the heuristic construction earlier noted by Urs App in *Richard Wagner and Buddhism* (2011) to describe some of Beckett's key influences.

Like the case of Schopenhauer, many of Beckett's other Western philosophical influences have been exhaustively examined in Beckett Studies. As will be shown throughout, Schopenhauer had a major influence on Beckett's writings. Biographical, archival and textual sources confirm this claim. Beckett's appreciation of Schopenhauer began in 1930, as is evident from a letter written to Thomas MacGreevy from July, which asserted: 'I am reading Schopenhauer' (BL I 32-33). In 2006 Matthew Feldman in *Beckett's Books: A Cultural History of Samuel Beckett's 'Interwar Notes'* has shown that in Beckett's mid-1930s 'philosophy notes', Beckett revealed a personal affinity with the philosopher by calling him 'dear Arthur'. In these notes, Beckett mentions Schopenhauer several times, seemingly in a familiar way. Some examples from the 'philosophy notes' illustrate this fact: 'Irrationalism comes to full development in Schopenhauer by removal of religious element' (Beckett 10967/252v). 'Schopenhauer became – leaving the weaknesses of his system aside – one of the greatest philosophical writers' (Beckett 10967/478). In keeping with his transcription of the parts of his source material - in this instance Wilhelm Windelband's 1901 edition of *A History of Western Philosophy* – Beckett tended to gravitate toward the details that interested him most.

During his travels in Germany in 1936 Beckett also purchased a collected edition of Schopenhauer's work edited by Julius Frauenstädt (1923). Dirk van Hulle and Mark Nixon note Beckett's conspicuous interest in Schopenhauer's works which is evidenced by marginalia in all six volumes of *Schopenhauer: Werke*. Later still, in 1937 when Beckett

was ill with gastric influenza, he returned to Schopenhauer and in another letter to MacGreevy wrote that Schopenhauer 'was one of the ones that mattered most to me' (BL I 550). Significantly, after a lapse of around forty years Beckett again returned to reading Schopenhauer as is evident from his 'Sottisier' notebook that he kept between July 1979 and December 1980 (Hulle, *Beckett's Library* 149). Also from this period, in a letter to Barbara Bray on 23 May 1977, Beckett wrote 'Yours of 20 with little books today. I had received a dozen in Paris. Thanks quand même. Beginning with Schopenhauer' (BL IV 462). Thus, Beckett's return to reading Schopenhauer suggests his continued engagement with the philosopher. In reiterating that this analysis is focused upon periods in which Beckett was demonstrably reading Schopenhauer – which presumably fed into his contemporaneous works – this study addresses on these two periods: up to the completion of *Watt* in 1945, and from the last dozen years of his life (Beckett died in December 1989). A closely related reason for choosing these areas is the importance of setting out Beckett's first encounter with Schopenhauer in the 1930s, when he was already fascinated by the philosopher. While much excellent criticism in Beckett studies has been written on Schopenhauer's influence on Beckett's most well known 'middle period' – including his most famous works, such as the fiction Trilogy, *Texts for Nothing*, *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*, amongst others – to date no analysis of Schopenhauer's influence upon Beckett has extended to the final period of his life; again, when empirical evidence makes clear he had returned to perhaps his favourite philosopher.

While Nixon and van Hulle's *Samuel Beckett's Library* (2013) makes clear that Beckett's interest in Schopenhauer was a lifelong affair, it is essential to point out that in his middle works (1940s - early 1970s) there is no direct evidence of Beckett's reading notes from Schopenhauer's philosophy as there is in both 'early' and 'late' periods. However, critics have long since noted a considerable use of themes highlighted in these works, above all, disintegration of the self into form, feeling, perception or consciousness. For example, in short stage play *Breath* there is no dialogue, no conventional use of character and communication is shown only through the sound of breathing on stage. In *Not I* a disembodied female mouth is shown on stage speaking a monologue at a record speed. Despite the implicit relevance of the theme of disintegrated self to my project, the word limit here means that it is not possible to include these and the middle works.

As noted above, the other reason for not considering the middle works is the excellent scholarly work done by critics such as Ulrich Pothast and Gottfried Büttner. In that regard Pothast surveys the influence of Schopenhauer upon the trilogy of novels *Molloy*, *Malone*

Dies, *The Unnamable* as well as Beckett's most well-known dramatic works *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*. Pothast shows, for instance, that the protagonists of these works – Molloy, Malone, Moran and the Unnamable and all 'his' avatars – show tendency towards fragmentation and will-lessness which closely reminds one of Schopenhauer. Pothast advances the idea of disintegration of the self. He writes 'There is no need to assume that Beckett, when writing *The Unnamable*, had indeed the intention to give an example of circumstances in which, according to Schopenhauer, individuation is impossible' and further asserts that 'it is obvious in any case that the narrator of this novel does not possess a principle of individuation which could successfully be applied to his own "person"' (174). Despite this, Beckett's 'middle period' protagonists are not granted any blissful state with which Schopenhauer associated the true loss of self. Pothast also argues that in *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*, Beckett follows Schopenhauer's metaphysical view that pain and boredom; for him, are the two main topics of great 'tragicomedy'. The characters from the drama, including Gogo, Didi, Hamm, Nell, and Clov, all have their own personalised suffering and when they briefly forget their suffering, they get bored. This can be placed in relation to Schopenhauer's tragicomic views:

> Behind need and want is to be found at once boredom, which attacks even the most intelligent animals. This is a consequence of the fact that life has no genuine intrinsic worth, but is kept in motion merely by want and illusion. But as soon as this comes to a standstill, the utter barrenness and emptiness of existence becomes apparent. (PP II 287).

Schopenhauer's views on art and life likewise recur in the dialogue and actions of the characters in the plays. Thus, Pothast writes that '*Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* are plays which indeed still use the forms of space, time, and individuality in matters of stage technique, but have dropped them as far as the inner structure of the kind of life and the whole world depicted here is concerned' (Pothast 228). On the other hand, the ground-breaking work done by Gottfried Büttner similarly highlights Schopenhauer's pessimism and resignation as it appears in Beckett's post-war play *Waiting for Godot*. Büttner writes that Gogo and Didi from the play reflect upon suicide but ultimately reject suicide - which is very close to the idea of endured pessimism in Schopenhauer's philosophy. Since Schopenhauer's philosophy was very close to Beckett's own, writes Büttner, the latter follows three ways of enduring the misery of existence, all 'borrowed' from Schopenhauer: art, or aesthetic contemplation, compassion, and resignation. In his overview article in *Beckett/Philosophy*, Tonning also asserts that 'the strict resolvability of the movement

between "self" and "unself" points to an area in which art can fruitfully function, by dramatizing attempts to establish subject-object links and their inevitable breakdown'. As Tonning notes, this is also a Schopenhauerian aesthetic approach ('I am Not Reading Philosophy' 62). By contrast, this kind of work has not been undertaken in terms of Beckett's late works, commencing from entries in his 'Sottisier Notebook' from the later 1970s. This lacuna will be addressed in this thesis by taking into consideration Beckett's late writings. This is in keeping with Feldman's argument (2012) that Beckett tended to incorporate what he had most recently read into his works.

Many critical essays and books explore Schopenhauer's influence upon Beckett, including works by John Pilling (1976), J. D. O'Hara (1981) and Mary Bryden (1998).[1] Most recently, in the studies such as *The Metaphysical Vision: Arthur Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Art and Life and Samuel Beckett's Own Way to Make Use of It* by Ulrich Pothast (2008) and an unpublished thesis 'Against Reason: Schopenhauer, Beckett, and the Aesthetics of Irreducibility' by Anthony McGrath (2014), Schopenhauer's influence on Beckett's philosophical concerns are amply documented. On the other hand, scholars have also explored affinities between Beckett's oeuvre and Buddhist ideas. Critical works by R. N. Coe (1964), Paul Foster (1989), Paul Davies (1994) and Kyle Gillette (2012) have all contributed to this area of scholarship. Yet, it is vital to address the fact that there is still a lack of archival material that can illuminate Beckett's direct references to Buddhism as is argued by van Hulle and Nixon in their recent book *Samuel Beckett's Library* (2013). Beyond a few scattered references, it is doubtful – at least in terms of the archival record – that Beckett took notes from Buddhist materials.

Even in the absence of any empirical proof, as suggested above, Buddhist philosophy continues to remain an important interpretative lens in Beckett Studies. The connection between Beckett and Buddhism was first explored in the late 1960s and 1970s, with Steven J. Rosen exemplifying this trend in his claim that 'indeed a whole complex of Buddhist ideas is reproduced by Beckett' (158). Echoing this point in an earlier study, Coe argues that 'the temptation to interpret this [Beckett's works] in terms of a specific branch of mystical teaching – Taoist, Buddhist or Zen-Buddhist – is very strong, and it is perhaps not wholly misleading to do so' (24). Clearly, there have been many scholarly attempts to explicate

[1] Some more works exploring Schopenhauer's influence on Beckett, are Pilling 'Beckett's *Proust*' 8-29; Acheson 'Beckett, Proust and Schopenhauer' 165-179; O'Hara 'Where There's a Will There's a Way Out' 249-270; Feldman '"Agnostic Quietism and Schopenhauer's Early Development' 183-200; Ackerley *Demented Particulars: The Annotated Murphy* 2004

both Schopenhauer and Buddhist philosophy in Beckett's writing; many of which have been both fruitful and influential.

However, this study chiefly undertakes the task of exploring the influence on Beckett's work of the Eastern philosophies of both Buddhism and the Vedas (Vedas is the entire body of sacred writings of Hinduism) through Beckett's engagement with Schopenhauer or to develop Chakraborty's tantalising suggestion: 'Schopenhauer stands as a common denominator in linking Beckett with the Eastern philosophy of Buddhism and the Vedas' (84).

Schopenhauer's own philosophy is of course influenced by Christian mysticism, quietism and Immanuel Kant and others, but only the Eastern philosophical influence ingrained in Schopenhauer's philosophy is central to this thesis – not least as it is difficult to elaborate on all the other influences, given the restrictions of word limit. Schopenhauer's knowledge of Buddhism and Vedic philosophy helps shed light on Beckett's specific focus upon the 'veil of Maya', aspects of Buddhist emptiness which includes a presentation of the self in disintegration. In making this point, I have taken Mahayana Buddhist thought into account because Schopenhauer takes his understanding of nothingness from Mahayana Buddhism. For instance, he states in the footnote at the end of *The World as Will and Representation*, 'This is also the *Prajna-Paramita* of the Buddhist' (WWR I 412). *Prajna-Paramita* is a Buddhist text from the Mahayana Buddhist tradition. Mahayana Buddhism represents a branch of Buddhism which originated in India. It emerged in the first century CE and became dominant during the ninth century. The Mahayana philosophy advocates the view concerning emptiness (Silk). The earliest sources of the Mahayana tradition include the Mahayana Sutras (*Prajana-Paramita* mentioned by Schopenhauer is one of these sutras. Sutra is a Sanskrit word which means 'thread' or 'string' and in Buddhism, Sutra 'denotes a doctrinal work, sometimes of considerable length, in which a particular point or doctrine is propounded and deliberated'). In *Prajana-Paramita* the doctrine of 'emptiness' is advanced – a major theme of this thesis. For the moment, it is essential to stress that Schopenhauer's Buddhist influences comes from Mahayana philosophy.

While Beckett's interest in Schopenhauer's philosophy is very well documented, the extent to which he was aware of Buddhism helps in clearing the critical ground here. Lidan Lin (2011) claims that Beckett's knowledge of Buddhism and Hinduism comes from Schopenhauer and that this can be demonstrated through his two works *Proust* (1931) and *Henri Hayden, homme-peintre* (1952). Lin also reveals that during the 1930s, when Beckett

was in Paris, he was 'greedily reading and learning' not only 'Western literature' but also 'Asian culture and art' through Louis Laloy's and H. A. Giles's books (642). Lawrence Shainberg recalls a conversation with Beckett and other friends after the performance of *Act Without Words I* in 1981. On being asked about his familiarity with Buddhism, Beckett replied, 'I know nothing about Buddhism […] If it's present in the play, it is unbeknownst to me' (Shainberg 'Exorcising Beckett'). Apart from the one direct reference in *Henri Hayden, homme-peintre* there are no explicit engagements with Buddhism in Beckett. In the essay, Beckett writes, 'Gautama, before they let him down, said that one is mistaken when claiming that self exists – but one is just as mistaken when claiming that it does not exist' (Beckett 'Henri Hayden, homme-peintre' 146). Likewise, indirect references to Buddhism in Beckett's work are not yet traced by scholars except through Schopenhauer. However, before highlighting Schopenhauer's Eastern philosophical engagements from both Buddhist and Vedic philosophy it would be helpful to outline the central themes critically highlighted in Beckett's work that bear Schopenhauer's traces.

Beckett's enthusiasm for Schopenhauer's philosophy touches various philosophical paradigms which are also chiefly dealt within Buddhism and Vedic philosophy. For example, in Beckett's letter to MacGreevy of July 1930 he insisted that 'I am not reading philosophy, nor caring whether he is right or wrong or a good or worthless metaphysician. An intellectual justification of unhappiness – the greatest that has ever been attempted…' (BL I 33). Clearly, for Beckett finding justification for human suffering was one of Schopenhauer's biggest achievements. Buddhist philosophy present in Schopenhauer's chief works trace the process involved in the origination of suffering of the self and its consequent dissolution. Beckett's copy of Schopenhauer's works also includes Vedic themes, above all in importance, the 'veil of Maya'.

As noted by Feldman (2006) and Nixon (2011), the 'veil of Maya' is present in Beckett's 'Clare Street' notebook from August 1936. Beckett composed an entry in German (likely in preparation for his trip to Germany that autumn) to express his effort to perceive a deeper reality of the world. Nixon asserts 'Echoes of this "veil" can be heard throughout Beckett's critical and creative writing of the 1930s, even as its nature and use is variously interpreted' (Nixon *Samuel Beckett's German Diaries* 168). Substantiating this point Nixon asserts 'in *Proust* Beckett refers to habit as "a screen to spare its victims the spectacle of reality", appearing "when it is opposed by a phenomenon that it cannot reduce to the condition of a comfortable and familiar concept"' (168).

In the marginalia of Beckett's copy of Schopenhauer's work several annotations are present which illuminate some other important themes. For example, 'On page 94 Beckett marked Frauenstädt's ultra-condensed summary of Schopenhauer's philosophy and focused on the causes of his "Pessimismus": the basis of the Will is want, and therefore suffering; and if there are no objects to be wanted, the result is a feeling of emptiness' (van Hulle, Nixon *Beckett's Library* 146). In Schopenhauer's philosophy, suffering can be understood through the Four Noble Truths given by Buddha. Likewise, the attainment of salvation from the world of suffering is an important approach in Schopenhauer's acknowledgment of suffering. Misery plays an important role in reaching salvation. Schopenhauer writes that 'suffering is the process of purification by which alone man is in most cases sanctified, in other words, led back from the path of error of the will-to-live' (WWR II 636). For Beckett, suffering is also central. However, the observation of the self represented by the characters in his late works show how the disintegration of the self reveals different aspects of the self that are combined in the process of suffering. The understanding of these aspects is a part of Buddhist emptiness. This can be acknowledged by the way Beckett disintegrates the self into body and mind, by showing the interdependent nature of various elements of the self and the acknowledgement of emptiness. For example, 'the physical fact' and 'the mental fact' in *Murphy* (69); staging of Mouth on the stage in *Not I* (1973); voices of the characters A, B, and C coming to the character on stage from both the sides and above in *That Time* (1976). Here the representation of disintegration of the self is an element of Buddhist emptiness.

Beckett's early writings on *Proust*, *Murphy* and *Watt* provide direct references to Schopenhauerian themes within the text. For example, in *Proust*, Beckett mentions, 'Life is habit. Or rather life is a succession of habits, since the individual is a succession of individuals, the world being a projection of the individual's consciousness (an objectivation of the individual's will, Schopenhauer would say)' (P 19). Also, 'The influence of Schopenhauer on this [musical] aspect of the Proustian demonstration is unquestionable' (P 91). These early texts also thematically engage with the disintegration of the self and observation of the self and the meditative states of the characters like Murphy and Watt. Awareness of the self in Watt's quest to find meaning in Mr. Knott's house provides a good example here:

> For when Watt at last spoke of this time, it was a time long past, and of which his recollections were, in a sense, perhaps less clear than he would have wished, though too clear for his liking, in another. Add to this the notorious difficulty of recapturing,

> at will, modes of feeling peculiar to a certain time, and to a certain place, and perhaps also to a certain state of health, when the time is past, and the place left, and the body struggling with quite a new situation. (W 62)

Thus, the archival notebooks, textual references and reading marginalia all highlight how aspects of the 'veil of Maya', suffering, time, contemplation, will and emptiness, are important considerations for Beckett in the formative 1930s.

As a preliminary to the critical discussions on Schopenhauer's Buddhist influenced philosophy in Beckett's works, I will more closely consider these common themes of suffering, contemplation, will and emptiness. Scholarly attempts to connect both Schopenhauer and Buddhist Studies to Beckett in this respect, however, reveal some specific concerns. Most notably, critics like Gottfried Büttner, John Pilling, Mary Bryden and Matthew Feldman have dealt with Schopenhauer's influence on Beckett's writing via topics such as the will, Christian mysticism, suffering, art, and subject-object relations. Büttner, for example, in 'Schopenhauer's Recommendations to Beckett', links Schopenhauer's pessimism with Beckett's own pessimism. He further finds similarity between Schopenhauer's pessimism and Beckett's 'inner mood' as well as 'his melancholic temperament, his inclination to resignation', while also asserting that 'it remains utterly distinct from nihilism' (114-15). Rather than nihilism – which considers that nothing could be known and all is meaningless – Büttner argues that suffering or melancholia can involve a stoic attitude of resignation. But how suffering leads towards an ascetic attitude, which can be examined through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework. Büttner catalogues the influence of Schopenhauer on Beckett's asceticism, an asceticism which can be endured thanks to 'art or aesthetic contemplation, compassion and resignation' (114). Similarly, Anthony Uhlmann states, 'Beckett's declaration that Schopenhauer's defence of unhappiness was "the greatest that has ever been attempted" might appear somewhat defensive: How could one with so little reading in philosophy make such a confident, categorical assertion?' (*Samuel Beckett in Context* 49). Uhlmann's query will be addressed, in part, through Schopenhauer's own approach to both Buddhist and Vedic philosophy. In view of Schopenhauer's philosophy, critic Ulrich Pothast also advances another important argument in the discussion of suffering embedded in tragedy. He argues that in tragedy 'the characters therefore strive and suffer as individuals, and they fight against each other as individuals, tearing each other to pieces as Schopenhauer says' but 'the excessive amount of suffering they had to undergo brings them to see through the "veil of Maya" and reach a higher level of knowledge' (70). However, how suffering helps to pierce through this

illusion is addressed in this thesis. He also notes that suffering is an important condition for artistic experiences, which can 'open a window on the real' and take the individual towards 'will-less contemplation' (138). Throughout his ground-breaking work, Pothast examines suffering and the real 'thing-in-itself' and reach a will-less state in Beckett's writings. By way of example, Murphy reaches the 'will-less' state in the novel where 'forms becoming and crumbling into the fragments of a new becoming, without love or hate or any intelligible principle of change' (M 72).

Pothast also expresses a significant role for the will in Schopenhauer's philosophy, which recognises that rejection of the will leads to a state of pure perception in which the self is dissolved. However, the dissolution of the self is addressed using a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework and it is here that drawing upon Schopenhauer's Eastern philosophical approach can help. Pothast further argues that a person can manage to separate the will from 'pure' awareness by discarding the relation between the will and consciousness together, so that the will 'is completely filled by the object and nothing else' (35). Pothast then applies the principle of sufficient reason to the relationship between will and object.

Pothast's understanding of nothingness, by contrast, entails a negation of the individual will. Nevertheless, how individual will can be negated is argued through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' approach. Also, he emphasises that Beckett's yearning for the bliss of nothingness is unmistakable. Instead, Pothast argues, Beckett restricts himself to considering the metaphysical quality of nothingness. Likewise, the significance of nothing in Schopenhauer's philosophy, according to Pothast, is also related to pessimism. He argues that in Schopenhauer's *Parerga and Paralipomena* pessimism leads to 'nothing'. As such, he refers to Schopenhauer's personal statement that we can regard 'life as a uselessly disturbing episode in the blissful repose of nothingness' (93). The relationship between suffering and the bliss of nothingness can be fully elaborated through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective. In Pothast's view, nothing has metaphysical property, and the rejection of will leads to a state of pure perception. Addressing further, this metaphysical quality of nothing incorporates disintegration of the self and suffering in Beckett's works. Here the influence of Schopenhauer's Eastern philosophical perspective comes to be of service and a wider framework comes into the picture.

Studies of Beckett and Buddhism have broadly dealt with themes of suffering, self and emptiness. Paul Foster in his *Beckett and Zen* (1989) focuses on the Buddhist idea of suffering in relation to the 'impasses' portrayed in Beckett's novels. Foster states that his

study is concerned with 'demonstrating the nature of the Beckettian dilemma', which 'disclose an impasse' (33). Foster also considers that Beckett's novels *Murphy*, *Watt*, *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable* fail to find a way out of the dilemma of existence. This dilemma is recognised as a fundamental human condition in Buddhism. As an alternative, this thesis puts forward Beckett's early and late works which, in part, depict the processes involving the self. The processes are highlighted through different parts of the body like eyes, hand, mouth and mind. For example, from the works of the middle period, *The Unnamable*, the character is searching for the self: 'it is not he, it's I, or another, or others, what does it matter, the case is clear, it is not he. He who I know I am, that's all I know, who I cannot say I am, I can't say anything, I've tried' (TU 405); again 'Absent always. It all happened without me' (*Endgame* 74). These examples show that disintegration of the self is present in the middle works too. As Pothast illustrates using *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable*, 'the novels have 'first-person narrators' who use "I" for themselves, but, especially in the later part of the trilogy, the 'course of action' reveals, among other things, a fast proceeding disintegration of what usually is called "personality"' (Pothast 154). The reason for not including the middle works of Beckett is the lack of archival material that shows direct reference to Beckett's reading of Schopenhauer. Although the works of Beckett's 'middle period' are more focused on disintegration of the self than in the other periods, the absence of any archival material that shows Beckett reading Schopenhauer during this time is one of the reason behind the choice for selecting the early and late writings of Beckett. Another is (as outlined on pp 2-3) that there has already been a substantial amount of excellent criticism focusing on the influence of Schopenhauer on the works of this middle period but research on the influence of Schopenhauer's Eastern philosophical renderings on Beckett's late writings has not been previously undertaken. Steven Rosen considers the Buddhist philosophy of emptiness through pessimistic relativism in Beckett's works. Arguing that the idea of relativity is mirrored in Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason, but as a negative, Rosen writes:

> Beckett's thought is thoroughly dominated by an abstract and logical tendency, a demand for conceptual simplification, which finds that it cannot understand its own experience except as a series of irresolvable problems and paradoxes […] It is this determined attitude which Beckett found valuable in Schopenhauer – pessimistic relativism. (153)

Rosen has adapted a relativist stance, but he is also aware of the problems with this. These are:

1. There are no absolutes or privileged points of reference, including God, though human kind is held to have need of such absolutes.
2. That all thought is self-contradictory; thus the curse of consciousness separates the subject from his own experience and even denies the experience at the moment he becomes aware of it.
3. All experience, but especially the most authentic, is atomized.
4. No self-integration, sincerity or real responsibility is possible. (155)

Rosen claims that relativity brings essencelessness, which is often experienced as horrifying. However, this stance of relativity, when observed in Beckett's writings, shows instead a kind of peace through awareness of essencelessness. In turn, this can be approached through the influence of Schopenhauer's Eastern philosophical lens.

For example, in the 1979 prose text, *Company*, there is peace and silence in the end when the hearer and the heard both recognise each other's company: 'The fable of one fabling of one with you in the dark. And how better in the end labour lost and silence' (C 42). Later still, in 1982 *Ill Seen Ill Said*, 'Grace to breathe that void. Know happiness' (ISIS 78). Rosen also correctly points out that the concept of the 'veil of Maya' is Vedic, and explains that 'pain, body multiplicity and subject-object dichotomy are illusions' (155-56). Rosen identifies the importance of relativity in the formation of the self. On the other hand, relativity also presents the illusion present in the singular sense of the self. This elision is addressed in Chapter One. Thus, Rosen's contribution in identifying Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason is useful.

In the article 'Womb of the Great Mother Emptiness: Beckett, the Buddha and the Goddess' Paul Davies explores the concept of the void as accepted by the protagonists of Beckett's late plays. He argues that these dramas depict liberation from human solidity, attachment, grasping, fear, and desire that connects with Buddhist esoteric processes. He further argues 'if we relate the event of void billowing in on top of you' with the 'understanding of the lack of inherent self-nature in all things' then we can see 'the direct connection between Beckett's art and the Buddhist esoteric process' (123). In another relevant article 'Zen and the Art of Self-Negation in Samuel Beckett's "Not I"' (2012) Kyle Gillette discusses Japanese Zen Buddhism as an alternative lens through which to see the 'limits of subjectivity and discursive thoughts', because it 'offers a more concrete paradigm for contextualising these plays within a tradition of mental and physical practice' (284). Gillette

argues that there is a deep affinity between 'Beckett's gesture of self-negation and their embodied thought' (284). He concludes aptly with the following:

> Through presence and negation of presence, and through the negation of the split between the two, Beckett promises nothing, and delivers. From a Zen perspective, this nothing points up the emptiness of forms, sensations, perceptions, formations, and consciousness, and thereby suggests the possibility of liberation from the suffering of attachment. (299)

Also, the combination of Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason and Buddhist emptiness point towards the awareness of the self's nature.

Other critics have also broached the proximity of Zen Buddhism to Beckett's art. Mario Faraone in '"Pity we haven't a piece of rope": Beckett, Zen and the Lack of a Piece of Rope', describes Beckett's plays and novels as to some extent 'similar to those belonging to the Zen Buddhist tradition'. Faraone argues that Beckett's works employ some fundamental Buddhist concepts (157). However, the interpretative lens used in this thesis explores the self awareness of Beckett's characters. John Kundert-Gibbs in 'Nothing is Left to Tell' finds that Beckett combines Zen with chaos theory such that Beckett's plays are taken as 'visual and conceptual riddles that, like koans, baffle the dualistic mind, defeating thought from within' (Kundert-Gibbs 'What is a birth' 38-56). These essays contain crucial insights into Beckett's texts from a variety of Buddhist perspectives.

While these are valuable studies, this thesis explores Schopenhauer's role in integrating Buddhist and Vedic philosophy, and presenting versions of it to Beckett's writings. This thesis addresses Beckett's writings using Mahayana Buddhism and Vedic philosophy as it can be read through Schopenhauer. Critics in Beckett Studies have not been able to isolate specific Buddhist and Vedic themes in Beckett's works – even though Schopenhauer, who was familiar with these, acted as a crucial conduit of Eastern philosophy for Beckett. The thesis provides an interpretative value using a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework for Beckett's writings. The perspective provided by suffering, self, emptiness and the 'veil of Maya' is warranted given Beckett's 1930 comment that he has found 'an intellectual justification of unhappiness' and similarly, in his 'veil of Maya' entry in the 'Clare Street Notebook'.

A. Methodology

A.1 Research Approach

The main reason for focusing on early and late works is Beckett's archival traces of reading notes from Schopenhauer during these periods. Since there is no evidence of Beckett's reading Schopenhauer during his writings of the 'middle works', that period is not taken into consideration in this thesis. This project draws upon the Eastern philosophy of Buddhism and Vedas as present in Schopenhauer's writings and thereby indirectly communicated to Beckett. Making use of both philosophy and modern literature, this inter-disciplinary approach focusses on the embedded Eastern philosophical understandings of the self as intrinsically empty, as well as Buddhist explanations for human suffering and the relation of the latter to the 'veil of Maya' all of which are present in Schopenhauer's philosophy.

A.2 Research Tools

The method advances a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework to interpret Beckett's early and late works, including non-fiction, criticism, fiction, prose and drama. Another central consideration is the use of Vedic 'veil of Maya' as present in Schopenhauer's work to interpret Beckett's writings.

A.3 Research Procedure

To interpret Beckett's art through Schopenhauer's philosophy, this work first establishes an interpretative framework of 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism'. This framework helps to identify the Buddhist and Vedic insights in Schopenhauer's philosophy. Beckett's intertextual use of these 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' themes will then be applied to key themes in his works: above all, the often recognised disintegration of the self and characters in his novels and dramas.

A.4 Resources

This thesis employs both primary and secondary sources to profitably deal with the philosophical interpretations of Beckett's early and late texts. In fleshing out the philosophical themes of these works, Beckett's commonplace books, especially the 'Whoroscope Notebook' from the 1930s, his contemporaneous 'Philosophy notes', and the later 'Sottisier Notebook' from the 1970s and 1980s, all form key primary sources. Both periods were times when Beckett was verifiably re-reading Schopenhauer and taking notes. The approach to Beckett's writings in the light of Schopenhauer's Eastern influences will be pursued chronologically in the chapters to follow in order to see how 'Schopenhauerian

Buddhism' can provide new insights to Beckett's writings from the periods mentioned above.

Chapter One develops a theoretical framework for Schopenhauer's use of Buddhist philosophy. It introduces the philosophy of Buddhist emptiness and the concept of the 'veil of Maya' from the sacred Hindu book of the Vedas. In delineating a specific understanding of emptiness, this chapter covers the metaphysics of dependent origination and essencelessness as emptiness in Buddhism, as well as Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason. This chapter then traces the genesis of Schopenhauer's long and consistent relationship with Eastern philosophy – including both Buddhism and the Vedas – and will concentrate on the themes of emptiness, suffering, self and the 'veil of Maya', textually demonstrating how Beckett's work characterises Schopenhauer's Eastern influences.

Chapter Two turns to Beckett's early critical essay *Proust* (1931) which is widely recognised to be deeply influenced by Schopenhauer, particularly the latter's major philosophical work *The World as Will and Representation*. The chapter also makes use of scholarly views on the role of Schopenhauer's philosophy in *Proust*. In addition to consideration of genre – *Proust* was the only critical fragment Beckett ever wrote. The interpretation of Beckett's early writings with help of a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework will set the stage for later discussions of Schopenhauer, Eastern philosophy, and the way in which Beckett makes use of it in his later fiction and drama.

Chapter Three addresses the dependent and essenceless characteristics of characters in Beckett's early novels *Murphy* (1938) and *Watt* (1953). The congruence between Beckett's understanding of nothing in *Murphy* and the idea of Buddhist emptiness expressed here as 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism' returns us to Beckett's call for an 'intellectual justification of unhappiness', which is depicted artistically in Murphy's interaction between different parts of his self and his mind (BL I 33). A 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' reading illuminates the novel's disintegration of the self, the essential conditions for suffering. If *Murphy* highlights Beckett's consideration of inner aspects of the self, *Watt* presents not only the essenceless condition of the self, but also the failure of language. The latter indicates how language does not convey its intended purpose when naming an object or person, and finally unveils the linguistic illusion embedded in the sense of self. This is in conformity with the 'veil of Maya' present in the problem of naming in *Watt*. After considering the early works by Beckett through Schopenhauer's Eastern philosophical lens, attention is then trained upon

his late works, specifically those from the late 1970s on, when Beckett returned to reading Schopenhauer.

Chapter Four begins with Beckett's encounter with Schopenhauer's philosophy again in the 1970s. The chapter then explores the late works *Company*, *Ill Seen Ill Said* and *Worstward Ho* within the framework of a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' reading. In this 'late trilogy', Beckett's concern with emptiness is artistically expressed as the disintegration of the self. As has often been noted, Beckett's late works move beyond storylines and narrative; instead, his writings show the self that manifests in the form of embodiment, mind and emotion. This expression of formlessness in the late works is a major representation in Beckett's art. Thus, from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective, interpretation of these late works expressing formlessness of the self will be undertaken in three stages: the emergence of consciousness in which different aspects of the self are manifested, the restricted use of emotional elements, and the identification of the self as an essenceless plural entity. These stages help in interpreting Beckett's approach to the illusion present in the notion of a singular self and provide an explanation for his use of the self in disintegrated form.

Chapter Five then turns to a new genre to explore Schopenhauer-inspired Buddhism in Beckett's drama. To do so, the late plays *Rockaby*, *Ohio Impromptu*, *A Piece of Monologue* and *Quad I & II* will be analysed in terms of their relevance to these Schopenhauerian and Buddhist concerns. These late plays use minimal images of the self which suggests self presented in fragmented form. *Rockaby* (1981) focuses on the voice, and again the self is fragmented into a listener and speaker. *Ohio Impromptu* (1981) focuses on the protagonist's disintegrated aspect of the self and the awareness of the thoughts developing inside his mind. In *A Piece of Monologue* (1982), for example, the speaker is placed alone on the stage and is concerned with self, mind and nothingness. *Quad* (1984) focuses upon a missing centre of the silent walking characters. The complete breakdown of voice in this last stage work signifies awareness exemplified in the movements of the companion piece, *Quad II*. When interpreted from Schopenhauer's Eastern philosophical perspective these late works reveal the ways in which Beckett's works confront the self and the world around it.

Penultimately, Chapter Six examines Beckett's late prose pieces 'The Way', 'Ceiling' and 'Stirrings Still', which manifest disintegrated forms of voice and mind. This chapter also takes into consideration aspects of the self, manifested in the form of monologues, which form disintegrated aspects of the self. These pieces of prose point towards the self and its

prerequisite elements, and continue to represent awareness of the various cerebral and corporeal processes helping in the construction and representation of the self. The process of disintegration becomes very apparent in late prose pieces in the notion of the self – a key insight from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework applied to Beckett's work.

A guiding hypothesis re-examined throughout this thesis and revisited in the conclusion is that Beckett's philosophical views on emptiness strengthened over time. The early works show an awareness of the self, and generally it is possible to identify names and plots in short stories. Yet in later works Beckett completely abandoned conventional narrative or plots, and in both the prose and plays his characters were thus in some sense in direct confrontation with their own selves. Beckett's works essentially move from the condition of suffering to an awareness of the fragmented self. Thinking has been put aside, and perhaps this is the reason Beckett's works present no doctrine or 'message'. In his translated entry in the 'Clare Street' notebook (11 August 1936) he wrote that 'life is so completely unbearable with self-knowledge, that steady, clear self-knowledge whose voice serenely asserts: "This is how you are, this is how you will remain, as you have fare until now, so you will continue to fare, till your 'I' decomposes into parts that are so familiar to you. For you need expect from death nothing better or worse than this division"' (qtd. in Feldman *Falsifying Beckett* 394-395). Thus, knowing the self is the main focus utilising a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework to Beckett's writings.

Chapter 1

Beckett's 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism' and the 'Veil of Maya'

As is outlined in the Introduction, Beckett's debt to Schopenhauer's philosophy and comparisons between Beckett and Buddhist studies are important critical approaches in elucidating the themes of self, suffering, and emptiness in Beckett's works. However, previous critical approaches have overlooked the linkage between Buddhist and Vedic philosophy present in Schopenhauer as a way in which Beckett's chief expressions of self, emptiness, suffering and the 'veil of Maya' might be further elucidated. To address this elision, the current chapter formulates a theoretical framework based upon both Buddhism and Vedic philosophy as present in Schopenhauer. However, this framework also explicates the innermost complexities of the reasons behind Beckett's use of disintegrated aspects of the self and the 'veil of Maya' and also helps us to better understand the different forms his works take and phases of his career that are covered by this project.

In exploring Beckett's use of the disintegrated self, and themes of emptiness and suffering, it is necessary to see how Schopenhauer has intertwined both Buddhist and Vedic philosophy in his chief philosophical works such as *The World as Will and Representation* and *The Fourfold Root to the Principle of Sufficient Reason*. Consequently, the first section of this chapter will develop a theoretical framework of Schopenhauer's use of Buddhist philosophy in order to examine the key doctrine of emptiness which I will call 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism'. The term 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism' is used by the Schopenhauer and Buddhist scholar Urs App in *Richard Wagner and Buddhism* (24). This section will also address the 'veil of Maya' from Schopenhauer's standpoint, as well as its interpretation in the Vedic philosophy. The understanding of 'emptiness' offered by this theoretical framework will help explicate the illusion present in the knowledge of the self. This illusion is known as 'Maya' and becomes the Vedic concept of the 'veil of Maya', one that Schopenhauer adopted from the Latin translation of the Veda (*Oupenk'hat*) available to him in the early 19th century. The second section will discuss the genesis of Schopenhauer's encounter with Buddhist and Veda philosophy which will in turn highlight specific themes of suffering, self, emptiness and 'veil of Maya' as understood by Schopenhauer. An

understanding of the nature of these themes in Buddhist and Vedic philosophy as present in Schopenhauer will then help in the interpretation of Beckett's writing.

A. 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' emptiness and Schopenhauer's use of the 'veil of Maya'

A.1 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism' – a framework

The reason for Schopenhauer's philosophical convergence with Buddhist philosophy of emptiness lies in his understanding of two aspects of Buddhism. First, there is the belief that the existence and formation of phenomena are the result of an interrelation between different elements that constitute the self. Parallel to this understanding, Schopenhauer defines his principle of sufficient reason: 'Nothing is without a ground or reason why it is' (FFR 6). In the history of Western philosophy, Schopenhauer asserts that Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz 'was the first to make a formal statement of the principle of sufficient reason as a main principle of all knowledge and science' (FFR 24). However, Schopenhauer argues that Leibniz 'cannot say any more about it than that everything must have a sufficient ground or a reason why it is so and not otherwise' and he never clearly discussed the principle (FFR 24). The principle proposes that there is a reason behind everything that exists. Schopenhauer endorsed this principle in his thesis *On the Fourfold Root to the Principle of Sufficient Reason* before he read Buddhism. Crucially, it was five years later, in 1818, that Schopenhauer first encountered Buddhist philosophy. Schopenhauer is perhaps one of the most important Western philosophers to talk about the principle of sufficient reason, which is similar to the Buddhist understanding of dependent origination. Bhikkhu Bodhi in 'Transcendental Dependent Arising' writes that dependent origination in Buddhism is a process that derives 'from the arising of this, that arises; from the ceasing of this, that ceases'. Second, self and object lack essence or inherent nature. This means 'that things exist but their existence is never self-standing' (Burton 177). In a footnote, Schopenhauer describes emptiness in Buddhism as 'the *Prajana-Paramita* of the Buddhist, the "beyond all knowledge," in other words, the point where subject and object no longer exist' (WWR I 412). The term *Prajana-Paramita* is understood as the perfection (paramita) of wisdom (prajna). This text introduces the concept of emptiness of the phenomena. In the text, the concept of emptiness reiterates not nothingness or void but the sense that things exist interdependently and there is no permanent being or essence. Thus, there are two aspects of Buddhist emptiness – dependent origination and essencelessness. Dependent origination is

similar to Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason, while essencelessness is similar to his knowledge of emptiness from the *Prajana-Paramita* of Buddhism.

On the other hand, the concept of 'Maya' is also described in Schopenhauer's text, and is discussed in his manuscripts and notebooks. This is one of the most important concepts addressed by Schopenhauer, and he addresses it many times in his chief philosophical works. For example, he writes that 'The Vedas and Puranas know no better simile for the whole knowledge of the actual world, called by them the web of Mâyâ, than the dream, and they use none more frequently' (WWR I 17); 'Kant calls the phenomenon in opposition to the thing-in-itself, and what Plato calls the becoming never the being in opposition to the being never the becoming, or finally what is called by the Indians the web of Maya' (WWR I 274); 'On the contrary, the eyes of the uncultured individual are clouded, as the Indians say, by the veil of Maya' (WWR I 352); 'For the veil of Maya has become transparent for the person who performs works of love, and the deception of the *principium individuationis* has left him' (WWR I 373). In Veda, the word 'Maya' comes from Sanskrit, in which 'MA' means 'not' and 'YA' means 'that'. Thus, 'Maya' means 'that which is not'. The most widely used analogy with which to understand this term is that of mistaking a rope for a snake, or vice versa. This means to perceive things differently from what they are. Since this is an important concept Schopenhauer borrowed from the Vedic philosophy, it is vital to elaborate the two characteristics of emptiness from Buddhism to reach a complete understanding of 'Maya' and consequently understand Beckett's statement in his Clare Street notebook written in Germany in August 1936, translated by Nixon as 'There are moments when the veil of hope is finally torn apart and the suddenly liberated eyes see their world as it is, as it must be' ('Scraps of German' 273). The examination of these characteristics will help clarify the knowledge of the self as disintegrated, dependent and essenceless.

A.1.1 Dependent origination

As mentioned above, the first aspect of emptiness is dependent origination, which is similar to Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason. Thus, the major synthesis of Schopenhauer and Buddhist philosophy starts with Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason, which recognises that there is a reason behind the presence of everything. This is in keeping with Buddhist concept of dependent origination, which also recognises the same. Crucially, the same principle applies in the formation of the self; self is not a singular entity but a confluence of elements. The example of a tree given by David Burton clearly explains the meaning of this principle. Burton writes that a tree is made up of various components such

as the trunk, root, branches, bark, leaves, and so on. This tree is also dependent on various factors of the environment such as water, sunshine, air, soil and so on. The doctrine of emptiness in Mahayana philosophy contends that what we call 'tree' is nothing but a combination of these various parts and external conditions that are helping the 'tree' to be a tree. There is no separate 'tree-entity'. When the search for a tree-entity is undertaken, nothing is found. Hence, 'tree is simply a name, a concept, which the mind attributes to these various conditions'. Thus, 'dependent origination means that dependently originating entities have a merely conceptual existence' (Burton 180). The same applies to the concept of the self. Likewise, the article 'The Integrity of Emptiness' explains that the self is an amalgamation of processes 'that are in no way separate from all the other processes on which they depend' (Thanissaro). This 'teaching of emptiness is actually an affirmation of the dynamic interconnectedness of all things' (Burton 178). Self, 'when examined, is discovered to be composed of five ever-changing psycho-physical factors' (Burton 180). These factors are physical form, feelings, perception, consciousness and fabrication. Fabrication is an important factor as it includes all the active processes of the mind including attention and evaluation (Thanissaro 'The Five Aggregates'). On closer inspection, 'the self' is seen to be simply an ever-changing interplay of these constituents, famously called 'khandha' in Buddhism which translates as 'aggregates' in English. 'Khandha' is a Pali word meaning 'a pile, a bundle or heap' (Thanissaro 'A Burden off the Mind' 2). Aggregates play an important role in the understanding of the world and the self. Discussion of the aggregates of the self is very elaborate in Buddhism. Thannisaro in 'The Five Aggregates' defines the constituents of the self as:

- Form covers the physical phenomenon of the body
- Feelings include happiness, unhappiness or neither happiness nor unhappiness
- Perception labels or identifies objects
- Consciousness recognises the six senses, counting intellect as the sixth
- Fabrication is the action or process to create by combining or assembling things or make up stories, untruth, fib or deception.

Thus, the formation of self is dependent upon these five aggregates, and the constant interdependence of aggregates forms the self. In other words, self is more of an ongoing process than a stable, fixed and solid form. Bhikkhu Bodhi writes in *Dhamma and Non-Duality* that, 'according to Pali Suttas of Mahayana Buddhism, the individual being is merely a complex unity of five aggregates'. From this perspective, individuality is

understood ‘in terms of a combination of phenomena which appear to form the physical and mental continuum of an individual life’ (Thanissaro ‘Five Piles of Bricks’). The most common response to the question ‘What is a person?’ is given in *The Five Aggregates* ‘What we conventionally call a “person” can be understood in terms of five aggregates, the sum of which must not be taken for a permanent entity, since beings are nothing but an amalgam of ever-changing phenomenon’ (Boisvert 4). The liberation process at work is the release from suffering. Upon observation, the knowledge of the five aggregates along with its various combinations can be known. Within the combination of any aggregate, the aggregate of fabrication begins. In this process of observation, if attention is given to the positive and beautiful characteristics of a thing with which the aggregates (form, feeling, perception, and consciousness) have come into contact, passion or delight will arise. This passion or delight is a sensation but the habitual act of fabricating a sense of pleasure with the sense of ‘me’ or ‘mine’ offer ownership. This ownership is very unstable and temporary since the feeling will not last long. Taking each aggregate Buddha asked if any of the aggregate of form, feeling, perception, consciousness or fabrication is constant or inconstant. The answer is ‘inconstant’ and that which is inconstant brings stress or pleasure. The answer is stress. Thus is ‘it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: “This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am?”. ‘The answer is “no”” (Thanissaro ‘The Five Piles of Bricks’). This shows the complex role of aggregates as being interdependent and constantly changing. If the habitual pattern of intertwining the sensation or any other aggregate with the sense of ‘I’ continues to form, suffering is bound to occur. The approach through the Buddhist idea of emptiness is to observe this fabrication and interplay of different elements which in turn creates a path to end suffering. In ‘Anuguttara Nikaya’ Buddha said to himself:

> Freed, dissociated, and released from form, the Tathagata [Buddha] dwells with unrestricted awareness. Freed, dissociated and released from feeling…perception…fabrication…consciousness…birth…aging…death…suffering and stress…defilement, the Tathagata dwells with unrestricted awareness. (Anuguttara Nikaya 10.81)

In Buddhism, the self is tagged by the mind as ‘I’, and is made up of the combination of aggregates which are dependent upon one another. There is no single essence to be found in any of the constituents. Thus, what is called self is not a singular entity but only an interplay between the aggregates, such as when mind interacts with feeling or the physical body interacts with mind in various combinations through mind-body, mind-feeling-

perception, mind-eyes-perception, and so on. According to this paradigm, any constituent part of the self can interact with any other, but this interaction is such that it will always be taken as an 'I' (at least in a conventional understanding). Now, it is not that thinking of the formation of the 'I' or the symbolic 'I' representing all the constituents of the self – as well as the interaction and interrelation between the constituents – is wrong, but rather that the overlooking of the interaction and interdependence taking place during the process is faulty. This elision creates an illusion of a singular entity 'I' without taking into consideration the process or interrelation of the constituents forming the self. There is no additional constituent called 'the self'. Thus, 'the self is, then, just a name, a concept, which is attributed by the mind to this ever-changing psycho-physical process' (Burton 180).

In Beckett's works, the expression of the self does not skip this process of formation, but makes the reader aware of each aspect of the self. For example, *Murphy* illuminates the mind-body division: 'There was the mental fact and there was a physical fact' (M 69). This clearly indicates the division of the self into two constituents – mind and body – but it also represents the dependence of the constituents of the self on one another. Also, Beckett's late works of the 1970s and 1980s present the knowledge of sufficient reason by expressing different aspects of the self which are dependent on each other. For example, in *Company*

> A voice comes to one in the dark. Imagine. To one on his back in the dark. This he can tell by the pressure on his hind parts and by how the dark changes when he shuts his eyes and again when he opens them again (C 3).

This textual example illuminates the division of the self into the voice, the hearer and the eyes which are all dependent on each other. In *Ill Seen Ill Said* we have a 'Hand resting on hand on some convenient support. Such as the foot of her bed. And on them her head' (ISIS 45). Again, foot, head and hand are working through dependence. Similarly, in *Nacht und Träume* the character Dreamer as (A) and his dreamt self (B) interact with the dreamt hands R (right) and L (left). The engagement with the disintegrated aspect of the self shows affiliation with Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason. This differs from the Cartesian interaction of mind and body, which has been a dominant approach to reading Beckett. In Descartes' Sixth meditation, for example, he writes the following:

> [O]n the one hand I have a clear and distinct idea of myself, in so far as I am simply a thinking, non-extended thing [that is, a mind], and on the other hand I have a distinct idea of a body, in so far as this is simply an extended, non-thinking thing.

> And accordingly, it is certain that I am really distinct from my body, and can exist without it. (Descartes II: 54)

The important distinction between mind and body comes from Descartes when he is writing about the independent existence of the mind and the body, which, according to the principle of sufficient reason, should be understood and observed as dependent entities. It is with this argument (i.e. that they are dependent parts of the self) that Schopenhauer criticises Descartes, who passes over the principle of sufficient reason. Schopenhauer writes 'For in this [principle of sufficient reason] respect we find even our eminent Descartes, the instigator of subjective reflection and thus the father of modern philosophy, still involved in error and confusion' (FFR 13).

Again, this contrasts with the argument set out in Descartes's Sixth meditation:

> [T]here is a great difference between the mind and the body, in as much as the body is by its very nature always divisible, while the mind is utterly indivisible. For when I consider the mind, or myself in so far as I am merely a thinking thing, I am unable to distinguish any parts within myself; I understand myself to be something quite single and complete. […] By contrast, there is no corporeal or extended thing that I can think of which in my thought I cannot easily divide into parts; and this very fact makes me understand that it is divisible. This one argument would be enough to show me that the mind is completely different from the body. (Descartes II: 59)

This argument has been reformulated by Justin Skirry in the following terms: 'I understand the mind to be indivisible by its very nature'; and 'I understand body to be divisible by its very nature' (Skirry). Therefore, the mind is completely independent from the body. This is also the foundation of Cartesian views of the *cogito*, that thinking constitutes existence: '*I think, therefore I am*' (Newman). This famous assertion equates thinking with singular identity, whereas for Buddhism thinking is part of the multifaceted self, since mind is a part of the self that thinks. Crucially, the difference between Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason and Cartesian dualism is that Schopenhauer explains the nature of things and self in terms of them depending upon each other for existence. By contrast, Descartes explores the nature of mind and body as distinct from each other, arguing that one exists without the other and that thinking can substitute for identity. Therefore, Schopenhauer found Descartes's philosophical position faulty:

> Nothing exists of which it could not be asked from what cause it exists. For this can be asked even in respect of God, not as if he required any cause in order to exist, but because the very immensity of his nature is the cause or reason by virtue of which he needs no cause in order to exist. (FFR 13-14)

Here, Descartes's argumentative base is that God needs no cause for existence, and herein lies the error that Schopenhauer has identified. For Schopenhauer, identifying God as the cause is an 'ontological proof [which] is really the most delightful farce' (FFR 14-15).

Schopenhauer argues that Immanuel Kant also neglected this fundamental principle of dependence, and calls this his first mistake, as noted in his 'Criticism of the Kantian Philosophy':

> It is certainly remarkable that he [Kant] did not trace that merely relative existence of the phenomenon from the simple, undeniable truth which lay so near to him, namely "no object without a subject", in order thus, at the very root, to show that the object, because it always exists only in relation to a subject, is dependent thereon, is conditioned thereby, and is therefore mere phenomenon that does not exist in itself, does not exist unconditionally. (WWR I 434)

This encapsulates Schopenhauer's understanding of dependent origination, which he could not find in Kant's philosophy, but which is an important, even fundamental aspect of the Buddhist doctrine of emptiness. Thus, Schopenhauer criticises post-Cartesian philosophers like Leibniz, Hume and Kant regarding the paramount importance of the principle of sufficient reason because they did not attribute as much importance to this principle as Schopenhauer did, when noting, for example, that 'its importance is exceedingly great, for it can be called the basis of all science' and 'that everything has a reason or ground which justifies us in everywhere asking why, this why may be called the mother of all sciences' (FFR 5-6). Beckett underlined some individual concepts in his copy of Schopenhauer's work such as 'Aseität' and 'existence originating from itself' suggesting that these are similar to the interdependent nature of the constituents of the thing or self that are dependent on one another for existence (van Hulle, Nixon 146).

A.1.2 Essencelessness

The second characteristic of emptiness in Buddhism is essencelessness, which is similar to Schopenhauer's understanding of nothing derived from the *Prajna-Paramita* of Buddhism: 'the point where subject and object no longer exist' (WWR I 412). This means that there is

no core at the base of subject or object which could be pinpointed as its essence. Schopenhauer characterises this understanding of essencelessness as an 'empty dream' and a 'ghostly vision' (WWR I 99). Thus, 'we can never get at the inner nature of things' without the help of the connections formed between the elements (WWR I 99). Further, he points out that 'however much we investigate, we obtain nothing but images and names. We are like a man who goes round a castle, looking in vain for an entrance, and sometimes sketching the facades' (WWR I 99). One similar account that Schopenhauer mentions in his work describes the nature of the world, recounted as a conversation between the dying Buddha and the Brahma (Hindu God) who comes to pay homage. When the Brahma asks Buddha how the world is made, and by whom, Buddha answers that 'in the world all is illusion, there is no reality in the things; all is empty'. According to Schopenhauer, the Brahma, 'being instructed in his [Buddha's] doctrine, becomes his follower' (WWR II 170). The reason for the instruction that the world is an illusion is the phenomena that underlie the construction of the self and self in relation to the world. '"Self" here implies not just the person, but anything – such as chariots – that may be taken to have substantial, independent existence' (Cooper 8). This means that material objects or self does not have any intrinsic nature or identity rather holds that entities are dependent on further conditions. Hence, affirming the doctrine of dependent origination and essencelessness.

Thus, it becomes clear that Buddhist concepts of emptiness were well known and well understood by Schopenhauer. For Schopenhauer, emptiness of the self or a thing has a dependent character, which goes alongside its essenceless quality:

> Knowledge and plurality, or individuation, stand and fall together, for they condition each other. It is to be concluded from this that, beyond the phenomenon, in the true being-in-itself of all things, to which time and space, and therefore plurality, must be foreign, there cannot exist any knowledge. Buddhism describes this as *Prajana Paramita*, i.e., that which is beyond all knowledge. (WWR II 275)

The doctrine of Buddhist emptiness comes close to Schopenhauer's philosophy. Indeed, in the latter's words:

> If I wish to take the results of my own philosophy as the measure of truth, I should have to concede Buddhism pre-eminence over the others. In any case, it must be a pleasure to me to see my doctrine is such close agreement with the religion (WWR II 169).

Beckett's work illustrates esssencelessness by showing the protagonists via disintegrated aspects of the self as eye, hand, mouth, voice, mind and the various combinations in which the different aspect of the self interact without naming any of them as a part of the self. In an early work such as *Murphy* the protagonist's mind is able to distinguish between the mental and the physical world, and he 'finds himself split between the two, a body and a mind. They had intercourse apparently, otherwise he could not have known that they had anything in common' (M 70). In the late work, *Company*, the narrator addresses the protagonists as 'he' and 'you', trying to suggest that the thoughts of the speaker accompany the hearer, challenging the very notion of the singular 'I' that represents all the elements of the self with a name. The important difference between the early works of Beckett and the late works is that Beckett used names in his early works but completely abandons the use of names in the later ones.

Thus, Buddhist conceptions of nothingness posit that not only is there interdependence behind the formation of the self or a thing, but there is likewise no essence or 'core' in the coming together of elements that make up a self or a thing. This understanding of the nature of emptiness leads to the key recognition of the impermanent nature of the self. Since the concept of self is based on the amalgamation of five aggregates, the most important aggregate is the fabrication aggregate. In this, whenever other aggregates interact, such a form, feeling or perception, the fabrication aggregate brings the sense of me or mine in addition to the other aggregate.

> This sense of "me" or "mine" is rarely static. It roams like an amoeba, changing its contours as it changes location. Sometimes expansive, sometimes contracted, it can view itself as identical with a khandha, possessing a khandha, as existing within a khandha, or having a khandha existing within itself. (Thanissaro, 'Five Piles of Bricks')

The aggregates play an important role in the construction of the self. In *Samyutta Nikaya* Buddha teaches the construction of the self. Thanissaro Bhikkhu explains Buddha's teaching to his disciples about the burden carried out by the aggregates. The Blessed One (Buddha) says that the five-aggregates are clinging aggregates and the person or the self is the carrier of this burden of aggregates. There are four modes of this clinging – sensuality, view, habit and self clinging. Thus, the person who assumes aggregates as self and stays obsessed with any of these aggregates will remain tied up with the fabrication of the 'self'. This means that all elements of form, feeling, perception and consciousness work together

as ‘I’ but ‘I’ is a fabricated entity. In Buddhism, the ‘I’ is observed through its various aspects which help to see clearly the interplay of the elements of the self. Thus, the concept of ‘I’ as singular is broken and the constituents of the self can clearly be identified as separate, dependent on other constituents and hence essenceless. For example, I feel hurt mentally. Hurt is a feeling, and I have given this feeling a name which is ‘hurt’. This name comes from memory. This feeling has arisen because the mind-consciousness has connected the feeling with the past experience of a similar feeling. When the connection between the feeling and the perception formed about the feeling as hurt is broken, the hurt will not bring suffering because there will be no interpretation generated from the mind that follows feeling. The connection between feeling and mind’s interpretation of it is broken and the two aggregates are experienced as separate. Thus, the knowledge of both feeling and perception as aggregates of the self is separated and the interdependent nature of these aggregates is recognised. On the divisibility of the self, Schopenhauer writes:

> Our knowing consciousness, appearing as outer and inner sensibility, as understanding and as faculty of reason, is divisible into subject and object, and contains nothing else. To be object for the subject and to be our representation or mental picture are the same thing. All our representations are objects of the subject, and all objects of the subject are our representations. (FFR 41-42)

Thus, there is divisibility and dependence on the faculty of reason to represent subject and object and there is ‘nothing else […worth] considering, namely the world as representation subordinated to the principle of sufficient reason’ (WWR I 8). This means that the construction of the self is phenomena where the self is constructed in the mind as ‘I’ through an interplay of many dependent elements. For this reason, the combination of Schopenhauer and Buddhist thinking provides a useful insight in acknowledging not only the phenomena involved in the construction of the self but also how suffering originates when the connection between different elements of the self is formed and the essence of the self is taken to be ‘I’.

For many of Beckett’s characters, both in the early and late works, the self is disintegrated into mind, and parts of body such as eyes, hands and voice. For example, ‘you are on your back in the dark’ (C 3); ‘Another devising it all for company’ (C 21); ‘What visions in the dark of night! Who exclaims thus? Who asks who exclaims’ (ISIS 78); ‘Hands. Lamp. Gleam of brass. Pale globe alone in gloom…Fade. Gone. Cry. Snuffed with breath of nostrils’ (APOM 269). This suggests their disintegrated state of the body and mind in which

the protagonist is not clear about their identity and also brings to the fore a sense of touch that comes through hands, breath through nostrils, and light from the lamp, all without using the senses of perception (sight, smell, touch) to associate an idea with them. This non-identification with identity as singular shows disintegration and essencelessness. The significance of this recognition of no 'I' is in discovering the grace of emptiness because the self is an amalgamation of many elements being essenceless in nature. The protagonists of Beckett's works are represented through separate constituents of the self and can see the relationship between the components of the self. This helps to recognise the rise of suffering which is due to the habit of forming automatic connections between the various elements of the self. This is evident in the protagonists of the late writings who are presented in disintegrated format. The result of showcasing the self in disintegrated form shows the use of Buddhist emptiness which is used in different ways in Beckett's writings such as the use of interdependent activity of different physical parts of the self. This all gravitate towards an understanding of the self through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective. In *Murphy*, the protagonist begins 'to see nothing, that colourlessness which is such a rare post-natal treat' (M 246). Despite a gulf of nearly fifty years in composition, both *Murphy* and *Ill Seen Ill Said* celebrate the experience of the void. Thus, the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework helps recognise Beckett's use of the disintegrated aspects of the self and reason for suffering which only arises when the different aspects of the self are taken together.

In line with presenting the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, Beckett's adoption of the 'veil of Maya' is taken into consideration. Beckett documented in his Clare Street notebook that 'there are moments where the veil of hope is finally ripped away and the eyes, suddenly liberated, see their world as it is, as it must be', (Nixon, 'Scraps of German' 273). For Schopenhauer, Maya is 'the knowledge belonging to the principle of sufficient reason, with which we never reach the inner nature of things, but endlessly pursue phenomena only, moving without aim like a squirrel in its wheel' (WWR I 274). This precisely follows the characteristics of Buddhist emptiness. To explicate Beckett's usage of the 'veil of Maya', I argue that rejecting the principle of sufficient reason and essencelessness leads to what Schopenhauer calls the ancient wisdom of the Indians [which] declares that 'it is Mâyâ, the veil of deception, which covers the eyes of mortals and causes them to see a world of which one cannot say either that it is or that it is not' (WWR I 8). Therefore, the clarification of the concept of the 'veil of Maya' can be recognised in the way Beckett's protagonists perform in the texts, that is through different elements of the self as characters without names and through contemplation of the various aspects of the self. Thus, a 'Schopenhauerian

Buddhist' framework is an important approach in understanding Beckett's utilisation of the themes of self, suffering, emptiness and the 'veil of Maya'. It is vital now to account for the genesis of the Eastern philosophical perspective in Schopenhauer's philosophy.

B. Genesis of Schopenhauerian- Buddhist and Schopenhauer-Veda philosophy

Schopenhauer was born in Danzig in 1788, and in 1813 he obtained his Doctorate in Philosophy for his thesis *On the Fourfold Root to the Principle of Sufficient Reason*. This key work, the beginning of Schopenhauer's belief system, set out the argument that Eastern philosophical ideas were like his own. Highly unusual at that time, in Schopenhauer's apartment in Frankfurt am Main, where he lived permanently after 1833, there was a small gilded statue of Buddha. Bhikkhu Nanájivako in *Schopenhauer and Buddhism* writes that when his housekeeper asked in astonishment about the statue, Schopenhauer replied, 'It is the Victoriously Awakened One' (8).

Schopenhauer pointed out in his principal work *The World as Will and Representation* (1969) that:

> For up till 1818, when my work appeared, there were to be found in Europe only a very few accounts of Buddhism, and those extremely incomplete and inadequate, confined almost entirely to a few essays in the volumes of the *Asiatic Researches*, and primarily concerned with the Buddhism of the Burmese […]. I have been able to furnish a fairly numerous list of the best works on this religion in my book *On the Will in Nature* under the heading 'Sinology'. (WWR II 169)

The list of books he consulted on Buddhism can be found in the footnotes to the chapter on 'sinology' in *The Will in Nature*. The chapter also praises Buddhism in the following terms: 'this religion which, on account of its intrinsic excellence and truth, as well as of the great number of its followers, may be considered as ranking highest among all religions on earth' (WIN 362). Given Schopenhauer's interest in Buddhism, perhaps we can say he was the first European to call himself a Buddhist (Abelson 255). At the University of Göttigen he studied ethnography under Arnold Hermann and Ludwig Heeren (1760-1842), who were experts in Indian philosophy (App, 'Arthur Schopenhauer and China' 5). All the evidence points to Schopenhauer's sustained engagement with Eastern thinking. The lending register of a library in Weimar similarly indicates the extent of his interest in Asian philosophy. According to the library record, in early December 1813 Schopenhauer borrowed a magazine entitled *Asiatisches Magazin*, edited by Julius Klaproth (1783-1835), a renowned Orientalist. While reading the *Journal Asiatique* in 1826, Schopenhauer wrote:

> In the seventh volume of *Journal Asiatique*, Paris 1825, there are rather elaborate and exceedingly beautiful portrayals of the life and esoteric teaching of Fo or Buddha, or Schige-Muni, Schakia-Muni, which are in wonderful agreement with my system. In Volume 8, this is continued with the exoteric teaching that, however, is very mythological and much less interesting. (App, 'Arthur Schopenhauer and China' 21)

As seen above, by that time Schopenhauer believed that Buddhist philosophy showed parallels with his own system, and relatedly it had helped him in the development of his own system of philosophy. *The Journal Asiatique* had articles from Sinilogist Michel-Ange-André le Roux Deshauterayes (1724-95). 'Abel-Rémusat, Klaproth, and Landresse recognised their value and published them in the *Journal Asiatique* of 1825 where Schopenhauer found them in 1826' (App 'Arthur Schopenhauer and China' 21). Thus, around 1830 Schopenhauer already had information on 'Chinese Buddhism from Deshauterayes, Klaproth, and Abel-Rémusat, about Nepalese Buddhism from Hodgson; and about Ceylonese Buddhism from Upham' (App 'Arthur Schopenhauer and China' 38). Further indications of his reading on Buddhism are found in *The World as Will and Representation* where he lists his reading 'Spence Hardy's Manual of Buddhism, pp. 394-96, Taylor's Probodha Chandro daya, London 1812, p.35, also in Sangermano's Burmese Empire, p. 6, as well as in the Asiatic Researches, Vol. VI, p.179, and Vol. IX, p.256' (WWR II 503). By 1832, Schopenhauer recognised the agreement he had attained with Buddha's realization of suffering and wrote: 'At age seventeen, without any advanced schooling, I was as overwhelmed by the wretchedness of life as the Buddha in his youth when he saw illness, old age, pain and death' (App 'Arthur Schopenhauer and China' 39). Since suffering is an important part in advancing towards the knowledge of the self 'the more one suffers, the sooner is the true end' (WWR II 639). Consequently, for Schopenhauer not only the conception of suffering but also that of salvation (nirvana) is in agreement with Eastern philosophy. Similarly, App argues that Schopenhauer's philosophy is like a compass showing two diametrically opposed directions: one holding the basic condition of suffering and the other pointing to 'nothing' which correspond to Nirvana of the Buddhist (App, *Schopenhauer's Compass* 13). So if suffering and the whole process of the arising and passing away of suffering as a form of feeling aggregate is detached with the sense of 'I', it will then, according to Schopenhauer, help to leave:

> the previous immorality and wickedness behind as dross, and there appears what Veda says: "*Finditur nodus cordis, dissolvuntur omnes dubitationes, ejusque opera*

> *evanescent*" [Whoever beholds the highest and profoundest, has his heart's knot cut, all his doubts are resolved, and his works come to nought]. (WWR II 639)

Strikingly, severing the knot refers to the attainment of salvation when all the doubts regarding the self vanish. Furthermore, for Beckett, Schopenhauer's Eastern philosophical perspective brings not only the recognition of suffering but also an 'intellectual justification of suffering' (BL I 33).

Schopenhauer became increasingly interested in the teaching of FO, or Buddha, and remained a voracious reader of this religion until his death in 1860. For Schopenhauer, emptiness is an important teaching of Buddhism.

> They neither hold on to imagination nor to the body and plunge into emptiness; they no more imagine that there are different things that are opposed to each other; they enter nothingness [le nèant]; images make no impression whatsoever on them; and finally they find themselves in a state where there is neither imagination nor non-imagination [*inimagination*], and this state is called total and final liberation; this is the happy shores that the philosophers rush towards. (App, 'Arthur Schopenhauer and China' 25).

This insightfully argues that the final attainment of salvation or liberation is achieved after the knowledge of emptiness. Reference to emptiness is present at the end of *The World as Will and Representation*, mentioned above, in which Schopenhauer used the phrase '*prajana-paramita',* taken from the Germano-Russian Isaac Jacob Schmidt (1779-1847) in the latter's translation of the Diamond Sutra from Tibetan Buddhism (App, *Schopenhauer's Compass* 16). It is important to highlight that Diamond Sutra is another important Mahayana text on emptiness. The text contains discourses on the emptiness of phenomena, practices for people who seek Enlightenment and what it calls the ultimate reality. Mahayana Buddhism, also known as the 'Greater vehicle', is a tradition known for the knowledge of emptiness. Therefore, the genesis of Schopenhauer's reading of Buddhism highlights how suffering, emptiness and salvation (nirvana, which is another way of ending suffering or finding a way out of suffering) are important themes for his reading of Buddhism and as they lead to that 'wonderful agreement' with Buddhist philosophy which he clearly indicated throughout his philosophical writings.

Alongside Buddhism, Schopenhauer also helped to introduce Hindu philosophy to Europe. App emphasizes that 'Schopenhauer's favourite book thus appears to be an extraordinary

melting pot' which contains interpretations from the Vedanta school, the Mahayana Buddhist school and the concept of 'Maya' taken from Veda (App, *Schopenhauer's Compass* 145). With the help of Anquetil's Latin *Upanishad* translations, he produced a discourse on the 'will' in 1814 and 1815, and spent most of the time between 1815 and 1816 reading and analysing the first nine volumes of *Asiatick Researches*. Also, 'Schopenhauer's favourite book was a Latin work entitled *Oupnek'hat*' (App, *Schopenhauer's Compass* 265). He praises this translated text of the Vedas in *Parerga and Paralipomena*:

> For how thoroughly redolent of the holy spirit of the Vedas is the *Oupnekhat*! How deeply stirred is he who, by diligent and careful reading, is now conversant with the Persian-Latin rendering of this incomparable book! How imbued is every line with firm, definite, and harmonious significance! From every page we come across profound, original and sublime thoughts, whilst a lofty and sacred earnestness pervades the whole. Here everything breathes the air of India and radiates an existence that is original and akin to nature. (PP II 397)

Schopenhauer calls this work 'the most rewarding and uplifting reading in the world' which 'breathes the holy spirit of the Vedas' (App, *Schopenhauer's Compass* 265). This reading gave him a crucial understanding of Maya (illusion):

> I compared what is stated about māyā in the *Oupnek'hats* 6, 8, 13, 26, 41, and 50. This principle is the primordial love [amour original], the desire of Brahm, of Atma, as distinguished and separated from knowledge. Mixed with this Source of light, i.e. knowledge, it has given birth to all that exists; that is, it continually has let and still lets appear all beings separately; thus from that moment on, there are but appearances. Man believes them to be existing substances. This is the ignorance springing from māyā. (App, *Richard Wagner and Buddhism* 18)

Schopenhauer envisaged the concept of Maya from a very broad perspective. While taking notes from *Asiatick Researchers* Volume I, borrowed from Dresden library during 1815, he noted:

> Máyá: the word is explained by Hindoo Scholars "the first inclination of the Godhead to diversify himself by creating worlds". She is feigned to be the mother of universal nature and of all inferior Gods; as a Cashmirian informed me, when I asked him, why Cama or Love was represented as her son: but the word Maya or delusion has a more subtle recondite sense in the Vedanta philosophy where it

> signifies the system of perception. The Vedantis, unable to form a distinct idea of brute matter independent of mind, or to conceive that the work of supreme Goodness was left a moment to itself, imagine that the Deity is ever present to its work, and constantly supports a series of perceptions, which, in one sense, they call illusory; though they cannot but admit the reality of all created forms, as far as the happiness of creatures can be affected by them. (App 'Arthur Schopenhauer and China' 83)

Schopenhauer's basic understanding of 'Maya' was, however, most clearly elucidated in the postscript to *The World as Will and Representation* (Vol I). In the section 'Criticism of Kantian Philosophy', Schopenhauer had shown high regard for Kantian philosophy and accepted that his own line of thought, 'different as its content is from the Kantian, is completely under its influence, and necessarily presupposes and starts from it' (WWR I 416). He nevertheless advanced his own criticisms of Kant's philosophy, which include overlooking the principle of sufficient reason. However, Schopenhauer writes that 'Kant's greatest merit is the distinction of the phenomenon from the thing-in-itself, based on the proof that between things and us there always stands the intellect, and that on this account they cannot be known according to what they may be in themselves' (WWR I 417-18). Schopenhauer takes on Kant's understanding that intellect is a hindrance in knowing a thing. This means intellect is a veil that hinders the true nature of an object. In the same section, Schopenhauer summarised Plato's understanding as 'this world that appears to the senses has no true being, but only a ceaseless becoming: it is, and it is not; and its comprehension is not so much a knowledge as an illusion' (WWR I 419). Thus, for Schopenhauer the admiration for the 'Maya' reasserts itself through Kant and Plato too but he also refers to 'veil of Maya' from Vedic philosophy.

Beckett's works also highlight the ceaseless coming together of memories, such as in *Company* where fragments of self come together in the forms of voice, thought, mind and body, while in *Murphy*, *Watt* and late works these fragments are always interacting but without mutual comprehension. It is in acknowledging the coming together of various elements of the self, dependent and essenceless, that the illusion of comprehension through intellect is broken in Beckett's art. Nixon asserts that:

> The importance of Schopenhauer to Beckett, and especially the reading of the passages on the veil of Maya, the manner in which it is lifted and the affect it has on the individual who sees through it, reaches far beyond the early critical essays, and profoundly affects his personal and aesthetic thinking. (Nixon *German Diaries* 169)

In Schopenhauer words:

> The same truth, though presented quite differently, is also a principal teaching of the Vedas and Puranas, namely the doctrine of Maya, by which is understood nothing but what Kant calls the phenomenon as opposed to the thing-in-itself. For the work of Maya is stated to be precisely this visible world in which we are, a magic effect called into being, an unstable and inconstant illusion without substance, comparable to the optical illusion and the dream, a veil enveloping human consciousness, a something of which it is equally false and equally true to say that it is and that it is not. (WWR I 419)

Feldman proposes that Beckett read the chapter 'On the Doctrine of the Denial of the Will-to-Live' in *The World as Will and Representation* in the summer of 1930. In the chapter Schopenhauer writes 'individuality, of course, is inherent above all in the intellect; reflecting the phenomenon, the intellect is related thereto, and the phenomenon has the *principium individuationis* as its form' (WWR II 609). Correspondingly, in the short philosophical meditation by Beckett, written in August 1936 in his Clare Street notebook, he mentions that the mind is free of any delusion when the veil of hope is finally torn apart and the object can be clearly recognised as it is. One way in which Beckett expresses tearing the illusion artistically involves his decision to reject the conventional way of naming his characters – especially in his late writings – such as that of Speaker in *A Piece of Monologue*, and W and V in *Rockaby*. The lifting of the 'veil of Maya' is a very difficult task, as it needs constant concentration and observation, but not through intellect or mind because as soon as the intellect takes over, 'the veil quickly reforms' (Nixon 170). For example, perceptions are formed in the mind as soon as a relationship is established between the elements of the self and the world outside, but it is the choice of the observer to let the mind and intellect intervene between the observer and the observed, and thus to let the veil form again. Beckett's art conveys choice-less awareness and does not let the intellect interfere in the presentation of his characters, whether they are rocking in a chair, pondering over thoughts or simply standing and staring out of a window.

The meaning of choice-less awareness has been considered by J. Krishnamurti in 'This Light in Oneself'. Krishnamurti uses an example of thoughts arising in the mind:

> The brain is endlessly active, chattering from one subject to another, from one thought to another, from one association to another, from one state to another – it's constantly occupied. One is not aware of it generally. But when one is aware without

> any choice, choiceless awareness of the movement, then that very awareness, that very attention ends the chattering. (Krishnamurti)

The choice less awareness of mind entails allows whatever is there in the mind to appear, to unfold, and disappear without any judgement. In a similar way, judgement is abandoned in an episode consisting of an encounter between Buddha and a man named Bhaiya which developed into a conversation in which Buddha taught choice-less awareness; that is when the mind can acknowledge everything as it appears without judgement. Thannisaro Bhikkhu, in *Bāhiya Sutta: Bāhiya*, also talks about Bhaiya, who, in conversation with Buddha, said: 'It is difficult to know for certain […]. Teach me Dhamma, Sugata [another name for Buddha], so that it will be for my good and happiness for a long time'. Buddha replied:

> Herein, Bahiya, you should train yourself thus: "In reference to the seen, there will be only the seen. In reference to the heard, only the heard. In reference to the sensed, only the sensed. In reference to the cognized, only the cognized. That is how you should train yourself. When for you there will be only the seen in reference to the seen, only the heard in reference to the heard, only the sensed in reference to the sensed, only the cognized in reference to the cognized, then, Bāhiya, there is no you in connection with that. When there is no you in connection with that, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor yonder nor between the two. This, just this, is the end of stress." In this way you should train yourself, Bahiya (Thanissaro).

Beckett's characters exemplify this awareness by the consistent destabilisation of the sense of the self. For instance, in *A Piece of Monologue*: 'staring beyond at the black lips quivering to half-heard words. Treating of other matters. Trying to treat of other matters. Till half hears there are no other matters. Never were other matters. Never two matters' (APOM 269). This illustrates Beckett's recognition that there is nothing to address except the coming back to an awareness of things as they are. Here, a tearing of the 'veil of Maya' takes place, which dissolves the automatic connection between the intellectual interpretation of the mind and the world, instead concentrating only on the moment of experience. In this view, suffering can clearly be seen as dependent, essenceless and illusory since it will become a feeling without attachment to the perception formed through the mind and the external world. Thoughts will not get any chance to interfere by connecting the experience with the sense of 'I'.

Hence it is evident from Schopenhauer's account of both Buddhist and Vedic philosophy in his chief philosophical works that the Buddhist concept of emptiness is an important approach in recognising the Vedic concept of the 'veil of Maya'. The conjunction of both the philosophies enables an understanding of Beckett's literary representations of choice less observation of self in disintegration. To firm up the understanding of unveiling the illusion as offered through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework present in Beckett's rendering of the self in relation to time, space, habit and suffering, the following chapter will deal with the early critical work *Proust*.

Chapter 2

Beckett's *Proust*: a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective

As Chapter One establishes, it is widely acknowledged that after Beckett's initial encounter with a range of philosophies during the 1930s, the influence of Schopenhauer remained at the fore, as 'has been amply documented by a number of critics over the years' (Tonning, 'I am not Reading Philosophy' 44). It is also clear how the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework uses Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason and Buddhist conceptions of emptiness to illuminate the idea of the 'veil of Maya' from Vedic philosophy. In the thesis, his knowledge is applied to the themes present in Beckett's writings to reveal the way Beckett utilised these philosophical themes of self, emptiness and suffering. With this philosophical framework as a point of departure, this chapter will address his early critical monograph, *Proust* (1931).

Proust is heavily reliant upon Beckett's reading of Schopenhauer in 1930s, as traced in biographies of Beckett, the most important being James Knowlson's *Damned to Fame* (1996). Direct references to Schopenhauer are identified within this text. However, as many critics have addressed the role of Schopenhauer's philosophy in *Proust*, this chapter will consider Schopenhauer's philosophy, that has been overlooked, one that suggests the influence of the Buddhist philosophy of emptiness and the Vedic philosophy of the 'veil of Maya' in the interpretation of Beckett's *Proust*.

Since Schopenhauer was a major influence on *Proust*, as has already been established by noted scholars like Acheson (1978), Pilling (1993), O'Hara (1997), Pothast (2008) and McGrath (2014), the point of analysing Beckett's *Proust* again in the light of Schopenhauer's philosophical influence is to examine the themes of time, self, will, desire, subject-object relation, habit, memory and emptiness. Such themes illustrate certain characteristics which can be understood through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' lens, and demonstrate how the embedded illusion, the 'veil of Maya', is present in these concepts. The argument presented through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework is that Beckett's critical evaluation of *Proust* portrays the interconnectedness and essenceless nature of the self in relation to time; time in relation to the aspects of memory and habit; memory in

relation to perception and experience; habit in relation to suffering; and the creation of self through perception, memory and habit. Hence, the 'Proustian equation' highlights the themes of time, memory, habit and suffering in relation to the self.

Introduction

In 1930, the publishers Chatto & Windus commissioned Beckett with the task of writing a critical monograph on Marcel Proust's sixteen-volume novel *À la recherché du temps perdu* (*In Search of Lost Time*). Beckett's monograph on Marcel Proust's novel was published under the title *Proust* in 1931. Beckett wrote the critical essay at the suggestion of his friend Richard Aldington for Charles Prentice of Chatto & Windus, 'who wanted an essay on Proust for their new Dolphin series' (Knowlson, *Damned to Fame* 113). This essay was written before Beckett took up his appointment at Trinity College, Dublin. Although, Beckett was writing criticism on Marcel's Proust novel, his study, *Proust* necessarily contains his own voice in dealing with philosophical themes, with Schopenhauer being a major influence. Supporting evidence for this view can be found in a letter Beckett wrote to MacGreevy in July 1930 in which he said that he was reading Schopenhauer and 'probably also in the very process of writing his *Proust*' (Pothast 95). As a result, Beckett's encounter with the works of Schopenhauer became crucial in the writing of *Proust*. John Pilling notes:

> Beckett draws heavily, throughout *Proust*, on the writings of the nineteenth century German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer. The result is that *Proust* often reads like an encounter between Beckett and Schopenhauer, with (Marcel) Proust's novel supplying pertinent material for a philosophic essay. (Pilling, 'Beckett's "Proust"' 3)

Pothast also supports the view that the 'Schopenhauerian material in Beckett's essay chiefly originates from his own Schopenhauer's studies, and to a small extent, indeed if at all, from less than numerous unequivocally Schopenhauerian elements which we find in *A la recherché du temps perdu* or in Proust's letters' (Pothast 95). Feldman too confirms that 'Beckett's only academic monograph, *Proust*, was so steeped in the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer as to distort the eponymous author's *À la recherché du temps perdu* ostensibly under examination' (Feldman, *Beckett/Philosophy* 3).

It is important to know that *Proust* was an early work and Beckett's philosophical outlook had only started to take shape. Thus, 'Beckett identifies with Proust at certain points' but not others (Pothast 95), and 'Beckett in the act of interpreting an author [Marcel Proust] concerned with the same philosophical problems as himself but one who observed those problems with different emotions and responded to them with different solutions' (Rosen

123). Drawing on Rosen's observation, Beckett was concerned with his own philosophical views during the writing of his critical monograph *Proust*, he advanced his own opinions and Schopenhauer has an essential voice in it. The following three points will be explicitly used to discern the themes of self, time, memory, habit, perception and suffering in Beckett's *Proust*.

1. 'The Principle of Sufficient Reason' which is elaborated in Schopenhauer's doctoral thesis *On the Fourfold Root to the Principle of Sufficient Reason* first published in 1813. The principle proposes the interdependent nature of things. Beckett's philosophical themes of time, space, habit, suffering and memory in *Proust* express the effects and causes that are dependent in nature. For instance, memory is dependent on perception, habit is dependent on memory, and time is dependent on space. Thus, dependent origination is a meaningful concept in understanding the manifestation of philosophical themes in *Proust*, for it gives expression of dependence between the elements of the self, as well as self in relation to time, memory and perception, and these in turn clarify Beckett's use of these themes in *Proust*.
2. Schopenhauer's philosophical understanding that the world is merely a representation concealed behind the 'veil of Maya'. This point employs Schopenhauer's argument that the phenomenal world is a representation dependent on cognition and in turn, cognition is dependent on 'the poisonous ingenuity of Time' (P 15). Time as poisonous because the mind is 'multicoloured by the phenomena of its hours' (P 15). This cognitive activity is the result of the principle of sufficient reason, proving the dependent nature of the object and subject that is at the basis of representation. In turn, this view stresses that there is a veil of understanding present between our perception of a thing and its actual existence.

3. Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason, which extends to an understanding that there is no core or essence in objects or things, relies upon the Buddhist concept of emptiness that Schopenhauer has taken from Mahayana Buddhism. This pertains to the understanding that object and subject are both dependent variables and there is no substantiality or essence in things.

Beckett's criticism in *Proust* expresses themes that are the result of these key paradigms, used singularly, partially or together. The first two paradigms are drawn from Schopenhauer's philosophy and also include the comprehension of the illusion (veil of

Maya) present in the view of the world around and the self through intellect, while the third is a permutation of Schopenhauer's and Buddhist philosophy termed the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework.

Critics have highlighted various philosophical themes derived from Schopenhauer's philosophy in *Proust*. Acheson writes that 'Beckett draws attention briefly to Schopenhauer's theory of music at the end of *Proust* and Schopenhauer's philosophy of "Idea"' (167). Schopenhauer's philosophy on the key issue of 'Idea' represents an important state for writers in which a special state of will-less awareness dominates. In this state 'the subject is lost in the object' (van Hulle 227). Also, for Beckett, Schopenhauer represents music as one of the most important art form. The metaphysical element embedded in music can momentarily tear apart the 'veil of Maya'. The issue of 'Idea' can be explained further through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework which provides an explanation for the loss of the subject and object. The 'veil of Maya' finds explanation in the loss of identity of the self when the subject and object no longer exists separately. O'Hara, on the other hand, argues on the disintegrated aspect of the self and explains:

> In *À la Recherché* he [Beckett] found Proust again and again translating the reincarnations of the will into a succession of separable selves within one life, links constituting the chain-identity of a single person. As Proust's narrator Marcel finds himself defined by time and space in the opening pages of the novel, redefining again and again by time, space, and causation throughout it, and freed from these forms of being or extended beyond them by intellect capable of coexisting in two times or of shifting from one another time and place. (O'Hara 'Where There's a Will' 264)

This explanation gives birth to disintegrated elements of the self. As O'Hara claims that in Proust's novel the narrator Marcel finds himself defined through time, space and causation but later gets freed from these forms. This recognition adheres to the disintegrated aspect of the self in Beckett's narratives in which the character will seek 'to identify his self in some way that will free him from these limits' of time, space and causality (O'Hara 'Where There's a Will' 264). Thus, O'Hara seeks to identify the self as free from the time, space and causality co-ordinates but overlooks the aspect of Schopenhauer's principle that focuses on the interdependence in relation to the aspects of the self. Steven Rosen illuminates the Buddhist philosophical interpretation of Beckett's essay *Proust* by addressing Madhyamika Buddhism, and employs the chief exponent of Madhyamika philosophy, Nagarjuna (200

A.D.). Rosen found that in *Proust*, too, the problem of suffering is addressed, and craving is the reason for suffering, for which Beckett uses Schopenhauer's term 'Will'. Rosen also identifies the dichotomy of subject-object relations, and finds relativism or dependent origination to be pessimistic. Rosen in his work overlooks the essenceless aspect of the Buddhist philosophy of emptiness, and only focuses on relativism. On the other hand, Pothast addresses the phenomenal surface of the world and the true reality beyond it as the first point of accord between Beckett's *Proust* and Schopenhauer's philosophy. He goes on to introduce the idea that 'true reality would be a state of identity between subject and object' (Pothast 96). It is difficult to understand Pothast's view because it is not clear what the true reality beyond the phenomenal surface is and how this true reality is an identification between the subject and object. For Pothast, the Schopenhauerian expression of Idea is the essence of empirical phenomena existing outside time, space and causality (97). Yet here too Schopenhauer's 'aspects of the principle of sufficient reason' is not mentioned (Pothast 97). How and why the 'Idea' is outside time, space and causality remains unexplained. Also, the expression of Will is the main obstacle that obstructs the way to perceiving true reality, writes Pothast, but the question arises of whether reality can ever be perceived. Does reality come through perception? To answer these questions, this chapter addresses Beckett's *Proust* further on this question of perception, self and essence. When writing about habit, Pothast contends that Beckett casts it as conceptual element which has a protective function, and its absence brings suffering and boredom. Nonetheless, how and why habit is a cause of pain remains unexamined. The concept of suffering is an important Schopenhauerian philosophical influence found in Beckett's writing, and Tonning addresses Schopenhauerian pessimism in *Proust* with the idea of 'original sin', which is akin to the understanding of suffering as a common human condition. However, Schopenhauer's incorporation of Eastern philosophy contributes to defining a way in which suffering can be understood. It goes a step further by recognising that suffering is a fundamental condition but also there is a way to become liberated from it. The more affirmative approach to pessimism is also taken up by Rosen, who writes that 'the pattern of emphasis in *Proust* indicates that Beckett found his subject chiefly useful as a source of pessimistic commonplaces', and that '*Proust* provides an excellent opportunity to describe the tone and range of Beckett's pessimism' (Rosen 137). Thus, critics have utilised both Buddhist and Schopenhauer's philosophy to interpret various philosophical themes in Beckett's critical monograph *Proust* that include pessimism, will, idea, habit and relativity. But they have not connected Buddhism with Vedic philosophy nor is there any explanation

for the reason of unhappiness of the self. From here, the discussion will focus on the synthesis of the philosophical elements of time, habit, memory and suffering in *Proust*.

A. Suffering

'Suffering – that opens a window on the real' (P 28). This is a very important assertion by Beckett. How can suffering open a window to the real? This can be explained through reference to the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, within which the explanation of the self and the nature of suffering becomes clear. The fundamental human condition of suffering is one of the most important philosophical assertions presented by Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer mentions, existence is 'embittered by inevitable sufferings of many kinds'; this 'is the most important of all truths' (WWR II 604, 605). One explanation is that Schopenhauer's philosophy in Beckett's *Proust* is connected to the suffering associated with will or desire. Another explanation is that Schopenhauer in his chief philosophical work *The World as Will and Representation* identifies the expression of suffering from Buddhist philosophy and proceeds from the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths. In *Proust*, Beckett mentions 'We are disappointed at the nullity of what we are pleased to call attainment. But what is attainment? The identification of the subject with the object of his desire. The subject has died- and perhaps many times – on the way' (P 14). The explanation for the nullity of attainment is rooted in the understanding that the subject and object are interdependently related to its essenceless nature. The absence of essence dissolves identity and if there is no lasting essence, there will be no lasting satisfaction. This interdependence modifies many times because the combination of the elements of the self is constantly shifting as is clear from the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework addressed in Chapter One.

> Therefore so long as our consciousness is filled by our will, so long as we are given up to the throng of desires with their constant hopes and fears, so long as we are subject of willing, we can never have lasting happiness nor peace (WWI I 254).

Thus, the misery brought about by the constant change of desires can never bring lasting happiness or satisfaction. Another important assertion is that Schopenhauer's philosophy shows how, 'suffering is the process of purification by which alone man is in most cases sanctified, in other words, led back from the path of error of the will-to-live' (WWR II 636). From there, one can then reach the understanding that 'Individuality, of course, is inherent above all in the intellect; reflecting the phenomenon, the intellect is related thereto, and the phenomenon has the *principium individuationis* as its form' (WWR II 609). The whole

procedure, beginning with suffering to reach the vision that individuality is a product of intellect, involves the activity inherent in the formation of 'I'. Through using a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, the self is revealed to be an amalgamation of many elements that work dependently on each other, for as Schopenhauer clarifies that individuality is a product of intellect since it is the mind that gives the thought of 'I'. The 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework reveals how the intellect can give rise to a false sense of 'I' and an embedded illusion in the sense of the self if the observation of the constituents of the self is skipped over. There is no singular 'self' entity which can be taken as the essence of 'I'. This recognition clears the illusion of singular entity called the self and can lead to what Schopenhauer describes as the state where the person 'will be least afraid of becoming nothing in death who has recognised that he is already nothing now, and who consequently no longer takes any interest in his individual phenomenon' (WWR II 609). Suffering has opened a window to the real through observation of the self which, when understood through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, reveals that although suffering is a common human condition, nevertheless the self is constituted of many elements and the notion of 'self' as singular is an illusion created by the intellect. Hence, self is interdependent and essenceless, and thus opens the reality of suffering as an aspect of feeling which, when observed, will show the connection between the singular 'I' and the constituent of the self. The sensation of suffering will no longer attach itself with the intellect or the false sense of 'I' to interpret the sensory state from past experiences. For example, when I lose a watch the sense of 'my watch' brings about suffering whereas if my friend loses the same watch, suffering will not accompany my feeling because the sense of 'my' or ownership that my friend has, is missing. Thus, the watch is not the criterion of suffering but the sense of 'I' and the possessive 'my' attached to the watch are the reason for suffering.

Many critics have evaluated suffering as an important Schopenhauerian philosophical theme. P. H. Collins argues that Beckett finds no happiness in the affairs of the character's present in Marcel Proust's novel, and that by the end of the novel the narrator has realised that happiness can never be attained through other human beings and relationships (Collins 119). This suggests that, for Beckett, as Collins argues, happiness is not a product attained outside self or in relation to other people. Further, Collins also finds that in Beckett's understanding, habit covers up the pain of living by the repetition of daily events, a repetition which, when broken, reveals the painful existence beneath (Collins 105, 106). Thus, suffering in Collin's argument can be lessened through habit. However, from the

perspective of a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, if the inner process of habit formation is recognised, the automatic response of habit will gradually disappear and reveal the root cause of suffering. Most acts are prompted by habit without alertness. However, if an alert mind takes over, the habit will not overtake mind's functionality and the suffering will not arise because an alert mind will not weave a story of 'I' or 'mine' with the object in consideration. Only the relationship between the object and subject becomes clear. Edward S. Brinkley argues that Beckett understands from Marcel Proust's novel that suffering arises wherever there is a lapse of habit. Here, suffering occurs when there is contradiction between surroundings and habit, but the following question arises: does the contradiction bring about suffering or is it the absence of alert response to the nature of suffering? For Mark Nixon, 'Beckett's appropriation of Schopenhauer's pessimism in the 1931 essay *Proust*' reflects Beckett's 'deep involvement with the tragic quality of life' (Nixon, *German Diaries 1936-1937* 60). The question how suffering originates and where it stands in relation to habit are questions left open for analysis. The 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework elucidates that habit and suffering are related. Beckett highlights that characters of Marcel Proust's novel suffer when habit lapses: 'Habit may not be dead (or as good as dead, doomed to die) but sleeping. This second and more fugitive experience may or may not be exempt from pain' (P 21). In the text, habit for Proust's characters 'may or may not' bring suffering. Again, how this relation takes shape remains unanswered, and this is where the Eastern philosophical perspective and Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason comes into the picture.

The expression of suffering can be understood in relation to time, upon which it is dependent from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective. Thus, Beckett shows how two of the characters in Proust's novel, Odette and Swan, suffer because of the association with memory and time which is a part of habit. Habit identifies and forms relation through memory and time. This association with the perceptions that are formed in the mind depending on time and memory brings about a change in the situation because of the role of perception. This change in time becomes the reason for suffering. Therefore, time is dependent upon the events of the future, and exists only in relation to the perceptions formed through the self. Suffering is the result of the relation between memory and perception formed within the dimension of future time. Beckett expresses this as the relation between perception, memory and time: 'the observer infects the observed with his own mobility' (P 17) and does not recognise the observed. This means that it is impossible to

know a thing without using intellect and the perception devised through intellect or habit brings about suffering. Schopenhauer writes

> It is true that, so far as the abstract representation, the concept, is concerned, we also obtained a knowledge of it according to its content, in so far as it has all content and meaning only through its relation to the representation of perception. (WWR I 95)

Since the self is made up of a process in which various elements contribute and work interdependently, self is explained in this way: 'the individual is the seat of a constant process of decantation,' Beckett argues, 'decantation from the vessel containing the fluid of future time, sluggish, pale and monochrome, to the vessel containing the fluid of past time, agitated and multicoloured by the phenomena of its hours' (P 15). The process of decantation when filtered through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework reveals that the self is always in the process of becoming because the constituents of the self keeps interacting. Also, the notion of the self produced is multicoloured because the self is perceived through various combinations of intellect, perception, habit, time and memory. Formlessness is embedded in the formation of the self as Kathryn White in *Beckett and Decay* succinctly points out: 'Beckett was never fully satisfied with anything he created' and thus 'he had to continue experimenting with both drama and prose in an attempt to find a form for formlessness, continuing to push each mode of expression to its limits' (114).

In *Proust*, the observer constructs an affiliation with memory and habit to form perceptions about the observed entity. This is reconstruction of dependence between the aggregates of habit and memory in relation to perception formation. This recognition is derived from Schopenhauer's principle, which highlights the process of dependent origination between habit, time and suffering. Beckett writes that memory and habit are the products of time cancer. In addressing this, Erik Tonning draws upon Beckett's presentation on 'the Time cancer' in *Proust*. The characters of Marcel Proust's novel are driven by the thirst of desire. Tonning discusses desire in relation to suffering, wherein desire is an aspect of suffering. Further, Tonning asserts 'in Schopenhauerian terms, the will strives endlessly, and every temporary satisfaction either entails immediate transition to another desire or an interval of empty longing, *ennui*' (50). Schopenhauer's philosophy addresses this concern of the relationship between desire and suffering. However, a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework explains how the suffering of the self is brought about by the interrelation between perception, memory and habit formation. Tonning justifies the argument that the characters of the novel are present in time, and that the aspect of willing and desire causes

suffering. But, in fact, the dependent characteristics of desire and suffering, through Schopenhauer's Buddhist-inspired views on the subject, explain the arising of suffering, and the observation of complete process (which has the characteristic of dependent origination and essencelessness) of the making of the self. Ignorance of the process involved in the making of the self brings about suffering.

B. Time

In the first section of *Proust*, Beckett reveals his understanding of the aspects of time as it relates to the novel. The first element employed by Beckett to present 'the Proustian equation' is 'Time', which is 'in the first place that double-headed monster of damnation and salvation' (P 11). Why is time a double-headed monster? This can be explained through Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason, that is, the fact that time can be implicit as an entity that depends on any one of its three bifurcations, which is past - dependent on either future or present; present - dependent on either past or future; or future-dependent on past and present. This differentiation of past, present and future is integrated into the entity called time and so explains the different aspects of time in relation to the self. Schopenhauer writes: 'In time every moment is conditioned by the previous one. […] Every moment is conditioned by the previous one; only through the predecessor can this moment be reached' (FFR 197). Clearly, Schopenhauer acknowledges the principle of sufficient reason in the aspect of time. In time, the self is trapped both as a victim and a prisoner. Collins argues that the characters of Proust's novel are 'victims of Time'. 'Time is like a chemical agent which ensures that we are no longer what we were one second ago, for by the continual piling up of intellectual impressions our being is changing' and 'this makes it impossible for us to remember past events accurately (however accurately we may feel we remember them) because we are no longer what we were when those events took place' (105). However, this continual change of impression is the result of interdependent activity between the elements of the self which calls upon the flawed sense of a unitary self as argued through 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework. Self is a victim and a prisoner because the conventional understanding of the self recognises the singularity of the self as 'I', 'me' or 'mine'.

This expression of singularity veils the other aspects of the self that contribute to its formation, making the self a victim of illusion since 'the good or evil disposition of the object has neither reality nor significance. The immediate joys and sorrows of the body and the intelligence are so many superfoetations' (P 13). Calling the joys and sorrows of the body to produce so many superfoetations expresses the number of interactions between the

feeling and intellect required to produce the sensations of happiness or otherwise. Further, utilising the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, it can be argued that not only is there dependence in the constituents of the self, but that there is no singular essence. Consequently, pinning down the essence of the self which itself depends on various permutations and combinations of form, feeling, perception and consciousness 'has suffered dislocation'. Here 'we are rather in the position of Tantalus, with this difference, that we allow ourselves to be tantalised' (P 13). As Schopenhauer asserts, the subject himself is responsible for creating the illusion (Maya) of a singular self and 'thus the subject of willing is constantly lying on the revolving wheel of Ixion, is always drawing water in the sieve of the Danaids, and is the eternally thirsting Tantalus' (WWR I 196). The inability of the characters in Proust's novel to be released from time is because there 'is an unceasing modification of his [Proust's characters] personality', 'whose permanent reality, if any, can only be apprehended as a retrospective hypothesis' (P 15). The ceaseless modification of personality, the constant change in the individual is due to various combinations of the constituents of the self, since the self is subject to temporality, and change is the only permanent reality.

In Beckett's hands, the idea of self as found in the characters of Proust's novel reveals a dependence of the self on both time and space. Beckett's use of the dualistic mode of time and space in which self is present, points to the division within the self in relation to these categories. For Schopenhauer time is 'nothing more than that very form of the principle of sufficient reason, and it has no other quality or attribute. Succession is the form of the principle of sufficient reason in time, and succession is the whole essence and nature of time' (WWR I 8). Similarly,

> He who has recognised the principle of sufficient reason as it rules in mere, purely perceived space, has thereby exhausted the whole nature of space. For this is absolutely nothing else but the possibility of the reciprocal determinations of its parts by one another, which is called *position*. (WWR I 8)

Thus, time and space have interdependence and the themes of time, space and self illuminate multiplicity, plurality, dependence and essenceless condition of the self in relation to time and space. Beckett in *Proust* identifies the 'poisonous ingenuity of time' (P 15) as relative because it associates itself with mind, rather than standing as a lone entity. Time is a product of thought and thought is representation. The presence of time associates itself with mind, which has the aggregations of past, present and future; and mind in turn is

a part of the self. Hence, the notion of the self exists in the multiplicity of time (past, present, future). Thus, 'time itself is nothing but the ground of being in it, i.e., succession; space is nothing but the principle of being in it, i.e. position; matter is nothing but causality' (WWR I 34). What we call past and future are thought forms, and only exist in the mind. Thus, in the movement of thought, time exists and associates itself with the self, showing how the self becomes a victim of perception and tends towards the 'monster of damnation' since the interdependent and essenceless nature of both time and self veils its inherent essenceless characteristic. Beckett concludes by calling time:

> A condition of resurrection because an instrument of death; Habit – an infliction in so far as it opposes the dangerous exaltation… and a blessing in so far as it palliates the cruelty of the other; Memory – a clinical laboratory stocked with poison and remedy, stimulant and sedative. (P 35)

The explanation of time is that it is regenerated and renewed, and expires each moment when 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework is applied. This means that the only time is the now. Past and future die and are resurrected in the now. Time is a construct of thought, and when thought is observed, time will disappear from the zone, and the only remaining element will be the now, the present in the time zone. The self is imprisoned and 'there is no escape from yesterday because yesterday has deformed us' through the continuation of perception in the mind through past time and it has become 'irremediably part of us, within us, heavy and dangerous' (P 13). However, salvation is aware of 'the only world that has reality and significance, the world of our own latent consciousness' which comes through the knowledge of interdependent and essenceless characteristic from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework that helps to provide an awareness and dispels the illusion of time and the self as an independent entity.

C. Self

In *Proust*, the self is also divided into the inner elements of memory, perception and experience through sense data and mind. Beckett advances that the idea of past time in the self is swollen with memory and experience in the same way that present time has 'immediate joys and sorrows of the body and the intelligence (with) so many superfoetations' (P 13). Since present time is the product of the past perceptions and experiences, 'yesterday is not a milestone that has been passed, but a daystone on the beaten track of the years, and irremediably part of us, within us, heavy and dangerous' (P 13). John Calder identifies the aspect of past time in *Proust* with nostalgia because the experience of

the past makes up the character's consciousness, which is the totality of everything experienced (64) but there is also relativity between time and memory. On observation of the self, both time and memory are separate and dependent entities. *Proust* represents the danger that is inherent in the relativity of the past which shapes the present and hurls it into the future, as expressed through the relative dependence of memory and habit with the self, which brings suffering. Past memories clothe the individual's understanding of the self or the object by making it a mere representation of thought and experience of the past; the individual does not observe the self or the object as it is but uses the combination of other constituents such as perception, memory and feeling that contributes to the understanding of the self or the object. Thus the 'cosmography' of the object suffers a 'dislocation' from being what it is as self, to what it becomes through the utilisation of perception and memory (P 13). The deceptive play of perception introduces the understanding of Schopenhauer's Vedic 'veil of Maya', where the veil is an illusion created from memories in mind and experience, and where 'the world as representation subordinates to the principle of sufficient reason' (WWR I 7).

Rosen suggests that Beckett finds that objects are in flux and the self is insubstantial. He also finds a parallel between Beckett's *Proust* and Buddhist philosophy: 'Beckett's tactics of doing things are found in Buddhist philosophy' (Rosen 156). He also addresses the fact that *Proust* deals with the problem of 'suffering, mutability and death' (156), and finds that craving underlies the conceptual framework which is Schopenhauer's Will. However, Rosen's position of not finding the reason behind the insubstantial nature of the self can be explained through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, which helps in knowing the self as an amalgamation of many elements without essence.

Beckett's *Proust* represents the self in disintegration using all the aspects of the self or the thing while defining it. Schopenhauer remarks that if we imagine matter as a starting point of observation what comes up is 'nothing but the subject that represents matter, the eye that sees it, the hand that feels it, the understanding that knows it'. Furthermore, 'it really tells us nothing more than the relation of one representation to the other' (WWR I 27, 28). For example, the word 'chair' will not identify with one part of the chair; rather, it will represent the wooden legs, a slab, the wooden back and so on. The episode of driving to the Guermantes Hotel in Proust's novel is an example demonstrating the self as dependent and essenceless. Beckett writes that the narrator of the novel, Marcel 'feels that everything is lost, that his life is a succession of losses, devoid of reality because nothing survives' (67) since there is death with each passing moment in time. Everything passes away and this

temporality is an important characteristic in the formation of the self. An example of temporality of time and the influx of many selves in Proust's novel appears in Beckett's recognition that there is

> nothing of his love for Gilberte, for the Duchess de Guermantes, for his grandmother, and nothing of his love for Albertine, nothing for Combray and Balbec and Venice except the distorted images of voluntary memory, a life all in length, a sequence of dislocations and adjustments. (P 67).

This constitutes the concepts formed through perception and the interdependent activity of the constituents of the self that keeps shifting between form, feeling, perception and consciousness. Thus, in Schopenhauer's words 'the individual is only phenomenon, exists only for knowledge involved in the principle of sufficient reason, in the *principium individuationis*', for 'the individual receives his life as a gift, rises out of nothing, and then suffers the loss of this gift through death, and returns to nothing' (WWR I 275).

D. Self and the 'veil of Maya'

Nixon confirms that Beckett's image of the screen is the basis for the rupture between subject and object which is taken from his reading of Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea* in July and August 1930 (Nixon *German Diaries* 168). Schopenhauer identifies illusion with the 'veil of Maya', which is the absence of sensing the interactions of the constituents that form the self, and also the inability to perceive subject-object relations and phenomena in a proper way. Explaining this further, the reality of an object is perceived by purging the assumptions contained in the mind. For example, when we look at a rose, the perception that follows in the mind relates it to its smell, colour, shape and beauty, and to the associated concepts of love and happiness. During this process, the sense of the self (eyes, nose, hand, perception) that is involved in examining the rose uses words to describe it rather than leaving the observation of the rose with hand, eyes and feeling. This reduces the rose to what Beckett calls a mere intellectual pretext. Thus,

> The most successful evocative experiment can only project the echo of past sensation, because, being an act of intellection, it is conditioned by the prejudices of the intelligence which abstracts from any given sensation, as being illogical and insignificant, a discordant and frivolous intruder, whatever word or gesture, sound or perfume, cannot be fitted into the puzzle of a concept. But the essence of any new experience is contained precisely in this mysterious element that the vigilant will rejects as an anachronism. (P 71-72)

Therefore, the word 'rose' through a name and perception is not what the thing really is; rather, it loses its presence as a rose because the concepts are fitted into its recognition as a rose and the, perception, for that matter, is relevant in most of the experiences formed while looking at any object. The understanding of the 'principle of sufficient reason' posits that perception is automatically produced without awareness. However, with observation the awareness of the dependent quality of the mind, perception and habit is recognised. This recognition of the dependent and essenceless quality of the self helps pierce through the veil and shows the illusory quality of an object which is conventionally taken as singular. Feldman writes that this 'veil of Maya', or the division between individual perceptions, is called by Schopenhauer the *principium individuationis*. Thus, ignorance of the process that forms an object or the self is the concept of 'Maya', which is

> this visible world in which we are a magic effect called into being, an unstable and inconstant illusion without substance, comparable to the optical illusion and the dream, a veil enveloping human consciousness, a something of which it is equally false and equally true to say that it is and that it is not. (WWR I 419)

Nixon substantiates the echoes of 'veil' in *Proust* and refers to Beckett's use of 'habit as "a screen to spare its victims the spectacle of reality", appearing "when it is opposed by a phenomenon that it cannot reduce to the condition of a comfortable and familiar concept"' (Nixon, *German Diaries* 168). Also, 'Beckett derived the image of the screen, another basis for the rupture between subject and object, from his reading of Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea* in July 1930, which he used when writing *Proust* (SB to TM, undated [25? July 1930])' (Nixon, *German Diaries* 168). For Nixon, 'the only possibility of overcoming the delusions and illusion of the world of phenomena is through artistic contemplation and suffering, leading to a higher level of understanding or knowledge' (Nixon, *German Diaries* 168). Arguing further, the higher knowledge is obtained from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' point of view when the illusion is broken with the recognition of the characteristics of dependent origination and essencelessness taking place in the formation of the self. These characteristics help in recognising the nature of origination of the self. When the process involved in the origination of the self is clear, suffering becomes an aspect of feeling and nothing else.

Beckett discusses Albertine's tragedy in Proust's novel as it illuminates how perception is dependent on memory and thought. This change of perception is also responsible for the innumerable ways of looking at the self, which is devised through mind and not through

observation. Thus, conception of the self is achieved through the screen of thought and perception. The example of tragedy is taken from Proust's novel in three stages: first, 'the narrator stays at Balbec, involved by their (the narrator and Albertine's) relation in Paris, consolidated during his stay at Balbec, and consummated by her imprisonment in Paris' (P 45). The first encounter happens to be near the sea, where the narrator finds Albertine as 'one blossom in this fragile hedge of Pennsylvanian roses breaking the line of the waves' (P 46). On the second occasion, the narrator is introduced to her by the painter Elstir, and this time the narrator's perception of Albertine is different. In the third instance, Albertine is 'characterised by a terrifying command of slang'; there is a 'disappearance of the inflamed temple' and 'transference of the beauty-spot from her chin' (47). John Pilling suggests that the point of reality in this relation is ineluctably shifting because the perception is changing every time the narrator meets Albertine. This tragedy for the characters of the novel shows how they become aware of the shifting nature of perception. Thus, Beckett shows the tragedy of perception which is not stable and that the temporal nature of perception is one of the chief causes of suffering.

The physical materiality of Albertine changes with time and this changes the 'observer's angle of approach' (P 47). Substantiating this point, P. H. Collins has also discovered Albertine to be a multiple image, and Beckett notes this in *Proust*: 'in order to be consoled I would have to forget, not one, but innumerable Albertines. And not only "I", but the many "I"s' (Collins 115). However, Collins does not elaborate on how there can be multiple images of the same person, nor how 'I' becomes many 'I's. The Proustian narrator realises that his attempt to penetrate the reality of Albertine through the intimacy of love was doomed to failure because love is motivated by considerations of will. As willing subjects, he and Albertine both undergo 'unceasing modification' (P 15): their personalities are in continual flux. Beckett notes that the narrator's and Albertine's selves are in continual flux and have 'unceasing modifications'. The change of perceptions and the character's willing nature can be explained through Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason, because unceasing modifications in the self are the result of the continuous interaction between the elements of the self, which are form, feeling, perception, consciousness and fabrication. Although Acheson claims that Proust's narrator cannot transcend his will while in love, I suggest that the narrator in Beckett's *Proust* is unable to achieve the timeless stasis of personality necessary to discover Albertine's innermost character: frustratingly, she remains for him firmly within the realm of Becoming (Acheson, 'Beckett, Proust and Schopenhauer' 172). Beckett therefore concludes that the change of perception in each meeting with the

same person clarifies the fact that 'the name is an example of a barbarous society's primitivism' (P 47). This primitivism of name is based on the understanding that name does not include all the aspects of an object or the self. In one of his letters, Beckett mentions that 'language appears to [him] like a veil which one has to tear apart in order to get to those things (or the nothingness) lying behind it' (BL I 518), since naming is based on the very basic and unsophisticated terms of comfort and convenience, and preserves the very basic characteristics in the evolutionary development of language. This is like

> most modern applications of photography (which) can frame a single church successively in the arcades of all the others and the entire horizon in the arch of a bridge or between two adjacent leaves, thus decomposing the illusion of a solid object into its manifold component aspects (P 49).

Perception is like the modern application of a photographic frame that captures many parts of a church of which none represent the whole picture. Similarly, on observation the decomposition of elements of the self ignites the question of naming an entity which presents the notion of singularity. From a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective, the self is made up of many elements. This means a name represents an entity that not only includes its physical but mental aspects as well. Thus, the picture of a church that Beckett cites decomposes within the entire frame and gives the illusory nature of solid object, which is not one but composed of many component parts. Similarly, language also fails to represent an entity by fully addressing all the component parts of phenomena. Another example from Proust's novel is the narrator's second visit to Balbec. Beckett writes that the narrator realises that Albertine is a succession of 'another Rachel and another Odette' (53), who are also lovers in Marcel Proust's novel and hence no different from Albertine. The tragedy of finding love is nothing but disappointment and 'tortures of memory and isolation' (P 53) because love is an aspect of feeling but by associating love with perception and memory suffering is bound to occur. Again, Beckett echoes Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason along with a description of how this works, using the example of photography as an analogy for the fragmented self.

In the third instance, the narrator, Marcel, 'brings Albertine to Paris and locks her up in his house' where 'all that is enveloped in time and space, is endowed with what might be described as an abstract, ideal and absolute permeability' (P 53, 57- 58). Beckett explains that Albertine, who is a representation of the self, exists in time and space and cannot be infiltrated because 'the extension of that being to all the points of space and time that it has

occupied and will occupy' cannot be handled, since the self is not merely body but also feeling, perception, consciousness and all other elements from which it is composed (P 58). Also, 'A being scattered in space and time is no longer a woman but a series of events on which we can throw no light, a series of problems that cannot be solved' (P 58). The solution lies in the observation of the inextricable associations and number of interrelations formed between the various elements of the self. Hence, in *Proust*, the relative aspect of the self is endowed with multiplicity.

Steven J. Rosen illuminates the continual flux in the formation of the self and observes that Beckett's treatment of Albertine in *Proust* is a symbol of temporality: it is impossible to dominate Albertine because possessing her is only possible when there is a complete identification of subject and object and complete identification between subject and object is not possible because there are dimensions of time which are in continuous change (Rosen 175). Richard Coe similarly proposes that the philosophical view of time calls 'all reality – in any metaphysical sense – is in the present, that is, instantaneous'; otherwise it will change (Coe 17). Beckett's notion of relativity in *Proust* is that the self is nothing more than an amalgamation of elements. Hence, to identify suffering with self is like identifying it with all the constituents of the self. Albertine is no longer a woman but a symbol that illustrates a series of problems that cannot be solved: 'a sea that, like Xerxes, we thrash with rods in an absurd desire to punish it for having engulfed our treasure' (P 58). In the same way, Rosen sums up his understanding of *Proust* that 'his [Beckett's] quest, is to discover a secure continuum of self, while the very structure of time, a succession of instants, and consequently a structure of successive deaths and incarnations of discrete identities, seems to preclude the possibility of personal integration' (Rosen 177). Rosen correctly identifies the impossibility of personal integration. Taking this argument further, I argue that this impossibility is the result of Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason that allows for formation and deformation.

E. Desire and Subject-object relation

In line with Schopenhauer's principle, the theme of desire in Beckett's *Proust* stands as an 'identification of the subject with the object of desire' (P 14). The subject-object relationship is a crucial concern in *Proust*. The moment desire meets the object, desire ceases. The question arises, if desire has essence, it should not cease to exist even when the object of desire comes into contact with it. Rather 'every attained end is at the same time the beginning of a new course, and so on *ad infinitum*' (WWR I 164). Desire starts afresh with a new search, to identify itself with some other object of desire. This is like the 'eternal

becoming, endless flux, belong to the revelation of the essential nature of the will' (WWR I 164) and

> Finally, the same thing is also seen in human endeavours and desires that buoy us up with the vain hope that their fulfilment is always the final goal of willing. But as soon as they are attained, they no longer look the same, and so are soon forgotten, become antiquated, and are really, although not admittedly, always laid aside as vanished illusions. (WWR I 164)

Hence the unceasing nature of desire, together with the unceasing manifestation of personality through the interaction between different elements of the self becomes pertinent due to Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason. Beckett identifies an example of the idea of suffering in Marcel Proust's novel through the character of Swann, whose sorrow and anxiety are dependent upon the relation between past memories and future incidents. Here, desire leading to suffering is identified, while anxiety in time is also addressed. The example from Proust's novel taken by Beckett exemplifies this aspect:

> And poor Swann, face to face with the *future* reality of Odette [his beloved] and Forcheville [Odette's lover and, after the death of Swann, her husband] in Egypt, suffers more grievously than even at the misery of his present condition. The narrator's desire to see La Berma in *Phedre* is stimulated more violently by the announcement 'Doors closed at two o'clock' than by the mystery of Bergotte's 'Jansenist pallor and solar myth'. His indifference at parting from Albertine at the end of the day in Balbec is transformed into the most horrible anxiety by a simple remark addressed by her to her aunt or to a friend: 'To-morrow, then, at half-past eight'. (P 16)

The characters suffer because of an event that has some fixity in the future. The anxiety is captured because a fixed time is assigned; otherwise the future would become out of focus. This also applies to the idea of death. The anxiety would be more if the date and time of death were assigned. Death remains 'meaningless and valueless' since 'death has not required us to keep a day free' (P 17). In this case, suffering is dependent on time and in case of uncertain time, no perception is formed and thus disassociation with anxiety is achieved.

F. Habit and Memory

Beckett introduces the phrase 'Time cancer' in *Proust* and its products as habit and memory (P 18). The peculiarity of the phrase draws the reader's attention to the negative aspect of time, which Beckett introduces as the 'monster of damnation' at the very beginning of his monograph (P 11). He also identifies time with redemption. The discussion of the liberating effect of time will be handled in subsequent paragraphs in relation to habit and memory. Beckett writes in *Proust*:

> Habit is a compromise effected between the individual and his environment, or between the individual and his own organic eccentricities. […] Habit is the ballast that chains the dog to his vomit. Breathing is habit. Life is habit. Or rather life is a succession of habits, since the individual is a succession of individuals; the world being a projection of the individual's consciousness (an objectification of the individual's will, Schopenhauer would say). (P 18-19)

This explicitly introduces Schopenhauer's philosophical understanding of the world as the presentation of our own consciousness. Schopenhauer explains the merit of understanding this distinction between the phenomenon and the thing-in-itself: 'Between things and us there always stands the intellect, and that on this account they cannot be known according to what they may be in themselves' (WWR I 417-18). For Pothast, it is the 'will-to-live that uses habit as a means to control the person's perception so as to keep the perceived world uniform, free from surprise and risk and, metaphysically speaking, perfectly unreal' (Pothast 103). However, on observation, and filtering the understanding through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, it can be seen that habit determines the relation between self and the environment and breaks the perceived characteristics of the self. Acheson paraphrases Beckett's Proustian discussion of perception, which is based on the way our mind organises sense data, along with the discussion of habit as a screen between perception and the Thing-In-Itself ('Beckett, Proust, and Schopenhauer' 169). Representation through consciousness is a kind of mental conditioning where change becomes painful because of the set patterns decided by habit. In other words, representation of the world is objectified by mind, and habit fixes it to a template provided by perception. Schopenhauer writes: 'Everything that in any way belongs and can belong to the world is inevitably associated with this being conditioned by the subject, and exists only for the subject. The world is representation' (WWR I 3).

Habit is a product of this mental conditioning. Krishnamurti in 'Freedom from the Known' argues that conditioning helps in setting the pattern of habit. Beckett articulates this mental condition of habit as 'the pernicious devotion of habit paralyses our attention, drugs those handmaidens of perception whose co-operation is not absolutely essential' (P 20). From a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, it can be argued that the destructive nature of habit causes loss of attention to the object under consideration by supplying information about it in a set pattern formed through conditioning and perception. This automatically developed habit of perception is subservient to the memory that produces the 'veil of Maya'. Nixon writes 'In *Proust*, Beckett refers to habit as "a screen to spare its victims the spectacle of reality", appearing "when it is opposed by a phenomenon that it cannot reduce to the condition of a comfortable and familiar concept"' (Nixon *German Diaries* 168). Perception is automatic because it will reduce the object under consideration into a set framework without much attention, in the same way that we take the concept of the self as singular because it is a habit that has been cultivated through the ages, and no deep attention is given to this aspect of the self. Consequently, the help we are given by habit to form perception is destructive since it takes away the reality of the object, whose formation is dependent in nature, and fixes the object with a pre-conceived notion.

Further, Beckett integrates this understanding and notes that if this collaboration between habit and memory is deduced, then the object under consideration becomes the subject of enchantment. Thus 'when it [habit and memory] appears independent of any general notion and detached from the sanity of a cause, isolated and inexplicable in the light of ignorance, then and then only may it be a source of enchantment' (P 22-23). This occurs when the intellect acting through memory and perception stops interfering. In *Proust*, the only way to understand the peculiarity of any object is to look at it in isolation. This isolation comes when no perception, memory or habit attaches itself to the object. But 'unfortunately Habit has laid its veto on this form of perception, its action being precisely to hide the essence – the Idea – of the object in the haze of conception-preconception' (P 23). This means that habit has fixed the perception of an object or formed a perception; the object goes out of focus when accompanied with pre-conceived notions. Pothast argues that the function of habit is to contribute in hiding the true reality of the object and to put it under a haze (Pothast 103). He points, rightly, to the function of habit that diverts a subject's attention from the large variety of experiential details, but how this happens is subject to the scrutiny of the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework. Beckett discusses two incidents from Proust's novel as examples to establish that habit is briefly suspended intentionally to

demonstrate how it works in unfamiliar environments, and produces enchantment whenever attention is paid to the ways of functioning. Beckett associates this kind of observation with the function of a camera that identifies the object with precision, without colouring it with any pre-obtained frame within it. With observation and complete attention, the onlooker views the object and his eye 'functions with the cruel precision of a camera; it photographs the reality' (P 27). Expanding this observation of habit, Beckett discusses an example in *Proust*, where the narrator, Marcel, who is at a hotel in Balbec-Plage, finds himself amidst an 'inferno of unfamiliar objects' (P 24). This situation puts the narrator's faculties on alert, because his body cannot identify with the unfamiliarity of the place, and this leads to greater awareness of his surroundings. 'The big room, gigantic furniture, sound of the clock, colour of the curtains and inaccessible vault of his belvedere' (P 24) – all of these things disturb the conditioned patterns of habit and cause the narrator suffering. This suffering he 'interprets as the obscure, organic, humble refusal on the part of those elements that represented all that was best in his life to accept the possibility of a formula in which they would have no part' (P 25). Hence, when a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' lens is applied to the role of habit, where habit is suspended, alertness emerges but habit leads the mind to an oblivious state, where it is not required to stay alert. Since habit is a product of mind that conditions itself into oblivion, any divergence from that pattern makes the mind alert. Thus, for the narrator Marcel, an 'unaware' response to place and situations is an immediate refuge.

The second incident taken from Proust's novel recounts the way in which habit, perception and memory are related and bring an alert response from the faculties of the self. Marcel, the character in Proust's novel, telephones his grandmother in Paris, but while on the phone the call suddenly stops, and the voice of his grandmother ceases. The narrator feels bad about it and leaves to meet his grandmother in Paris. He thinks that his sudden visit will surprise her, but his grandmother is unaware of his arrival, so that 'he is present at his own absence' (P 27). Now the habit of being with his grandmother is reserved in past memories of the narrator. This association with her is reduced to alertness in the gaze with which he will see but no longer perceive. There is just seeing in the seen happenings and thus 'no longer the necromancy that sees in each precious object a mirror of the past' (27). Here, his gaze works with the 'cruel precision of a camera' that captures 'the reality of his grandmother' (27). As soon as this gaze takes over, he 'realizes that his grandmother is dead, long since and many times, that the cherished familiar of his mind' (27). This shows the relationship between the narrator and his grandmother in the now, the present where memory and perception are no longer working. It brings a sudden respite to the narrator for

whom the habit is broken, and his mind can see his grandmother with the distinctiveness of a stranger who is 'overburdened with years, flushed and coarse and vulgar […] a stranger whom he has never seen' (P 28). Such is the play of habit that brings great clarity about an object under consideration. Beckett concludes: 'If there were no such thing as habit, Life would of necessity appear delicious to all those whom Death would threaten at every moment, that is to say, to all Mankind' (P 29). This death is the death of perception with which the mind takes over things in relation to time and memory as it is. The dullness of mind will be broken, and awareness will bring acknowledgement of people and places as they are. In other words, the veil of illusion present in the sense of perception can be pierced.

Beckett synthesises the effect of habit which accompanies suffering when the situation is not fed with awareness (the presence is in the dimension of present time). However, this awareness of habit brings enchantment when the relation between habit and memory is struck off and dependent origination of both memory and habit becomes known and suffering is eliminated. As Schopenhauer writes 'We can withdraw from all suffering just as well through present as through distant objects, whenever we raise ourselves to a purely objective contemplation of them' (WWR I 198). Perception is no longer formed, and every relationship with the world is beautiful and good. Thus, time becomes a source of salvation when its momentary and changing nature is revealed, but damned, when past and future by way of habit and perception prevent it from contemplating the object as it is. Lidan Lin portrays Beckett's view of Time as a 'double-headed monster', as a relationship of simultaneity or co-existence, by stressing the 'correlative' of subject and object, which are in fluid state, that is, both subject and object are constantly 'changing'. But she does not acknowledge Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason in her account (Lin 627). Suffering is taken away because the nature of the self becomes clear through the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework which explains that the constituents of the self are interdependent and do not possess any essence. The self is thus a process. This proves the third key paradigm about the insubstantial nature of subject and object where no core or essence belongs to any object.

The dependence of memory also helps in the formation of perception, since 'memory is obviously conditioned by perception' (P 30), which again suggests Schopenhauer's philosophy on the principle of sufficient reason. If memory and the related perception formed are positive, the mind will store the image of the experience about the object in a beneficial way. A form of scaffolding for habit is formed, which will be consulted again

whenever any similar situation or object encounters it as in *Proust*. This process sets habit in motion to seal the object with a predetermined perception: 'memory is so closely related to habit that its word takes flesh, and is not merely available in cases of urgency, but habitually enforced' (P 31). Beckett segregates memory into two parts: voluntary and involuntary. He defines voluntary memory as 'the uniform memory of intelligence; and it can be relied on to reproduce for our gratified inspection those impressions of the past that were consciously and intelligently formed' (P 32). For Beckett, voluntary memory is a kind of controlled memory that performs the task of understanding an event with the help of perception. This memory furnishes the material that 'contains nothing of the past, merely a blurred and uniform projection once removed of our anxiety and opportunism – that is to say, nothing' (P 32-33). The 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework can be used to explain the memory that furnishes nothing because there is nothing new in the storehouse of remembrance but an old pattern of habit, which is taken through perception to understand the subject.

Voluntary memory aids in keeping the identity of the self as singular by supplying material from habit and memory, and Beckett insists this kind of memory forms the self as the 'most necessary, wholesome and monotonous plagiarism – the plagiarism of oneself' (P 33). The composition of 'the plagiarism of oneself' principally relies on the borrowed information from the sources of intellect and memory. Applying a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework is to suggest that if memory and habit work interdependently, and not through observation then there is the unconscious reaction towards the world. The constituents of the self will create an illusion of a singular self where feeling, memory, habit and perception controls the response to the world. The constant utilisation of habit and memory to understand a thing is repetitive and all responses filtered through them create illusion and not the reality of the thing as it is. The results of knowing a thing will remain plagiarised because the pattern always in use is derived from perception and habit. So, for Beckett in *Proust*, voluntary memory is the result of the self which is unconscious of the interdependence and interplay of memory and habit. This self is plagiarised because it shows the same results when any relationship with the world is established using habit and perception. Pothast identifies this kind of memory in *Proust* as a mechanism that remains in the service of the Schopenhauerian will (Pothast 105). He also discusses voluntary memory as an index for the aspects considered important by habit. This kind of memory does not reconstitute the full content of a person's original experience (Pothast 105). Pothast's evaluation becomes less clear when he highlights that voluntary memory does not provide a 'person's original experience'. What is this original experience? This original experience

when considered through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' lens of understanding is the experience and awareness of memory and habit as constituents of the self. On the other hand, involuntary memory identifies the deception of memory and habit that conceals the object. Involuntary memory restricts the play of perception and habit and restores an object as 'an immediate, total and delicious deflagration' (P 33). This kind of memory directly puts sensations in contact with the object rather than channelling the experience through perception and habit. Beckett calls involuntary memory 'an unruly magician [which] will not be importuned. It chooses its own time and place for the performance of its miracle' (33-34). It is a miracle because it is very difficult to look at the object without the help of voluntary memory. Beckett recalls that Proust gives the examples of involuntary memory 'twelve or thirteen times' (P 34) in his work. Pothast links Beckett's involuntary memory with the past experience in a form which is truer. I argue that in Beckett's *Proust* the willing aspect becomes aware of the sense data selected by habit and it knows nothing of the data habit rejects. This rejected data is not altogether lost to our will-less aspect – the unchanging 'best of our many selves' (P 31) – and stores it in symbolic 'vases' in our minds (P 73). Within the vases, the rejected sensations crystallise around various 'central impression[s]' (P 72); the sensations and impressions are preserved there after the scrutiny of voluntary memory. The difference between the two conditions of memory that Beckett presents is that the awareness of object becomes miraculous when it is filtered through involuntary memory and becomes blurred when it is filtered through voluntary memory.

Beckett sums up the aspect of habit as being relative. It works in relation to memory, and memory, in turn, works in relation to perception. If the habit is voluntary it acts as a sedative that stimulates the unawareness of the relative aspect of the object and if it is involuntary it helps to look at the object as it is, with all its relative aspects and essenceless nature, which is the principle of sufficient reason. Involuntary memory allows the breaking of habit and perception and releases the subject from the torture of suffering and unhappiness, because then the object is seen in the light of the principle of sufficient reason; and when this principle is observed, no core in the self or object is found. This then leads to no suffering, because there is no being.

Beckett explains this with an example from Marcel Proust's novel. In *Proust*, Beckett examines how the death of the narrator's grandmother illuminates the understanding of involuntary memory, which helps the narrator to realise that 'at any given moment our total soul, in-spite of its rich balance sheet, has only a fictitious value' (P 41). On closer examination of involuntary memory through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework the

object is without the use of intellectual concepts given by memory and perception. The direct contact with the body and the sensations helps to understand the fabricated perception which is formed when aid is provided by habit and voluntary memory. Beckett represents involuntary memory as 'never completely realisable', and the time in which the moment of memory exists represents 'an endless series of parallels', which is 'switched over to another line and proceeds, without any solution of continuity' (P 41). Beckett's *Proust* gives no solution in the presence of involuntary memory because it is an endless process in which the elements combine to support a memory with continuity but without essence. This representation of memory as either voluntary or involuntary in Beckett's texts explains the problems of habit and perception in understanding the object under consideration. Thus, habit shows 'momentary paralysis', for when it performs the task it has been assigned, the elements of perception, conditioning and memory play their role and have 'already laid the foundation of its evil and necessary structure' (P 43).

Conclusion

Beckett's *Proust* has direct references from Schopenhauer and the critical essay discusses the themes of self, suffering, memory, habit, time taking examples from Proust's novel. Given the development of a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework in Chapter One, as an approach for this and other texts, it is evident that Beckett's Proustian themes demonstrate the dependent and essenceless characteristics of time, suffering, space and self, and also reveal the embedded illusion in the sense of the self and self in relation to time and space. The 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' characteristics found in time (past, present and future) are constantly changing and hence timeless, 'where nothing survives' because the bifurcations of time are interdependent. Similarly, the self is devoid of having a permanent essence; this incorporates Schopenhauer's knowledge that 'In such a world where there is no stability of any kind, no lasting state is possible but everything is involved in restless rotation and change' (PP II 284). Also, Schopenhauer finds that in all the causes of the world there exists mere 'existential flux', and the world exists 'through constant fluctuation and change and is comparable to a whirlpool' (PP II 289). This amounts to a view of time and self as constantly changing, and dependent upon each other. Hence, it is not possible to find the essence or core of an object:

> We shall also recognise the same emptiness in all the other forms of the principle of sufficient reason, and shall see that, like time, space also, and like this, everything that exists simultaneously in space and time, and hence everything that proceeds from causes or motives, has only relative existence. (WWR I 7)

The failure to find 'the ideal core of the onion' that exists only in space and time preceded by causes and conditions reveals the truth of relative existence. Robert Alan Paul writes: 'Central to Schopenhauer's view is that the phenomenal world, which is our experience of suchness filtered through temporal, special and casual conditions, is in a continual state of flux' (Paul 17). This means the phenomenal world is ever-changing, continuously filtered through time, space and causality, and hence it invigorates the ever-changing nature of objects. Schopenhauer also notes: 'Everything that in any way belongs and can belong to the world is inevitably associated with this being-conditioned by the subject, and it exists only for the subject. The world is representation' (WWR I 3). The self is no exception, and belongs to the category of ever-changing and continuous flux. Thus, *Proust* sets out Beckett's own ideas that he found in Schopenhauer's philosophy. Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason, and the Eastern philosophical influence embedded in it, helps elucidate some of Beckett's key concepts and the way he used them to lift the illusion ('veil of Maya') present in the understanding of the self, and the self in relation to the world.

This criticism is not straightforward, but gives an overview of Beckett's critical perspectives on various philosophical concepts. The explanation of philosophical themes through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework assists in finding how Beckett portrayed in his art the self in relation to time, time in relation to the aspects of memory and habit, memory in relation to perception and experience, habit in relation to suffering, and the creation of self through perception, memory and habit. Hence, the 'Proustian equation' shows the fusion of time, self, memory, habit, and suffering. The result is the interaction between and within the subject and object. When the association between the different aspects of the self in relation to time and space is recognised using a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, the reason for the suffering of humanity can be deduced. This deduction is based on recognising the interdependent and essenceless nature of the self.

Chapter 3

Samuel Beckett's *Murphy* and *Watt*: The expression of nothing, the disintegrated self and the 'veil of Maya'

After the publication of *Proust* (1931) but before *Murphy* (1938; finished 1936) and *Watt* (1953; finished 1945), Beckett wrote the novel *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, which was first published posthumously in 1992, later decanted into a collection of short stories entitled *More Pricks than Kicks* (1934; finished 1933) and a collection of thirteen poems from 1935 *Echo's Bones and Other Precipitates*. Relevantly for this thesis, before the conclusion of *Murphy* in June 1936 and the commencement of *Watt* in February 1941, Beckett read Schopenhauer again. This is evident from a letter to MacGreevy written on 21 September 1937 during a period of illness, 'I always knew he was one of the ones that mattered most to me, and it is a pleasure more real than any pleasure for a long time to begin to understand now why it is so' (BL I 550). *Proust* was written as Beckett started to acquaint himself with Schopenhauer's philosophy, yet by the time Beckett wrote the novel *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, *More Pricks than Kicks*, *Echo's Bones*, *Murphy* and *Watt* Beckett had already developed a much deeper understanding of Schopenhauer's philosophy. As Nixon aptly asserts on this point: 'By internalising Schopenhauer's thought, itself expressive of his own temperament, Beckett's writing would henceforth include a philosophical layer that was in any event not inimical to simple or direct expression' ('German Diaries' 102). Therefore, after investigating the philosophical themes of time, habit, space and self in Beckett's early criticism of *Proust* (1931) in which the characteristics of Buddhist emptiness and Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason supported the understanding that self, memory, habit, suffering and perception are interdependent activities, this chapter re-considers the influence of Schopenhauer's Eastern philosophical perspective on *Murphy* and *Watt*. Changing the genre from literary criticism as represented by *Proust* in Chapter Two to the novel *Murphy* and *Watt* in this chapter indicates the intension of this thesis to delve more deeply into the intricacies of the disintegrated self represented through characters in a way that is only possible in the genre of the novel that also contain elements of discursive philosophy.

Although both the novels can accommodate various philosophical approaches, Schopenhauer's Eastern philosophical perspective can be usefully applied to the various aspects of the self: interdependence of the inner and the outer reality; and the acceptance of peace in nothingness. Both the eponymous characters Murphy and Watt are keenly aware of the limitations of their inner selves, and Watt even extends his understanding, at the end of the eponymous novel, to the extent that he has given up all willing.

For Schopenhauer, when the illusion (Maya) is broken, the inner working of the self reveals itself as disintegrated and essenceless, and all willing and suffering departs. As such, the conjunction 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism' is used here to embrace both a perceived emptiness of the self and an essencelessness needed to see illusions embedded in the understanding of the self as singular. Buddhist ideas, filtered through Schopenhauer, aid in approaching constructions of the self in Beckett's work, where selfhood is viewed as free when fragmented, exemplified by the peaceful and positive nothing of Murphy, and the ultimate harmony between the outer and the inner in Watt. To understand Beckett's exploration of peaceful nothingness via decay in *Murphy* and *Watt*, a recounting of the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' reading is briefly presented below, echoing the more complete examination in Chapter One.

Already by the 1850s, Schopenhauer was referring to himself as a Buddhist. This was in large measure a result of the emptiness that Mahayana Buddhism proposes, which was a particular strand in Buddhism that was of greatest interest to Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer's philosophy reveals a general characteristic regarding the emptiness of the self; namely, an interdependence of the elements that make up the self and the latter's ultimately essenceless nature. Central to his understanding is the principle of sufficient reason, founded upon the idea of interconnectedness and essencelessness in Buddhism. Thus, in the opening of *The Fourfold Root to the Principle of Sufficient Reason* Schopenhauer writes: 'Nothing is without a ground or reason why it is' (FFR 6). This means that things originate not through chance but by an intersection between and within their formation – such as the subject/object relationship - the latter being a problem that Beckett was especially interested in during the 1930s, when his engagement with Schopenhauer's philosophy was at its most intense. Beckett's interest in the intersection between subject and object is similar to that found in Buddhism's formation of the self, where component parts of the self interact. In this view, the self stands for the essential being of a person, this includes all the constituents that make up the self. This entails plurality, which suggests the presence of more than one

element in the formation of the self - one involving the criss-crossing of various elements, such as interrelated thoughts, images, perceptions and sense organs. According to this 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' approach, then, 'I', 'me' or 'mine' are no longer singular in formulation. There is the complexity with which the conception of the self correspondingly de-emphasises the particular, unique, singular entity, 'I'.

Urs App, one of the few scholars to look at the transnational relationship between Schopenhauer and Mahayana Buddhism, notes that 'for Schopenhauer this typical Mahayana teaching was in a sense a dream come true: his youthful dream of a better consciousness' (App, *The Cult of Emptiness* 57). For App, the idea of nothing in Schopenhauer's writings is like the idea of emptiness in Buddhism. Put another way in Schopenhauer's formulation 'Accordingly, this root [principle of sufficient reason] would have to be regarded as the innermost germ of all the dependence, relativity, instability, and finiteness of the objects of our consciousness or the world' and moreover, 'such a world is repeatedly degraded by the sublime Plato to the "always only arising and passing away, but never really and truly existing"' (FFR 232).

The philosophical impasse reached in both of Beckett's novels rests upon the value of contemplation and awareness of intersections between body and mind. The 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework presented here offers a way of interpreting Beckett's pervasive themes of self, emptiness and suffering evident in both *Murphy* and *Watt*, which are concerned with the inner consciousness and the self in relation to the world. Approaching these themes through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, this chapter explores the way in which the expression of the protagonist called Murphy finds freedom from mind and peace in nothing; likewise, Watt reaches an awareness of the world as precarious - to the point in Schopenhauer's words 'he will be least afraid of becoming nothing'; or again, he 'no longer takes any interest in his individual phenomenon, since in him knowledge has, so to speak, burnt up and consumed the will, so that there is no longer any will, any desire for individual existence, left in him' (WWR II 609). In *Watt*, the eponymous protagonist inspects his self and the world around him by penetrating through the 'veil of Maya', or illusion present in conventional understandings of the self. Watt is a very keen observer and makes a significant contribution by embodying the experience of the world with awareness. The 'veil of Maya' thus reveals the layers of illusion present in the understanding of the world solely through the intellect.

The neglected elements of Schopenhauer's philosophy in Beckett's two novels include what I will argue here is a vital, early implementation of Buddhist philosophy – one acting as a kind of positive and peaceful nothingness in representations of the self. Reading these novels with a Buddhist-inflected Schopenhauer in mind can help in understanding the illusion of the self as presented in *Murphy* and *Watt*.

A. *Murphy*

Decades of studies on *Murphy* shows how diverse western philosophical systems – such as from Descartes, Geulincx, Spinoza, and Leibniz – are crucial in Beckett's philosophical development. As articulated by critics like J. Acheson (1979), R. Wood (1994) and P. J. Murphy (1994), Schopenhauer's influence has been shown to play an important role. For instance, critics like Ulrich Pothast (2008) and Anthony McGrath (2014) have registered Schopenhauer's philosophical presence in *Murphy*. Pothast notes Schopenhauerian approaches to suffering, will-lessness and nothingness as major elements dominating *Murphy*. McGrath argues that Beckett's reading of Schopenhauer acquainted him with quietist themes of Thomas à Kempis which may be an influence found in Beckett through Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer defines quietism as 'the giving up of all willing, asceticism, i.e., internal mortification of one's own will, and mysticism, which is, consciousness of the identity of one's own inner being with that of all things' (WWR II 613). I will argue that quietest themes are cognate with my 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' interpretation. The 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' reading suggests that this is the summit of human insight:

> Nothing can be more surprising than the agreement among the writers who express those teachings, in spite of the greatest difference of their age, country, and religion, accompanied as it is by the absolute certainty and fervent assurance with which they state the permanence and consistency of their inner experience. (WWR II 613)

This can be related to Murphy's concept of selfhood. He comes to certain conclusions, starting with inner contemplation, which is pleasurable (pleasure is contemplation): the transitory nature of forms and their disillusionment, and the reaching of an essenceless nature of the self. Thus, Murphy 'was a point in the ceaseless unconditioned generation and passing away of time' and 'nothing but forms becoming and crumbling into fragments of a new becoming' (M 72). Referring to this condition, Mundhek argues that 'there is only moving and becoming, things are never manifest, but always in the process of manifestation' (227). He further argues that 'the relationship between the changing subject and the changing object must be constantly renegotiated, thus creating a predominant

feeling of insecurity and doubt' (227). This crucial feature of a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' reading posits that only change is constant and there is no essence found in the so called 'self entity'.

Murphy exemplifies Beckett's approach to depicting the self via emptiness and necessary suffering; states from which consciousness can find freedom during contemplation. This aspect of the self is mentioned frequently in the novel. In the famous Chapter Six, Murphy's mind is divided into three zones: 'light, half light, dark, each with its speciality' (M 71). Earlier, there is also a division between Murphy's mind and body, where the relation between the zones is one of quietening the body so as to delve into the mind for 'until his body was appeased that he could not come alive in his mind' (M 4). At the end of the novel, furthermore, Murphy's ashes being scattered all over the floor symbolises a final disintegration of the body. In this way, a stable concept of self is disintegrated when articulated through the protagonist's mind - which strives for freedom from form (physical, material) in the novel.

At the conclusion of the novel, nothingness is glimpsed in the game of chess Murphy plays with Mr. Endon, whereby 'Murphy began to see nothing, that colourlessness which is such a rare post-natal treat' (M 154). The notion of nothing as a 'post-natal treat' again suggests that freedom can be found in the disintegrated form of the self. While the events in *Murphy* revolve around the protagonist, it is possible to approach Beckett's deployment of nothingness by focusing upon the fragmentation of the self. The latter thereby attains a positive freedom – a fact that has remained largely unnoticed in interpretations of *Murphy* to date.

From this idea, in this chapter I will employ:

1. Beckett's utilisation of Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason in *Murphy;*
2. The lack of essence or core in the formation of Murphy's self;
3. 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism' as a way of understanding the aspects of nothing in Beckett's novel.

A.1 Murphy – the protagonist

At the beginning of the novel, Murphy's position depicts how contemplation of the inner self pleased him as 'he sat in his chair'. He was tied to his rocking-chair 'because it gave him pleasure' (M 3), for he did not like the outer world of 'sights and sounds' for 'they detained him in the world to which they belonged, but not he, as he fondly hoped' (M 3).

Contemplation had long been a major part of Murphy's life. Indeed, before elaborating on the idea of self and nothing in *Murphy*, it is imperative to trace a brief outline of the protagonist's material and mental world. Murphy's physical restraint using scarves seems to enable a kind of stillness of mind, separating him not only from the external world but also from his self, which is, in this case, literally tied to the external world of relations. An attempt to detach himself from his physical body and attain a state of nothing becomes a central concern for Murphy in the novel.

Murphy came from Dublin and loves seclusion and silence in his West Brompton apartment. Readers are later introduced to Celia Kelly, who is Murphy's lover but who also works as a prostitute. Celia loves Murphy, and asks him to find a job so that she can quit prostitution. Murphy consults his horoscope, prepared by the astrologer Suk, and reluctantly starts searching for a job. The action of the novel then shifts to Neary, Murphy's teacher from Cork. One day, Neary comes across Wylie (another of Neary's students) in Dublin. Neary is in love with Miss Counihan, who in turn is in love with Murphy. Miss Counihan is also from Dublin. On Wylie's advice, Neary tries to find Murphy with the help of Neary's companion, Cooper. Meanwhile, Wylie also falls in love with Miss Counihan. Neary goes to London in search of Murphy, and during the course of Neary's search both Miss Counihan and Wylie reach London. They find Murphy happily nursing people at the Magdalene Mental Mercyseat asylum. Murphy lives there in a garret and still owns his rocking chair. A schizophrenic patient, Mr. Endon, intrigues Murphy by playing chess with him. After staring into Mr. Endon's eyes, Murphy goes to his garret and rocks in his chair again. Sometime later, he is burned to death in his garret through what the autopsy rules as 'misadventure'. Murphy leaves instructions that his ashes should be put in a paper bag and taken to the toilets of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. His desire is not fulfilled, because Cooper, who is carrying the ashes, throws them at someone in a pub in a fit of anger. Thus dispersed, Murphy finally achieves freedom and peace in nothing - as his self in the form of his ashes get scattered on the floor, and Neary, Counihan, Celia, Cooper and Wylie return to their old lives.

The outline above is centred upon the life of the protagonist, Murphy, around whom all the other characters revolve. However, in Murphy's case, the attempt to reach a kind of stasis found in nothing is 'a rare postnatal treat' (M 154). Owing to the temporary suspension of thought forms when rocking, contemplation is what makes *Murphy* intelligible through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework. Yet, before considering this notion of nothingness

as positive in the introspection of Murphy's self, it is important to approach the theme of suffering in *Murphy*. Throughout the novel, perhaps Murphy's chief concern is to set himself 'free in his mind' (M 4). The negative aspects of pain and suffering initiate an inner search by Murphy. As Schopenhauer affirms in this vein: 'it is the knowledge of death, and therewith the consideration of the suffering and misery of life, that give the strongest impulse to philosophical reflection and metaphysical explanations of the world' (WWR II 161). Biographical details also confirm that Beckett was very aware of the pain surrounding him in his early life. His authorised biographer, James Knowlson, writes that 'between 1923-26 he [Beckett] became acutely aware at this time in his life of the poverty, pain and suffering that was visible almost everywhere around him in Dublin' (Knowlson, *Damned to Fame* 63). It may be that, a few years later, *Murphy* was also the product of Beckett's concern with suffering. In a revealing letter written to his confidant Thomas McGreevy on 10 March 1935, Beckett wrote: 'For years I was unhappy, consciously & deliberately ever since I left the school & went into T.C.D., so that I isolated myself more & more, undertook less & less & lent myself to a crescendo of disparagement of others & myself' (BL 1 258). In the eponymous novel begun about six months later, Murphy is convinced that the suffering of the world is more important than the question of money. Beckett writes of Murphy: 'But it is not altogether a question of economy. There are metaphysical considerations, in whose gloom it appeared that the night had come in which no Murphy could work' (M 18). Another important vision in the novel is that the 'big world' outside is an enormous disaster (Pothast 147). Indeed, Pothast has noted '"Fiasco" is one of Murphy's favourite epithets for the big world' (147). Clearly, economic considerations for Murphy are limited in importance, since 'metaphysical considerations' are decisive for him (which includes the knowledge of interactions between mind and body).

Critical perspectives dealing with aspects of Murphy's self often imply that re-examining *Murphy* through Schopenhauer's Buddhist-inflected philosophy can be very fruitful. Several scholars have found the parallels between *Murphy* and various philosophies in addressing Beckett's novel. Chapter Six pastiches a number of philosophers to describe 'Murphy's mind' as John Fletcher asserts:

> Beckett has ranged freely among the writings of philosophers, where he found configuration and justification of the metaphysical obsessions that haunt his work: the gulf set between body and mind, the epistemological certitudes. (Fletcher 43)

Further, scholars including Michael Mooney in 'Pre-Socratic Skepticism' (1982), Sylvie Henning in 'The Guffaw of the Abderite' (1985) and C. J. Ackerley in 'Demented Particulars' (2010), all discuss philosophical ideas in Beckett's *Murphy*, especially in Chapter Six. The views of the self through these philosophies often centre upon Cartesian dualism; Schopenhauer's state of will-lessness and pessimism; Leibnitz's 'Monadology', or idealist perception in relation to Berkeley's philosophy. However, neither Cartesian dualism nor the Monadology attempt to cast emptiness. James Acheson, for one, approaches *Murphy* in the light of Leibniz's philosophy arguing that 'Leibniz is the source of Murphy's belief that his mind is a hollow sphere containing in microcosm the entire universe as it is, was and is to be' (9). An earlier critic, Samuel Mintz, argues that the division between mind and body in Murphy owes to Cartesian 'the dualism of Descartes' (157). With respect to the latter, Schopenhauer raises the flaw of neglecting the dependent nature of things and objects present in Descartes' philosophy. Accordingly, Schopenhauer argued in his thesis that Descartes showed how 'Nothing exists of which it could not be asked from what cause it exists', and moreover; that God needs no cause in order to exist. Schopenhauer further argued that Descartes paved the way 'to the ontological proof of the existence of God'. This proof led Descartes to argue, according to Schopenhauer, that '[e]xistence is necessarily contained in the concept of the supremely perfect being' who is the cause of everything (FFR 13-14). Moreover, 'whereas everything else requires a cause for its existence, the immensitas [intensity] employed in the very notion of God who is brought on to the ladder of the cosmological proof, suffices for him in lieu of a cause' (FFR 14). This argument was questionable for Schopenhauer because Descatres concept of God appears confusing; he calls it 'a most delightful farce' (FFR 15). This is in alignment with Feldman's claim in *Beckett's Books* where he also downplays the Cartesian influence on Beckett's *Murphy* and his oeuvre in general: 'Descartes tried to clear away paradoxes through the rational enterprise, but in his literature – and partially aided by the 'Philosophy Notes' – Beckett showed this enterprise to be bereft of palliation' (Feldman *Beckett's Books* 76).

Mintz was the first to take Geulincx's philosophy on board in the analysis of Murphy's self. He argues that in Geulincx's philosophy 'all physical movements corresponding to mental volitions are determined by God' (158). Mintz correctly points out that 'in Murphy we are treated to a rigorous and illuminating exploration of the self', but Descartes' and Geulincx's philosophies are ultimately untenable for Beckett due to the presence of God as the reason for the existence. McGrath argues that Schopenhauer agreed with the human impotence

found in Geulincx, although the former called upon will as the governor of human affairs, in contrast to God – who, for Geulincx, is responsible for our being mere spectators, in keeping with the doctrine of Occassionalism. In Geulincx's philosophy, the mind is non-physical and is separate from the physical body. Geulincx held that mind is un-extendable and body is extendable, hence any interaction between un-extendable mind and extendable body is impossible. For Geulincx, the ultimate explanation for causal connections is God. David Tucker's recent monograph, *Samuel Beckett and Arnold Geulincx: Tracing a Literary Fantasia*, examines this connection carefully. However, from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' reading the mind-body interaction is part of the fragmented self, and this process suggests that it is not possible to pinpoint any particular aspect of the self as containing the essence of any entity.

On philosophy, critics like Ulrich Pothast focused upon Schopenhauer's philosophy in *Murphy*. Similarly, McGrath argues that Schopenhauer's philosophy aligned Beckett with the quietist themes of à Kempis and Geulincx (McGrath 200). Indeed, these quietist elements in Schopenhauer were influential for Beckett (McGrath 201). Feldman's points about Schopenhauer's take on quietism can be answered by considering Schopenhauer's debt to the Eastern philosophy of Buddhist emptiness and the Vedas. Both lead to quietism by surrendering all willing; only at that point can the aspects of self be explained through emptiness. Chapter One argued that the knowledge of Schopenhauer's Buddhist-derived principles forges a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism' interpretation of Beckett's writing, which identifies many of the same outcomes as that of a quietist philosophy. In other words, the results of quietism are much the same as that provided by the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework: the self is made up of many constituents, yet has no essence. Quietist and 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' frameworks bring the same attitude towards existence. Schopenhauer writes:

> Whosoever has fully accepted the teaching of my philosophy and thus knows that our whole existence is something which had better not have been, and to deny and reject which is the highest wisdom, will not cherish great expectations of anything or any condition; he will not ardently aspire to anything in the world, nor will he complain very much if he fails in any undertaking. (PP I 409)

Pothast argues that in *Murphy* the 'big world' is constructed in Schopenhauerian terms, as Murphy's girlfriend Celia wants him to earn and save money. Yet, for Murphy, it is scarcely a question of economy.

Pothast describes the vision that Beckett depicts in *Murphy*, where Murphy disconnects himself from the world and retreats into his mind as if 'attempting to meditate one may say' (Pothast 146). Pothast focuses on suffering and the vision of disassociation in *Murphy*, both within the mind and from the empirical world of phenomena. He further argues that vision can be characterised as negative, and could also be taken 'as a metaphysical content in the most blissful moments of Murphy's existence' (149). By contrast, a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism' perspective isolates factors of awareness, as well as the way the interactions between the 'big' and 'little' worlds help to develop a clear and distinct vision that viewpoints are actually consequences of the ignorance and fabrications of the mind. The ignorance and fabrication can only be understood when there is an awareness of the dependent characteristics of the elements of the self.

The yearning for nothing in Pothast's readings decisively raises Schopenhauer's will-less state, which is pure and blissful because of the dissolution of 'I'. Exemplifying this in the novel is when Murphy surrenders in his game of chess with Mr. Endon of which more below. Pothast highlights Schopenhauer's conception of 'nothingness' in the *World as will and Representation* as follows: 'the state of mind of those in whom Will has turned and denied itself is such that there is just one word to describe the contents of that state otherwise beyond description: *Nothing*' (qtd. in Pothast 152). Beckett's view of nothingness in *Murphy* can be seen much later in the letter he wrote to Sighle Kennedy on 14 June 1967: 'If I were in the unenviable position of having to study my work, my points of departure would be the 'Naught is more real…' and the 'Ubi nihil vales…' both already in *Murphy* and neither very rational' (Disjecta 113). These are explicit references to maxims of Democritus and Geulincx: however, two important conclusions can be drawn from this letter: first, Beckett's interest in the concept of nothing; and second, the doubt raised over the concept of nothing in *Murphy*.

According to Beckett, the desire for nothingness present in Murphy's quest for the self gives rise to the need of another interpretation for nothing. Accordingly, the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework advanced here provides an insight into Samuel Beckett's art, whereby Murphy reaches a positive aspect of nothingness in the novel. The will is rejected by

Murphy when he becomes aware of Mr. Endon, putting aside any perception about him: 'little by little his eyes were captured by the brilliant swallow-tail of Mr. Endon's arms and legs, purple, scarlet, black and glitter, till they saw nothing else' (M 153). The relation between Murphy and Mr. Endon is described as 'the former's sorrow at seeing himself in the latter's immunity from seeing anything, but himself' (M 156). For Murphy, then, Mr. Endon becomes a remarkable mirror self, which reminds the former of his awareness of the disintegrated self. Since Mr. Endon's madness represents for Murphy a kind of psychological superiority in terms of showing things of the mental world as it is. Schopenhauer calls this the 'kinship between genius and madness' (WWR I 191-92). He further elaborates on madness as follows: 'Neither the faculty of reason nor understanding can be denied to the mad, for they talk and understand, and often draw very accurate conclusions. They also, as a rule, perceive quite correctly what is present, and see the connexion between cause and effect' (WWR I 192).

The denial of will is the result from being acquainted with an awareness of the self as amalgamation of many interdependent elements; and conversely, none of the constituents carries the essence of the self. In the beginning of the novel, when Neary suggests, 'all life is figure and ground', 'but a wandering to find home', 'against the big blooming buzzing confusion' (M 4) an answer is found which Murphy calls, 'Neary's big blooming buzzing confusion or ground, [is] mercifully free of figure' (M 153).[2] This freedom from any figure or picture about the self in mind is the result of understanding the disintegrated and dependent nature in the formation of the self. Here, from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' reading notion of the self is no more attached to a singular 'I'. Thereafter, 'he dropped his head on his arms in the midst of the chessmen, which scattered with a terrible noise (M 153).

In *Murphy*, McGrath rightly traces the idea that rational thinking has intrinsic limitations, and argues that from Schopenhauer's point of view 'it can never get beyond the representation' since representation is the product of mind. Yet, a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' reading draws upon Buddhist thinking that goes beyond mind by not attaching any perceptions or thoughts to given situations or feelings. In this sense, it is through Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason and the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' recognition of nothing that Murphy reaches the blissful state of nothingness. As such, the

[2] Albeit both phrases are taken from Woodworth's textbook on Psychology (cf *Beckett's Books* ch. 4)

conjunction 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism' embraces this concept of peaceful nothing. Among the many metaphysical influences in the novel, the Buddhist idea of emptiness, interpreted here as coming through Schopenhauer's philosophy, aids in approaching the nature of the self as free when fragmented, and suits Beckett's notion of nothing – the attainment of which ostensibly is the goal for the protagonist of the novel.

A.2 Murphy's contemplation and unveiling of mind's illusion

The novel starts with the scene where Murphy sits on a rocking chair, naked; as noted above, he fixes himself to the chair with scarves, ready to begin contemplation. This gives Murphy pleasure:

> He sat in his chair in this way because it gave him pleasure! First it gave his body pleasure, it appeased his body. Then it set him free in his mind. For it is not until his body was appeased that he could come alive in his mind, as described in section six. And life in his mind gave him pleasure, such pleasure that pleasure was not the word. (M 3, 4)

Murphy finds contemplation pleasurable since it provides him freedom within his mind. His acknowledgement of this freedom through contemplation perfectly represents Schopenhauer's belief that 'all philosophy is always theoretical, since it is essential to it always to maintain a purely contemplative attitude, whatever be the immediate object of investigation; to inquire, not to prescribe' (WWR I 271). At the start of *Murphy*, Murphy sits naked in a position where 'he fastened his shins to the rockers, one his thighs to the seat, two his breast and belly to the back, one his wrists to the thrust behind' (M 5). This position is adopted by Murphy so that he can enter the zones of his mind. This also 'gave him freedom of that light and dark that did not clash, nor alternate, nor fade nor lighten except to their communion' (M 9). Celia, Murphy's lover, is likewise well aware of Murphy's tendency to sit alone in meditation: 'No sound came from Murphy's room, but that did not trouble her, who knows how addicted he was to remaining still for long periods' (M 20). This underscores Murphy's interest in contemplation, and his willingness to sit through the long periods of silence, which helps him observe his self.

Beckett expresses this inner search as an escape into the world of silence. Moreover, this state brings him into direct relation with the thoughts arising in the mind. The first stage of meditation begins as soon as Murphy lapses, and falls away 'from the pensums [Schopenhauer's term] and prizes, from Celia, chandlers, public highways, etc, from Celia,

buses, public gardens etc. to where there were no pensums and no prizes but only Murphy himself' (M 62). Thus, Murphy's self observation is an enquiry into the inner self. The self in disintegration is highlighted at the end of the novel, when Murphy dies and his ashes are thrown all over the floor. Again, the self becomes disintegrated when articulated through the protagonist's mind, which strives for freedom from forms (physical, material), as depicted in chapter six in the novel. Later, nothingness is glimpsed in the game of chess with Mr. Endon, where 'Murphy began to see nothing, that colourlessness which is such a rare post-natal treat' (M 138). This nothingness and its accompanying freedom is predicated upon the disintegrated form of the self. Here, Schopenhauer's mediation of Buddhist philosophy becomes essential in analysing the importance of selfhood and nothingness in *Murphy*.

The negative features of pain and suffering lead to an inner search in *Murphy*. S. C. Steinberg writes that 'Beckett has created the physical as the antithesis of the mental' (Steinberg 93). This preferred escape into the 'little world' helps Murphy to confront the inner elements of his own self (mind, perceptions, thoughts). Hence, the retreat of Murphy into his mind becomes absolutely essential. Beckett begins with Murphy's search into the inner elements of the self, where 'there were sights and sounds that he did not like. They detained him in the world to which they belonged, but not he, as he fondly hoped' (M 6). This points to Murphy's portrayal as a man fond of seeking the self within. Here, Schopenhauer's pessimistic view is again relevant, particularly the idea that suffering is stitched into the very nature of existence. The first retreat into one's own self is, in fact, the beginning of meditation. Murphy's position is therefore not the result of a preconceived notion or thought, but is decided by observing the functions of his mind.

During his meditations, Murphy attempts to reach stillness: a state where he can abandon his self, which is caught up in the external world. At this point, he begins to confront the formations in the mind. From a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' reading, the thoughts present inside the mind create and interpret the world outside. The universe created inside the mind, real or virtual, is questioned in *Murphy*: 'Nothing ever had been, was or would be in the universe outside it but was already present as virtual or actual, or virtual rising into actual, or actual falling into virtual, in the universe inside it'. This acknowledges that 'there was the mental fact and there was the physical fact' (M 63). The attributes of mental and physical facts can be related to an entry in the contemporaneous 'Whoroscope' notebook, taken from the idealist philosopher Giovanni Gentile: 'that all consciousness is self-consciousness and that in coming to know itself by thinking about itself mind is adding to itself, so making the

self that it knows' (Ackerley, *Demented Particulars* 105). This quotation suggests that there is division between the mental and physical body. However, there is also an awareness of the split between the mental and physical body which is added by observation: 'Thus Murphy felt himself split in two, a body and a mind. They had intercourse apparently' (M 70). This intercourse is interdependence as both the aspects work together. For Ackerley this split is at the heart Cartesian dictum: the mind is a thinking thing, while matter is an extended thing (Ackerley, *Demented Particulars: The Annotated Murphy* 106). In contrast, this split through disintegration explains a Schopenhauerian Buddhist perspective that brings with it a state of peace: 'But motion in this world depended on rest of the world outside' (M 64). Throughout *Murphy*, the confrontation with the constituents of the physical body is very clear: 'the world of the body broken up into the pieces of a toy' (M 72). This evokes an awareness of Murphy's 'mind treasures' from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective for the observation of thoughts silences the thoughts in the mind, which is the treasure of peace that gives pleasure. Beckett moves further into the inner world of the mind to enquire into the processes involved in it.

Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason holds that there is interdependence in the formation of a thing or the self. In turn, this helps explain the first zone of Murphy's mind, which manifests a dependence of the physical body upon the mind. In other words, the internal consciousness is dependent upon external experience: 'here the kick that the physical Murphy received, the mental Murphy gave' (M 65). The principle of sufficient reason can aptly be applied to the relationship between the body and mind. Thus, for Murphy,

> [h]is body lay down more and more in a less precarious abeyance than that of sleep, for its own convenience and so that the mind might move. There seemed little left of his body that was not privy to his mind, and that little was usually tied on its own account. The development of what looked like collusion between such utter strangers remained to Murphy as unintelligible as telekinesis or the Leyden Jar, and of as little interest. He noted with satisfaction that it existed, that his bodily need ran more and more with his mental. (M 71)

A satisfaction that mind and body are working in agreement with each other is enough for Murphy. According to Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason, since all experiences are trifling and dependent in nature, the formation of an entity-in-mind co-operates with,

and is a result of, the effects on the physical body. This means that images of the self simultaneously exist during the interaction between the body and the mind. In chapter six, the second zone of Murphy's mind is 'forms without parallels' (M71) where the mental-physical interaction takes place. The notion of the self is setting free through the recognition that various elements of the self are working together in harmony and there is an interaction between them. *Murphy* thus, in this way, helps to illuminate the interacting elements of a contemplative mind. In meditating on the structure of forms, Murphy simply observes them in silence. He experiences bliss because the formation is taking place on its own, dependent upon the interaction of the elements within the mind. Beckett uses the word 'bliss' to describe the state of contemplation in Murphy as 'here is the Belacqua bliss' when thoughts and perceptions do not work, and the mind remains silent. Murphy observes the silence of the mind because it is under constant surveillance and observation. The purpose in identifying acts of contemplation within Murphy's mind is to deny the formulation of answers or questions.

This mental state can be read via Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason, whereby the body and the mind are seen to interact, but where nothing is found behind that interaction. Murphy's mental state exerts pressure to cause a split in the elements of an essenceless self. The identity of any singular self is lost and physicality gives way to fragmented mental formation. Thus, from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, there are three stages of formation in Beckett's *Murphy*: the maker (physical body); the process of making (mind); and what is made (the perception or entity). When all three stages unify, the individual subject comes into the picture. Here, Murphy's mind is analogous to Schopenhauer's interpretation of the subject-object relations, which in turn owes much to Buddhist concept of emptiness - where no essence or substantiality is found within interacting forms, no matter whether the interaction is between the subject-object relation or the mind and the body. As Schopenhauer asserts: 'After an examination of the whole nature of the principle of sufficient reason, of the relation between object and subject, and of the real character of sense-perception, the question itself was bound to disappear, because there was no longer any meaning in it' (WWR I 16). This disappearance of meaning suggests that there is no essence left to consider in the existence of the self. There is just an interplay of forms. Similarly, in *Murphy*:

> The light contained the docile elements of a new manifold, the world of the body broken up into pieces of toy; the half light, states a peace. But the dark neither

> elements nor states, nothing but forms becoming and crumbling into the fragments of new becoming, without love or hate or any intelligible principle of change. Here there was nothing but commotion and the pure forms of commotion. (M 72)

This observation is rational, scientific, and unnamed. Mental processes are treated with great care in chapter six, and the mode of relations is unfurled. The world of mind and body is broken into pieces, and the pieces themselves are then made up of constituent parts. For example, mind can be divided into thoughts, perceptions, collections of sensory data and so forth; similarly, the physical body can be broken up into eyes, nose, arms, heart, lungs, and so forth. The relation between the tangible body and mental formation is based upon the product of many elements working in conjunction.

Finally, the third zone of Murphy's mind sees the interaction of mental forms. In terms of Buddhist emptiness, if a thing is permanent and has essence it should not begin with the help of other elements, nor should it wither away. By going through the stages of mental formation of things, Murphy confronts the reality of a non-self, or the essencelessness of phenomena. In short, the subject-object relations are phenomena, and the inability to find a stable core is rooted in the dark zone of Murphy's mind, one where 'his body set him free more and more in his mind, he took to spending less and less time in the light, where the choice of bliss introduced an element of effort; and more and more in the dark, in the will-lessness, a mote in the absolute freedom' (M 72).

Such essencelessness is reflected in Murphy's condition, notably when he is unable to locate a self in his mind. This can be read as a conglomerate of mind, feeling, consciousness and form in the third zone of Murphy's mind:

> [He] began to see nothing, that colourlessness of which is such a rare post natal treat, being the absence not of percipere but of percipi. His other senses also found themselves at peace, an unexpected pleasure. Not the numb peace of their own suspension, but the positive peace that comes when somethings give way, or perhaps simply add up, to the Nothing. (M 154)

Murphy's mind construes 'nothing but forms becoming and crumbling into the fragments of a new becoming, without love or hate or any intelligible principle of change' (M 72). In turn, this leads to an awareness of each element contributing to the formation of the self. This disintegration points to the idea of a fragmented self.

His relation to Mr. Endon is another important manifestation through which Murphy reaches the state of nothingness. Murphy observes Mr. Endon 'lay back and fixed his eyes on some object immeasurably remote, perhaps the famous ant on the sky of an airless world' and thus 'took Mr. Endon's head in his hands and bought the eyes to bear on his, or rather his on them, across a narrow gulf of air, the merest hand's-breath of air' (M 155). Furthermore:

> Kneeling at the bedside, the hair starting in thick black ridges between his fingers, his lips, nose and forehead almost touching Mr. Endon's, seeing himself stigmatised in those eyes that did not see him, Murphy heard words demanding so strongly to be spoken that he spoke them, right into Mr. Endon's face. (M 156)

Murphy claimed that 'the last at last seen of him, himself unseen by him and of himself' (M 156). This represents dissolution of Murphy's self into Mr. Endon. Murphy can witness his own self in the other. In representing the mirror image, Beckett called upon the idea of 'tat twam asi' (that you are) in *Murphy* which derives from Vedic philosophy. In a letter dated 7 July 1936, for instance, Beckett mentions that he chose to keep Murphy's 'death subdued and go on as coolly and finish as briefly as possible […] because it seemed to me to consist better with the treatment of Murphy throughout, with a mixture of compassion, patience, mockery and "tat twam asi" that I seem to have directed on him throughout' (BL I 350). Whilst 'tat tvam asi' is traceable to Schopenhauer's Eastern philosophical perspective, it is important to understand that there is intimate connection between the 'veil of Maya', Buddhist emptiness and 'tat twam asi'. In Schopenhauer words: 'if we had to convey to the beholder, for reflection and in a word, the explanation and information about their inner nature, it would be best for us to use the Sanskrit formula which occurs so often in the sacred books of the Hindus, and is called *Mahavakya* i.e., the great word: "*Tat tvam asi*", which means "This living thing art thou"' (WWR I 220). The comprehension of 'tat tvam asi' is possible when the knowledge of the self as an amalgamation of various elements that are dependent on each other is clear; and so too the self's essenceless nature. In light of Buddhist conception of emptiness, the 'veil of Maya' is pierced. Consequently, all aspects of the self can merge into other selves, since the basic element of the self remains the same. The treatment of Murphy's ashes that gets scattered on the floor exemplifies this, assimilating both disintegration and oneness in the universe. Schopenhauer asserts, in this respect: 'whoever is able to declare this [tat tvam asi] to himself with clear knowledge' taking into consideration both the principle of sufficient reason, and Buddhist emptiness 'is certain of all virtue and bliss, and is on the direct path to salvation' (WWR I 374). Murphy

reached his destination in becoming one with Mr. Endon; and later, moreso in becoming one with the five elements of the nature on his death through his ashes that got scattered on the pub floor. Yet, Murphy's ashes on the floor point towards disintegration and essencelessness as an important step in reaching both the position of 'tat tvam asi' and an unveiling 'veil of Maya'.

Perceptions contained in Murphy's mind has no attachment to Murphy's idea of the self. The latter's death highlights both disintegration and oneness in the universe, which simultaneously brings interdependence (Buddhist emptiness) and oneness (tat tvam asi). Schopenhauer writes: 'For the people, however, that great truth [tat twam asi], in so far as it was possible for them to comprehend it with their limited mental capacity, was translated into the way of knowledge following the principle of sufficient reason' (WWR I 355). This issue can be read as what is called in this thesis a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' emptiness; namely, an awareness of the interaction (Buddhist dependent origination) of subject and object amidst the elements within the self, whereby an essenceless characteristic of the self is identified.

B. Watt

As set out in the Introduction, Beckett's engagement with Schopenhauer began at the time of writing *Proust* (1931) and even during wartime, when *Watt* was written, the connection between Beckett and Schopenhauer persisted. Beckett returned to Schopenhauer before starting *Watt* in 1941. In the final version, completed in 1945, it is worth noting that *Watt*'s addenda, added last, contains the entry '*zitto zitto! Das nur das Publikum nichts merke*!' [Hush! Hush! So that the public may notice nothing] (W 217). This is a direct reference to Schopenhauer in *Watt*. Beckett's entry is extracted from the 'Whoroscope' notebook, and he later mentions in a letter that this entry in *Watt's* addenda refers to the 'conspiracy of silence against Schopenhauer' (BL I 43).

In keeping with Beckett's interest in 'dear Arthur', this section approaches *Watt* as a novel that incorporates key themes from the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework. In particular, this section considers the contemplation of the world within the mind and the world outside it; the veil of illusion that hides awareness; and a lifting of the veil for the short moment during introspection. Watt's journey to Mr Knott's house and back is significant in so far as he becomes aware of his own self and the world around him. He ultimately reaches a state of complete surrender (not resignation) by recognising the separate elements of the self as they are: 'he lay on his seat, without thought or sensation,

except for a slight feeling of chill in one foot. In his skull the voices whispering their canon were like a patter of mice, a flurry of little grey paws in the dust' (W 201). The 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' approach used in this thesis is in keeping with what Büttner calls the 'spiritual science' in *Watt*. Moreover, this framework considers the inner investigation of the selfhood in the novel (Büttner 171). As Beckett himself said: 'the only possible spiritual development is in the sense of depth' (Büttner 171). Over the course of this section, the unveiling of self-illusion in Watt will be analysed, as will his awareness of self in disintegrated form. This directly relates to 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' themes, with the latter an important way to understand Watt's journey.

To begin with, the very title of the novel suggests difficulties in observing one's self. Starting with the question 'what is self', Chris Ackerley notes that the 'interrogatives "who, what, where, by what means, why, in what way, when" are listed on the first page of the first draft of what became *Watt*' (Ackerley, *Obscure Locks, Simple Keys* 28). These are taken from the 'Philosophy Notes' section on Aristotle. The published novel begins with a fictional examination of what is the self in different situations: sitting on the train platform, walking on the street, or working in the environment of an unknown master. From this introductory point onward, nothingness becomes an important theme: 'I tell you nothing is known, cried Mr. Nixon, Nothing' (16). 'Nothing' is an important consideration for Watt. Since the search for the inner self is of primary importance, Mr. Hackett accepts Mr. Nixon's statement that nothing is known, for the self cannot be understood completely unless observed carefully, the neglect of which is 'a common failing' (W 16). In this way Watt represents this confrontation with the inner self and his relation with the world.

Watt is introduced in the novel as having the similar characteristics to a sage. He is 'a milder', 'inoffensive creature', and 'literally turn[s] the other cheek' (W 14). Little else is identified about Watt in the novel's outset except that he is a solitary, naïve and a most unoffending creature. He has no fixed address, and there is no information about his 'nationality, family, birthplace, confession, occupation, means of existence, distinctive signs' (16). An introduction by Mr. Nixon about Watt is given to Mr. Hackett, yet once Watt is introduced, no more is known of Hackett. However, a sudden uplifting of the illusion is present in Mr. Hackett seeing Watt from far off. He looks at Watt for the first time, although the illusion quickly reforms, as in the case of Mr. Hackett who, when looking at Watt, experiences the bliss of thoughtlessness. For the first time, Mr Hackett experiences

the difference between observations through the thoughtless state of the mind and looking through mind perceptions and memories.

The start of *Watt* is important in depicting mental awareness, as Beckett introduces how looking becomes mesmerising for Mr Hackett when the veil of perception is put aside:

> Mr. Hackett did not know when he had been more intrigued, nay, he did not know when he had been so intrigued. […] Here there is nothing in the least unusual, that I can see, and yet I burn with curiosity and wonder. The sensation is not disagreeable, I must say, and yet I do not think I could bear it for more than twenty minutes, or half an hour. (W 12)

Watt's presence becomes unusual for Mr. Hackett, for one, since in the act of seeing conscious perception is abolished. The formation of perception is an automatic response from the mind due to the conditioning termed as habit. However, utilising a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework shows that the act of seeing can be detached from the singular sense of 'I am seeing' through perception. Hence, seeing becomes an awakened seeing when its nature is not clouded with the sense of perception or habit. Thus, when perception drops down for Mr. Hackett for some time it brings a sense of wonder and curiosity.

On the surface, the novel is a simple story about the eponymous character who is going to take up his duties as one of the servants in Mr. Knott's household. There are a series of servants who had cyclically worked in Mr. Knott's house before Watt, and who continue to work after Watt leaves. Watt serves his term as a servant, first on the ground floor of Mr. Knott's house and then on the first floor. After serving on both floors, he leaves. The novel goes into great detail to explain the routine jobs of Watt at Mr. Knott's establishment. The inapplicability of the outer world within Knott's house becomes diminished for Watt. This deceptively simple story is unusual in the sense that the ordinary becomes extraordinary when simple, routine things are given complete attention and are fully contemplated. The extra edge that Beckett provides to look at the things, with no distortion from perception or thought, is what makes Watt's walking, talking, eating and watching extraordinary, and performs the task of unveiling the delusion of Maya. There is freedom from the known – referring to knowledge of the outer world, which is present in the form of perception or thought – is put aside, and the ordinary tasks are given complete focus and attention.

According to a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework the beginning of the awareness of the self is to know and recognise the voice of your own thoughts, and this is what Watt encounters. He begins the journey towards Mr. Knott's house and meets a certain Mr. Spiro; he then experiences voices in his head while Mr. Spiro is talking to him.

> But Watt heard nothing of this [Spiro's words] because of other voices, singing, crying, stating, murmuring, things unintelligible, in his ear. With these, if he was not familiar, he was not unfamiliar either. So he was not alarmed, unduly. Now these voices, sometimes they sang only, and sometimes they cried only, and sometimes they stated only, and sometimes they murmured only, and sometimes they sang and cried, and sometimes they sang and stated, and sometimes they sang and murmured, and sometimes they cried and stated. […] And sometimes Watt understood all, and sometimes he understood much, and sometimes he understood little, and sometimes he understood nothing, as now. (W 22, 23)

Watt's awareness of the thoughts inside his head is the first indication that he is familiarising himself with the concept that thought is a separate entity arising within the mind. This entails according to Buddhist thinking recognising thoughts as they arise within the mind, and comprehension of these thoughts is of little relevance since thoughts are the product of the interaction between memories and perceptions. Merely knowing that they arise and are dependent on perception and memory, therefore invokes an awareness of their presence as they exist. After reaching Mr. Knott's house, Watt finds it strange to pay attention to the details of his surroundings, including the relation between the outer and the inner world. Beckett identifies the inner world of Watt with Mr. Knott's establishment, as when Watt states: 'No Matter, he is content'; and, 'He is well pleased. For he knows he is in the right place, at last' (W 33). For Watt, Mr. Knott's establishment is a replica of his inner state.

Similarly, Beckett's illustration of the dependent characteristic of the physical body is shown in Watt's weakness. For example, he sits down on the path while proceeding to Mr. Knott's establishment without thoughts, but with a complete awareness of the various parts of the physical self that are working together to help him walk. He 'settled himself on the edge of the path, with his hat pushed back, and his bags beside him, and his knees drawn up, and his arms on his knees, and his head on his arms which is classically a 'Beckettian' image taken from Belacqua in Dante's Purgatory. The parts of the body are really friendly at

such times, towards one another' (W 26). This is an illustration of the awareness of the dependent characteristic of the physical body, which can be understood when the principle of sufficient reason is applied. The position of Watt is due to the interaction and dependence of hands, arms, knees and legs. His alertness to the sounds will then yield an inner awareness, as 'Watt rested for a little time, listening to the little nightsounds in the hedge behind him, in the hedge outside him, hearing them with pleasure, and other distant nightsounds too' (26). He also becomes aware also of 'the breath that is never quite' (26), which is one of the most important observations when sitting in Buddhist meditation. This entails paying attention to the movement of the physical body as it is, 'having oscillated all his life between the torments of a superficial loitering and the horrors of disinterested endeavour, he finds himself at last in a situation where to do nothing exclusively would be an act of the highest value and significance' (33). Doing nothing mentioned here is thus an act of observation where no other act is required, and the significance of this understanding is unmatchable, since this understanding will bring for the individual 'the highest and profoundest, has his heart knot cut, all his doubts are resolved, and his works come to nought' (WWR II 607).

Watt's quest for self-knowledge seems to bloom into a lotus flower of awareness. Knott's establishment starts to give results in the form of inner development, by looking at things as they are and merging with the surrounding area. Such acts encourage him to realise his own presence where he finds himself walking along with the flowers and the sky as 'he unbuttons his coat and sits down, proffered all pure and open to the long joys of being himself' (33). This sense of self in *Watt* does not derive from concepts in the mind but through an awareness that a self that is divided into many elements: seeing, feeling, touching, and so on. The joys of being accompany Watt in Knott's house, and the simple acts of walking in the garden can become extraordinary, mesmerising and enjoyable.

The nature of the work being performed at Mr. Knott's house gives Watt the liberty 'for himself, that he may abide, as he is, where he is, and that where he is may abide about him, as it is' (34). The task at Mr. Knott's house gives Watt a sense of detachment. There is detachment because nothing much is known about Mr. Knott and hence the inability to form perceptions about him brings disengagement. This facilitates detachment with thought formation for Mr. Knott and helps in performing the tasks with awareness for Watt. *Watt* also portrays the futility of the tasks performed in the outside world. Watt's situation is said to carry no intrinsic meaning, such as the incident of Mr. Gall and his son coming to tune

the piano at Mr. Knott house. Beckett shows there, through the Galls' visit, that there is no significance in the phenomenal world: everything has relative value. The event

> continued to unfold, in Watt's head, from beginning to end, over and over again, the complete connection of its lights and shadows, the passing from silence to sound and from sound to silence, the stillness before the movement and the stillness after, the quickenings and retardings, the approaches and the separations, all the shifting details of its march and ordinance, according to the irrevocable caprice of its taking place. It resembled them [all the incidents in Mr. Knott's house] in vigour which it developed a purely plastic content, and gradually lost, in the nice processes of its light, its sound, its impacts and its rhythms, all meaning, [in the incidents] even the most literal. (W 59-60)

Thus, the significance of the incidents in Mr. Knott's house from the outside world, as presented to Watt's consciousness, does not go beyond interaction between 'sound and silence' and 'going and coming' and nothing can be deduced. Watt had not 'executed an interpretation since the age of fourteen or fifteen, and […] had lived, miserably it is true, among face values all his adult life' (W 60). This signifies the futility of any interpretation for any event occurring in Mr. Knott's house for Watt and the incident of piano tuner 'was perhaps the principal incident of Watt's early days in Mr. Knott's house' (59), and it is important to note that the futility of such incidents 'resembled all the incidents of note proposed to Watt during his stay in Mr. Knott's house, and of which a certain number will be recorded in this place, without addition, or subtraction' (59). The incidents taking place in Mr Knott's house perform the task of expressing the futility of occurrences for Watt since he is more concerned about performing the task rather than interpreting or deducing any conclusions from them. The incident Watt encounters while sitting one afternoon in Mr. Knott's house clearly echo what happens when one sits in meditation; in 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' terms, how the sense of self crumbles upon inner observation. It is similar to Watt's recognition of his sense of self as slipping away like sand, making one suddenly become aware of oneself: 'Where was I? The change. In what did it consist? It is hard to say. Something slipped. There I was, warm and bright, smoking my tobacco-pipe, watching the warm bright wall' (35). Here, Watt's observation of his own self who is smoking a pipe disintegrates. The self that is watching (observer) and the other smoking (observed) are parts of the same self in disintegration. Thus, both the internal and external systems begin to tilt toward dependence and disintegration, where self is performing acts in relation to its

different elements. This acknowledgement unveils the 'illusion of Maya' regarding the singularity present in the sense of the self and the world around. The description of the crumbling self and the piercing through the veil of illusion of the self are compared, as if

> [t]here is a great alp of sand, one hundred metres high, between the pines and the ocean, and there in the warm moonless night, when no one is looking, no one listening, in tiny packets of two to three millions the grains slip, all together, a little slip of one or two lines maybe, and then stop, all together, not one missing, and that is all, that is all for that night (*W* 35).

The comparing of the crumbling of the self into millions of sand grains exemplifies Watt's 'personal system', and the distinctiveness of this complete system is not easy to draw for him: 'My personal system was so distended at the period of which I speak that the distinction between what was inside it and what was outside it was not easy to draw' (35). Watt's realisation of the change in the state of the self is clear, so 'that in my opinion it was not an illusion, as long as it lasted, that presence of what did not exist, that presence without, that presence within, that presence between' and then the veil of illusion returns. Watt returns to the practical nature of the world where he has 'a debt to pay, or a score to settle, before he departs' (37). This realisation through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework offers an ability to understand how, 'when you cease to seek you start to find, and when you cease to want, then life begins to ram her fish and chips down your gullet' (36). Thus, filtering through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, ceasing to seek starts when observation of the world around is intense and no thought activity is generated, and this is what Watt does that afternoon when the self begins to crumble within him. The 'I' starts to dissolve and the phantoms of the mind become clearly visible. However, here the awareness does not last long: as Beckett noted several years earlier in his 'Clare Street' notebook, the veil returns and the eyes return to the world of phenomena, where the interaction between thoughts and perception colours the world view (Nixon, *German Diaries* 170).

The internal and external atmosphere in Mr. Knott's establishment merges, since 'everything that happened happened inside it, and at the same time everything that happened outside it' (35). The external physical world and the internal self are yoked together. This means the outer physical world and the internal world is becoming interdependent. In Schopenhauer's Buddhist-inspired thinking, there is interdependence between the outer and the inner world, and that is the nature of both the self and the phenomena occurring within

and outside the self. The world is ‘a wonder to him and will remain so’ (W 33) because to see the world beyond illusion, with each element in relation to each other, brings wonder. In this vein Schopenhauer states: ‘our greatest sufferings do not lie in the present as representation of perceptions or as immediate feeling, but in our faculty of reason as abstract concepts, tormenting thoughts’ (WWR I 298). Thus, the absence of attaching thoughts to form perceptions for the outer world creates wonder, and Watt begins to sense this amazement. This is the amazement at the heart of a ‘Schopenhauerian Buddhist’ readings of nothingness, which according to Schopenhauer is ‘merely a relative, and not absolute nothing’ of interconnectedness, and essencelessness, and ‘full of insight’ (WWR II 612). This suggests how, if we turn from the forms produced by external circumstances and get to the root of things, we ‘will admit that every philosophy […] to be consistent, must reject that whole mode of thought’ (WWR II 615).

By understanding that perception brings suffering and that thoughts are the products of mind and nothing else, the notion of temporality arising and passing away can be clearly recognised through a ‘Schopenhauerian Buddhism’ framework, and thus acknowledge the illusion (veil of Maya) present in perception. The incident with the Galls brings one such clarification about the temporality and nothingness of the self to Watt, where ‘nothing had happened, that a thing that was nothing had happened, with the utmost formal distinctness’ (62, 63). Watt’s recognition of the forms creating and dying within the mind by the way of thoughts is very distinct because he can separate thought from perception. This separation helps in distinguishing the futility of perception formation and without perception thoughts cannot trigger any sensation of pleasantness or aversion. ‘Yes, Watt could not accept […] that nothing had happened, with all the clarity and solidity of something, and that it revisited him in such a way that he was forced to submit to it all over again’; ‘to hear the same sounds, see the same lights, touch the same surfaces and so on, as when they first involved him in their unintelligible intricacies’ (63). Watt is now able to follow the movement of sensations (sounds, lights, touch) and intelligibly observe them. Watt’s experiences are reduced to an alertness that defies answers or formulations, either in his perceptions or conscious thoughts; this is ‘when the knock came, the knock becomes a knock, on the door become a door, in his mind, presumably in his mind’ (W 63). Beckett probes the minutest parts of Watt’s mind; a mind which is alert to situations as they arise both within his self and in his relation to the outside world.

The change of servants in Mr. Knott's house depicts the temporality of events in his establishment: the arrival of one means the exit of another. Again, the internal merges with the external, while the purposeless state of coming and going is intuited: 'And what is this coming that was not our coming and this being that is not our being and this going that will not be our going but the coming and being and going in purposelessness?' (W 49). This also relates to the coming and going of the servants, which parallels the arrival and departure of thoughts in the mind. Here, the essenceless condition of the self in relation to the world of Watt and Mr. Knott is established. This experience enforces the recognition that thoughts arise and pass away in the mind. The exit of one thought replaces the other:

> There were three men in the house: the master, whom as you well know we call Mr. Knott; a senior retainer named Vincent, I believe; and a junior, only in the sense that he was of more recent acquisition, named, if I am not mistaken, Walter. The first is here, in his bed, or at least in is room. The second, I mean Vincent is not here anymore, and the reason for that is this, that when I came he went out (W 47).

This confused narrative, with one servant coming to Mr. Knott's establishment and the other leaving, depicts the experience of the self as a fragmented 'I' that works with one sensory experience at a given time. This experience also establishes the temporality of the coming and the going of feelings, forms or perceptions, which are taken up at any given moment with the sense of 'I': 'what is this coming that was not our coming and this being that is not our being and this going that will not be our going but the coming and being and going in purposelessness?' (W 48, 49). This situation invariably exhibits the dependent and essenceless dimension of the self. Schopenhauer encapsulates this purposelessness as: 'Peace, serenity, and bliss dwell only when there are no Where and no When' (PP II 45). *Watt* exemplifies Schopenhauer's philosophical view at the point where

> [t]rue wisdom is not to be gained by measuring out the boundless world, or what would be more to the purpose, by actually traversing endless space. It is rather to be obtained by the thorough investigation of any individual thing, for thus we seek to arrive at a full knowledge and understanding of its true and peculiar nature. (WWR I 128)

This peculiar nature lies, for Schopenhauer, in presenting the 'form of subject and object, [which] belongs merely to the phenomenon' (WWRII 641). Furthermore, 'knowledge in general is itself only phenomenon, and therefore it takes place only in the world, just as the

world comes to pass only in it' (WWR II 642). Watt knows that the understanding of his self had descended upon him but very briefly: 'but that would come, Watt knew that would come, with patience it would come, little by little'. This is represented as rays from the sun into the kitchen of Mr. Knott's establishment, when 'all the unsoiled light of the new day, of the new day at last, the day without precedent at last' (54). Hence, Watt's awareness is coming through the direct observation of his self.

The perceptions formed by self about any given situation are meaningless, and this has started to become familiar to Watt when he realises that 'he could evolve, from the meticulous phantoms that beset him' (64). He also recognises that 'there was nothing, in this operation' (64). From a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism' perspective the mind where perceptions form creates the illusion because perception is a by-product of thought. Hence, recognition of thought as thought is to bring the awareness of the element of thought arising in the mind. All thought formations are representations of the mind, according to a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' approach. This is reflected in the phrase: 'For to explain had always been to exorcize, for Watt' (64). This kind of explanation is exorcism because explanation takes away the truth of the situation and pushes it into words and conceptions formed through the mind. Incidents – like when the Galls' father and son come to tune the piano at Mr. Knott's house – keep losing and recovering their meaning, as 'now a meaning evolved, after a delay of varying length, and with greater and less pains, from the initial absence of meaning' (66). For Watt, to know a thing or the self is to look at it without the assistance of perceptions, as 'there is nothing, in this operation, at variance' (64) with habits of the mind, which are always performing illusions. The incidents in *Watt* are examples that come close to the Buddhist view of emptiness.

The shifting of Watt from Mr. Knott's house to another pavilion, which is mentioned as a mansion, raises the symbolic illustration of the fence between Watt and Sam, who lives near him in the mansion and arguably asylum, as several critics have noted. In this asylum, Rabinovitz uses that the word 'screen' to suggests Schopenhauer's sense of the 'veil of Maya' (cited in Ackerley, *Obscure Locks, Simple Keys* 198). In this place, both Watt and Sam experience 'windowlessness' and 'could not hear the wind, nor see the sun, what call could come, from the weather we liked, but a call so faint as to mock acceptance, mock refusal?' (W 129). The acceptance and refusal of liking and disliking respectively are due to Watt's awareness of seeing and hearing as things beyond the 'veil of Maya'. Both, Sam and Watt in the asylum are aware that there is an embedded illusion in their understanding,

which is like ‘thickets rose at every turn, brakes of impenetrable density, and towering masses of brambles, of a beehive form’ (W 132). Watt’s shift to this new pavilion symbolises the thick cloud of illusion that keeps reforming after the sudden confrontation of direct reality.

Sam is like the other self of Watt. Watt, who is already aware of the constituents of his own self can see himself as divided into physical and mental form and is recognised as Sam in this other pavilion, to see the formation of veils of illusion. To see through illusion is very difficult, and both Watt and Sam are enclosed in a garden of the self, which is an enclosure that is ‘surrounded by a high barbed wire fence, greatly in need of repair, of new wires, of fresh barbs’ (W 133). To understand clearly how the wires of the self are laid out, the intense observation of the self is undertaken both by Watt and Sam, as their ‘senses [are] being now sharpened to ten or fifteen times their normal acuity’ (W 137). The sharpening of the senses comes from pure awareness that assists in seeing the world around as it is. The conjunction of fences is like dropping the veil of illusion present in the sense of the self, but the veil quickly reforms since Watt and Sam again become separate entities with their own gardens of the self.

The relentless elusiveness of using names in *Watt* is a part of observation into oneself. Watt’s confusion about naming – especially the perplexing question of how it is possible to have a name when the self is already divided into an outer and inner form – is illuminated by the restriction language poses in identifying all the aspects of the self with a singular name. Feldman discusses the post-structuralist approach on the issue involved in the ambiguity of naming.

> The post-structuralist approach has undoubtedly yielded valuable insights by fruitfully emphasizing the problematic role of Beckett’s language through the centrality and conspicuous inescapability of words, undermining of narrative, continual self-opposition and reinterpretation, fusion (or interchangeability) of subject and object, and so on. In the texts, this is effectively seen as having a self-cancelling and contradictory effect, tending towards the conflux of words, leading writing towards disintegration or lack of signification. (Feldman ‘I Inquired into Myself’ 221)

A Post-structuralist approach is one helpful way of analysing Beckett’s writing because the insignificant and disintegrated use of the language becomes comprehensible. However, a

'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework reveals the attributes of the self as disintegrated, interdependent and essenceless. The language used by Beckett succeeds in peeling away the layers of the self and records the movement of all the elements as it is that lack in signification because the formation of the self is a process without essence. Jennie Skerl discussed the problem posed by language and the philosophical problem raised by it. She asserts that 'Fritz Mauthner (1849-1923) was a forerunner' in terms of taking ordinary language as a philosophical problem. His 1923 *Critique of Language* concludes that there is no one-to-one relationship between words and things, and 'the existence of words did not establish the existence of a corresponding entity' (Skerl 476). Further, Mauthner argues that language is the result of sense perception and a social consensus on usage, and, since senses perceive qualities, language is flawed. However, a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework discourages any such perceiving, because perception in itself is flawed as it is refracted through culture and environment. Language is faulty since it does not provide a way to describe all the aspects of the thing or the self. Rather than perceiving the direct presentation of the self or the thing through the senses, language cannot figure out a way to describe all the constituents of the self or the thing that it comprises. Mauthner's argument, according to Skerl, is that the inner self is unknowable through language because there is no word that can describe the inner world; in fact, Mauthner concludes that truth can be known only in mystical silence.

Again in contrast, the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' view offers a different response to the unknowability of the self, one in which self is the result of the interconnectivity of various elements of which it is made, but does not possess any essence. Mauthner concludes: 'the ladder of philosophical linguistic analysis led to the realm of silence where these propositions [perceptions] becomes nonsense' (Skerl 484). Thus, Mauthner's position only leads towards understanding that language is not the right tool to grasp reality, whereas through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, *Watt* shows that language merely provides details of the self and the thing as it is, without going through perceptions accompanying sense organs such as the eyes watching, mind thinking, legs walking, or even the combination of the physical and mental elements endured by Watt. Mauthner's mystical silence resembles the platform of essencelessness in the nature of the self. From a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective self is beyond form because 'I' is a combination of various elements of the self. On observation, when the 'I' dissolves as the result of realising that it is by nature an amalgamation of many elements that depend on each other, there is

nothing left to say in relation to 'I'; hence silence turns out to be an outcome. Thus, language for Beckett when taken from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework is used in the description of the experience without any added perception and this facilitates the representation of the contents of the conscious experience as it is.

The knowledge of perception about language for Schopenhauer, which 'forces the infinitely shaded, mobile and modifiable idea into certain rigid, permanent forms, and by fixing the idea it at the same time fetters it' (WWR II 66), falsifies the reality which it attempts to represent by not bringing all the aspects of the thing or self under consideration. Similarly, encapsulating things in words brings us close to impoverished awareness because 'we have a thorough understanding of things only in so far as we are capable of representing them to ourselves' (WWR II 71). This sense of representation is illustrated in *Watt*, where 'things appear, and himself [Watt] appear, in their ancient guise, and consent to be named, with the time-honoured names and forgotten' (W 70). This suggests that naming is distinguished with singularity, but it is false or veiled because of name's inability to relate to all the aspects of the self. Thus, perception is troublesome because of the conditioned nature of the thoughts that represents it. However, rather than being attached to 'referential fallacies', Watt becomes aware of this problem, for 'this constant tension of some of his most noble faculties tired Watt greatly' (W 71). The complexity of language, recognising that words present illusions that do not reveal the whole thing as it is, and do not address the essenceless quality or reality for Watt, forcing him to make a 'pillow of old words for his head' (W 99).

Acknowledgement and recognition of essenceless reality through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' lens brings Watt to a position whereby 'he had not seen or interpreted a symbol' since his teenage years. Thus he asks, 'what was this pursuit of meaning, in this indifference to Meaning? And to what did it tend?' (W 62). The failure of meaning is closely connected with the failure of language in *Watt*. For example,

> Looking at a pot, for example, or thinking of a pot, at one of Mr. Knott's pots, of one of Mr. Knott's pots, it was in vain what Watt said, Pot, pot… For it was not a pot, the more he looked, the more he reflected, the more he felt sure of that, that it was not a pot at all. It resembled a pot, it was almost a pot, but it was not a pot which one could say, Pot, pot, and be comforted. It was in vain that it answered, with unexceptionable adequacy, all the purposes, and performed all the offices, of a pot, it

> was not pot. And it was this hairbreath departure from the nature of a true pot the so excruciated Watt. (W 67)

The smallest departure of language from signification reveals a complete failure in identifying the essence of a pot. This is painful for Watt due to the failure of language: unless language finds a way to address all the aspects of the thing, it veils the reality of the object under consideration. Although Mauthner's approach to this perception relies on the view that 'truth' consists in a complete correspondence between language and reality, the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework shows why language is incapable of telling the truth. This offers the explanation that it is the incapacity of language to take all the aspects of the thing or the self while defining or naming it:

> Watt preferred on the whole having to do with things of which he did not know the name, though this too was painful, to Watt, to having to do with things of which the known name, the proven name, was not the name, any more for him (W 67).

Although a pot remains a pot to everyone other than those with intuitive observation, like Watt. For Watt, the word pot does not reveal all the aspects of which it is made, rather the conventional understanding and naming of the object has provided an automatic response from the mind, which is a very difficult position for Watt. For Watt, the pot is not just a pot any longer. He moves away from the object, the pot, and is further troubled to a great degree by the nature of naming whether it is a name of a person or a thing. For example, the naming of a person also poses the same problem as the naming of an object, because the way in which the thing or the self is approached comes 'with a record, with an idea, with a conclusion, with prejudice; that is, you name the experience', and does not take what the thing is. 'This terming gives quality to experience, the quality arising out of naming' (Krishnamurti, *Commentaries on Living Series*). 'Self' is plural and is formed of aggregates, as becomes clear from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, and so is the illusion of the name, which produces conflict between what is and what should be. Watt feels so unhappy about this failure of language that

> [h]e would set to tying names on things, and on himself, almost as a woman's hats. Thus pseudo-pot he would say, after reflection […] As for himself, though he could no longer call it a man, as he had used to do, with the intuition that he was perhaps not talking nonsense, yet he could not imagine what else to call it, if not a man. (W 69)

Watt's struggle portrays the understanding of the failure of the language to address both things and self. An earlier entry in Beckett's *German Diaries* from March 1937 contextualises this failure of language, in which Beckett mentions 'a dissonance […] that the word cannot express' (Nixon 20). Thus, the speculation about naming in *Watt* owes much to this 'dissonance', and the novel betrays Beckett's ardent desire, set out in the 'German Letter' later in 1937 'to drill one hole after another into it [language] until that which lurks behind, be it something or nothing, starts seeping through – I cannot imagine a higher goal for today's writer' (BL I 518). This characteristic of being aware is what seeps through the language and is echoed in Watt's experience, where

> Watt's attention was extreme, in the beginning, to all that went on about him. Not a sound was made, within earshot, that he did not capture and when necessary, interrogate, and he opened wide his eyes to all that passed, near and at a distance, to all that came and went and paused and stirred, and to all that brightened and darkened and grew and dwindled, and he grasped, in many cases, the nature of the object affected, and even the immediate cause of its being so. (W 71)

Watt's experience is that of complete awareness of things and situations as they are. Watt comes close to an aspect of Buddhist meditation whereby the ability to recognise things as they are arises and passes away, becoming clear and perceptible. This awareness leads Watt to sense the exact manner of things happening in and around Mr. Knott's house.

In another instance of this fragmented perception, Watt gains entry into Erskine's room, where the object of note is a picture on the wall, which has a circle drawn by a compass, but which is broken at its lowest point. There is a dot in the eastern background. Watt 'wondered how long it would be before the point and circle entered together upon the same plane' (W 109), signifying the importance of being together and dependent in the picture. He also confronts the essenceless condition through this picture on the wall. In turn, this encapsulates Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason and the essenceless characteristic of things and objects. This further hint at a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' angle of interpretation. As Watt appears to wonder, he muses upon a

> circle and its centre in search of each other, or a circle and its centre in search of a centre and a circle respectively, or a circle and its centre in search of its centre and a centre respectively, or a circle and its centre in search of a centre and its circle respectively […] and at the thought that it was perhaps this, a circle and a centre not

> its centre in search of a centre and its circle respectively, in boundless space, in endless time, then Watt's eyes filled with tears that he could not stem, and they flowed down his fluted cheeks unchecked, in a steady flow, refreshing him gently (W 110).

This understanding – that the essence of the circle is not traceable – brings tears to Watt's eyes. The passage suggests an absence of the essence of being, which is initially painful to perceive due to the loss of identity, when the initial fixation with the 'I' is so strong. However, this loss of essence is ultimately refreshing for Watt. It is refreshing because the notion of the self becomes clear by establishing all its characteristics, along with the understanding that 'I' becomes associated not only with one element, but with all the elements of the self.

As noted above, working in Mr's Knott's house on the ground floor as a servant first brings the experience of nothing for Watt: 'What had he learnt? Nothing. Of his anxiety to improve, of his anxiety to understand, of his anxiety to get well, what remained? Nothing' (127). This nothing intrudes into Watt's journey; namely, the experience of awareness. This makes a gentle uplifting of the veil of illusion from the matter of incidents and the exploration of the self that disintegrates into the fragmented form of thoughts and perceptions.

Watt finally leaves Mr. Knott's house in the same way as he came, when Micks joins Mr. Knott's establishment. Watt then travels toward the railway station; at which time, he 'did not desire conversation, he did not desire company, he did not desire consolation, he felt no wish for an erection, no, all he desired was to have his uncertainty removed, in this connection' (W 196). Watt leaves without giving any reason at the end, and knows that no attempt can possibly bring about the reality of the things and self, because there is no reality. The bliss of understanding the relativistic or inter-dependent nature of things illuminated by a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, and further understood in *Watt* where 'Nothing changed, Mr. Knott's establishment, because nothing remained, and nothing came or went, because all was a coming and going' (W 132-33). The key phrase here is 'all is a coming and a going'. This focuses on the temporality of both inner and outer world. Impermanence is an essential characteristic through which disintegration of the self is understood in Buddhism. The different aspects of the self that are interdependent on each other are in the process of constant change in Watt. This disintegration of the self portrayed

throughout *Watt* comes alive when Watt finds: 'As for himself, though he could no longer call it a man, as he used to do, with the institution that he was perhaps not talking nonsense, yet he could not imagine what else to call it, if not man' (W 83). To judge the self as singular becomes fallacious and a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework helps in illuminating how Beckett's use of language represents its exact use by highlighting the experience as it is. This means to follow the movement of each aspect of the self with intensified awareness, which can address the self with all its constituent elements, in constant change while interacting with each other and at the same time, distinguish each constituent from the other.

The awareness of coming and going that operates within Watt's mind in relation to feelings and thoughts along with the change of Watt's surrounding brings self-consciousness, but this contemplation appears at the earliest stages of Watt, while the veil appears after a while at a later stage. 'He did not desire conversation, he did not desire company, he did not desire consolation, he felt no wish for an erection, no, all he desired was to have his uncertainty removed in this connection' (W196). This uncertainty is removed through awareness. The brilliance with which Watt encounters things and situations and his self encourages observation without perception when he is inside the waiting-room of the railway station 'Watt saw now his companion all this time had been a chair. Little by little, as the light grew, he came to know this chair, so well, that in the end he knew it better than many a chair he had sat on…' and 'it was a high, narrow, black, wooden chair, with arms, and castors' (W 204). This leads Watt to understand not to perceive things through intellect. As Watt reached the railway-station, which was closed, Watt experienced the bliss outside.

> He contemplated with wonder also the ample recession of the plain, its flow so free and simple to the mountains, the crumpled umbers of its verge. His eyes then rising with the rising land fell ultimately on the mirrored sky, its coalsacks, its setting constellations, and on the eyes, ripple-blurred, staring from admist the waters' (W 194).

This contemplation of the world around the self without giving perceptions is an awareness that brings his mind to rest. In Schopenhauer words, Watt has attained a place where 'he is least afraid of becoming nothing' and depicted how 'individuality, of course, is inherent above all in the intellect; reflecting the phenomenon' (WWR II 609). Being an early text, and written during wartime, *Watt* suggests the early stages of Beckett's engagement with a

fragmented self and the setting apart from illusion. The character has a name, although, the name punningly suggests a question of fragility of the name: 'what'.

Conclusion

'Schopenhauerian Buddhism' and the Vedic theme of the 'veil of Maya' open the possibility of interpreting *Watt* as an attempt to interrogate aspects of the self in relation to the outside world. This conjunction also signifies the importance of not giving any answers or meanings in the novel, for instance, when Watt 'lay on the seat, without thought or sensation […] in his skull the voices whispering their canon […] this was very likely a sensation also, strictly speaking' (W 201).

Reaching Mr. Knott's establishment for Watt is like reaching a space within, where

> sensations, the premonitions of harmony are irrefragable, of imminent harmony, when all outside him will be he, the flowers the flowers among him, the sky the sky that he is above him, the earth trodden the earth treading, and all sound his echo. When in a word he will be in his midst at last, after so many tedious years spent clinging to the perimeter (W 33).

This harmony comes from recognising the things outside him, like the sky and flowers, without the prick from intended automatic perception and the conscious thought mode that gives definition to the world. Likewise, the sensations within Watt are all fragmented elements of the self that are working together in harmony. Watt is moving towards imminent harmony from where he can recognise the different aspects of the self, which are dependent and essenceless according to Buddhist emptiness. After a long wait, he can clearly see that there is no identity, which he can hold onto forever, since the elements of the self are also interacting and passing away. The perimeter of the self reaches nothingness, and the veil embedded in the self is unveiled. In Schopenhauer's words:

> If the inducements to pleasure and enjoyment leave it unaffected, or the threats and fury of enraged enemies do not shake it, if the entreaties of deluded friends do not cause its resolve to waver, and the deceptive forms the scorn of fools and the populace does not disconcert it or perplex it as to its own worth, then it seems to be under the influence of a spirit world visible to it alone and this is the world of concepts, before which that perceptibly present moment, open to all, dissolve like phantom (WWR II 148).

Thus, the silence is reached when the 'I' is dissolved and there are no more phantoms of thoughts provoking perceptions about the world, and things are visible as they are. This unveils the illusion embedded in the sense of the self and in its relation to the outside world. Watt's is therefore an unusual journey, because the plot is not linear, but what becomes apparent is that in his quest for the essence of things he is unable to find them. Instead, he finds a place where 'sounds meaning nothing […] that demand nothing, ordain nothing, explain nothing, propound nothing' (W 32). He continues to feel this sense while working in Mr. Knott's household – termed 'the being of nothing' (W 32) – yet there is pleasure in this nothingness because the experience is without perception about things and places. The experience is like the food prepared for Mr. Knott:

> a sufficient quantity of food was prepared and cooked to carry Mr. Knott through the week […] these things, and many others too numerous to mention, were well mixed together in the famous pot and boiled for four hours, until the consistence of a mess, or poss, was obtained, and all the good things to eat, and all the good things to drink, and all the good things to take for the good of the health were inextricably mingled and transformed into a single good thing that was neither food, nor drink, nor physic, but quite a new good thing.

This 'new thing' highlighted in *Watt* is a metonymy of all the things as they are, mixed, dependent and without any name, because naming will bind this new thing into a perception that again needs interpretation, and interpretation is what is not needed; observation is enough to understand some of the very simple aspects of self and existence. What is clear in *Watt* are the moment-to-moment experiences of the characters, unfolding the possibility of directly dealing with the expressions of the inner and the outer world. There is no linear narrative, but a conscious effort on the part of the characters to set out on a journey to 'know thyself': 'Watt learned towards the end of this stay in Mr. Knott's house to accept that nothing had happened, that a nothing had happened, learned to bear it and even, in a shy way, to like it' (66).

On the other hand, the explanation of nothing in *Murphy* through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' reading of emptiness reveals Murphy's observational attitude in confronting the nature of the interaction between different parts of his self. The elements of the mind, such as forms, feeling and perceptions, help Murphy to discern various elements of the self and see the role of interactions between them. A 'Schopenhauerian-Buddhist' approach helped

Beckett in exploring the inner search in Murphy's mind by starting the character's fictional journey through suffering and concluding it with the disintegration of the self. The elements of the self come together (dependent origination) and fall apart (disintegration). The objective in *Murphy* was to confront this disintegration of the self and represent it through the symbolic illustration of Murphy's ash being thrown on the floor at the end, so that it mingles with other elements. Thus, the understanding of Beckett's rendering of nothingness in *Murphy* evolves from confronting suffering, as well as the nature of the self through the mind. This understanding of nothingness involves comprehending an essenceless nature of forms, which according to Buddhism are always evolving and falling apart, but always without a core or essence. A 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework helps in revealing the disintegrated aspect of the self. *Murphy* shows the freedom attained in the composition of forms in mind as dependent on 'the freedom of that light and dark that did not clash, nor alternate, nor fade, nor lighten except to their communion' (M 141). This 'communion' is a result of the interaction between the elements of the self in various permutations. Murphy takes a journey within the self, and encounters parts of his self in fragmented aspects of mind and body. Accordingly, the novel ends with the symbolic expression of his self in complete disintegration, as his ashes are scattered on the floor.

Murphy and *Watt* depict the contemplation of objects, while remaining aware of the relationship of the world within and without. Thus, filtering the understanding of the novel through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework and reaching the unfolding of the 'veil of Maya' are important revelations. Both novels give a unique opportunity to confront one's own self. What follows in these two novels is the germination of the sense that the expression of the self can be found in disintegration: by reaching a point of nothingness through observation; and by recognising that the essenceless condition of the 'veil of Maya' is dispelled, but with a persisting expression of suffering which is not present in the late writings. The next chapter will analyse the late works that also draw upon this understanding of the self that Beckett presents in his works. However, the later works correspond to a more complete recognition of the self as it is, in 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' terms including the suffering, which can be seen as perception formed through the memories. By contrast, in last works of Beckett the 'veil of Maya' is completely uncovered from the sense of oneself.

Chapter 4

The expression of 'self' and 'nothing' in *Company, Ill Seen Ill Said*, and *Worstward Ho*

After *Watt*, Beckett entered what scholars call the middle period (1945-1960) of his literary works. During these fifteen years, Beckett's works were more directly concerned with writing about failure than previously and he also turned from English to writing in French (Pattie 63). He produced four stage plays (*Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame*, *Krapp's Last Tape* and *Happy Days*), the three novels *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable*; and prose works including *How It Is* and *Texts for Nothing*. Working across different genres in the middle period and after receiving Nobel Prize in 1969, Beckett continued to show a striking concern with failure. Although, the middle works concentrate largely on the themes of nothing and self, there is no direct evidence of Beckett reading Schopenhauer during this time. Beckett explores disintegration and nothing in the middle works which is evident from examples taken from the texts written during this period. For example, in *Texts of Nothing* I, 'I need nothing, neither to go on nor to stay where I am, it's truly all one to me, I should turn away from it all, away from body, away from head, let them work it out between them, let them cease' (TN I 71); in *The Unnamable*, 'All for nothing again. Even Mahood has left me, I'm alone' (TU 316). However, Beckett's 'Sottisier' notebook and letters from the late 1970s do show evidence of a return to Schopenhauer's philosophy as well as Beckett's extraordinary concern with the representation of the self as fragmented and the heightened sense of awareness in the relation between the inner and the outer world which yields 'profounds of mind' with a 'mindlessness'. This additional sense of awareness of the self in fragmentation and the death of the conventional image of the self as singular sustain attention that dissolves the boundaries and meaning of the self. In Pattie's words, the late works show 'an approach to writing that made use of the fewest possible resources, that dealt in the discarded or overlooked elements of creative work' (85). Through an ever shorter and more distilled style of his prose, Beckett's late texts show a binding association with the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework.

As mentioned previously, having had an initial encounter with Schopenhauer's philosophy in the 1930s, Beckett returned to him in the 1970s for creative inspiration. During this

period, Beckett not only read Schopenhauer's thesis *On the Fourfold Root to the Principle of Sufficient Reason* but also *The World as Will and Idea* and *The World as Will and Representation*, but also 'essays in *Paralipomena* like Additional Remarks on the Doctrine of the Vanity of Existence, Additional Remarks on the Doctrine of the Suffering of the World, On Suicide, Additional Remarks on the Doctrine of the Affirmation and Denial of the Will-to-Live' (Pothast 15-16). In his 'Sottisier' notebook there are a number of entries taken from Schopenhauer, written in German between July 1979 and December 1980 (Pothast 15). For example, 'Das leben ist ein Pensum zum Abarbeiten: in diesem Sinne ist *defunctus* ein schooner Ausdruck' [Life is a pensum to be worked off: in that sense 'defunctus' is a fine expression]; 'Die Welt ist eben die Hölle, u. die Menschen sind einerseits die gequälten Seelen u. andererseits die Teufel darin' [The world is just a hell and in it human beings are the tortured souls on the one hand, and the devils on the other]; Beckett also notes 'Life's penal colony' (Pothast 15). It is also remarkable to note that Beckett recorded: 'Sch. 'totgeschwiegen' from Schopenhauer's *Concerning the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* in which 'Schopenhauer explains that the mind interprets the experiences of the body as effects of a cause, which it situates outside the organism' (Van Hulle, Nixon *Beckett's Library* 150). In line with the understanding that Beckett re-read Schopenhauer by the 1970s 'there can be little doubt that Beckett's interest in Schopenhauer was a lifelong intellectual commitment, probably stronger and deeper than his contact with any other of the many philosophers whom he quotes or refers to in passing' (Pothast 16).

This chapter will discuss the late prose works, *Company* (1980), *Ill Seen Ill Said* (1982) and *Worstward Ho* (1983). A 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' reading of these texts suggests that Beckett's art had moved beyond storylines and fables; instead, the dominant material is the presentation of a fragmentary and dependent nature of the self as manifested through the physical and mental aspects. This central assertion in the texts persists in the form of disintegrated elements of the self that unveils the veil of illusion, as in *Ill Seen Ill Said*: 'the mind betrays the treacherous eye and the treacherous word their treacheries. Haze sole certitude' (ISIS 78). This treachery is highlighted when a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework is used to approach Beckett's art as a form of awareness toward recognition that self is not singular but plural. On this note, Dirk Van Hulle argues that 'in his later works, Beckett seems to have anticipated some recent developments in cognitive science, notably by means of his hands-on experience with multiple drafts and writing as a form of thinking'

(8). However, this anticipation of cognitive experience follows observation as a kind of first-hand experience of the self but without the use of thought. Raymond Federman asserts that Beckett's literature during this late period becomes conceptual, and 'empties itself of its own subject – no more fable, no more storyline, no more anecdote' ('The Imaginary Museum of Samuel Beckett'). Federman's argument can be taken further with observation through the optic of the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework that showcases the presentation of the self as it moves, thinks, hears, feels and then dissolves. The singularity of the sense of 'I' becomes dissolved in the later writings because observation opens the doorway to an understanding of the self, which is comprised of different parts that make up the sense of 'I'. In the 'late trilogy', Beckett's protagonists are alienated from the sense of an 'I' – their senses and society representing the recognition of the disintegrated and dependent characteristic of the various elements of the self. Regarding the illusion embedded in the knowledge of the self, as stressed earlier in terms of the 'veil of Maya', a brief summary here will help recall its meaning. The concept implies recognising that there is an illusion embedded in the singular sense of 'I'. In Schopenhauer's Buddhist-derived thinking, it is in the mind that thoughts are produced, and it is in the interactions between thoughts and perception-building within the mind that the sense of 'I' is taken into account. On observing the mind, two aspects are revealed: thoughts and perceptions. The nature of thought is fleeting – that is, it arises and passes away. Unless perceptions or feeling are added together, to bring pleasure or pain as the case may be in the realm of a fictitious singular entity 'I', thought will remain thought in the realm of thought and feeling will remain feeling in the realm of feeling. This means feeling will not be accompanied by thoughts or perceptions arising in the mind and the other aggregates will not anticipate further in the territory of feeling. The recognition of this process happens first when the sense of 'I' is taken as singular. But mind itself has two capabilities: one, thought generation, perception formation and second, to relate feeling, which is, the sense of pleasure or pain with 'I' in relation to the perception formed. However, in the texts different aspects of the mental and physical elements of the characters are stressed. As Robinson claims, 'Beckett pursued his hero until nothing remained but the voice, the silence and eternity' (Robinson 208). Beckett's later period shows his concern with the question of self in greater detail, and more emphasis is on observation than in the middle and early prose. As Martha Fehsenfeld says of *Company*: 'the importance of the Voice and its omnipresence and lack of fixity is essential to the nature of the work' (355). The lack of fixity signifies the temporal nature of the interacting elements of the self which in the text is voice. The

protagonists are tempted to withdraw from the outer world, and are moved from within to confront their minds and their self.

These distinctive features of the self that the narrators of Beckett's late works encounter are presented as fragments. Knowlson writes that Beckett spelled out the theme of the self as the *only* theme, written in a card for Morton Feldman in 1976 (Knowlson, *Damned to Fame* 98). The note indicates Beckett's involvement with the aspect of the self as can be found in 'neither', which Feldman set to music, and which treats the theme of the self succinctly: 'to and fro in shadow from inner to outer shadow, from impenetrable self to impenetrable unself by way of neither' ('neither' 258). It becomes difficult to say if there is self or no-self. This denial of self or no-self from a 'Schopenhauerian-Buddhism' perspective charts the middle way in which both interpretations of the self or no-self are discarded and are based on observation limiting the understanding of the self through intellect or viewpoints.

Beckett's text illuminates three properties of the self: one, the impenetrable self (there is disintegration of the elements of the mental and physical aspects of the self); two, the impenetrable unself (on investigation no essence is found within the interacting constituents of the self, namely of feeling, perception, consciousness and fabrication); and three, 'by way of neither' (thus reaching an awareness where saying that there is self and also saying there is no self is absurd). During interviews with Charles Juliet recorded as 'Conversations with Samuel Beckett' conducted between 1968 and 1977, Beckett again expressed this interest in the self: 'In the end, you don't know who is speaking anymore. The subject disappears completely. That's the end result of the identity crisis' (157). This statement can be interpreted as Beckett's view of the dissolution of the self and its disappearance, because the self and the voice coming from the self are observed intuitively. The elements of the self which comprise both the voice and the self are one in our conventional understanding, but in Beckett's representation in these later years, the inner self – which, when understood through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework results in an amalgamation of the constituent elements of the mind, feeling, form and consciousness which are dependent on each other and essenceless. In Beckett's late works, the person who speaks and the self who is speaking can be considered separately. For Beckett's protagonists, the idea of a singular 'I' is different from the voice with which they are speaking. Therefore, the question here is whether it is the speaker or the speaker's voice which should be taken as the 'I' or the self, or whether there is a technicality involved in the process of 'I' formation, where 'I' is dependent on both the voice and the thought of the speaker. This suggests that Beckett's

idea of the self as being volatile, plural and fragmented, also acknowledges the characteristic of dependency. Hence, the theme of the self in Beckett is focused on the manifestation of the self, and the no-self – its composition, dissolution and fragmentation. Therefore, the first major step towards understanding Beckett's late works is to grasp the idea of the impenetrable self and no-self through the interpretative framework of 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism'.

There is a famous conversation relating Buddha's response to a wanderer named Vacchagotta, who asks whether the self exists or does not. Buddha remained silent. Vacchagotta leaves when he receives no answer. But Ananda, Buddha's disciple, asks why he remained silent, to which Buddha replies:

1. To state that there is a self would be to side with the wrong view of eternalism.
2. To state that there is no self would be to side with the wrong view of annihilation.
3. To state that there is a self would not be in keeping with the arising of knowledge that all phenomena are non-self.
4. To tell Vacchagotta that there is no self would have left him even more bewildered than he already was. (Thānissaro 'The Not-Self Strategy')

For Schopenhauer, his philosophy 'sticks to the actual facts of outward and inward experience as they are accessible to everyone' and 'accordingly, it arrives at no conclusions as to what exists beyond all possible experience' (WWR II 640). In a similar way, Beckett's expression of the self leads the reader to conceive that there is no use in keeping up with the view of self and no-self, but that observation of the self can reveal the aspects of the self that is 'by way of neither'. This helps in observing the process that gives rise to suffering and reaching the knowledge behind the cause of suffering.

In this chapter, the evolution of Beckett's prose works will be examined in two ways. The first involves examining the reason behind the representation of Beckett's protagonists who have divided a conception of the self; and second, the recognition of the self as plural, which is dependent in nature and without essence. Once these aspects are clearly seen and understood from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective, the traditional idea of the self will no longer pertain to the singularity of the 'I' and the justification for Beckett's use of the expression of the self in disintegrated form and its dependent and essenceless nature will become clear. In his 'late trilogy', Beckett illustrates vivid details of the processes involved in the making of the self, rather than narrating a story in a coherent form – that is, marked

with a beginning, middle and end. This absence of a conventional setting also echoes earlier modernist literary techniques of fragmentation. For example, works such as *The Waste Land*, *Ulysses*, and *Four Quartets* represent selfhood as pluralist and discontinuous. However, Beckett's late theme of the self involves not only a literary technique but also a philosophical understanding of the interdependence between the elements of the self (mind, feeling, and perception), and of the insubstantial nature of the self. The detailed excavation of the self in the late works reveals interaction at various levels, both within the body (mind, eyes, voice) and outside the body (awareness of the surroundings, such as a table, chair and windows) to depict the interdependent nature of the elements that form the self.

The late trilogy exhibits a tendency towards restricted emotional flow, in contrast to Beckett's early works where emotions like suffering, love and hate are clearly revealed. In keeping with this view of the works, Knowlson notes: 'The widely acknowledged power of his writing, particularly in late works, comes from the fact that emotions are strictly contained' (Knowlson, *Damned to Fame* 671). This approach to the emotions, of keeping them contained, is implicit in Beckett's texts where feeling is an element of the self and not the essence of the self per se. When the relationship between the perception and feeling is broken, the reason behind suffering is revealed since suffering is the result of combining feeling with perception and then entangling the process with the false idea of the self. In Beckett's late writings, characters are already present in disintegrated form and are working with this awareness of disintegration embedded in the sense of the self. The reader has to position himself/herself as under investigation of the inner self. Through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework it is easy to disassemble the elements of the self and observe its functionality.

Also, the late works discard the false consolation found in the unified idea of the self, which produces the illusion created by a stable 'I'. The Vedic philosophy of the 'veil of Maya' presents the idea of the self as false, which can be confirmed by a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework revealing that the usual 'I' and the related 'me' identify themselves as singular. On deeper observation of the 'I', the self is identified with voice and name, and is equated with the thought formed about the self. Following from this, the magic word 'I' is equated with name and thought, so that 'I' slowly pushes itself through every part of the self (which include feelings, body, mind, perceptions and thought forms that arise inside the mind). For example, if a thing gets broken, the notion that 'my thing gets broken' brings about suffering. Suffering begins when the 'I' steps into the event. The fact that the object is

broken is not the issue, but the thought that '*my* object has been broken' introduces pain. From a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective, the observation of the self as composed of all its constituent elements brings peace and happiness, because the notion of self as a unitary entity is dissolved, and the idea of 'me', 'mine' or 'I' is no longer attached singularly to an object or to a thought form; instead, the feeling, the thought and the voice are taken up individually, and the recognition of the self as plural ends suffering. This plurality of the self can be gleaned from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework in which the self is seen as being a fabricated entity, the result of the combination of various elements like form, feeling, perception, and consciousness that interact to give a false sense of a singular self, as no more than just a process. This is a very skilful portrayal of the self which activates a non-conceptual intelligence, where wisdom comes with the ability to be choice-lessly aware of the processes involved in the making of the self. Just look and just listen.

Beckett's preference for nothingness along with the expression of the disintegrated self is evident in his 'Sottisier notebook', as well as in his late publications. Thus, in the late 1970s, between 13th and 18th January 1978, Beckett noted in his Sottisier notebook: 'Ex nihilo omne fit [From nothing originates nothing]'. Beckett's engagement with nothing/nothingness has been discussed by many critics, who suggest that he understood it in a straightforward fashion, by referring to it as a condition that brings about pessimism, futility and unhappiness. For example, Raymond Federman discusses existential concerns in Beckett's late prose works, as shown by Beckett's interest in the existence of man in isolation, 'cut-off from reality and surrounded by illusions he substitutes for the resulting void' (Federman, *Journey to Chaos* 194). Federman's argument stresses an existential view of the meaninglessness of existence and the deeply embedded presence of suffering in the world. Fletcher argues: 'His fiction progresses towards more and more total emptiness, in which plot, character and language itself crumble to nothing' (Fletcher, *Samuel Beckett's Art* 144). Fletcher's argument on nothing in Beckett's writing takes on board the basic human condition of suffering and emptiness. The emptiness here concerns the condition of feeling that there is nothing worthwhile in existence, which is in contrast to the emptiness of 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism' that explains the phenomena embedded in the sense of 'I' as positive nothingness. Beckett's preference for Schopenhauer's philosophy in *The Fourfold Root to the Principle of Sufficient Reason* was because it provided an understanding of the principle of sufficient reason, helping to understand the disintegrated and essenceless quality of the self, and in turn giving a systematic explanation for the reason behind

suffering. In this vein, Paul Davies relates the self to the 'absence at the core of being' and 'the perennial conflict of being' (Davies, *The Ideal Real* 196). However, from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective there is no conflict of being because it is not possible to pin down being:

> Beckett's late works scrutinize the false reassurances of the Western identity pattern. The fragmentation of the mind and matter gives illusory solidity to some elements in the picture, while denying the relevance, even existence, of others, thereby threatening overall mental and physical health. (Davies, 'On Beckett's Metaphysics of Non-Location' 399)

Davies's argument stresses the negative aspect in recognising that there is illusory solidity in the concept of the self because there is no self and the existence of 'I' is threatened. The mental and physical health of the self is under threat because the understanding of the self is not based on observation and unless self is observed, it will remain a source of conflict and unhappiness. However, self becomes liberated when applying a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework because according to this framework the observation of the self starts from a ruptured idea of 'I' because during observation focus is slowly moved onto each part of the self. The false reassurance of the self's identity and its fragmentation is emphasised in this reading. Beckett's late works confront the elements of the self through the segregation of the elements of the self as mind, eyes, memory, hands and other physical and mental parts. This separation brings peace without giving voice or interpretation to the elements of the self. For example, in *Ill Seen Ill Said* Beckett depicts the function of mind as:

> Already all confusion. Things and imaginings. As of always. Confusion amounting to nothing. Despite precautions. If only she could be pure figment. Unalloyed. This old so dying woman. So dead. In the madhouse of the skull and nowhere else. Where no more precautions to be taken. No precautions possible. Cooped up there with the rest. Hovel and stones. The lot. And the eye. How simple all then. If only all could be pure figment. Neither be nor been nor by any shift to be. Gently gently. On. Careful. (ISIS 67)

Here, the function of 'mind' can usefully emerge if 'mind' is observed just as a storehouse of thoughts and nothing else. This challenge the identity of the self, and gives recognition to the mind as an element of the self: fragmented and insubstantial. However, the emphasis on nothing in Beckett's idea of the fragmented self draws upon Schopenhauer's principle of

sufficient reason, whilst the insubstantial nature of the self acknowledges the emptiness that can be traced to the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework. This relation between Beckett and Buddhism is linked through Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason [Nothing is without a ground or reason why it is], with emphasis upon Schopenhauer's nothing refracted through Buddhist concepts of emptiness. We can recall from Chapter One how in *The World as Will and Representation* Schopenhauer describes his concept of nothing as the 'prajana-paramita' of Buddhism.

In order to situate this nothing in the idea of the self in Beckett's *Company*, *Ill Seen Ill Said* and *Worstward Ho*, I will now highlight some of the previous research on the questions of the self in Beckett's late prose. I will then turn to how Schopenhauer's philosophy elucidates the idea of the fragmented self as the reason behind suffering and then provide artistic instances of this dissolution of the self which are present in Beckett's late prose. Finally, with reference to 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism' an alternative interpretation of Beckett's use of elements of the self is presented where the elements of the self have been viewed individually, and so they elucidate the more Buddhist conception of the emptiness of the self in disintegrated form without essence.

In Beckett's late trilogy critics have found a common difficulty in the way he portrays the unstable nature of the self and being. Many have fixed on the identity of the self by looking for a name. Justin Beplate writes: 'The question "Who Speaks?" lies at the heart of Samuel Beckett's mature prose writings' (Beplate, 'Who Speaks?' 154) and this raises a crucial issue in Beckett's art: the fundamental question about the singular aspect of the self, where self and the person who speaks are taken to be two different elements. Carla Locatelli argues that 'through a systematic fragmentation, a narrative suspension, and the simultaneous use of different referential systems, discourse in *Company* manages to challenge the objective limits of reference, as well as the immediacy of the "I"' (Locatelli 181). The lack of a definite point, and the obvious fragmentation within the work, mean that identifying the origin and fixity of the self creates difficulty for critics. Gary Handwerk notes that Beckett's narratives depict a frustrated desire for the stability of identity and being; this challenge is enhanced given that language cannot confirm or create an existence for the self that Beckett is trying to produce (Handwerk 65). Similarly, Poiana argues that 'to understand the late trilogy it is important to know that the ontological structure of the narratives' of these texts shows 'the principle of reduction' (141). This reduction according to Poiana comes from Badiou's view on the question of being which can articulate itself

only in terms of an attempt to remove itself from the concept of unity. Reduction of being has generally been seen 'with a large number of affective and thematic orientations. Among these are loss, mourning, failure, silencing, error, impotence and destitution' (141). However, reduction of being brings peace and an explanation of suffering in Beckett's trilogy. Therefore, the use of a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework shows how the self also demands attention and observation in order that we can see with clarity the phenomena behind the process called the self.

The rendering of self when seen through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism' points to the surface of the 'I' suggesting its constituents, which include form, thought, feeling, perception and consciousness. The self is volatile and plural, and has an essenceless or empty nature. This understanding returns us to the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' view of emptiness.

A. *Company*

The prose piece *Company* (1980) presents an exquisite investigation of the self. The self includes both physical as well as mental aspects: for example, mind, thought, body and voice. The 'internal splitting of the subject found in *Company* performs a significant task in narrating a self', notes Salmon-Bitton (143). The prose text takes us on a journey through past experiences and narratives, with striking scenes from adolescence and boyhood; however, the protagonist of the text is divided into a speaker, a thinker and a physical body. The protagonist is involved in thinking, narrating, remembering and functioning physically. The dissection of the self is approached through the method of fragmentation, where each element of the body/mind is divided into an internal and external element, each performing its assigned task. The self is present in different forms (mind, feeling, thought, perception, consciousness) in the text. Lawrence Graver describes the scene as that of 'an old man lying on his back alone in the dark [the protagonist] is spoken to by a ghostly, unrelenting voice he can neither verify nor name' (Graver, *Samuel Beckett's Company comes to Williams Downstage*). The character can hear a voice, the origin of which cannot be verified by the hearer. In this regard, Pilling calls *Company* 'complex rather than complacent and [it] succeeds in defamiliarizing the familiar and making the strange even stranger' (Pilling, '*Company*'). It is complex because the naming that familiarises the self is missing. Pilling further argues that the complex structure of the text in *Company* focuses on the notion that words and language cannot be used to describe all aspects of an entity. For example, when we call someone by name, we seek to direct that person's attention towards us. This

includes diverting their minds, turning their physical body towards us in person, and stimulating their feelings and engaging their perceptions. As seen in the case of Fritz Mauthner earlier, naming as a linguistic tag is a complex formation which identifies itself with all the aspects of a person when his or her name is called, thus producing what Ed Jewinski calls, in terms of Beckett's *Company,* the philosophical scepticism which pervades the novella: one that succeeds in peeling away the layers of superfluous phenomena through the 'sustained series of efforts to deprive the protagonists of attributes and possessions which are inessential to the core questions of how Beings imagine themselves' (Jewinski '*Company*, Post-structuralism, and Mimetalogique' 141-60). Jewinski's argument commences from a post-structuralist perspective, whereas a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' reading on language employs a more rooted understanding. These interpretations highlight a complexity and strangeness of the narrative voice; yet this complex structure of the plot can also be read through Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason, which is similar to the Buddhist idea of dependent origination. The self vanishes when the observation of the interaction between these elements becomes conspicuous, or in Schopenhauer's words 'I know my body only in the perception of my brain. This perception is brought about through the senses, and on their data the perceiving understanding carries out its function of passing from the effect to the cause' (WWR II 6). Accordingly, one's perception of an object is formed when mind, memory and habit combine and form into a singular entity in the mind. This knowledge commencing from the observation of the self can usefully be applied to display the interplay of mind, memory and habit through Schopenhauer's *principium individutionis*.

Company starts with 'A voice [which] comes to one in the dark. Imagine' (C 3). The voice in the dark can be said to reside in the dark zones of the mind which are not perceptible to any eye. The thoughts seem to be addressing someone in the mind, and necessarily it is the self. Readers regard this voice as addressing the self, because no other character is introduced by Beckett in the text. The formation of the self thus first finds its construction and presence in thoughts. The thoughts address the rest of the body as the self, and only a very small portion of what is heard by the thinking mind is understood, because the mind is vacillating between past and present – 'only a small part of what is said can be verified' (C 3) – and the observation continues. From a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' understanding, thoughts are representative of past perceptions. In the text, thinking seems to oscillate between past and present. The question that *Company* poses is: what is there in the entity

called the self that is trying to find acceptance in thought? Does it involve memories of the past in relation to the idea of the self, or the present speaking voice in relation to the idea of the self? This is what needs to be considered: 'that then is the proposition' (C 3). Both propositions, past memories and the present voice, show the mind-thought interdependence, which can be understood via Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason. Mind-thought interaction lurks in past memories, and sometimes in the present, and rarely in the future; as the text says, 'with occasional allusion to a present and more rarely to a future' (C 3). Beckett describes this as company: company for the mind, which is thought and this is the interplay between the two constituents of the self. The function of the mind as an element of the self is to generate thoughts, depicting the process of interdependence. Thoughts will offer company to the mind, and this process will attain an interminable continuity, 'in fact, it is a phenomenon of the brain' since the 'person is split up into knowing and the known, into object and subject, and here, as everywhere, these two face each other inseparable and irreconcilable' (WWR II 6). At the end of one thought another will appear, and at last 'you will end as you now are, in the same position where your mind will devise thoughts to give company' (C 3). Stephen Bachelor helpfully illuminates this perception of self as 'I', and writes, 'who "I am" appears coherent only because of the monologue we keep repeating, editing, censoring and embellishing in our heads' (24). In other words, the notion of the self is the play of thought and perception in the mind.

The narrator in *Company* tries to devise methods to fix identity with the use of the 'second person [that] marks the voice' and that of the third person that marks the 'cankerous other, an erosive or spreading sore' (C 4). Salmon-Bitton writes of 'this narratological process that comes into play in this postmodern literary act of self-construction', pointing to this 'new idea of self that is dynamic, rather than clustered and unified [and which] can accommodate the fragmentation characteristic of the experimental novel' (142, 143). Advocating this postmodern aspect of fragmentation, the philosophical 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework approaches the self in much the same way by presenting the disintegration of the self which is the result of observation but not through intellect because intellect is a part of the self, dependent on memory, time and perception. Hence, it is further removed from the truth of the self as it is. *Company* refers to the disintegrating aspect of the self as eroding, because there is a continuous erosion of the self on observation. Here, the fragmentation of the self is called 'cankerous' because it is based on the continuous deconstruction of the self:

> Use of the second person marks the voice. That of the third that cankerous other. Could he speak to and of whom the voice speaks there would be a first. But he cannot. He shall not. You cannot. You shall not. (C 3-4)

The expression of the self is in disintegration and Beckett produced the result of the voice coming from the self in fragmented form. There is also the denial of any original beginning of the voice and then restriction in pin- pointing the position of the voice within the self. In Schopenhauer's words

> The first imperfection is that the beginning of the chain of causes and effects that explains everything, in other words, of the connected and continuous changes, can positively never be reached, but, just like the limits of the world in space and time, recedes incessantly and in infinitum. The second imperfection is that all the efficient causes from which everything is explained always rest on something wholly inexplicable, that is, on the original qualities of things and the natural forces that make their appearance in them. (WWR II 173)

In this case, the voice, which is making its appearance in the self, is showing the imperfections of both. First, its continuity through the self and second, the constituents that make up the self. The singularity of the self is also questionable since the use of the pronouns 'I', 'we', 'me' fail.

Company's acknowledgement that 'apart from the voice and the faint sound of his breath there is no sound' (C 4) illustrates that Beckett is artistically rendering the segregation between mind and thought as part of the self and part of inner observation. The mind asserts the presence of the self in thoughts, perhaps for no other reason than 'to kindle in his mind this faint uncertainty and embarrassment' (C 5). The faint uncertainty of the self is due to the uncertainty of finding essence in thoughts and the embarrassment is due to the fact that self is not a singular entity. Clearly, this uncertainty exists in *Company* because the self is present as singular in the mind. Interdependence is an important segment to present a relationship between the external environment and the body as a whole. The activities of the mind (thought) circumscribe the idea of the self, but only upon self-observation can interdependent activity be revealed. In *Company*, Beckett is presenting an instance of just such disintegration and interdependence. The flux of self happens through the arbitrary construction of mental images that combine many elements attached to a singular entity called the self, which is but illusion (Maya). As for Schopenhauer 'it teaches us that our

intellect, in which that rapidly changing phenomenal world exhibits itself, does not comprehend the true, ultimate essence of things, but merely its appearance or phenomenon' (WWR II 475-76).

The other way of proceeding and looking into the self is to observe its formation in all its constituent parts – namely form, feeling, perceptions and consciousness. The relentless activity of the mind gives company to all the elements of the self: 'Yet a certain activity of mind however slight is a necessary complement of company' (C 4), and helps it to escape from 'faint uncertainty and embarrassment' (C 5). The faint uncertainty is the understanding that the self is not singular and the interaction between the elements of the self is infinite but temporary that is, it will arise and pass away. Beckett represents this uncertainty and embarrassment because it is unusual to say 'the eye is looking at the tree', instead of saying 'I am looking at the tree'. The understanding, seen through Schopenhauer's Buddhist-inflected principle of sufficient reason, is reflected in the awareness of and dependence on the sense organs. In Beckett's works, the representation of the role of the eye is to see, and so to say 'the eye is looking at the tree' is no longer a strange utterance. The process of seeing is not associated with other body parts; for if so, then looking at the tree would also involve the perception and the feeling involved during the process of seeing. Another example of this is when thought recalls the reflective voice, where, unless accompanied with thought, the voice 'might not as well cease' (C 5).

The narrator reminisces about scenes and memories from the past. These include the stories and thoughts that tell the protagonist about his childhood. Daniela Caselli writes '*Company* is the only text that has regularly elicited biographical interpretations' (272). This identification of the self with memories is the interactive strategy applied to access the protagonist's stories from the past. Here, we can recall the Proustian 'involuntary memory' in which perception and habit are not utilised to define or judge the event from the past. As Knowlson and other biographers have shown, these stories are constructed from Beckett's childhood and adolescence. The first memory that emerges from the protagonist's childhood involves the protagonist: walking along with his mother, he asks her about the reality of the distance between the sky and the earth (the difference between as it appears and as it really is). There was no answer, and the protagonist is told that his mother 'shook off your little hand and made you a cutting retort you have never forgotten' (C 6). Following this, another scene pops up from the past, of when his father left for the Dublin Mountains 'to take himself off and out of the way by his aversion to the pains and general unpleasantness of

labour and delivery' (C 7). On his return, he found that labour was still in full swing, and decided to set off again. Another past memory involves remembering himself as old and counting the steps that had been walked till the present date: 'the giant tot in miles. In leagues. How often round the earth already?' (C 8). Another scene features an old beggar woman failing to get in through a big garden gate. On the way home from school, Beckett recalls that he got off his cycle and opened the gate for her, and in return was blessed with the words: 'God reward you little master [… God] save you little master' (C 10). The narrator also recalls his father's 'upturned face' as he called out to him when 'he was standing at the tip of the high board. He calls, be a brave boy' (C 11). In this way, *Company's* narrator presents memory in relation to time and thought. Memories in the mind provide company for each other, but these memories are just an indication and observation of how mind is always filled with voices from the past. These voices have no essence or existence unless combined with feelings and perceptions that give them a sense of 'I'. Thus, to observe them is the strategy provided in *Company*; that is, to accompany memory with thought.

Beckett gallops through various mental states to portray a fragmented sense of the self. During the retelling of the memories in *Company*, the protagonist's ability to identify the self with the voice inside his head fails. The failure to identify memory as self, thought as self, or feeling as self remains one of the most important aspects in the narrator's search for self while recollecting the past. Beckett's writing shows parallels between the self and memory that draw on Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason, especially the interdependence of aspects of the self. It also draws on the synthesis of the self with mind and thoughts, which are elements of the so-called self. The self stands aloof, integrating all the elements yet containing nothing, because mind, thought and memory alone are not the self. Self is, rather, the coming together of the entire arrangement of mind, thought and memory, which is what Beckett depicts in *Company*: disintegration through observation.

The assemblage of scenes from the past acknowledges the interdependent activity of mind and thoughts of the protagonist. The voice is calling to the protagonist from many directions, with different intensities – from a distance, from nearby, or as a murmur. The impossibility of tracking down the voice is equivalent to the difficulty of tracking down the sound from a particular part of a lute. This represents an enigmatic condition that calls upon the constituents of the self, and the problem of representing any form (thought, perceptions, consciousness) with which the sense of 'I' can be related: 'what an addition to company that

would be!' (C 9). The voice becomes louder and then ebbs, but it is continuous: 'A faint voice at loudest. It slowly ebbs […] slowly back to faint full' (C 10). The 'unformulable gropings of the mind. Unstillable' (C 14) are like the constant voice of thoughts arising in the mind which are never still. The characteristic of the voice is that of a flat tone: 'No life. Same flat tone at all times' (C 12). The voice remains flat in response to all affirmations, negations, interrogations, exclamations and imperatives in the mind. Schopenhauer emphasises,

> The senses are merely the brain's outlets through which it receives material from outside (in the form of sensation); this material it elaborates into representation of perception. Those sensations that are to serve mainly for the objective apprehension of the external world must not be in themselves either agreeable or disagreeable. (WWR II 26)

With the constant chatter of thoughts within the mind, a failure of the voice is a welcome signal: 'What a help that would be. When the voice fails' (C 12). Silencing the chattering is helpful because it pauses the process of ever-flowing thoughts inside the mind. Thus, the observation of the interdependent activity of thought and mind is 'company' in itself. Beckett's representation of this activity in *Company* brings awareness of two constituent elements of the self: mind and emergent thoughts.

After this, there is a shift from the mind and thought of the protagonist in *Company*. This shift is now focused on the interdependent activity of eyes and mind. Eyes are watching and giving information to the mind so as to form perception, and this interdependence of mind and perceptual formation provides company again. But now a sense organ, the eye, is the company of the mind. 'There is of course the eye. Filling the whole field' and then there is mind present as 'I': 'Yes, I remember. That was I. That was I then' (C 12-13). Seeing exists and the mind is inferring the data received, and this is what can be reasoned as 'company'. This is the representation of the world in Schopenhauer's philosophy:

> For concepts obtain all meaning, all content, only from their reference to representations of perception, from which they have been abstracted, drawn off, in other words, formed by the dropping of everything inessential. If, therefore, the foundation of perception is taken away from them, they are empty and void. (WWR I 474)

The quotation above clearly expresses the importance of the factor of interdependence between words, perception and thoughts. If the mind and perception are taken away, the 'thing' in question loses its name. At first looking is pure and clear, but as soon as the company of the mind intrudes, perception is formed.

> In another dark or in the same another devising it all for company. This at first sight seems clear. But as the eye dwells it grows obscure. Indeed the longer the eye dwells the obscurer it grows. Till the eye closes and freed from pore the mind inquires. What does this mean? What finally does this mean that at first sight seemed clear? Till it the mind too closes as it were. As the window might close of a dark empty room. The single window giving on outer dark. Then nothing more. (C 13-14)

This obscurity is the result of not grasping the dependent activity of thought upon the seeing process, replacing it with the illusory 'my seeing'. Giving a name or tag takes away the clarity of a thing. Nothing is left, since the processes go into infinite regression until some other thought takes over. Beckett expresses this process intuitively in *Company*, and finds these interactions to be insubstantial: 'Then nothing more. No […] Unformulable gropings of the mind. Unstillable' (C 14). The unformulable interaction between the elements of the self suggests the fumbling nature of the elements of self, which interact to give perceptions and images but are unable to show the essence of the self (mind, thought, memory) as contained in any of the constituents.

Company then attempts to name a character in the text, naming the hearer 'H. Aspirate. Haitch', but fails because of the failure of the expression 'I', which cannot isolate the protagonist's feelings as the hearer, the voice as the hearer, or the mind as hearer. However, the phenomenon is so subtle that the inherent interdependence that forms the sense of 'I' is skipped over. Through the understanding of Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason the constituents of 'I' can be seen to represent an interdependent whole. Further in the text, the mind becomes a 'deviser of the voice and of its hearer and of himself' and 'deviser of himself for company' (C 16). Thus, the mind becomes the generator of thought (voice in the head) and hears its own thought formations (hearer). As Schopenhauer says: 'However much we may investigate, we obtain nothing but images and names' (WWR I 87). The constituents of the self are present in the mind as thought and perception. On identification with various elements, however, self as 'I' remains singular due to lack of awareness and observation from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework. *Company* expresses this

interdependence of the constituents of the self, and as readers of the text we are told: 'for the time being leave it at that' (C 16). Thus, the text encourages us to pragmatically look at the structure of the 'I' formation through the principle of sufficient reason; as the self represents interaction between the various elements of mind, feeling and perception. In the next section, I shall discuss how *Company* illustrates the interaction between the physical elements that form the idea of the self.

Slowly, the mental chatter comes to a halt because the observation of different constituents of the mind is taken into account: 'Doubts gradually dashed as voice from questing far and wide closes in upon him. When it ceases no other sound than his breath […] mental activity is of a low order' (C 36). The mental activity of thought production is getting less and less and the focus shifts on breath. This is similar to the experience during Buddhist meditation in which the focus on breath reduces mental activity or thought generation. The thoughts in the mind keep switching from one to the other: first it was thought and now physical activity. The activity of the mind is dependent upon many elements: without showing any definite sign of essence in the mind, the thought of the physical form of the self pertains to Beckett's representation of emptiness when seen through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework.

The activity of the mind in which the formation of thoughts and the physical body are devised reflects that the concept of the self exists in mind and during observation the essenceless nature of the self that operates dependently upon many constituents is similar to a '[d]evised deviser devising it all for company' (C 30). The devised (the self), the deviser (mind, thought, memory), and the devising (perception, naming, tagging) are all there as the dependent origination in the formation of the self. In this way, *Company* depicts the company of the self, which comprises its constituent parts or elements. Beckett's representation of the disintegrated form of the self through the elements of mind, thought and body has represented an observation of the self as plural. If 'I' were to be broken down and observed intuitively, the constituent elements emerge; and they are without essence. The idea of the self divided into parts once more recalls Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason; its non-observation is like an illusion (the 'veil of Maya'), and its essenceless characteristic is read here from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' lens: 'Till finally you hear how words are coming to an end. With every inane word a little nearer to the last. And how the fable too' (C 42). The fable that thoughts produce in the mind continues without end because the mind cannot stop thinking. The fable here evokes memories, while

experiences relate to the idea of the self – 'The fable of one fabling of one with you in the dark' – and this raises past experiences and an awareness of the multiplicity of the self, where the 'you' is divided between feelings, consciousness, past experiences and physical movements, without generating any essence behind the interacting body-mind phenomenon: 'and how better in the end labour lost and silence. And you as you always were' (C 42).

The self as an entity, and with a name or a form, seems singular, but on observation it is plural. Schopenhauer explains this flux of dependent activities in *Parerga and Paralipomena* as a 'world where there is no stability of any kind, no lasting state is possible but everything is involved in restless rotation and change' (PP II 309). Schopenhauer, in his meditation on Buddhist philosophy, thoroughly investigates how the self is formed as an amalgamation of interconnected elements, and explains how infinite regression is involved in the interacting process during the formation of an object. About the subject-object relationship, the principle of sufficient reason insists that 'through it are mutually connected all the objects presenting themselves in the entire general representation, which constitutes the complex of the reality of experience' (WWR I 312). The principle devised by Schopenhauer emphasises the characteristic of dependent origination, and, since there is infinite regression, the essence of an object cannot be tracked down to a singular entity or being. The representations of the mind and body that Beckett advances in *Company* describe the interdependent activity of mind and thoughts. The no-self state formed in the late works of Beckett more generally, and the reader's inability to track down any essence in the representation of the self, clearly reveal a subtle knowledge of Schopenhauer's approach:

> [The] entire relativity of both subject and object, which proves that the thing-in-itself, or the inner nature of the world, is not to be sought in them (subject and object) at all, but outside of them, and outside everything else that exists merely relatively, still remained unknown. (WWI I 42)

Abelson accordingly argues that 'there is no subject without object. 'Subject' and 'object' are correlative concepts, deriving their meaning from each other' (Abelson 273). Beckett found memories connected to the self, the voice in the dark, as an element of thoughts in the mind (with no name to address the thoughts), and mind and voice as the self. He was also well aware of the obscurity of the fragmented self; that is, the division of the elements of the self, like mind, thought and voice, is clearly illustrated. Beckett thus ends *Company* with the mind's concern with thought in silence, deeply expressing the awareness of the fact that

mind and thought will go together, depend on each other, and the display of images or perceptions will continue. The best that could be said is that 'the great triumph of *Company* is to be complex rather than complacent, and to banish thoughts of limited ability'. This goes, in fact, beyond thought and seems to detect the phenomena underlying the formation of the self and its relation with the world (Pilling, 'Company').

B. ***Ill Seen Ill Said***

The disintegration of the self is an important representation in *Company*, whereby the consideration on the elements of the self working together is put under scrutiny. Awareness of such disintegration is accelerated in *Ill Seen Ill Said* (1982). This second text in Beckett's late trilogy goes a step further in suggesting that the disintegration of the self leads to the recognition of the positive aspect of emptiness, expressed as 'grace to breathe that void' (ISIS 97). The text first provides an intense insight into the process of identification of the self through the sense organs. The text then explores the constituents of the physical self; of the seeing and speaking of the protagonist. What emerges is a picture of the interactions between the elements of the self. The self fades and diffuses continuously in the text.

In his critical assessment of *Ill Seen Ill Said*, Nicholas Zurbrugg focuses on the character 'she', who tries to '"ill say" and "ill see" the inner condition, in the hope that it will somehow or the other go away' (145). Zurbrugg further notes that the perceptual confusion of the self baffles us. In view of this suggestion from Zurbrugg, Gontarski suggests that 'the novel explores the mysteries of perception and consciousness and so being itself' (Gontarski 270). However, despite the confusion and sense of mystery highlighted by the critics, the text explores the diverse elements of the self, making particular use of two sense organs of the self: eyes and voice. The text reaches a state of awareness when the self dissolves and the insubstantiality of being is revealed (no core is found in the self). The text ends with grace in void, which is possible only when there is recognition of interdependent and essenceless characteristics of the self (ISIS 97). This acceptance of this emptiness brings the text closer to an investigation through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' model.

Unlike in conventional prose, *Ill Seen Ill Said* focuses upon two constituent elements of the self – that is, the eyes and the voice – as well as the mode of observation of the self. The identification and relation between the observer and the observed are formed through perceptions; that is, by seeing and speaking. The text begins with the protagonist 'she', who loses her sense of direction, place and time, and the text situates the reader within an

awareness of this present moment, which also has no direction, place or time. The process of situating the protagonist in the present is undertaken with extreme care and caution. Since observation of the self is very challenging and always takes place in the present, thus, care and caution are advised in the text. 'Careful' is used almost ten times in the text to develop the awareness that takes place during the protagonist's seeing and speaking process. Awareness cannot advance in past or future because past and future are thought forms and Beckett is particularly instructive in presenting the process of speaking and seeing in the present. Schopenhauer writes 'Past and future are as empty and unreal as any dream; but present is only the boundary between the two, having neither extension nor duration' (WWR I 7).

The protagonist in the text is present in the time and space dimension aware of the mere movement of speaking and seeing. Schopenhauer writes 'that time and space [which] belong to the subject, are the mode and manner in which the process of objective appreciation is carried out in the brain' (WWR II 33). The opening scene starts with 'she' in a state of suffering, sitting 'rigid upright in her old chair […] erect and rigid in the deepening gloom' (ISIS 57). The reason for her unhappiness is not given, but an awareness of suffering is portrayed. Thus, suffering is present in the form of feeling but no interpretation of the feeling is given in the text. There is a marked restlessness in the action of sitting, and a consistent back and forth of movements: 'such helplessness to move she cannot help' (ISIS 57). The protagonist is seated, with her 'hand resting on hand on some convenient support. Such as the foot of her bed. And on them her head' (ISIS 57). The sense of place is relative, as though she stands somewhere indeterminate in time and space: 'At the inexistent centre of a formless place' (ISIS 58). The 'cabin' in which the character is sitting exists in time and space, albeit without any specific dimensions given. The restless movement of the character within these indeterminate co-ordinates of time and space perpetually calls to attention the physical nature of a body that is constantly rocking like that in *Rockaby*. This rocking exemplifies the restless state of both body and mind, which is never still but under observation in the text through the protagonist's awareness of both the mind and body. Thus, the narrator is aware of each move, and the scene ends with an awareness of the physical actions of moving. The action is performed without the help of concepts prepared by thoughts, and a constant observation of the movement of the body is present in a formless space of time. As Schopenhauer writes:

> Thus, in the case of all juxtaposition in space and of all change in time, so long as each of these forms by itself, and without any connection with each other, has its course and duration, there would be no causality at all, and as this constitutes the real essence of matter, there would also be no matter. (WWR I 9)

The action thus performed by the entity in space and time is segregated to show the awareness of matter in disintegration. The narrator represents the process of dependent origination and observation rather than getting entangled with the concept of the singular self, 'I', which is composed of body and mind. As mentioned earlier, 'she', the protagonist, is somewhere, in the dimension of time and space, whose centre is not fixed. The protagonist's cabin is 'at the inexistent centre of a formless place' (ISIS 58). This curious description shows the relativity of time and space by establishing a sense of place in the mind. Here, this place is a 'cabin'. The character 'she' stands up just to get an awareness of things happening, 'rigid with face and hands against the pane she stands and marvels long' (ISIS 59). There is no single point of reference that delineates place distinctly; instead, the 'two zones form a roughly circular whole. There is a feeling at times of being below "sea level" or "moor"' (ISIS 59). The imagery lingers around many surrounding objects – 'flowers', 'moor', 'sky', 'sea', 'cabin' – but the action of seeing is an observing state, with few perceptions attached to the process of seeing. This means that no adjectives are attached that are able to produce feelings of pleasure or pain, or to connect them to 'flowers' or 'sky'. Awareness emerges in the action of seeing: 'Then a moment straying. Then still. Gently, gently' (ISIS 60). The action of seeing is not related to perception because the description of the object is not given. Beckett's prose leaves the labelling to one side, and does not give names to the objects. This is akin to the 'veil of Maya' produced by labelling any object or person. Attention is given to the process of seeing, which is independent of intellectual concepts; hence, seeing becomes an element of the self and not the self per se. The fragmentation of the self is identifiable without the mind's company in *Ill Seen Ill Said*, by not forming concepts during the process of seeing an object. 'Each of them has paid its debt to it by having become, in other words, by having appeared as effect from a cause' and 'here there is neither error nor truth, for these are confined to the province of the abstract, of reflection. But here the world lies open to the senses and to the understanding' (WWR 1 15-16).

The sense of the self of the character is given a pronoun, 'she', which starts to flicker when it is put under scrutiny. Now the question is: who is she? Is 'she' the physical movement

(physical body) of the self; speaking (language); or is 'she' perception (the mind-thought interface) of the self? Where should the self be tagged for 'she' to find recognition? Which part of the body is addressed as 'she' – her body, language, mind or perceptions? Constant observation disperses the concept of the self into fragments which can be traced individually and further dissected to see that nothing remains behind the amalgamated properties of the self, just as there is no 'core of an onion. […] Under constant watch it betrays no sign of life' (ISIS 61). The stimulus, which causes this interaction to take place between the body and mind, is both mental as well as physical. After this interaction takes place, silence sets in – 'No sounds. No answers' (ISIS 61). These characteristics clarify the fragmented and essenceless aspect of the self. Thus, the conclusion is reached, as observed through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' model, which shows that the self is dependent, impermanent and essenceless. Thoughts, mind, memories, forms and feelings all interact; no essence is found, and thus the sense of the self, starts to fade: 'she shows herself only her own. But she has no own' (ISIS 62). The idea of a singular 'own' is dissolving.

Time also moves erratically for the protagonist. It moves with 'long lapses […] From one moment of the year to the next suddenly no longer there […] Then as suddenly there again. Long after' (ISIS 64). The textual imagery of time is dependent, and forms an image of the interacting subject and object placed in time and space, but without determining any specific moment or space of connection between them. On this point, Schopenhauer argues: 'In time every moment is conditioned by the previous one. […] Every moment is conditioned by the previous one; only through the predecessor can this moment be reached' (FFR 197). In *Ill Seen Ill Said*, the representation of the self is the unknown zone of time in which the self is placed, and this could be any moment in time and space. More importantly, its distinct arrangement is unknown: 'suddenly open. A flash. The suddenness of all! She still without stopping. On her way without starting. Gone without going. Back without returning' (*ISIS* 66). Bringing the elements of the self to stillness, the prose utilises the concept of time and space as sudden flashes of awareness which annihilates any past and future and helps becoming aware of the fullness of the moment.

The self depicted in *Ill Seen Ill Said* as seen from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework is un-presentable and no concrete essence or being is apportioned to its character (in our eyes) or is accessible to the imagination of the protagonist. The persistent interactions between subjects and objects depict rootlessness or essenceless natures: 'Things and imaginings. As of always. Confusion amounting to nothing. Despite precautions […] No

precautions possible […] Neither be nor been nor by any shift to be. Gently gently. On. Careful' (ISIS 67). Images are formed and progress through the interaction between the elements of the self, which interdependently help each other to form perceptions. Consequently, the act of pinning down the self in seeing, or in time and space, or in thought, fails: 'such bits and scraps. Soon no matter how and said as seen… Nothing left but black sky. White earth. Or inversely […] Everywhere no matter where' (ISIS 75). The interactions are everywhere in the text, but are again presented without defined referential frames: 'Void. Nothing else. Contemplate that. Not another word. Home at last. Gently, gently' (ISIS 75). Thus, contemplation is an important theme in *Ill Seen Ill Said* that helps to reach a state of inner peace.

Words and experiences thus create a backdrop of images in *Ill Seen Ill Said*, forming every now and then, eventually depicting awareness of the moment of interaction between subject and object. The inexplicable eruption of thoughts in the mind identifies with images of the past, as the mind is aware of the thought patterns taking place within itself: 'One evening she was followed by a lamb. Reared for slaughter like the others it left them to follow her. In the present to conclude. All so bygone' (ISIS 79). Arising and passing away is a constant process, and it includes the interaction between the self and time: 'Incontinent the void. The zenith. Evening again. When not night it will be evening. Death again of deathless day. On the one hand embers. On the other ashes. Day without end won and lost. Unseen' (ISIS 81, 82). 'Death' here is not a real death, however, because of the constant interaction-dependence processes and the coming-going of mind processes, as well as the world around them in which the self is placed. Therefore, these processes of the self as seen through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework helps in explaining the reason behind the infinite interaction between the elements of the self without essence.

The association between subject and object is formed using language. For example, the use of name helps in speaking to someone. In language, addressing an entity with a name shows singularity of the self. During this process the other elements of the self are not addressed and they become 'unseen'. This shows how language crosses over the interdependent nature of the self by not addressing all the elements of the self but one, which is the name of the object. This suggests an obliviousness of the process that helps in the entity's formation; and it becomes 'ill seen' because the veil is immediately drawn when the subject is taken as a whole rather than as an amalgamation of parts. Hence it is 'Unseen' and 'Ill seen': a seeing that is ignorant of the many properties of the self, so 'no matter. No matter now.

Such the confusion now between real and – how say its contrary? No matter' (ISIS 82). The inability to name the self as 'real' or 'unreal' produces a confusion, described by Schopenhauer as 'the veil of Maya'. When trying to pin-point the essence of a subject, it is usually impossible because of the association of its constituent elements. Similarly, it is equally unattainable to pin-point the element that contains the essence of the subject. There is just an intersection between the elements of the self:

'Such equal liars both. Real and - how ill say its contrary? The counter-poison' (ISIS 82); 'The mind betrays the treacherous eyes and the treacherous word their treacheries. Haze sole certitude […] To see but haze. Not even. Be itself but haze. (ISIS 88)

Thus, both words and the mind become treacherous, demonstrating the use of Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason and the essenceless nature of the self.

Beneath the covering of the self, *Ill Seen Ill Said* expresses the startling characteristic of the 'no-self'; here, the term 'self' covers all the elements, yet 'the self' as a singular entity is not there; then '[a]lone the face remains. Of the rest beneath its covering no trace […] Startling without consequence for the gaze the mind awake' (ISIS 93). The representation of phenomena remains superficial, a facade that obscures a view of the emptiness behind the idea of the self 'She shows herself only to her own. But she has no own' (ISIS 12). The reference to windows here is suggestive of this veil of ignorance, where 'she' often goes: 'Yes within her walls so far at the window only. At one or the other window. Rapt before the sky' (ISIS 12). The black drapes symbolise the illusion that surround the feeling of pain and the protagonist every now and then can look through the window with clarity into the phenomena suggesting the process of pain but this does not last long. The clarity only comes through the knowledge of subject-object relation which when understood through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework will result in the following knowledge:

> [Subject-object] are inseparably connected as necessary parts of one whole, which includes us both and exists through us both. Only a misunderstanding can set up the two [subject-object] of us as enemies in opposition to each other, and lead to the false conclusion that one contests the existence of the other, with which its own existence stands and falls. (WWR II 18)

Upon recognising the illusion of Maya, there is peace and pleasure. In this respect, two notable phrases appear in the narrative of *Ill Seen Ill Said*: 'sweet foretaste of the joy at the

journey's end', followed by 'second after long hesitation no trace of the fallen where they fell. No trace of all the ado' (ISIS 56). These two phrases highlight a very positive note of awareness and happiness. The taste at the journey's end, which the protagonist feels, is the joy of awareness of a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, when one can see the volatile and plural nature of the self that sees, speaks, thinks and forms perceptions. Further to this understanding, there is nothing beneath the interplay of the elements of the self that interact between themselves. When the interaction between the feeling of suffering and concept formation through the mind is broken down and observed, then the recognition of suffering becomes clear because mental suffering is the outcome of thoughts and perceptions. This is not circular logic, but deduction in process wherein thoughts and perceptions will only cause suffering when the idea of 'I' is attached to them; and if thoughts and perceptions are placed under observation they lose their power to cause any emotion. *Ill Seen Ill Said* advances an idea of the self which is actually no 'self' in particular, but is instead an amalgamation of many elements. This evokes a conception of the essenceless nature of the self where the excavation of the layers comprising the self never reaches a point that can be described as an essence: 'Nothing having stirred. Look? Too weak a word. Too wrong' (ISIS 57). In the end, it is 'Grace to breathe that void. Know happiness' (ISIS 59). The recurrent reference to a 'void' in *Ill Seen Ill Said* denotes the relativity of interdependent elements of the self and its essenceless nature. The relentless unwillingness to propose a singular self thus sheds light on the diverse elements that are normally involved in the singular phenomenon of the self.

Ill Seen Ill Said lacks the distinction that has consistently been made between subject and object in typical self-formation; instead, textual interaction takes place between the elements within the subject/self. The text therefore points towards the perception of things, and how this perception lacks independent existence and essence when viewed through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' model. This idea reflects the expressive relations and intuitive understandings contained in Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason. In addition, it also bears out the notion of 'nothing' found in a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' model, which promotes the essenceless nature of subject and object. Thus, the image of the self, created in *Ill Seen Ill Said* serves to highlight essenceless and dependent nature, which in turn dispels the 'veil of Maya' and justifies the idea that the reason for unhappiness is nothing but the incoherent understanding of the self.

C. *Worstward Ho*

The title of the final work in Beckett's 'late trilogy', *Worstward Ho* (1983), can be read as referring to a possible journey towards something, probably a movement towards an end where nothingness is about to set in. Ulhmann notes that in *Worstward Ho* 'here are three images: a woman seen from behind who is seemingly kneeling at prayer; an Old man and a young boy walking hand in hand along some road but never moving any further' (79). There is also an image of a crippled hand with a head sunk in it. These images are cut from familiar contexts are 'worsened and lessened, from bodies to parts to lines to points' (Ulhmann 79). This worsening is related to light, and the images that are present grow dimmer or worsen – as do even words. The word 'on' accompanies the 'endless process of lessening, or worsening or dimming through words' (WH 80). Mel Gussow, in a newspaper article in the context of a stage production of *Worstward Ho*, wrote that it is 'a dense, introspective monologue on the continuum of existence' (Gussow *The New York Times* 1986).

On the other hand, Hugh Culik has described *Worstward Ho* as a text that 'encapsulates the process of approaching the limit of representation' (Culik 131), suggesting that representation comes up against natural limits. Throughout the text, the narrator takes us to the limits of our minds, where even the representation of perception stops, to find the essence or being of the self. The mind is trapped in the acts of thinking, perceiving, inventing stories and reminiscing: 'On. Say on. Be said on. Somehow on. Till nohow on. Said nohow on.' (WH 81) and again 'First the body. No. First the place. No. First both' (WH 81)

This is similar to *Company*, where the narrator recalls events from his childhood and adolescence. Yet in contrast, the opening of *Worstward Ho* commences with 'On' and ends with 'nohow on'. The subject of the discussion that unfolds between 'on' and 'nohow on' proceeds with the observation and presentation of the self in disintegration (*WH* 81, 103). The self, which is felt to be 'permanent, unitary, and under its own power' (Gyatso 162), is found to be constantly changing, and careful observation results in it being understood as increasingly differentiated, elusive, fragmented and ultimately essenceless. Ulhmann contends that *Worstward Ho* represents 'the nature of the relation between the infinite and the finite, being and non-being', which is fundamental to Beckett's writings more broadly. He argues further that Beckett was concerned with

> The One [that is not] and proceeds through negation. This part is crucial to Neo-Platonism and negative theology, being identified with a concept of the Godhead. This idea is also echoed by Spinoza's concept of One substance, God or Nature, Schopenhauer's "Idea" and interrelation of something and nothing in Geulincx. (Uhlmann 83)

On the other hand, the essenceless condition of the self understood according to a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework does not identify with the concept of Godhead, but rather points to the observation of phenomena taking place within the self.

The self is not placed in the time-space dimension, which is dependent. As Schopenhauer writes: 'Space and time are so constituted that all their parts stand in mutual relation and, on the strength of this, every part is determined and conditioned by another. In space this relation is called position, in time succession' (FFR 194). The place mentioned in the text is 'beyondless'. According to a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework the observation of self is independent of any time-space dimension. During the course of 96 paragraphs, a reduction of the self takes place. This gradual reduction can be related to the process of Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason, wherein the elements of the self disintegrate and depend on each other. The phenomenon of dependent origination and the interaction between subject and object are the main focus of the following analysis of the text.

Worstward Ho begins by evoking the mind and the body as different entities: 'say a body. Where none. No mind. Where none. That at least. A place. Where none. For the body. To be in. Move in. Out of. Back into. No. No out. No back. Only in. Stay in. On in. Still' (WH 7). In this statement observation of the mind and body is represented along with the differentiation between the two. No trace of the essence of the self can be found. Even after further investigation, the essence does not establish itself. The observation of the mind and body reveals interdependent relationships between them. The mind thinks and the body responds, and the struggle to reach the root of the self fails. It cannot be found in the body or the mind alone: 'All of old. Nothing else ever. Ever tried, ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better' (WH 7). Beckett illustrates the failure to express the core of the self either in mind or body. This observation of the fragmented self is portrayed in terms of a continuity and interdependence: 'First the body. No. First the place. No. First both. Now either. Now the other' (WH 8). This expression of the place and body relationship manifests itself in the temporality of interaction. There is a continual flow of interactions between

subject and object. The time and space dimension is a frame of reference where the precarious nature of the interacting elements of the self can be observed. From a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework the impossibility of maintaining the textual imagery of either the body or the mind necessitates its temporality: 'No bones but say bones. Say ground. No ground but say ground. So as to say pain. No mind and pain?' (WH 8).

Refusing to confirm the reality of mind, self or body, the narrative maps out a significant, multi-dimensional space in order to paint a transient picture of the self. The phenomenon described is that of an interaction between the self and the outer world. In this way, *Worstward Ho* depicts the phenomenon of interdependence between various elements of the self: 'Worse failed. With care never worse failed' (WH 9). This failure is categorically stripped down, so as to dismiss the significant image of any distinct referent: 'see in the dim void how at last it stands. Yes. Say that a body. Somehow standing. In the dim void' (WH 10, 11). Such confusion is inherent in the formation of the self, as it awakens readers to the inadequacy of representation. There is a perplexed fading: 'They fade. Now the one. Now the twain. Now both. Fade back. Now the one. Now the twain. Now both. Fade. No. Sudden go. Sudden back. Now the one. Now the twain. Now both' (WH 14). Here, the elements of the self are clearly distinguishable and serve to explain why it is so difficult to identify and clarify the self as a singular entity. As soon as the inspection of each element and its origin comes into question there is continued failing.

Worstward Ho also explores both the changing and unchanging nature of time: 'Each time unchanged. Somehow unchanged. Till no […] Sudden back changed. Somehow changed. Each time somehow changed' (14). Uhlmann contends that in *Worstward Ho* time reduces to points that are near to absolutes. Yet how this is done is passed over (Uhlmann 91). The emptiness, or the dependent and essenceless nature of the time, is presented as an ongoing process, not a state, since it interacts with more than one element at a time and then suddenly the emptiness in the whole process of time becomes concentrated in the moment: 'The void. Unchanging. Say now unchanging. Void were not the one. The twain. So far were not the one and twain. So far' (WH 17). The interaction of the elements within time is what marks dependent origination since 'in time this [principle of sufficient reason] is the succession of its moments, and in space the position of its parts, which reciprocally determine one another to infinity' (WWR I 7). Thus, time and self in *Worstward Ho* echo Schopenhauer's philosophical position regarding the principle of sufficient reason. Without bones, pain is not possible. Pain is dependent on bones: 'First the bones. The ground. The

pain. No bones. No ground. No pain'. Next eyes are staring into the vastness of space with an awareness: 'The void. Before the staring eyes. Stare where they may. Far and wide. High and low. Know no more. See no more. Say no more. That alone. That little much of void alone' (WH 18). The eyes are taken into consideration aiming to see without interacting with thoughts to form perceptions, which is seeing with awareness beyond the 'veil of Maya', to see the thing as it is, without judgements. This is just the interaction between the observer and the observed, without naming or tagging the picture within the frame for the onlooker.

The same relationship is attributed to the head and the voice. The head provides perceptions and representations, and thus is considered the 'Germ of all' (WH 18). Mind is used as a tool for self-observation and is not allowed any participation in linking its perceptions or thoughts to the eyes, body or any other element of the self. Language also seems to occupy a prevalent position in the mind, along with the perceptions formed through thoughts; hence, they are seen as 'almost true' (WH 20). According to a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' model, the perceptions formed in the mind are dependent upon the position of the hands, eyes and feet. What remains constant is the interaction between them all. The awakened state of the interacting elements releases a flow of thoughts between, and within, the elements of the self: 'remains of mind then still. Enough still. Some whose somewhere somehow enough still. No mind and words? Even such words. So enough still. Just enough still to joy' (29). The joy of stillness, where the mind is without words and thoughts, enables the textual representation of awareness of the self which comes through the interaction between the elements of the self. Words fail to provide their meanings, and the mind has stopped performing its job, it does not give any instant responses by forming perceptions in relation to the object. Words are just words arising in the mind: 'Not to know what they say. Not to know what it is the words it says sat. What the so-said void' (29, 30). There is a gradual process of wearing away. First the mind stops perceiving, and then the meaning of the words is lost, 'as somehow from some soft of mind they ooze. From it in it ooze. How all but uninane' (WH 33). What emerges is formless words with descriptive urgency. The words have gone without meaning, since words and speech are taken as they are: linguistic tags that flow inside the mind as they arise and pass away [as in dependent origination]. Words and thoughts are cropping up in the mind and awareness of these shows how the thoughts arise and pass away and also gives distinction to the thoughts generating in the mind; and which, in turn, is presented as an element of the self: 'back is on. Somehow on.

From now back alone. No more from now back and now back on' (WH 33). The process continues to depict the development of thoughts within the mind. This becomes the 'same thing. Same nothing. Same all but nothing' (WH 38). The recognition of the arising of thoughts in the mind is depicted as: 'Ooze gone. Till ooze again and on. Somehow ooze on' (WH 38).

Consequently, the diverse elements of the self interact as the phenomena continue. Since the essence of self cannot be traced either in the mind, body, eyes, thought or in perceptions, it is so difficult to pin the self down to any one part of these elements. Hence, the 'names gone and when to when. Stoop mute over the graves of none. Same stoop for all. Till somehow less in vain. Worse in vain. All gnawing to be naught. Never to be naught' (WH 45, 46). Thus, the words, names and thoughts are just associations used to form concepts and present a perceived meaning to the perceiver about the perceived. Similarly, the harsh shifting interaction between the elements of the self are snapshots of thought, identifying itself with a name and concept. Both the name and the process of growing interdependence between the elements is very quick and generally goes unnoticed. On careful observation this leaves us with an image of the mind operating through thoughts and perceptions, which keeps producing perceptions for other elements of the body like eyes, ears and tongue. Observing the mind and other elements of the self illuminates the characteristic of the dependent origination and essencelessness of the self. So, 'into it still the hole' and 'no move and sudden all far. All least. Vasts apart. At bounds of boundless void' (46, 47). The self is presented as an entity that is plural and essenceless in nature. The relationship between the mind, thought and sense organs come together to represent the characteristics of the self in *Worstward Ho* and to illustrate this plurality of the self in fiction. Beckett's prose segregates the elements of seeing, thought, mind, perception and speaking.

Conclusion

In the 'late trilogy', Beckett explores the instability of the self, in which there is an awareness of its many constituent elements. The prose works challenge the singularity of names, pronouns and identity tags; as Beckett puts it, 'In the end, you don't know who is speaking any more. The subject disappears completely. That's the end result of identity crisis' (Juliet 57). The certainty of the self is gradually discarded in Beckett's 'late trilogy', revealing itself as mind, thoughts, names, feelings and perceptions. The notion of 'I' is challenged, and a way to look at its nature is presented. The so-called characters become increasingly indifferent to the external world of material possessions. Beckett says: 'But the

problem is how to express that […] there is no pronoun […] I, he, we – nothing is quite right' (Juliet 164). Beckett provides ample illustrations to provoke us to see the mental as well as the physical formation of the self. The continuity with which the elements of the self are exposed in the light of 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' model shows dependence and the essenceless characteristic of the self, resulting in an understanding that can change the very nature of looking at the self.

Beckett's late trilogy suggests that the word 'self' itself contains ambiguity. Language interposes an inevitable veil, and offers no other way of looking at someone except by tagging the person or thing with a name; hence language is unable to pierce through to provide a relevant way of understanding things. A 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' reading directly addresses this ambiguity of failing language. This does not mean that language is useless: it is conventionally meaningful in giving names. However, naming an object does not take into consideration the constituents of an object and so the object which is so named produces illusion. Beckett's texts explore this plurality of the self in the 'late trilogy', and directly present elements of the self. The resultant insight shows the concept of emptiness discernible through the concept of 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism'.

Beckett's late prose works mastered the basic premise of presenting identity and reproducing its nature; the way it exists. There is no analysis, just fundamental observations. Hence it is not relevant to view his 'late trilogy' as optimistic or pessimistic. Rather, it is a journey within the nature of the self as presented through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework. The characters in Beckett's late works act, speak, think, and constitute a clear and precise picture of the elements that are implicated in the process of being. Thus, the late prose works identify with the disintegrated aspects of the self and strongly justifies a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' approach.

Chapter 5

Examining *A Piece of Monologue, Rockaby, Ohio Impromptu, Quad, What Where*

Samuel Beckett's late stage plays, like his late prose works, also present characters with an awareness of a fragmented self. As established earlier, disintegration of the self is a major point of reference from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective. The late stage plays concentrate specially on the disintegration of the self and thus, a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' approach is strongly helpful in understanding this disintegration. The use of drama as a literary genre in representing the disintegration of the self helps the theatre audience in visually experiencing the disintegrated self on stage. Indeed, the way in which Beckett's works move 'from genre to genre is almost unprecedented in the history of literature' (Acheson vii). Ruby Cohn once described these late works as 'jumping of genres' and these genres show many different ways of dealing with awareness of the self in disintegrated form (*Just Play* 207). Beckett's stylistic innovations helped to highlight his artistic representation of disintegrated form by dramatizing it in his late stage 'dramaticules'.

These dramatic works represent the veil of ignorance present in the formation of the self by depicting the protagonists who are aware of their own senses on stage. Kundert-Gibbs rightly asserts that 'with this visual, aural, verbal and performative fragmentation of the self, Beckett puts the spectator in the position of a witness to one's own self and its elements' (299). Likewise, Gillette stresses that Beckett's 'late plays stage minimal images of body and mind'; and moreover 'this kind of performance depends on a sort of intimacy that can come only from a deep unmasking of the self below all ego-driven ideas' (883, 291). Underscoring this point in her autobiography, the famed Beckett actor Billie Whitelaw offers the following description:

> Often, when one is sent a play, the first thing that occurs to you is: "what can I do with this to make it different"? With Beckett I learned that you don't do anything with it, you don't try to make it "different", you simply allow your own core to make contact with what comes off the page. Eventually everything then falls into place,

> the material takes off on its own. If you allow the words to breathe through your body if you become a conduit, something magical may happen. (118)

The 'core' located by Whitelaw suggests a number of key points in common with the previously established 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' model. Before applying this framework to Beckett's later drama, it bears highlighting once more that several scholars have identified commonalities between Zen Buddhist traditions and Japanese Noh plays in Beckett's works.

> The diminished figures of late Beckett, seemingly abstracted from the conditions of materiality and embodiment, continue to play out this fearful ambiguity of corporeal self presence, the urgent flight from a subjectivity that represents the impossibility of its own identity. The fact that the body seems to recede in plays like *Not I* and *That Time*- that it is fragmented, decentred, often deanimated, and that many of its regions are characterized by absence – does not obscure its place in the play of ambiguity and dispossession. (Garner 451)

Far from any recognition of fearful ambiguity of the self, a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' lens represents disintegration of the self as an important characteristic that liberates the self from delusion. Kedzierierski calls Beckett's later plays 'a theatrical event without having to show a single dramatic occurrence' suggesting that Beckett's drama makes no theatrical gesture per se but rather an observation of the self on stage (306).

As established earlier, observation has become a major point of reference from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective in many different forms. To let go of thoughts is to return to present, to the here and now…' which gives pleasure (290). This insight is present in Beckett's writings; for example, in *Murphy* 'life in his mind gave him pleasure, such pleasure that pleasure was not the word' (M 4). Stage directions offered in *Krapp's Last Tape* describe the eponymous figure as follows: 'Krapp remains a moment motionless, heaves a great sigh, looks at his watch, fumbles in his pockets, takes out an envelope, puts it back' (55); yet again in *Nacht und Träume*, the following scene is described: 'Fade up on a dark empty room lit only by evening light from a window set high in back wall. Left foreground, faintly lit, a man seated at a table. Right profile, head bowed, grey hair, hands resting on table' (305). In such representations of contemplation and observation, Beckett leaves very few 'physical resources' for performance (Kedzierski 307). Put another way, in the late dramatic works Beckett can be said to begin where dramatization ends.

Thematically, the role of self observation takes over, leading to dramatization of simple hearing, seeing, listening and watching, in Kedzierski's words, 'frequently with the eye and ear turned inward' (307).

For Beckett's plays to present an inner reality of the mind, the dramatic convention of stage characters, dialogue, plot, space and time has been taken to the edge of collapse. Even language is superfluous in *Quad*. The wordless images also represent a depersonalised figuration of characters in the play. Graley Harren argues that this 'issue of depersonalization is a thorny one' in Beckett's works, with 'much of the backlash against Beckett in theatrical circle centres upon this problem' (47). The issue of 'depersonalization' can also be seen as liberating since disintegration of the self from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective is an insight through observation. In Zen Buddhism, the 'nothing points up the emptiness of forms, sensations, perceptions, formations, and consciousness, and thereby suggests the possibility of liberation from suffering of attachment' (Gillette 299). Zen also points toward a concrete paradigm for contextualising these late plays, writes Gillette. Yet these dramatic enactments of the mind's basic nature can help to characterise two of the most important aspects of Buddhist emptiness – dependent origination and essencelessness. Through these tropes, Beckett's late theatre pieces challenge the conventional modes of theatrical traditions; encapsulating a divided image of the self very precisely on stage. Furthermore, as this chapter will explore, these late theatrical works present the characters in disintegrated forms, manifested in dramatic monologues, voiceless and dark structures.

From a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' view, the unusual structures presented in Beckett's post-Nobel drama point towards the significance of the constitution of the self and its prerequisite elements. Beckett's late plays moreover, address direct confrontation with the elements of the self on stage that is continually interacting with each other, to form a link with the outer world of phenomenon and experience. Yet these elements of the self or 'I' cannot be pinpointed as they are not unified. One example amongst many is the woman sitting on a rocking chair replaying fragmented memories in *Rockaby*. On this point, Charles R. Lyons writes: 'what remains, of course, is a paradigm that Beckett has exercised throughout his writing: an image of character whose consciousness processes a narrative' (81). In attempting such a presentation of consciousness, theatre becomes an important medium in Beckett's art and Lyons agrees with the view that the character is segregated as a listener from an inner voice of consciousness.

Critics such as Kenneth Tynan, Colin Duckworth, Stan Gontarski and Matthew Davies have noted that Beckett's late theatrical works take drama towards its 'impoverishment', that they constitute 'an assault on theatre', but also 'an assault on the audience that sustains it'. Accordingly, these works can be profitably approached as Beckett's 'dramatic vacuums' that are 'difficult for audiences to digest' (Davies 159). Without doubt, some of the late dramatic works are delivered at 'incomprehensible tempos' either because of their slowness (*Footfalls*) or their imperceptible pace (*Quad*) (Davies 159). Despite these views, it remains important to understand that this opacity can be approached as an investigation of the fragmented self in the late plays – one that has placed self under scrutiny clarifying the false notion of the self as a singular 'I' using a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism' lens.

In much the same way, Paul Davies finds that 'Beckett's late work scrutinizes the false reassurances of Western identity pattern' by applying Buddhist psychology. He then suggests that 'the late plays non-locational and anonymous character opens up a witness-point in which the disaster of Western ego-identity, based in fragmentation, is seen for what it is, rather than as the advantage and privilege of human experience' (399). Davies identifies Buddhism as a key theme in Beckett's later prose and drama, but does not address the reason for the fragmentation of identity as portrayed in Beckett's late works – so often based on the understanding that 'I' is an amalgam of many elements and without essence in Schopenhauer's rendering of Buddhist emptiness. Although theatrical audiences are likely to want something comprehensible, Beckett's stage works instead present them with a reflection of their own selves, something which is only possible when one sits in observation; and in such introspection no comprehension is required. The task for viewers is to observe the self as it is, with all its elements, including the mind.

Thus, Beckett's late plays can be interpreted as the performances that present self observation in narrative form, with the experience of perception or reflection situating the viewer into an observational mode. While narration is an important part of drama, however, Beckett ultimately rejects it, using silence on stage as in *Quad I* and *Quad II*. A 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework is applied to interrogate this mode of observation of the self as the protagonists think, remember or perambulate without touching the centre of the stage as in *Quad*. This exemplifies Beckett's 'art of failure', insofar as he rejects any unified essence of the self; this is an extremely challenging art-form that allows him to present the self as it exists. Beckett separates the functional entities such as listener, reader, a voice of consciousness, and thoughts, and he continues to yoke together the various

cerebral and corporal processes helping him to investigate the self. Employing this perspective, the chapter will analyse several of Beckett's late plays; namely *A Piece of Monologue*, *Rockaby*, *Ohio Impromptu*, *Quad* and *What Where*. The next section will again explore the fragmentation of self in *A Piece of Monologue* by once more applying a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' reading.

A. *A Piece of Monologue*

This play was first published in 1979 in *The Kenyon Review*, having been written specifically for the actor David Warrilow, who performed the role at the LaMama Theatre in December 1979 (Fehsenfeld 356). The use of darkness in the earliest stage performance; the continual construction of an external 'I'; and the interplay of various elements of the self, which includes mind, collectively help in pointing toward a significant function of 'I' in the play. On this point Fehsenfeld writes: 'The Speaker stands motionless, describing a character in the third person – "he" – who moves in a setting that we do not see, but can only imagine with the eye of the mind' (356). The narrator is an eighty-two-year-old man retelling his own story in monologue. The speaker's self is split in two from the very beginning of the play: one persona tells the story while the other listens. The speaker uses the third-person pronoun for the person whom the story is about, even though there is no other but himself. *A Piece of Monologue* starts with the sentence: 'Birth was the death of him' (Beckett 265). The juxtaposition of death and birth suggests that, as another late text puts it 'the end was in the beginning' and vice versa. The singularity of 'I' is undone, and starts at a very early stage when the representation of identity is fixed with a name and a pronoun 'I'. 'I' thus interacts with the outer world to form representations that are nothing but interpretations through the mind. A 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework reading stresses this process of interaction between one part of the self (subject) and the world (object) rather than leaving the sense of 'I' as singular.

The interrogation of the self in *A Piece of Monologue* may be explained by taking the analogous example of the interaction between perception and physical pain. When the physical body is pricked with a needle, for instance, the interaction between the needle and the skin is interpreted by the brain as 'I got pricked' rather than 'the skin got pricked'. According to the Buddhist view, the formation of 'I' is an amalgamation of form, feeling, perception and consciousness which are dependent on each other. The interaction between skin, needle and mind inevitably involves pain as the mind and the contact of the needle and the skin is a process. Such self-reflection demands more than 'I am in pain because I got

pricked'. It demands seeing the number of elements involved in the interaction between the skin, needle and brain, and the awareness of the pain generated by the mind. When the sensation of pain is observed and mind stops playing any role in the interpretation of pain, it is only at this point that suffering does not arise, since suffering is the final stage in the process of interdependence. To conceptualise the complicated nature of suffering, then, it is important to see how sensation, thoughts and interpretation work interdependently.

The speaker in *A Piece of Monologue* is characterised as having 'white hair, white night-gown, white socks'. He is at the 'same level, same height' as a 'standard lamp' which has a 'skull-sized white globe' (APOM 265). The speaker first looks out of the window, then lights an oil lamp and faces a blank wall, where pictures of loved ones were once pinned. This is a familiar routine, and is the chief occupation of the speaker. Cohn finds that despite the simple presentation of memory and suffering, there is something very complex going on in the play. This conception can be read as the dramatization of varied elements of the self at work. Thus, what eyes see and cognition interprets are two very different things. As Cohn puts it, what is 'simple in its appeal to the eye, [in] *A Piece of Monologue* is dizzyingly complex in conception' (Cohn 355-356). Despite the apparent simplicity of common details, the text depicts a profound process embedded in the formation of the self.

The narrative involves memories of childhood. It expresses the protagonist's sense of self (the thinking mind) and associated memories, all in the wake of a vicious cycle of death and birth: 'cradle and crib… from mammy to nanny and back' (APOM 265). From a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective, perception depends upon the way a person is conditioned. However, the text renders this by representing sensory data in disintegration. Hence, the failure to interpret memories in the text represents a dramatic approach, one utilised to portray the basic nature of the self. As such, the speaker in *A Piece of Monologue* creates a generic self by referring to present and future times. Whereas the focus of the self, at least in the beginning of the play, is the mind, and thoughts operating within the mind, later the same self is divided into the thinking mind and a mind that is watching itself. In this way, the play presents the speaker uttering thoughts while being aware of them.

In *A Piece of Monologue*, memory is attached to sensations that arise within the mind. Thus, when the protagonist faces the blank wall, which was once covered with pictures: 'Pictures of… loved ones. Unframed. Unglazed. Pinned to wall with drawing-pins' (APOM 266). Yet there is 'nothing stirring there either. Nothing stirring anywhere. Nothing to be seen

anywhere' (APOM 266). The protagonist, while staring at the wall manifests an awakened state of mind which is accomplished when the memories are recognised as memories and no perception of happiness or sadness is attached to them: 'my memories pinned to the wall' but there is no sense of 'stirring' possible anywhere. This acceptance eases suffering for the narrator. For Schopenhauer, 'what the eye, the ear, or the hand experiences is not perception; it is mere data' (WWR I 12). Accordingly, when these phenomena of the self are recognised the origin of suffering can be recognised too.

Further, the thought formations and their utterance are simply and clearly presented in *A Piece of Monologue*. The protagonist repeatedly does the same thing every night, as he 'stands facing wall after the various motions described […] Up at nightfall in gown and socks and after a moment to get his bearings gropes to window' (APOM 267). This manifestation is a portrayal of the dissolution of the self. The ritual of looking outside, however, reveals nothing but 'Empty dark. Till first word always the same. Night after night the same. Birth. Then slow fade up of a faint form' (APOM 267). Through the simple acts of lamp-lighting and looking outside, the narrator develops an observational mode, and the outer world is then laid open to the mind and senses but without judgement. Hence, it is impossible to assert that *A Piece of Monologue* depicts, to quote Schopenhauer 'an examination of the whole nature of the principle of sufficient reason, of the relation between object and subject, and of the real character of sense-perception, the question itself was bound to disappear, because there was no longer any meaning in it' (WWR I 16). This 'question', then, is 'the question of the reality of the external world', which always 'arose from confusion, amounting even to a misunderstanding, of the faculty of reason itself, and to this extent the question could be answered only by explaining its subject-matter' and here the subject matter is the self, engaged in different ways (WWR I 16). Approached via Schopenhauer's philosophy, this dramatic piece portrays how mind works in relation to thought and memories, fictionally depicting the varied characteristics of the self.

The description in the text of the void beyond the wall and the window characterise the thinking mind that behaves spectrally, like a 'Ghost light. Ghost rooms. Ghost graves. Ghost' (APOM 269). Through the image of ghosts, the play proposes a criterion to distinguish between dream and reality. Schopenhauer, in his *World as Will and Representation*, advances a similar idea: 'We have dreams; may not the whole of life be a dream?' (WWR I 16). The elementary properties of the thinking mind are ghostly, since it is difficult to identify the ultimate ground of thought formations. As approached through a

'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, thought formations continually arise and pass away: his property of thought is what creates the characteristics of impermanence or temporality. That which is impermanent does not have essence, moreover, because the property of essence is that it does not wither away. In *A Piece of Monologue*, memories are ghostly, since they are ultimately 'unaccountable. From nowhere. On all sides nowhere. Unutterably faint' (APOM 269). In this way, the play can be interpreted through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework which highlights the unaccountable essence of memories or thoughts forming in the mind.

Although Linda Ben-Zvi notices a separation between the speaker and the inner 'me' in *A Piece of Monologue*, she overlooks Beckett's expression of the self in fragmentation and essenceless. Ben-Zvi states that *A Piece of Monologue* represents

> the Schismatic self which gives the separation between the speaking subject and the "outer" persona. The speaker is not the "I", the macrocosmic figure facing the world and claiming the use of the first person pronoun, but rather the inner me, the objective self that watches and reports but has no means of independent articulation of being. (15)

This independent articulation of being is impossible since the self is inherently disintegrated. In *A Piece of Monologue*, no singular being can be pin-pointed for the complete expression of 'I' as a singular entity. Ben-Zvi similarly finds that the self is divided. Yet Beckett generates an awareness of the self by, in Schopenhauer's words, representing 'how every possible object is subordinate to it (principle of sufficient reason), that is to say, stands in a necessary relation to other objects, on the one hand as determined, on the other as determining' (WWR I 6). This means that, if the object under consideration is the self, then the elements of selfhood must stand in relation to each other, and the reflexive mind fails to find the origin of memories, thus laying bare the essenceless quality of thoughts and memories.

Thus, *A Piece of Monologue* when filtered through the understanding of a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework can be seen as providing a picture of the self in disintegration: the temporally-bounded nature of thoughts; and the essenceless quality of the self - together removing the illusion present in the unified concept of the self.

B. *Rockaby*

The fable of one with you in the dark. The fable of one fabling of one with you in the dark. And how better in the end labour lost and silence. And you as you always were.

Alone.

—Beckett, *Company* (1980)

Rockaby received its premiere in April 1981 at State University, New York. According to Hale, the play considers:

> the fluctuating, unstable, boundless, impossible nature of the vision of the world where human beings no longer occupy the privileged, exterior, and omniscient point of view of the classical artist rather the play pushes the boundaries to look within and investigate the patters of the self. (Hale 67)

Clearly, *Rockaby* pushes the boundaries of this search for the self. The play is characterised by highly condensed language and a repetitive pattern. The pattern reveals the monotonous and repetitive habits of a reflexive mind. The vivid imitation of the pattern in which the mind works has been described as a 'kind of form one finds in music […] where themes keep recurring' (Marowitz 44). As notes are musically repeated (da kapo), so too the woman seated on the chair in *Rockaby* repeats the word, 'more'. However, repetition is also an exposition of thoughts that keeps repeating itself in the mind. Charles R. Lyons suggests that 'Beckett's images of human character [in *Rockaby*] confront fundamental epistemological questions, often with a high degree of self-consciousness' (297). Similarly, Fehsenfeld writes that this one-act stage play has a narrowed focus on the disembodied voice, 'V', and the listener, 'W' (356). In this way, critical discussion of the play tends to revolve around its formulaic construction of a disembodied voice and the idea of self and language, which, once more, can be read through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective of the self stressing the oft-repeated thought patterns occurring within the mind in relation to fragmented memories.

Rockaby is deceptively simple, delivered with often repeated words reflecting the essential states of human existence from birth to death. The voice of a woman can be heard from the stage, a woman who has spent her life in search of her selfhood – 'another like herself' (R 275). She listens to her own recorded voice leading to a fragmentation of the self into listener and listening. The woman does not possess any name or identity. This non-identification with a name, from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective, suggests how

naming leads to the mistaken perception of a unified self whereby the subject is bound with an illusory singularity. *Rockaby* therefore depicts an attempt at eliminating the complex structure of the self by removing names since naming provides refuge to an illusory sense of singularity present in the notion of 'I'. The perspective through 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism' framework calls upon the fact that naming masks the interdependent nature of the elements of the self. Hence without naming, memory remains only memory, a fragment from the mind. The representation of the character in *Rockaby* shifts the focus to the relationship between the mind and the self with sustained mindfulness. The old woman in the play sits in the dark, dressed in black, with an expressionless face. Importantly, the place resembles a meditative space in a faintly lit environment. In the single act, the woman repeats, 'more', and the chair on which she is sitting starts rocking. During the play, the woman stops four times, and every time she says 'more', her rocking begins again. The oft-repeated word 'more' is like a reminder to carry out further self-observation. *Rockaby* can be divided into four parts, with each part echoing some of the words and lines from the previous section. The rocking of the chair finally comes to a halt, and the light fades away at the end of each section, until it becomes totally darkened in the finale. The rocking of the chair may be said to symbolise a meditative state, and listening to her own voice indicates the woman's self-conscious effort to discover her inner self. 'This familiar Beckettian technique dramatises the dual nature of human perception and consciousness, and to portray a relationship between the outside and inside' (Hale 68). Hale's view about the dual nature of human perception and consciousness also emphasises disintegration and plurality. Hersh Zeifman, in contrast, aptly summarises this as 'a journey from the outside (a "going to and fro" in search of another) to the inside (a retreat into the room and a more passive variation of that search) to a still deeper inside' (144). Correspondingly, this inner search is undertaken through observation and not through intellection.

The woman's consciousness in *Rockaby* shifts from head to toe, 'going to and fro, all eyes, all sides, high and low, for another, till in the end, close of a long day' (R 275). As such, the mind of the woman furnishes the raw material for thoughts through the symbolic representation of 'V', her recorded voice. This recorded voice, in turn, is the material available to the mind in the form of raw data. This raw data has no room for the interpretation of memories. Thus, the objective link between the feelings, thoughts and the formation of perception is not performed; instead the data is taken raw. Hale describes this as a very familiar Beckettian technique, whereby:

> we are penetrating the consciousness of the mute character on stage [by dramatising] the dual nature of human perception the division of every consciousness into a perceiving subject and a perceived object that can never coincide with each other, in spite of all one's desire to join them in a perfect perception of the self. (Hale 68-69)

Hale describes this division of consciousness and the inability of all the other elements to join in as a singular self. Yet the disintegration of consciousness and its consequent non-familiarity can be related to the Buddhist understanding that self is an amalgamation of many elements; these elements work interdependently. The other aim of this kind of meditative reflection in Buddhism is to enhance the skill of observation. The woman, 'W', reflects on her mind's voice, which is going 'back in' with the help of 'windows'. Here mind is the metaphorical window to cognition without interpretation. This is the representation of the mind beyond the 'veil of Maya' where raw sensual data is filtered through sense perceptions as it is received. In *Rockaby*, the text describes that she 'went down… down the steep stair… into the old rocker… and rocked and rocked' (R 281-282). Death only emerges at the end, 'where mother rocked', and 'dead one day… in her best black… head fallen and the rocker rocking' (R 280). The conclusion of the play describes the death of the woman rocking and the falling back of the mind into the regular pattern of non-stop interaction between body and mind: a deathless process that continues when one is alive. This representation of body and mind disintegrating brings about disgust, leading to the phrase 'fuck life' (R 282). The disgust for life arises from the inability to remain aware of the process involved in our daily existence. This is just like 'a fast revolving firebrand [which] gives the illusion of a circle of fire, the dynamic processes of physical and mental energy giving rise to the illusion of "I", of "self"' representing the 'veil of Maya' (DeSilva Lily 'The Self-made Private Prison').

Kalb writes that the 'primary experience of *Rockaby* is that of a lullaby, an unchanging rhythm of words that lulls us into tranquillity until we are startled by the words "Fuck life" near the end' (12). This explanation is insightful, since Kalb notes the unconsciousness in *Rockaby* that follows from the repetition of words. Yet the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective on the repetition of words goes further in treating self-awareness as interacting, dependent and essenceless. Beckett dramatizes the lone figure's temporal intersection of mind and thought processes. She becomes immobile and silent by the end of play since she is unable to find any suitable core or essence for herself. Hence, the play can be read as a

meditation on the aspects of the self rather than a temporary moment of finding the self through a fixed and definite essence or being.

C. ***Ohio Impromptu***

Beckett's ideas of nothingness and disintegrated self are also embedded in *Ohio Impromptu*. Published in 1981, the one-act play focuses upon the idea of nothingness in the acts of reading and listening. This conception of nothing also owes much to Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason, as well as the Buddhist notion of emptiness in relation to the self. By examining the disintegrated self in *Ohio Impromptu* this section will again approach Beckett's play through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, which turns the 'the sad tale a last time told' into an activity of intense mindfulness, one achieved at the end of the play when 'thoughts' become 'no thoughts' and the Listener and Reader achieve 'profounds of mind' (OH 288).

The play stages a Listener and a Reader, closely resembling each other, sitting on chairs with a table in front of them. Both are clad in black coats and white wigs. The Reader is reading from a book on the table in front of him. He is occasionally interrupted by the Listener with a knock. When the Listener knocks, the Reader stops and repeats the last segment of the sentence before continuing to read the text. The Listener knocks at the table, reminding the Reader when to stop and start the story again. At the end of the book, Reader closes the book, and both the Listener and the Reader stare at each other, and both figures freeze. The light fades and the play finishes. Throughout, the Reader tells a 'sad tale' to the Listener – ostensibly from the book on the table. The narrative revolves around a man who leaves his loved one who is dead perhaps and regrets his 'error' (OH 287). The man resides in the Isle of Swans and passes his days by pacing the island, wearing a long, black coat and Latin Quarter hat. His night terror returns, and his dreams become troubled due to the absence of the loved one. One night, a man comes to him, informing him that he is sent by someone dear and 'named the dear name' (OH 287). The man keeps returning until one night he announces that he will not return any more, since the 'sad tale' has become just a 'tale' and protagonists, Listener and Reader, 'sat on as though turned to stone' (OH 287).

Critical opinions on *Ohio Impromptu* largely focus upon issues of nothingness, mindfulness and elusive identity, which helps in pointing up matters related to constructions of the self. Gontarski suggests *Ohio Impromptu* is a work more concerned with 'mindfulness than mindlessness' (qtd in Schneider 135). In Gontarski's view, 'mindfulness' suggests an alertness with which the tale is told by the Reader to the Listener. In the text, listening is

represented as an act of awareness, for in the process of listening complete attention is paid to the words, rather than to the interpretation of words with pre-determined opinions. If the concentration of the listener is diverted to other thoughts the process of listening is hindered. Interpreting through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, listening with complete attention is a kind of awareness. Substantiating this view, Jonathan Kalb argues that *Ohio Impromptu* is 'a meticulously sculpted tableau [which] remains nearly motionless the entire time, allowing spectators to meditate on its metaphoric significance while a flow of words emanates from the stage, guiding meditation' (48). This guiding meditation is further confined to two aspects of the self: listening and reading.

In light of Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason, the play illustrates an apparent movement of awareness between the interaction of ears and mouth (Listener/Reader). The Listener is aware of the story being told by the Reader, and the periodic knock accounts for the silent zone between the reading and listening processes. The self is split between 'Listener' and 'Reader'. While listening is dependent on the words coming from the Reader (mouth) telling a 'sad tale', the cognition of the tale is sometimes lost. This loss of listening is dramatised by the knocks. Similarly, the (re-)commencement of reading is also indicated by a knock, as the mind focuses its attention to tell the tale. In this way, the protagonist is meditating on the act of listening to a story in the mind. The fact that listening ceases when the Listener knocks implies that words take the mind away to form perception and generate meaning, rather than merely concentrating on the words alone. The purity of narrative relies upon the Listener's act of listening without interpreting it any further or without giving any meaning to the words narrated. Since the Listener is not speaking, the words are directly taken by the mind: 'From the street no sound of reawakening. Or was it that buried in who knows what thoughts they paid no heed?' (OH 287-88). Here the mind pays no heed to the interpretation of raw sense data of thoughts. Both the speaker (mouth) and the listener (mind) are not engaged in interpretation. Instead, both are engaged with complete concentration towards what is being repeated in the mind, until the tale becomes merely a tale, with no interpretation added. At this point 'no need to go to him again, even were it in your power' and the tale becomes 'what thoughts who knows' (OH 287-88).

The text offers the audience as well as the reader of the play a state of meditation by bringing pure awareness to the processing of thoughts. Disintegration of the self illuminates the fact that the mind is but an element of the self; if not observed, it is responsible for the interpretation of thoughts and memories. Thus, recognising thoughts as thoughts and

becoming aware of the thoughts as an element of the self, brings 'reawakening' (OH 288). It is 'reawakening' because the Listener and the Reader are already attentive, even if the presence of knocks in between the process of reading and listening hinders attention placed upon the words in *Ohio Impromptu*. The two characters in the play are embodiments of the process of listening: 'To sounds of reawakening. What thoughts who knows. Thoughts, no, not thoughts. Profounds of mind. Buried in who knows what profounds of mind' (OH 288). Here the self is restricted within the boundaries of mouth and ear. However, if the mind stops to interpret, listening can again become pure without any interpretation: 'Whither no lights can reach. No sound. So sat on as though turned to stone. The sad tale a last time told' (OH 288). Through this interaction, the mind intrudes upon the process of reading and listening. However, according to a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework the elements of the self represented in the play by mouth and ears, are dependent upon each other. Put another way, the mind is not synthesising their functions by providing interpretations and ears are purely listening.

From a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective, the Listener and the Reader are one and the story about the missing loved ones takes place in the mind. Angela Moorjani terms this unified existence as 'the grieving artist at work, self divided from self, within an inner entombment, reading from the book of memory or a script inscribed within' (89). The story is like a thought read out in the mind, with traces of awareness. This awareness suggests that mind and thoughts are interdependent, with periods of silence in between. When the self is observed carefully, the silence between words and interpretations implies both interdependence and essencelessness. From a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' view, the play illustrates movements of thoughts inside the mind before the process of intellection.

Another important consideration in *Ohio Impromptu* is the issue of identity. Both characters betray a close resemblance to one another. In keeping with this 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' reading, Yosumari Takahashi rightly argues that, in *Ohio Impromptu*, 'Listener and Reader are, despite their separate identities, those halves of a split self that we are by now familiar with' (106). This familiarity also reveals a process by which self is constructed. This is achieved through an amalgamation of elements working interdependently upon one other. Ruby Cohn recognises the coalescence of identities while also acknowledging the divergences:

> On stage the refracted images of the old men resonate towards reflection within the tale that is read from the book…Within the book tale, however, the two men 'grew to be as one' as the tale is repeatedly read, while on stage the two men diverge before our eyes. (Cohn, *Samuel Beckett Humanistic Perspectives* 14)

According to Cohn's argument, the technique Beckett uses on stage produces doubt. With the passing of time, even the meetings between Listener and Reader 'grew to be as one – if ever they were separate – a unity reinforced topologically by the single hat that sits on the table' (Cohn 29). Charles Lyons argues that the narrative of the story makes the audience assume that the two figures on the stage are identical. Substantiating this point further, Kundert-Gibbs notes that the 'play frustrates the conceptual categorization of separate egos, eliminating Listener's and Reader's individual consciousness and merging them' (295). These critical views suggest that there is convergence of identities between the Reader and the Listener; the protagonist and the man who visited him at night in the text: 'With never a word exchanged they grew to be as one' (OI 287). However, the dependent and disintegrated aspect of the self is not taken into consideration by critics assigning a separate singularity to both Listener and Reader. The constant convergence and divergence of identities paves the way for the erasure of identity since the self is nothing but an amalgamation of elements working together.

The Reading Archive held at the University of Reading holds twenty pages of the earlier drafts of Beckett's manuscripts of *Ohio Impromptu*. Adam Seelig, in his article 'Beckett's Dying Remains: The Process of Playwriting in the *Ohio Impromptu* Manuscripts' notes how Beckett focuses upon the process of self-erasure. Seelig's attempt to classify this process indicates that Beckett tries to cancel out autobiographical presences from the text through his technique of 'vaguening', or the 'intent of undoing'. For instance, in MS 2259/I, the holograph on verso of leaf I states:

> I am out on leave. Throw out on leave.
>
> Back to time, they said, for 24 hours.
>
> Oh my God, I said, not that.
>
> Slip ~~into~~ on this shroud, they said, lest you catch your death
>
> Of cold again.
>
> Certainly not, I said.

This cap, they said, for your ~~deaths head~~ skull.

Definitely not, I said.

The New World outlet, they said, in the state of Ohio. We

Cannot be more precise. Pause.

Proceed straight to ~~Lima~~ the nearest campus, they said, and

Address them.

~~Address whom~~? I said.

The students, they said, and professors.

Oh my God, I said, not that.

Do not overstay your leave, they said, if you do not wish it to

Be extended.

Pause.

What I am to say? I said.

Be yourself, they said, ~~youre [ ]~~ say yourself.

Myself? I said. What are you insinuating?

~~Yourself before, they said~~.

Pause.

And after.

Pause

~~Not during? I said~~. (Seelig 379)

The early drafts of *Ohio Impromptu*, as analysed by Seelig, suggests Beckett's preference for erasing his identity by deleting temporal references. Thus in MS 2930/2, Beckett vacillates between different times of the day: 'Let me first explain ~~my pretense~~ my presence in your midst ~~this evening, or perhaps this afternoon, or even this morning~~' (381). A later draft highlights the absence of time for both the play and the character. As Seelig argues: 'throughout these early drafts Beckett strives to shape a domain of temporality in which narrative relates everything that occurred, will occur, and is occurring - a "mythological present"' (381). Seelig also notes that the mythological present is a critical feature of the published text, since the narrative of the story reflects both the recurring events in the lives of the characters and their relationship as temporal (382). This explains Beckett's reflection of the observation of the self which is constantly changing and interacting.

Thus, the play, from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective, explores the splitting of identity as a formulation of the self in conversation with a part of the body, that is, mind. The interruptions within the narrative signifies the deliberations of a thinking mind that halt due to the silence created by an awareness of mind during the gap present in the arising of the thought and the consequent interpretation provided by the thinking mind. The figures therefore signify two aspects of the self: the thoughts in the head with a voice and the silent space between the arising of thoughts and its interpretation. The knocks in between suggest an awareness of the thinking mind and its ability to remain aware of the pure thought. Thus, what occurs at the end of *Ohio Impromptu* is nothing less than the encounter between different elements of the self, undertaken without any inherent attempt to construct identity.

D. *Quad I & II*

First televised by the BBC in 1982 under the title *Quad 1+II*, both plays were first published by Faber & Faber in 1984. In the dramaticules, four figures walk four times along the sides and the diagonals of a square. Each figure avoids the square's centre – 'a danger zone' – by an abrupt leftward movement. The timing of the play is crucial, as no two players should meet during their movement (Cohn 370). Mary Bryden writes, 'as the piece progresses, players consecutively embark upon or quit, their scurrying route according to their appointment, such that one, two, three, or four players may be observed at any given time' (Bryden 110). The question then arises: why are the characters moving in repeated patterns, and why are they avoiding the centre?

Critics like Hans Hiebal interpret *Quad* as an exposé of debased human existence, and argue that the play is built upon the view that life consists of repetitive and compulsive activities, and that it is deceptive to believe that life has freedom of will, individuality or spontaneity (Hiebal 341). However, *Quad* exemplifies something beyond the surface level of simply knowing that there is constant and repetitive action. There is an erasure of personality as well, since the players are identical in build and attire, and no faces are shown. Herren writes that 'no Beckett work restricts the psychological output and creative input of its directors and performers more ruthlessly than *Quad*' (47). One reason for this may be the part played by observation of the self, which might downplay hindrance of any kind – emotional, psychological or physical. These representations of elements of the self can be viewed through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' approach, which accounts for the way various elements of the self interact, but are never able to approach being or a unified essence. In fact, Beckett defines *Quad* in the script as 'A piece for four players, light and

percussion', one giving 'equal billing to each element, and suggesting that no one element is more important […] than the other' (Herren 46). The staging of the characters can be said to represent a formation of the self and its essenceless nature, which again unveils the 'illusion of Maya' and evokes what Knowlson claims is the '"purity of spirit" that had long been important in his life as well as in his works' (Knowlson 683).

Several critical approaches have been taken toward Beckett's technique of staging voiceless beings, wandering around in an enclosed space, in rhythmic patterns and avoiding the centre. In his detailed analysis of Beckett's directorial notebook for *Quad*, S. E. Gontarski argues:

> Revision is often a patterned disconnection, as motifs are organised not by causality but by some form of recurrence and (near) symmetry. This process often entails the conscious destruction of logical relations, the abandonment of linear argument, and the substitution for a more abstract pattern of numbers, music and so forth, to shape a work. (Gontarski 136)

There clearly is a mathematical strategy used in *Quad*. It is based upon geometrical movements along the sides of a square, whereby the characters never meet each other and avoid the central position of the square. The mimes perform a pattern, starting at different times from different points, thus eliminating the scope for spoken language or props on the stage.

The centre of the square, called in Beckett's text the 'danger zone', 'marks the spot or moment of recognition of the void, the nothingness which seems to penetrate through the black hole in the centre. Death, nothingness, misery, futility, "danger" are visible for a second, but are instantly forgotten or repressed' (Hiebel 146). This 'danger zone', from Hiebel's point of view, also accounts for an essenceless nature of the self, wherein the self dissolves. However, the dissolution of the self is not dangerous but is liberating from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' point of view. In fact, Beckett remarked to Martha Fehsenfeld that 'gradually one realised they were avoiding the centre. There was something terrifying about it … it was danger' (qtd in Bryden 111). This 'terrifying' centre Bryden identifies as the absence of any core of the self. However, from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective the absence of core is a liberating factor. Although part of the appeal of *Quad* lies in its mathematical structure, consisting of various permutations and combinations, another key consideration is the idea of nothingness. Perhaps this void is not the 'danger

zone', as interpreted by Hiebal, but an awareness that follows from the observation that selfhood is disintegrated, dependent and essenceless. Beckett writes that it is 'a piece for four players, light and percussions' (CSP 291), and 'as alike in build as possible' (Bryden 110). Sidney Hoffman suggests that 'if we are an active audience in Beckett's work, no matter what medium he chooses, here in the mimes we are even more so. The actions are devastatingly physical […] and yet we cannot resist the self-imposed drive toward symbolism and meaning' (Hoffman 146).

Other interpretations of the play suggest that the mime act as if they are within a prison with no walls; the barriers are within the players themselves, and the structure of surveillance is internalised (Woycicki 146). Yet the prison can be seen as a prison of the body, one in which all the elements are working together. Beckett added a telling sentence at the close of the section on 'Light' in his production notes toward the Stuttgart filming: 'An eye suddenly opens, suddenly shuts (can't bear any more)' (Bryden 109). The sudden opening and closing of an eye suggests a kind of awareness of fleeting perception. The opening of *Quad* pierces the 'veil of Maya', but then returns to the illusion of selfhood that is associated with the world of phenomenon in a singular mode. The square only exists through performance; it is thus a 'performative map'. This 'performative map' may be said to also represent an enclosure within which the self operates.

Given the starkly conflicting interpretations of the play, a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' reading can help to explain the concept of essencelessness as well as the dependent characteristics of the self in *Quad*. The justification for this is the mime themselves, who avoid the centre. Carey argues:

> The nothingness at the centre of the *Quad*, seen from the perspective of "being there", becomes a metaphor for that which cannot be determined. The indeterminable inner quad, that threatening central area, both underlies and pervades the temporal being there of the design. (Carey 146-147)

The indeterminable centre can be read as an allegory for the essenceless nature of the self. The nothingness that lies inside this mathematical formulation of the self suggests an interwoven pattern of elements that depend upon each other for their existence. The presentation of the physical body as one element of the self – as depicted through characters and to keep the bodies from reaching the centre – makes the play a meditative piece on the fragmented construction of the self. This short mime points towards the readiness to reveal

fundamental aspects of self-formation, whereby the illusion of any unified core in the sense of 'I' is dispelled.

The dynamics of *Quad I* show the mobility of players on the stage, with sound in the background; *Quad II* is produced without sound. Mime wear colourful attire to show the bodily movements in *Quad I*, although in *Quad II* colourful attire disappears. The upsurge of mobility, silence and colourlessness may be seen to represent an awakened consciousness, as silence is the by-product of knowing oneself – dependent, interacting and without essence. Filtering this through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective, the possible awareness of emptiness or essencelessness is directly portrayed, and the silence coheres with an awareness of the self. Beckett asserted that *Quad II* in black and white is 'marvellous, it's 100,000 years later' (qtd in Martin Esslin 109). While *Quad I* is more interactive, an awareness of the absence of essence characterises *Quad II*. The recognition of the noisy mind, flooded with thoughts while the interaction between the outer and inner world is surviving, is an aspect of *Quad I*. In contrast, there is nothing but silence in the background of *Quad II*, representing an attainment of a meditative state. *Quad II* is therefore a step further than *Quad I* in the attainment of self-awareness, for silence and awareness prevail along with the capacity to silence the constant recurrence of thoughts in the mind.

On the other hand, Bryden focuses on a remarkable aspect of *Quad* in performance; namely, that it is 'Beckett's aversion to "sex indifference"', and 'intense though the viewer's focus upon the intersecting figures may be, the question of gender is elided to the extent that it does not pose itself as an issue demanding resolution' (Bryden 'Dancing Genders' 118). Of course, consciousness is not divided into genders. More generally for Schopenhauer, consciousness is formed when the elements of the self interact, and Bryden also points out that 'in the end, it is the imperative towards continuation which remains when the conventional power of organizing categories has been disabled' (Bryden 'Dancing Genders' 120). This may be because it is this continuity within the elements of the self that never ends, nor one which accumulates any essence. Beckett's *Quad* gives form to what is formless: the representation of the self in his late drama. This is like 'giving form to what has none' since the self has no form as interpreted via a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective (Juliet 148,149).

E. *What Where*

What Where was first published in 1984 by Faber & Faber. In this piece, Beckett may be seen to once again explore the themes of identity and memory in relation to the self. Yet as

with most self-generated puzzles, the work held his attention for quite a while, and he spent several years revising it, in three different languages and writing two separate versions for stage and screen. In 1985, he adapted a version for German television, and in 1987 he worked with Stan Gontarski and John Reilly to refine his production for American television. Replacing the megaphone with an eerie, distorted face, the TV versions of *What Where* used special effects to render the characters as robotic, disembodied heads (O'Donnell).

Summarising the play is difficult, in keeping with so much of Beckett's late drama, due to the lack of conventional plotline. There are four grey-haired male characters, Bam, Bem, Bom and Bim, all wearing long, grey gowns. There is also 'V' (Voice of Bam), which is represented by a small megaphone at head height. The stage is dimly lit and surrounded with darkness, representing a sense of void in space. A lengthy interrogation scene takes place on the stage, with 'V' serving as a narrator. 'V' opens the play and says:

V: We are the last five.

In the present as were we still.

It is spring.

Time passes. First without words.

I switch on. (*What Where* 310)

The role of 'V' expands as the play proceeds, as he introduces and also interrupts the action between Bam and Bom:

V: Not good.

I start again.

Bam: Well?

Bom: Nothing

Bam: He didn't say it?

V: Good.

Bom: No.

Bam: You gave him the works?

Bom: Yes.

Bam: And he didn't say it?

Bom: No. (WW 312)

The information provided by 'V' is never explained beyond 'what' and 'where'. The latter are posed as questions, repeatedly asked by 'V', as time passes through spring, summer and autumn, until V is left alone in winter. The defamiliarisation of space and time raises an ambiguity that is present in space and time itself, at least from a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective, which are dependent entities on the stage.

It has long been established that, for Beckett, theatre was a place of relief, which promised, in Michael Robinson's words, 'a firmer reality than a subjective monologue written and read in isolation' (230). *What Where* expresses an escape from notions of 'I' by assigning each aspect of the self a distinct character. Jonathan Kalb notes Beckett's interest in the 'relative values of solitude and companionship' in *What Where*, arguing that the character of 'V' punctuates the dialogue with phrases like 'I switch on' and 'I switch off' and, after his obscure interactions with other characters, who look conspicuously like him, says, 'I am alone' (311). This companionship can be construed as a coming together of thoughts that manifest themselves one after the other in the mind – accompanied by the empty and dark space in between the thoughts, which generally goes unnoticed.

In *What Where*, Bam is 'acting upon instructions from his alternative Self, Voice', which is 'condemned ultimately to his solitary physical presence and the dictations of his voice' (Renton 177). The alternative self is the voice of thoughts that keeps repeating itself inside the mind. Charles R. Lyons writes:

> *What Where* appears to be a highly self-conscious dramatic invention that parodies the very processes of the spectator's extrapolation of images of character, situation and time from the limited and equivocal data the playwright provides. The "itness", "whatness" and "whereness" of these figures, who are interchangeable, does not exist. (qtd. in Acheson 96)

This non-existence can be read as an acute sense of fragmentation that Beckett generates while dealing with the fragmented self in *What Where*.

'V', in *What Where*, is a witness that intrudes between the erupting memories inside the mind and the self as 'I'. Indeed, the play evokes simultaneous memories on the stage. Mind, of whose function 'V' is not conscious, is portrayed as encountering certain memories and then letting them go. The memories seem to beg to remain, but the awakened consciousness does not allow them to stop, since awareness helps in understanding the temporary nature of thoughts arising and passing away:

Well?

Nothing?

He didn't say anything?

No

You gave him the works?

Yes.

And he didn't say anything.

No.

Then why Stop?

He passed out. (WW 313)

The voice thus becomes a mere player in the game; a game played by the mind. The identity of the self is only lost when the position of thought is taken as it is, and no perception is associated with it. The play once again presents the self. Thus, the players reconstruct the fragments of 'V', who is responsible for the questions posed while interrogating Bam, Bom, Bim and Bem: 'The striking similarities in names and appearances suggest that all the players are fragments or "shades" of the same character' (Herren 327). For Schopenhauer, such a disintegration of elements of the self are always posing questions within the playground of the mind.

In *What Where*, the self is depicted as aware of the functions of a mind that interrogates itself. The conventional recognition of the self as singular is fundamentally challenged in the play, with each memory granted a name. Yet the possibility of wrestling with memories at any single moment is laid bare on stage. The central speaker is alone, generating a

network of interconnected thought patterns within the mind, as depicted by the four characters on stage. Thus the focus is, first, upon the mind and the awareness; and second, upon the dependent characteristics of mind, where the concept of time in relation to self is found without core: 'Without journey. Time passes. That is all' (WW 316).

Conclusion

The dramatic works examined here, as Herren argues, 'robs the performers and directors of the traditional tools of their trade – human identification, mimetic translation, emotional appeal' (47). This introspection will finally become 'a continuing beginning towards transparency' of the constituents of the self (Brater *Beyond Minimalism* 109). In a piece for the *Village Voice*, Billie Whitelaw described her acting technique to David Edelstein as follows: 'Beckett blows the notes. I want them to come out of me and create feeling in whoever's sitting out in front' (Herren 48). Whitelaw's dramatic experience suggests a choiceless awareness of what had been given to her to perform by Beckett (such as *Rockaby*). The overall effect of the late drama, when filtered through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' lens, helps in illuminating the strained tension of looking for interpretation, when instead only direct observation is portrayed. This observation, as represented through the characters on stage, rejects the veil of illusion of the singular self and is like 'accepting that the voices of his disembodied and shifting people indisputably make awareness non-localised'. Therefore, awareness as non-localised finds an answer by recognising the characteristics of the self which possesses temporary, shifting and essenceless characteristics (Davies *Beckett and Eros* 194).

The 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework emphasises the dependence of different elements of the self, and the dissolution of solid identity. Beckett's method of depicting the self in fragmentation via the protagonists of his late play, such as the Speaker, Listener, W (Woman), V (Her recorded voice) is to evokes images of the protagonist on the stage as features of meditation, which enforces the unexamined characteristics of the self. This disruption of conventional self-identity suggests the moment in which the self appears in the time-space dimension. This illusion performed in relation to the self is that the observation of many interdependent processes is ignored and the self prospers as 'I', me or mine. Thus, a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework elucidates images of the protagonists of the plays, who are listening to themselves, fragmented as different elements of the self such as 'eyes', 'mouth' or 'ear'. Consequently, the focus on the genre of drama explicates the chance to see the disintegrated aspects of the self in theatre.

Chapter 6

Examining Beckett's 'The Way', 'Ceiling' and 'Stirrings Still'

The short prose works written in the final decade of Beckett's life clear away the obscurity of the self and its relation to the world. As is evident in the late drama, Beckett's short prose works also draw upon the fragmented nature of the self through contemplation. My attempt to study the short prose works in the light of a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' approach aims to concentrate on the characters who are present in disintegrated form without presenting any metrical structure. The words and images used in the late prose works describe the place, elements of the self and the way images are presented, which constitutes an attempt to show the simplest acts of observation. This appearance and disappearance in the construction of the self are artistically dramatised in these late works, despite the lack of critical attention paid to this interpretation. This underscores the close reading given to these shorter late works in this chapter through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' interpretation, which emphasises how the word 'I' embodies multiple aspects without essence. In this way, a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' reading of Beckett's late texts forefronts the images of disintegration that are so prominent in Beckett's late works. In this process, the protagonists reflect upon thoughts and imaginations, which end with an emptiness equivalent to an understanding filtered through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework. This emptiness attempts to deny the images of the self as singular and clarifies the embedded illusion in the expression of the self. Furthermore, a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework helps in elucidating Beckett's project of a 'literature of the unword' in which language goes beyond representation and complies with Beckett's position of presenting the self in disintegration in which identity as a stable self is an issue. As Gendron rightly asserts

> although there are some references to characters many of who appeared in Beckett's earlier novels who seem to correspond to the traditional subject in that they are endowed with a name and a familiar human physical form, these identities do not remain stable long' (50).

Decades after 'Three Dialogues' in which Beckett mentions that there is nothing to express, the obligation of expression comes through an awareness of the self which through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective shows how the bare combination of the elements of the self are constantly interacting.

This chapter is concerned with the fragmented self in Beckett's prose works from the 1980s – the shorter 'The Way' (1981), 'Ceiling' (1985) and 'Stirrings Still' (1989). These ultra-compressed prose works pay rigorous attention to each activity within the self. Beckett's attempt to yield an awareness of the self into the text is evident in a conversation with Lawrence Harvey in which he gives a significant status to contemplation and says that it plays a consequential role where 'getting below the surface, concentrating, listening, getting your ear down so you can hear the infinitesimal murmur' is reinforced (247). As Knowlson writes of this period in Beckett's life: 'The theme of a man seeing himself rise and disappear was developed, intermittently, over the next few years in several short manuscript fragments' (*Damned to Fame* 698). This interpretative framework foregrounds the self as disintegrated, lacking any essence. For Schopenhauer, this brings clarity in understanding how an illusion (veil of Maya) is formed in the sense of the self. When Schopenhauer writes that 'the world is my representation', he draws upon the Buddhist expression of emptiness and the Vedic illusion (veil of Maya) present in the idea of things and the self. To this end, Schopenhauer further remarks that 'the world must be recognised, from one aspect at least, as akin to a dream, indeed as capable of being put in the same class as dream' (WWR II 4).

The protagonists of these late prose works are divided into an inner and outer self. For example, 'his ears from deep within' (SS 114); 'self and second self' (SS 110); 'head on hands he saw himself rise and go' (SS 107); 'He speaks of himself as of another' (CI 16). The relationship between the elements of the mind, such as mind and eyes, are observed without reactions or perceptions: 'For some time after coming to the eyes continue to. When in the end they open they are met by this dull white. Consciousness eyes to of having come to' recognise self as it is (CI 129). For example, a thinking mind recalls a memory. This memory is a fragment from the past, but no label either of good or bad is attached to it. The protagonists are aware of emergent memory in the mind, which is also a product of habit as in *Proust*. The awareness of memory and habit is generally unnoticeable, and Schopenhauer explains this through a simile: 'The most accurate seems to be that of a piece of cloth, which after being folded frequently, again falls automatically, as it were, into the same creases'

(FFR 216). This explains the automatic mental images passing over the process of interdependence. Beckett's late works clasp unawareness at the moment of its occurrence and lay bare memory, perceptions and thoughts at the moment of happening, unveiling the distinctive nature of how memory and habit work.

The focus of these texts is toward an interrogation and observation of the self through consciousness. This is achieved by assigning the characters to distinctive elements of the self, such as the mouth, thought and perception. The status of a failed self and 'the dissolution of the ego' are key expressions through which Beckett's work can be viewed (Oppenheim, *The Painted Word* 38). Yet why and how this dissolution occurs is not addressed in the late prose works. This dissolution of the self in Beckett's works comes through the protagonist who is aware of the self's different constituents. Using a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework for analysis, it becomes clear that for the protagonists, there is identification with the mind and other constituents of the self separately and that the construction of the self is based on its various elements. Thus, first, the protagonists of the late prose works talk and observe themselves, but they do not identify with the normally defined sense of self as 'I', which is infused with the perception of adjectives such as 'good', 'bad', 'beautiful' or 'lovely'. This is the most common perception about the self when the reference is given as 'I'. The most difficult part of the sense of 'I' is to grasp or define it, because there is no essence behind the illusory sense of self. In other words, it is impossible to pin down 'I' in any of the constituents of the self, as is clear from Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason, which, when read into Beckett's late prose works, suggests a fragmentation of the self. The interactions between these elements do not enable a single part, which can be taken as the essence of 'I' to be isolated. This is exemplified by Beckett's poem 'neither', where he suggests that whether self exists or does not exist is unimportant, because both are wrong ways of perceiving. This is comparable to Schopenhauer's view that 'I know my body only in the perception of my brain. This perception is brought about through the senses, and on their data the perceiving understanding carries out its function of passing from the effect to the cause' (WWR II 6). Thus the 'I' is like '[o]ne's own person [which] is then split up into the knowing and the known, into object and subject, and here, as everywhere, these two face each other inseparably and irreconcilably' (WWR II 6). This explicates the nature of the self as split and dependent.

The idea that 'nothing remains to say' about the self becomes a key aspect of self-awareness that dispels the illusion embedded in the sense of the self. For self, Schopenhauer understands 'the senses are merely the seat of an enhanced sensibility' and 'each sensation as a modification of the sense of touch or the ability to feel which extends over the whole body' (FFR 239). This means that the representation of the elements of the self is shown as aspects that are normally taken as a singular self, which in fact it is not. Beckett's direct literary observation focuses upon the breakdown of the elements of the self. In turn, this reveals the fragmented phenomena comprising the self. Schopenhauer highlights this interdependence and disintegration in his essay 'On Vision': 'each sense is open to a particular kind of influence to which the other senses are either slightly susceptible or not at all' (FFR 239). This isolates both the themes of disintegration and dependence. To reach this understanding it is useful to analyse, through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, the way Beckett artistically renders the idea of the self and probes the structure upon which it is built because the form of the text is an important part on which the structure is based.

Significantly, to represent this disintegrated form of the self, the short prose works use various unconventional techniques of presenting the self. Employing pronouns and showing images of body and mind separately present artistically a division of the self. When the disintegration in his texts is read through Schopenhauer's philosophy and a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' emphasis upon nothingness of the self is emphasised, the insignificance of naming can also be recognised, and the 'veil of Maya' can be pierced to see the interaction that lies behind the formation of the self. Even the texts created for mass media in the 1960s, such as *In Words and Music: A Piece for Radio* (1962), *Film* (1965) and *Eh Joe: A Piece for Television* (1966), Beckett, 'with a rapidly increasing ease and sophistication uses the technical resources of the form to explore the fragmentation of the self', as Pattie phrases it ('Space, Time and Self in Beckett's Late Theatre' 395). The use of pronouns instead of proper names, is one characteristic that showcases the indeterminate location of the self in the 1980s prose works.

The monologues of these late works display inconsistent and apparently meaningless narrative structures, and the voices appear in non-representational patterns, which evoke the failure of words to describe a thing or event. Beckett's use of these structures suggests the underlying meaninglessness of words, which influences understanding of the thing under consideration. The failure of language is considered in the text. The reader realises that on the level of interpretation, basic comprehension is not possible. For example, in the opening

lines of *Imagination Dead Imagine*, Becket introduces the death of thought where, 'No trace anywhere of life, you say, pah, no difficulty there. Imagination not dead yet, yes, dead good, imagination dead imagine' (IDI 63). For this, Adrian Hunter argues that 'what punctuation there is has the effect not of assisting but of further breaking down any chain of meaning in the language' (92). In a similar strain, Hugh Kenner argues that Beckett 'seems unable to punctuate a sentence, let alone construct one. More and more deeply he penetrates the heart of utter incompetence, where the simplest pieces, the merest three-word sentences, fly apart in his hands'. Both Hunter's and Kenner's evaluation can be contradicted by applying a 'Schopenhauerian-Buddhist' framework that helps specify that Beckett's language obliterates the various elements that construct the entity of the self. This underpins an argument in favour of Beckett's approach to language which performs exactly what observation shows. The reason for this failure can be seen from Schopenhauer's Eastern philosophical perspective: his principle of sufficient reason and the concept of Buddhist emptiness, both of which express clearly how the self is made. Therefore, the nature of language in Beckett's work gives a complete 'telegraph communicating arbitrary signs with greatest rapidity and the finest difference of shades of meaning' (WWR I 39). In general, the way that language is effected through pictures, conditioning of the mind, habit and imagination. Schopenhauer writes: 'our learning of a language consists in our linking together a concept and a word for all time, so that this word always occurs to us simultaneously with this concept, and this concept with the word' (WWR II 134). Hence the process involved in language 'connect[s] the image of the person or thing with any quality of perception' (WWR II 134) and this kind of association is likely to 'seize any impression that has been left behind', and thus is temporary and deceitful' (WWR II 134). Thus, naming relates to the singularity of the self and the perception formed is not from direct observation. This yields an instantaneous veil, which is the veil of perception created for the object. The prose works are shining examples where language is not posing any threat to the observation of the self, as language is just describing the self as it is.

A general understanding of this concept can be gained through the following example. When we talk about a word such as 'chair', we call upon all the elements that make a chair: its legs, arms, and utility, and the wood it is made of. However, the word 'chair' does not encapsulate the presence of the wood, or the sunshine or the water that helped the wood grow. Even sunshine and water are important parts in the making of the chair, because it was sunshine and water that helped the tree to grow. Hence, the word 'chair' does not

signify the complete entity 'chair'. Similarly, the characters in Beckett's 1980s prose works represent awareness of sensations and thoughts that partake in the process of the self. Schopenhauer elucidates this point further:

> In general, the thought-process within us is in reality not so simple as its theory, for here the whole thing is involved in a variety of ways. To make the matter clear, let us compare our consciousness to a sheet of water of some depth. Then the distinctly conscious ideas are merely surface; on the other hand, the mass of the water is the indistinct, the feelings, the after-sensation of perceptions and intuitions and what is experienced in general, mingled with disposition of our own will that is kernel of our inner nature. (WWR II 135).

Schopenhauer suggests here that thoughts, feelings and perceptions are all intermingled and dependent, and without observation the reality of the dependent and disintegrated nature of the self is ignored and as soon as the object comes under consideration, the immediate response is thought rather than observation. This process of thinking is on automatic mode and 'the whole process of our thinking and resolving seldom lies on the surface' (WWR II 135), which means it is seldom taken without pre-conceived judgements and perceptions.

The characters in the prose works display disintegration of the self and the connections between the various elements of the self. By applying a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, the dependent characteristics in the formation of the self can be recognised and the characters in the prose can manifest feeling as feelings, form as form and consciousness as consciousness, without binding them with the idea of 'I', 'me' or 'mine' as singular. This is what the protagonists in the late prose works do, as in the dramatic piece *That Time*, when Beckett writes 'making yourself all up again for the millionth time' (*That Time* 234). This supports the view that self is not an entity but a process that follows on through various combinations between and within the elements of the self. In his 1980s short prose works Beckett restricted the use of feelings of suffering and focused more on how feelings and the mind are part of the process called the self.

Critics like Sarah Gendron have discussed the fragmentation of the self and the fragmented narrative structures and the way voices are presented in non-representational fashion in Beckett's work. Gendron argues that 'Derrida examines the role that presence has historically played in the construction of the stable, distinct, authoritative phenomenological

subject. A concept of the self that was theorized by Descartes, Rousseau, Hegel, and countless Western philosophers' (48). She writes that:

> According to this model, the self is determined and known only through self-presence. In the case of Descartes, the subject is formed by applying systematic doubt to everything about which the mind cannot be certain. Cartesian self is therefore what remains after everything external to the mind, and everything that could be potentially deceptive, has been eliminated. (Grendon 48)

Here, it is difficult to verify what self-presence and self-reflexive meditation conveys and what remains after the elimination of everything external to the mind is taken away. It is also difficult to pin down what is external to the mind. Gendron also argues that in *Difference and Repetition*, Gilles Deleuze makes a similar argument about the relationship between the self and self-presence. He begins by asserting that Descartes was correct in stating that one can come to an idea of the self only through contemplation' (48-49). Consequently, 'where Descartes ultimately is able to give form to the subject through self-reflection, Beckett's characters never achieve that same stability. Oftentimes, they are barely present at all' (49). Gendron's approach to the instability of the self cannot be related to the point of view of both Descartes and Deleuze, because when self-reflection is an important aspect, giving form to the self is not possible as the perspective offered by 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework would state. This framework represents the very instability in the formation of the self. As self is an amalgamation of many elements, dependent on each other and without essence, it is impossible to pin point 'I' or 'me' from the various participating elements of the self's formation. Thus, self can be recognised in disintegration and without essence by considering 'the world as representation subordinated to the principle of sufficient reason' (WWR I 8). Hence, two very important aspects of the self are reflected in these works: one is the identification of an 'I' without essence, and the second is the recognition of the illusion present in the representation of the self as singular.

This chapter explores the fragmented conditions of self, present in Beckett's last prose works that represent the mind and its formulations through representation, the mind's interaction with thoughts, and the 'nothing' found at the bottom of thought processes and memory. Although Beckett separated the functional entities, such as listener, reader and voice of consciousness, he continued to represent the awareness. These representations of the aspects of the self in the form of various elements of the self that are interacting and

performing the assigned tasks are attempts to overturn the image of the self as singular. For example, eyes are seeing, legs are moving and noses are breathing, and the achievement is the attainment of understanding the self by 'annihilating its deception' (WWR II 148) and bringing about awareness through observation.

A. 'The Way'

From this late period, Beckett's short prose piece 'The Way', written in mid-May 1981 – precisely at the time of his Schopenhauerian entries in the 'Sottisier Notebook' – emphasises this depersonalisation of the self, which has been identified above as drawing upon a specific 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' formulation that stresses the illusion of a singular self. Faber has only recently published the short prose works 'The Way' and 'Ceiling' and therefore there is little critical commentary in Beckett Studies on them. The depersonalisation of the self lifts the illusion (Maya) of the self as singular by direct observation. This observation is not undertaken by thought, or perception formed by thoughts, but experienced reflexively. A perceptual haze suggests that the elements of the self are difficult to isolate within the measurements of time and space. 'Perceptual haze' here refers to the ambiguity created by the thoughts in relation to the understanding of the mind as an element of the self. No pronouns or names are given in 'The Way'. The absence of any name or pronoun is an indication that the analysis is being done on one's own self, as will be developed below.

The self in Beckett's late text participates in a kind of maze that one encounters while travelling within oneself. This is akin to the form of Buddhist meditation in which the attention is taken inwards and the self becomes an entity comprising various aspects. This movement toward meditative introspection in Beckett's work is presented across the body from 'foot to top and thence on down another way. On back down'; 'the ways crossed midway more and less than midway up and down'; 'the way up back down', or 'in part from on the way' (TW 125). Here, the text presents an observation of the self and does not name it as such. Rather 'The Way' records the movement of observation of the self from top to bottom in the way it is – direct and clear. According to a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, after the attention is trained across the body, it seems difficult to pinpoint which part of the body can be labelled as self, and thus the text expresses confusion over how to pinpoint a specific place in the corridors of the body that purports to record the element called the self.

The conception of the self as a dependent entity comes from Schopenhauer's Buddhist-derived view on the emptiness of the self. When the attention is moved inward, as in the case of meditation, one can experience the elemental parts of the self, which are divided into feeling, form and consciousness. Explaining it through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, feeling is a part of the self, and also feeling has an interaction with the sense of a fictitious singular 'I' which is dependent in nature. However, feeling takes on the sense of 'I' automatically because insufficient attention is paid to its nature. 'I' then is an illusion (veil of Maya) because the element of the self, which is feeling, is not recognised separately and also the dependent nature of feeling and perception is ignored. It is only through knowing the dependent and essenceless characteristics of the self as feeling, perception, consciousness does there come 'freedom once at foot and top to pause or not. Before on back up and down' (TW 125). The observation suggests an understanding of the self as disintegrated, and thus freedom from the illusion that the self is a singular 'I'. This representation of the different parts of the self entails that feelings, form and perceptions are all arising and passing away, and the automatic connection between mind and feeling to form a perception is broken. So, when perception is not formed for the feeling in relation to the sense of 'I', suffering gets eliminated. Hence, Schopenhauer's principle of sufficient reason regarding the dependent aspect of the self where no essence is found in any particular aspect of the self, helps us to peer behind the veil of illusion (the connection between thought and perception which is broken) in 'The Way'.

The observation that goes through the corridors of the whole body in 'The Way' distinguishes each part of the body separately – mind, feeling, perception, eyes, ears and the rest – followed by the effort to tag any part as the self in spaces within the body. There is a literary detachment of the elements of the self as a speaker, thinker, hearer and watcher. The same is true for the evaluation of time in terms of dependent characteristic. According to Schopenhauer, time is also a dependent entity and its dependence is based on space. Here, time is measured as 'a foot, a second, a mile, an hour and more' (TW 125). Thus, the various formulations of time extend over space and cannot be measured in terms of time alone, since time is also an entity present in the mind. Thus, only when time is attached to the category of space can it be perceived. 'For it is precisely through the union of space with time, to form the complete and general representation of the complex of experience, that the representation of coexistence arises' (FFR 196). The experience is complex because 'I' is

attached. Therefore, time is not bound to past or future in the text since past and future are the result of dependent variables.

Beckett presents the way to reach a distinct element called 'the self' in the 'same mist always'. The ambiguity of reaching any essence of the self is indicated. Since there is no singularity of the self when read through the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective, this haze is everlasting, because to pin down one element of the self as self is impossible. The mixture of various elements that accompany the formation of the self, from top (thoughts) to bottom (senses) and the 'same half light' of undifferentiated elements cobbled together to give the feeling of 'I', are like 'loose sand underfoot', with 'no sign of remains, no sign that none before. No one ever before so' (TW 125). Thus the self remains in disintegration and the illusion of the singularity of 'I' is like the 'loose sand underfoot' on which our understanding of 'I' is dependent, and the feeling of 'I' is a false consolation. The narrator's effort to provide a noun or a pronoun to identify all the elements of the self in a singular way is exhausted, and remains – for the narrator – 'barren'. The self is stained with the 'same ignorance' of identification. Hence, 'no sign of remains a sign that none before. No one ever before so-sigh' (TW 126). The non-recognition of the self as plural is the main cause of illusion, and when this illusion of 'I' is clear, suffering bids adieu.

Applying the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, the 'inmates' (form, feeling, perception, consciousness) of the self in the prose 'The Way' can be seen as wandering and interacting 'Forth and back across a barren same winding one-way way' (125), but they seek no relief, 'so-sigh'. This interaction between the elements of the self is constant and never stilled. Thus, the dimensionless projection encompasses the elements of the self without pinning down any particular point from where the self either starts or ends. One becomes aware of the precarious nature of the so-called self, which has no absolute point of reference; it is 'loose sand underfoot'. The activities taking place in consciousness nonetheless linger in the textual imagery. Retrieving the essence of the self is impossible because the formation of the self is a process of interaction between different elements that constitutes the self. The representation of the self is 'In unending ending or beginning light' (TW 126). In the text 'The Way' there is no subject-object union, but an interaction between the elements that can be seen in the light of interdependence. This key point is also made by Schopenhauer in his notes: 'dependence of subject on the object […] nothing is a mere concept of relation' (MR 319). As Dirk van Hulle suggests, it is 'Well on the way to inexistence' (xi); or, in the words of *Ill Seen Ill Said*: 'as to zero the infinite'. This suggests

that the inexistence of existence is infinite. Similarly, the same can be said about the concept of Schopenhauer's dependent origination when read through 'The Way's' expression of the self, in which the self is presented to show a chain of causes and conditions which had constant interaction between the various elements of the self. The self is thus an interwoven web of connected causes and conditions. Filtering Beckett's text, 'The Way', through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework, is to highlight the illusion of 'I' or the self as singular. Following 'The Way', self is the focus of another 1980s short prose text 'Ceiling' recently published by Faber, and here the elements of mind and consciousness are presented.

B. 'Ceiling'

In the short text 'Ceiling' (1985), eyes seem to open upon on the dull white of body, consciousness, mind and breath. Dirk Van Hulle calls 'Ceiling' 'a study of consciousness as a return to consciousness as consciousness regained' (xii). The consciousness of the self is created as a backdrop of white or dull white. There are inexplicable eruptions of thought emanating from the notion of the self in mind and consciousness. These thoughts cannot be linked to any single aspect of the self, as the observation of the self is as 'consciousness eyes to of having come to' (CI 129). The text suggests that the origin of conscious thought is unknown, and this makes it clear that mind is a thinking tool that produces thoughts 'No knowledge of where gone from. Nor of how. Nor of whom. None of whence come to' (CI 129).

Thus, thoughts are just thoughts without any singular 'I'. In other words, the image of the self is manifested as a synchronous mash of mind, breath, consciousness and eyes, with no leftover perceptual identification of any of the individual elements that can be pointed to as 'I'. Needless to say, pronouns such as 'he', 'we' or 'I', as in *Worstward Ho* and other texts of this period, are nowhere to be seen. The expression of the self is constructed interdependently, highlighting the characteristics of emptiness in the sense of the self by scrutinising mind, thought and consciousness individually, which are interacting elements in the present, and then their coming, arising and passing away in 'Ceiling'. Dirk van Hulle discusses *Ceiling* from Dennett's mind model, and writes that the text performs 'from a post cognitive perspective, the mind is not some "inside" separated from an "outside", but an interaction between – for instance – a bedridden organism and the ceiling above, or a writer and the paper on which s/he writes' (285). He further argues that 'writing is not just form of

thinking, but can also be regarded as a model of the mind' (286). However, in a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' reading, the text represents the observation of the thinking mind. This framework brings the empirical aspect of observation before thinking, and not a model of the mind which again has perceptive quality.

Beckett evokes this interconnected image of the self in 'Ceiling' by subtracting rather than adding the interdependent elements of the self (body, consciousness, eyes, mind and breath) collectively comprising the notion of the self. From a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective, the identification with the self collapses during observation of the self because fragments of the self can be recognised. During the interaction between the elements of the self, the eyes are exposed to the 'dull white' of an object outside the self. After that, the eyes continue to interact 'sometime after coming to the eyes continue' (129). This interaction between the eyes and consciousness is observed in dull white: 'when in the end bidden they open they are met by this dull white' (130). The only spatial co-ordinates given in this text are those of the self, which cannot move any further: 'further one cannot' (CI 130). Beyond this interaction, the text does not illuminate any other references to subject-object relation or elements of the self. The writing style in 'Ceiling' allows contemplation and direct attention, nothing else: 'no knowledge of where gone from, nor of how, nor of whom. None of whence come to. Partly to. Nor of how. Nor of whom. None of anything' (CI 130). This perspective of coming to nothing contributes to an awareness of the self, through which the configuring zone of the self now sets the mind: 'Of mind alone. Alone come to. Partly to' (CI 130). The awareness of the mind as part of the self brings about an awareness of embodiment, the physical element: 'Then worse come of body too. At the sight of this dull white of body too' (CI 130). This playground of the elements of the self – the eyes, consciousness, body, mind and breath – is where Beckett incorporates continued interaction suggesting that the self is plural and dependent. Here, the awareness of plurality and the interactions between the elements of the self are particularly revealing. The text exposes the unravelling knots of the entity called 'self' and displays the interaction behind the endless display of elements within the self: body, mind, consciousness and eyes and exposes the illusion we associate with the sense of 'I'.

C. 'Stirrings Still'

The text "Stirrings Still" was published in 1989 and written at the request of Beckett's long-time American publisher Barney Rosset. Beckett translated the text into French as *Soubresauts*. Hulle writes that *Stirrings Still* can be regarded as its last *Soubresauts*, a vain

but heroic and moving attempt ‘to paint a still of the always stirring consciousness’ (Hulle, ‘Samuel Beckett: Stirrings Still’). However, this stirring evokes awareness of a self-consciousness that remains in constant motion, thus depicting a striking aspect of the self. In this context, the text, keeps the process through which the self is constructed ongoing, sustaining the elements of the self in constant interaction. The literary rendering in “Stirrings Still” can be read as the representation of a disintegrated self, one where the status of ‘I’ diminishes. Such an illustration of consciousness exhaustively presents the echo of self-analysis which, when expressed through Schopenhauer’s principle of sufficient reason and a ‘Schopenhauerian Buddhist’ framework, helps in interpreting Beckett’s text more clearly.

The text opens with a physical body placed under observation. This state of observation is prior to thought. According to Schopenhauer’s philosophy, thought and knowledge of a thing are always presupposed, and thus far removed from what the thing is: ‘all knowledge inevitably presupposes subject and object’ (FFR 207). The figure sits at the table with his ‘head on hands’, after which thoughts arise in the mind of other places. This is not the physical travel of the body, but the travel of thoughts. Mental travel appears in ‘Stirrings Still’, argues John Calder, who also notes that ‘the ability of mind to leave the body and travel outside it, and to return, is believed by some spiritualist groups and many Buddhists’ (Calder, *The Philosophy of Samuel Beckett* 44). Since no indication in the text is given that the mind has travelled outside the body, this travel can be read as the travel of thoughts, as in self-observation; reflexive thought is an important aspect of Buddhist meditation. Another important expression is that the character is aware of thoughts in the mind, which means that the character is observing himself. The observation of the self involves the standing position of the body on the stool and looking through the window ‘he would simply stand there high above the earth and see through the clouded pane the cloudless night’ (SS 107). The portrayal of self-observation can be read as an act of meditation. Two clear and distinctive states of awareness are evoked in the first paragraph. This is the awareness of the self in standing and moving positions and the eyes that look at the clear sky. The self is created both as seeing and as the physical body. Two separate entities are taken up from the self (SS 107). Again, Beckett has produced two separate entities for a single person who ‘sat at his table head on hands’ (107): thought and the physical body. This exposes the intended division of the self.

In the second paragraph ‘he’ (the mind) watches himself (the physical body) rise with difficulty, ‘first rise and then stand clinging to the table again. Then go. Start to go. On unseen feet start to go’ (SS 107). The feet are unseen because the physical movement of the feet is not associated with any perception. Then, in ‘Stirrings Still’: ‘Waiting to see if he would or would not. Leave him or not alone again waiting for nothing again’ (SS 108). This suggests a wait for nothing to perceive from the physical aspect of the body, yet to go on observing seems difficult because ‘he disappeared only to reappear later at another place. Then disappeared again only to reappear again later at another place again’ (SS 108). The complex situation that is the disappearance of body and mind is taken up, and anticipates the ultimate disappearance associated with death: ‘as others would too in their turn and leave him till he too in his turn’ (108). This waiting, composed only a year before Beckett’s actual death, seems to be awaiting for death; until then there is a wait, and that is ‘for nothing again’ (108). The disappearance of the self while alive is desirable, for in that state the self is disintegrated and dissolved from a singular ‘I’ to a fragmented ‘I’.

There are also visual allusions in ‘Stirrings Still’, starting with the participle ‘seen’, which contrasts with the adverb ‘blindly’; ‘whithersoever’ he went blindly in the dark, he is always seen from behind (Hulle *Literary Encyclopaedia*). Two important expressions are mentioned here, which are specifically states recognised during meditation. One is ‘seen’, as in the understanding of a meditative state where the mind is aware of its own wanderings; and the second is the blind aspect of a life journey where the search is always on for ‘a way out’ to reach emptiness (SS 108). The strange condition of repeated activity is evoked by the mind: ‘Same hat and coat as of old when he walked the roads. The back roads’ (108). The oft-repeated pattern of walking under similar conditions suggests the awareness of habit in time and place.

Thereafter in ‘Stirrings Still’, the revisiting of memories takes place in the mind. However, memories fade due to the disappearance of the boundaries between present and the past, inside and outside. Such disappearances are only possible when the whole frenzy of the mind’s expression gets dissolved and the flow of coming and going thoughts is recognised. The strokes and cries are heard again, but ‘nothing to show not another where never’ (SS 110). Thoughts bring ‘strokes and cries’, but the self is aware now, and these cries are ‘now gone, now there again now gone again’ (SS 110). Arguably, the constructed idea of self is now broken, and the patience to seek the physical end of the body is underway. This end will eliminate all the ‘end of time and grief and second self’ (110). This second self can be

seen as the disintegrated aspect of the self that represents the 'I'. This waiting involves patience and acceptance in 'Stirrings Still', along with a representation of the dissolved self.

Continuity in the meditative state is marked in the second part of the text. At this point, the mind brings 'what is more his remains of reason to bear on this perplexity in the way he must be said to do if he is to be said at all' (SS 111). The memories or thoughts of inner or outer visual scenes bring no respite for the wandering mind, save that of bringing focus to the impermanent and continual processes of self-reflection. Meditation opens the door to the self-awareness, or in "Stirrings Still", 'sink his head as one in meditation' (SS 113). Eventually, the meditative observations bring about a gradual decline of knowing or finding essence in thoughts, memories or thought. The new, distinctive feature of profound self-awareness is displayed by 'the strokes now faint now clear as if carried by the wind but not a breath and the cries now faint now clear' (SS 113). The important passage suggests an awareness and renunciation of any singular essence behind the origination of thoughts. In this way, "Stirring Still" subsumes 'the meditator seated at his desk, the observer and the observed […] separating and yet fusing the outer and the inner one' (Cohn *A Beckett Canon* 380).

The word 'On' also communicates the impression of successive forms of disintegrated self, interacting between words and thoughts. The vain initiative to search for self in thoughts that tags the person as 'I' is presented in the third part of 'Stirrings Still': 'For how could even such a one as he having once found himself in such a place not shudder to find himself in it again' (SS 114). The mind's sense of self is associated with thoughts that mark the self with happiness or sadness as the situation arises. Thus, it is very difficult to get out of the loops formed by the thoughts to entangle the idea of self 'such and much more such the hubbub in his mind', and also time, sorrow, and the 'I' within which the self exists; all come to an end with a representation of the essenceless and dependent characteristics of the self, and hence 'time and grief and self so-called. Oh all to end' (*SS* 115). This kind of overlooking of the association between mind and thought is discussed by Schopenhauer who writes that 'we see mechanical, physical and chemical effects, as well as those of stimuli, ensue every time on their respective causes without on that account ever thoroughly understanding the process' (FFR 213). This explains the 'veil of Maya' in which the various elements of the self and the process of dependent origination is missed and self is taken up as a singular entity.

Conclusion

Beckett's 1980s prose works portray the ever-growing disintegration of the self. The protagonists, in their search to locate the self, depict an intuitive observation that is gained through meditation. This provides a key insight into the way Beckett represents mind, physical body, thoughts and perceptions, as nothing but the dependent and essenceless nature of the aggregates of the self. The late prose works starkly portray this disintegrated self, as well as how the elements of the self are dependent on each other. 'First mind alone. Something of mind alone. Then worse come body too. Something of body too. When in the end the eyes unbidden open' (C 130). Gontarski claims that 'Beckett distilled essences for some sixty years' (Gontarski, *From Unabandoned Works* xi) and the product is an inevitable interaction and fragmentation between the elements of the self.

This analysis accordingly has advanced four perspectives in this chapter. First, that there are renderings of a meditative dwelling in the inner recesses of the self in Beckett's 1980s short prose. Second, there is a portrayal of the disaggregated self as mind, body, form and feeling. Third, the attributes of the self are both dependent and essenceless. Fourth, the veil of illusion that performs the task of singularity in the formation of the self as 'I' is pierced, but soon returns, for achieving awareness of this illusion is difficult. These late prose works traverse a path of awareness, separating the elements of the self before receding to the formation of 'I'. 'Same pace and countless time. Same ignorance of how far. Same leisure once at either end to pause or not. At either groundless end' (TW 126). The stirring elements that constructs the 'I' helps in leading to a sense of disenchantment with the sense of 'I'. Thus, Beckett's 1980s late prose works portray the phenomena of the self as observed within, as it arises and passes away. These late texts boil down the attributes of the self to their basics, which are interacting, arising, passing away, yet they also include disturbances in the mode of self-examination, thus, accomplishing 'pure expression' in language that describes everything as it is. In moving towards 'pure expression', Beckett's late short prose bears out his lifelong philosophical influence by Schopenhauer, and in turn, the latter's use of Buddhist themes in his work. Together, it helps to reveal the indebtedness of Beckett's art to what is called here 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism', which, it is argued, helps in the interpretation of Beckett's presentation of the disintegrated self, as is so forcefully presented in his late prose.

Conclusion

The German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, who in turn drew inspiration from the Eastern philosophies of Buddhism and the Vedas, played an influential role in the writings of Samuel Beckett. This thesis has re-examined Schopenhauer's philosophical influence on Beckett, and advanced a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' interpretation to provide insight into Beckett's non-fiction and novels before his 'frenzy of writing' after 1945, as well as his late short prose and drama from 1970s and 1980s. As expressed here my 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' reading departs from the principle of sufficient reason and its engagement with Buddhist emptiness – a demonstrably key influence upon Schopenhauer and, as asserted here, indirectly upon Beckett. As Lin emphasizes 'Even in the absence of formal training, Beckett demonstrates, at times, surprising creativity in his appropriation of Eastern wisdom as evidenced by his imitation and expansion of Schopenhauer's use of Buddhism and Hinduism' (641). For Schopenhauer, the 'veil of Maya' can be explained when it is realised that the true nature of the self is an amalgamation of many elements that are mutually dependent and essenceless in nature.

Drawing upon Schopenhauer's reading of Buddhism, Beckett presents the self as not unified but fragmentary. This is in keeping with Buddhist views on emptiness, which so intrigued Schopenhauer. This interdependence indicates that the existence of the self is not singular, but there are many aspects that comprise a self or a thing. This principle applies to Beckett's various renderings of the disintegrated self. This aspect in the manifestation of the emptiness of the self is the knowledge that suffering is an aspect of sensation, which is one of the elements of the self. When the sensation arising in the body is observed qua sensation and no interpretation is added, the habit of the mind to generate automatic connectivity during the interaction of sensation, form and mind is broken. These clearly show the ability of the protagonists to go beyond thought formations and to recognise the interdependence of various elements of the self.

This fragmentation of the self is deployed across Beckett's writings. Starting from the early criticism *Proust* and novels *Murphy* and *Watt* to the late trilogy and later drama and short prose, Beckett engages deeply with this notion of a fragmented self. This is exemplified in his first novel, *Murphy* in terms of the division of mind and body: 'Thus Murphy felt himself split in two, a body and a mind' (M 70). As Tonning has argued, but did not systematically pursue: 'Schopenhauer's "solution" to the problem of existence itself draws

heavily upon the "way out" suggested by Eastern mysticism and asceticism ('I am not Reading Schopenhauer' 87). An inability to notice the dependent and essenceless characteristic of the self gives rise to illusion ('veil of Maya') which is created by the mind in presenting the self as singular. Thus, when self is recognised as being an amalgamation of many elements of form, feeling, and consciousness, the interdependence of these elements helps in its formation, then the illusion of the singular self is broken. This knowledge of phenomena that leads to no conclusions helps in the understanding of a process involved in the origination of suffering. The knowledge of this process according to Schopenhauer:

> Arrives at no conclusions as to what exists beyond all possible experience, but furnishes merely an explanation and interpretation of what is given in the external world and in self consciousness. It is therefore content to comprehend the true nature of the world according to its inner connexion with itself. (WWR II 640)

Yet, the major difference found between the early and late writings of Beckett is that, at least to a certain extent in the early writings the self is expressed as a singularity. In early texts, the characters have proper names and suffering plays an important role in the lives of these protagonists. By contrast, in the late writings a complete disintegration of the self has taken place. Accordingly, naming is replaced by pronouns or single letters, such as 'W' in *Rockaby*, or 'A', 'B' and 'C' in *That Time*. Various aspects of the self are instead under observation, with observation coming before conscious representation in thought. Hence, the sense of self that comes from the conceptual or intellectual part is kept at bay; rather, the representation of the self in Beckett's art attempts to portray the self as it is observed during contemplation.

In other words, the early and late works demonstrate a key change in Beckett's writings. Beckett's art conveys the cycle of existence of the protagonists who represent various aspects of the self and moves from 'I' to 'Not I' (since the self is present in disintegrated form) and invites readers to explore the self as it is, with all its constituent parts. Beckett's form moves towards the 'literature of the un-word' as he described in his famous 1937 letter since the 'I' becomes progressively effaced during his writing. As in the 1950s *Texts for Nothing*, the authority that binds the 'I' degenerates: 'the words too, slow, slow, the subject dies before it comes to the verb' (*Texts of Nothing* 68). Through the dissolution of the self, Beckett represents the unveiling of the 'illusion of Maya' – one of Schopenhauer's key philosophical themes. The explication of the self, provided through disintegration, dependence and essencelessness, produces a disintegrated picture of the self. Beckett's late

works thus take the path of dissolving identity 'with which contemporary awareness of the nature of mind is clouded' (Davies 404). In turn, this veil or fog of ignorance is identified via a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' approach. To artistically clarify this 'problem of existence', Beckett used several different genres to bring about an acute awareness of different aspects of the self through his writings: non-fiction, novels, short prose and 'dramaticules'. Since novels are read and drama is watched, depicting fragmentation of the self in different genres produces an effective strategy to understand self through different mediums.

This indirect manifesto reveals Beckett's aims at bringing an independent statement that reflects awareness of the self as 'something itself' rather than 'about something'.

The relevance of Schopenhauer's Eastern philosophical framework in addressing Beckett's artistic aims derives from the fact that Beckett committed himself as an artist to showing 'how it is'. Beckett chose an artistic approach that proposed no philosophical solutions to the reality of existence. Self-knowledge remained an important aim for Beckett. His art aims to inspire the insight, and 'does not reproduce the visible, it makes visible' the content which is missed by general eyes (Klee 42). These readings, presented here within the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' and Vedic frameworks, amply illuminate aspects of not thinking but observing, wherein one apprehends the self as fragmented when the 'veil of Maya' is perceived and the embedded illusion of the self is finally realised.

An unveiling of the fragmented self is more prevalent in Beckett's late works, which pierces through 'the densest of conceptual veils' (Copeland 19), piercing through layer after layer of the elements of which the self is made. Cohn writes that Beckett 'seeks ignorance, impotence, nakedness. He comes as close to them as literature can, but he cannot achieve them'. She then adds 'That is his curse, as it is ours' (Cohn 290). Yet it is not truly a curse since 'ignorance, impotence and nakedness' gives clarity to the phenomena involved in the process of becoming of the self or the thing. In another critic's words, Beckett helps us explore the human condition 'with uncompromising honesty, ruthless integrity, and utter frankness' (Esslin 28). The impossibility of finding any essence or being of the self closely resonates with the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' perspective offered here: finding solutions is not as important as looking at the problem itself, a problem with which Beckett's art constantly engages. Beckett, according to Ihab Hassan, is 'a profoundly responsible artist'

who, with 'his relentless will towards truth and [for] his naked art, which strips itself to meet truth bravely' (Hassan 198) signifies the importance of self-observation. In his late fiction and drama, Beckett's representation of his protagonists in observation of their own selves pierces through the veil of illusion created by the mind if not recognised properly.

Beckett's pre-occupation with the condition of suffering, essence and emptiness is pervasive. On this point, Copeland notes:

> To make the essence visible, he must eliminate all diverting surfaces; he must empty his form of all extraneous ornamentation, strip it down to its fundamental elements, and chisel it to fine transparency. Indeed, since it is the absence, the nothingness at the centre of being, that he wishes to reveal in his art. (Copeland 26)

However, it is clear that identifying a particular philosophic aspect or effect of Beckett's writing is tempting, the author himself reminds us that 'the danger is in the neatness of identifications'. Surely, it is impossible to pigeon-hole his writings. Beckett worked on thought itself, and championed it as a separate entity deriving from the mind. In so doing, the stability of the world is shattered. In *Murphy*, the self is merely 'a mote in the dark of absolute freedom' in which 'the sensation of being a missile without provenance or target, caught up in a tumult of non-Newtonian motion. So pleasant that pleasant was not the word' (M 72). Thus, for Beckett the artist is in a state of willing, and cannot write unless he understands 'that will, being utilitarian, a servant of intelligence and habit, is not a condition of the artistic experience' (P 90). Thus, the stability of the will is a hindrance to producing art of an ordered world, since 'the creation of the world did not take place once and for all time, but takes place every day' (P 19): That is, it is dependent and essenceless. The various aspects of the self are explored across Beckett's different genres to identify the way they operate without pre-conceived judgements.

Pothast, Büttner and Moorjani have very effectively highlighted Beckett's fragmentation of the self through Schopenhauer's influence upon Beckett's writings. As Pothast argues (174), 'the narrator discloses his problem concerning individuation in the first words of the novel: "Where now? Who now? When now? Unquestioningly. I, say I. Unbelieving. Questions, hypothesis, call them that"' (TU 375). This suggests fragmentation of the self. Beckett's art discards the surface of the self and arrives at essencelessness. As he said to Lawrence Harvey in the 1960s: 'In so far as one is, there is no material' (Harvey 249). In another interview with Harvey, Beckett said that he 'knew of no form that didn't violate the nature

of being "in the most unbearable manner"" (Harvey 435). This suggests that being cannot be directly expressed, as it is an object of uncertainty. Beckett's art reduced the personality of the protagonist and laid bare the illusion of singularity present in the concept of the self.
From his early *Proust* following his initial encounter with Schopenhauer, it is possible to extrapolate Beckett's themes of self, time, space and memory in pointing toward the interdependent and essenceless characteristics of self. The basic ideas formed in Beckett's critical evaluation of Proust already suggest a self in relation to time; time in relation to aspects of memory and habit; memory in relation to perception and experience; habit in relation to suffering; and the creation of self through perception, memory and habit. The early novels *Murphy* and *Watt* then fictionalise some aspects of these through the division between mind and body. Even the mind is further divided in *Murphy* which resembles the states of meditative experience in which the states of mind change during contemplation. For that novel's protagonist Murphy, the mind experiences three zones of light, half light and dark (M 71).

Yet Murphy and Watt remain aware of the fragmentation within their own selves, and of the necessary connections formed between the different elements of the self. This representation of the protagonist's mind and body which when filtered through a 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' framework uncovers the 'veil of Maya' present in the understanding of the self as singular and helps in illuminating the process involved in the construction of the self. This suggests that the singularity of the self is questionable when observed carefully, as in the climax of both novels. In this way, Beckett's first two novels already explore the self as fragmented, reaching a point of void, or an essenceless condition. The moment-to-moment experiences of the characters can be seen to represent an unfolding of possibilities which directly evokes the partition between the inner and the outer world. There is no inherent subject or story in many of the late works, but a conscious effort on the part of the characters to set out on a journey to know oneself. There is an instability of the self, in which there is an awareness that many elements of the self are challenged in the singularity of names, pronouns and identity tags: 'In the end, you don't know who is speaking any more. The subject disappears completely. That's the end result of identity crisis' (Juliet 157).

Any stable notion of the self is gradually discarded in Beckett's late works, and reveals itself separately as mind, thoughts, names, feelings and perceptions. Here the notion of 'I' is fundamentally challenged, and the representation of its nature is portrayed. Beckett's so-

called characters become increasingly indifferent to the external world around them. Again speaking to Charles Juliet, Beckett claimed: 'But the problem is how to express that… there is no pronoun.… I, he, we – nothing is quite right' (Juliet 164). Beckett provides ample illustrations in his late drama and fiction to enjoin us to see the mental as well as the physical formation of the self. The continuity with which these elements of the self are exposed in the light of interdependence, as well as the essenceless characteristic of the self earlier championed by Schopenhauer, result in a different way of looking at the self. Language interposes a necessary veil, and does not provide any other way of looking at a thing except that of tagging it with a name. According to Schopenhauer's philosophy, and later Mauthner, the inability of language to pierce through the veil is a characteristic of language which is not capable to naming the person or a thing by taking into account all its constituent parts. Many contemporary critics are concerned with the failure of language in Beckett's work. However, the important question left to ask is why language fails. In response, the 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' reading suggests that language is inherently unable to encompass all the characteristics of the self.

Beckett's late prose and drama renew this fragmented idea of the self by bringing to it an awareness that elements are interdependent. Although there is a portrayal of the disintegration of the self in Beckett's early works, his pre-1945 work still had associations with more or less traditional narratives in which the protagonists are in search of their inner selves. Yet in late works, these stories are effaced, and associations with the self *as self* are of greater concern. This thesis argues that one reason for this change may be found in Beckett's return to Schopenhauer in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which emphasises self in disintegration and without essence. Rather, they are representations of journeys into the nature of the self. The figures in Beckett's late works act, speak and think in a way that highlights various elements that are implicated in the process of self formation but they never reach a definite point of selfhood. Thus, the effect of not being able to assign a noun or a pronoun, or the failure to find any singular essence, is the main reason for the construction of the philosophical framework of 'Schopenhauerian Buddhism' in this thesis.

In Stephen Bachelor's words, Beckett's writings show that 'much of the time we fail to register what is happening here and now. We are reliving an edited version of the past, planning an uncertain future, or indulging in being elsewhere. Or running on automatic pilot, without being conscious at all' (24). Beckett's writings evoke this conscious effort to remain aware of what happens at the very moment of looking, seeing or thinking. Beckett

depicts these features of the self in his art, and highlights the constituent parts that form it – even if, of course, he left it to the readers to draw their own conclusions. Self-awareness was such an important thing for Beckett that he wrote the following in German in his 'Clare Street' notebook in 1936, translated and reproduced here:

> If you find yourself when confronted by death different than you have been hitherto then you should feel ashamed of your inadequate self-awareness, your lack of the strength I demand of my servants. And if you find yourself after your death the same as you were before, then do not be surprised. It is perhaps a law that someone who achieves self-knowledge does not die, just as it is certain that he who does not know himself never lives. (RUL MS 5003, 33, 35)

To 'Know thyself' is the way to approach Beckett's art through 'Schopenhauerian Buddhist' lens, since it places at the forefront the confrontation of a fragmented self. That is why reading Beckett's art through Eastern philosophy is so important.

Schopenhauer contends in *The World as Will and Representation* that recognising the illusion of the 'veil of Maya' is similar to the cave metaphor in the *Republic*, which Plato expresses by saying:

> that those who outside the cave have seen the true sunlight and the things that actually are, cannot afterwards see within the cave anymore, because their eyes have grown unaccustomed to the darkness; they no longer recognise shadow form correctly. They are therefore ridiculed for their mistakes by those others who have never left that cave and those shadow form[s]. (WWR I 190)

This is analogous to reading Beckett's expression of the self in disintegration and essencelessness via Schopenhauer's philosophy, or once more, in Schopenhauer's words: 'It then reaches the point where the phenomenon, the veil of Maya, no longer deceives it [sense of self]. It sees through the form of phenomenon, the *principium individuationis*, the egoism resting on this expires with it' (WWR I 253).

Approaching Beckett's art through this philosophical lens enjoins readers and members of the theatre audience to simply witness the characters on stage, or read them on the page and simultaneously to reflect upon processes involved in the formation and subsequent dissolution of the self. Again, in Schopenhauer's words: 'Individuality, of course, is

inherent above all in the intellect; reflecting the phenomenon, the intellect is related thereto, and the phenomenon has the *principium individuationis* as its form' (WWR II 609).

> Therefore everyone knows of himself only as of this individual, just as it exhibits itself in external perception. If, on the other hand, he could bring to consciousness what he is besides and beyond this, he would willingly give up his individuality, smile at the tenacity of his attachment thereto, and say: 'What does the loss of individuality matter to me? For I carry within myself the possibility of innumerable individualities. (WWR II 491)

These individualities are the product of interacting elements of the self where none possesses the essence of any so called 'self'. '[F]or at bottom every individuality is really only a special error, a false step, something that it would be better should not be, in fact something from which it is the real purpose of life to bring us back' (WWR II 491-92). Thus, the task of tearing the veil is accomplished and the 'liberated eyes' encounters the world as it is.

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