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AN ONTOLOGICAL FOUCAULDIAN READING OF TECHNOLOGIES OF THE SELF IN SELECTED NOVELS OF SAMUEL BECKETT

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Chairperson: Associate Professor Noritah Omar, PhD

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As the overview of the past studies on Samuel Beckett shows, his fiction is not thoroughly analyzed in a framework which is both conceptual and standardized so that we can academically differentiate the modern or postmodern nature of his novels. The purpose of the present study is, thus, to offer a critical reading of the selected major fictional works of Samuel Beckett, *The Trilogy*. Its goals are to suggest a variety of interpretations that will encourage readers already familiar with Beckett's novels to reevaluate his works and their implications and also to encourage new readers and students of literature to undertake further critical studies of his fiction. To that end the present study first explores Beckett's selected novels - *Molloy , Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable* - in the light of the Foucauldian concept of the 'Technologies of the Self' to understand how does Beckett depict and portray the self as a key concept in the rudiments and characteristics of the postmodern novel; and second, the present thesis postulates to formulate a basic criterion by means of which we can yardstick the predominance of post/modern essence in Beckett's novels as a possible academic strategy. The methodology here will be to evaluate Beckett's trilogy in the light of critical concerns that have previously been, and are currently, discussed in the context of New Historicism, specifically speaking, the Foucauldian concept of the 'Technologies of the Self'. In doing so, a further goal of this study is to reiterate and reinforce the value of what Brian McHale, in *The Postmodern Fiction*, refers to as a postmodern version of modernist literature and to contribute to the ongoing reevaluation of post/modern novel as critical idioms. This has been the main concern in chapter four of the present research to present a reading which encapsulates a discussion of the 'Technologies of the Self' across these novels. It also explicates on the existence of a more ontological nature, rather than that of an epistemological one to designate the postmodern stance rather than that of the modern one in these works therein addressing the inquiry: How is 'self' depicted and manifested in *The Trilogy*? With what the body of the voices of the self that *The Trilogy* reveals it appears to be titanically significant in answering the ontological question they are created to find an answer for. Molloy, Moran, Malone, The Unnamable and Mahood along with so many other surrogate characters for them want to leave stains and traces, to entertain, comfort, or

guide their listeners as to whom they are. Thus, this research surmises that in *The Trilogy*, postmodernism precedes modernism through the 'Technologies of the Self' thereby creating a standard exemplary model for other possible case studies in ascertaining the blurring boundaries between the modern and postmodern novel. Each one of these novels provides the reader with an experiment that tests the limits of what it is to be a human, the ontological question of who am I here, the ontological question as the self keeps a voice resonating in a perusal so persistent that even the reader is not left untouched. They help the reader in having an experience of themselves and their world, and give them an increasing knowledge of the bodily and the linguistic limits of their modes of being, and create a stronger sense of their own flexibility.
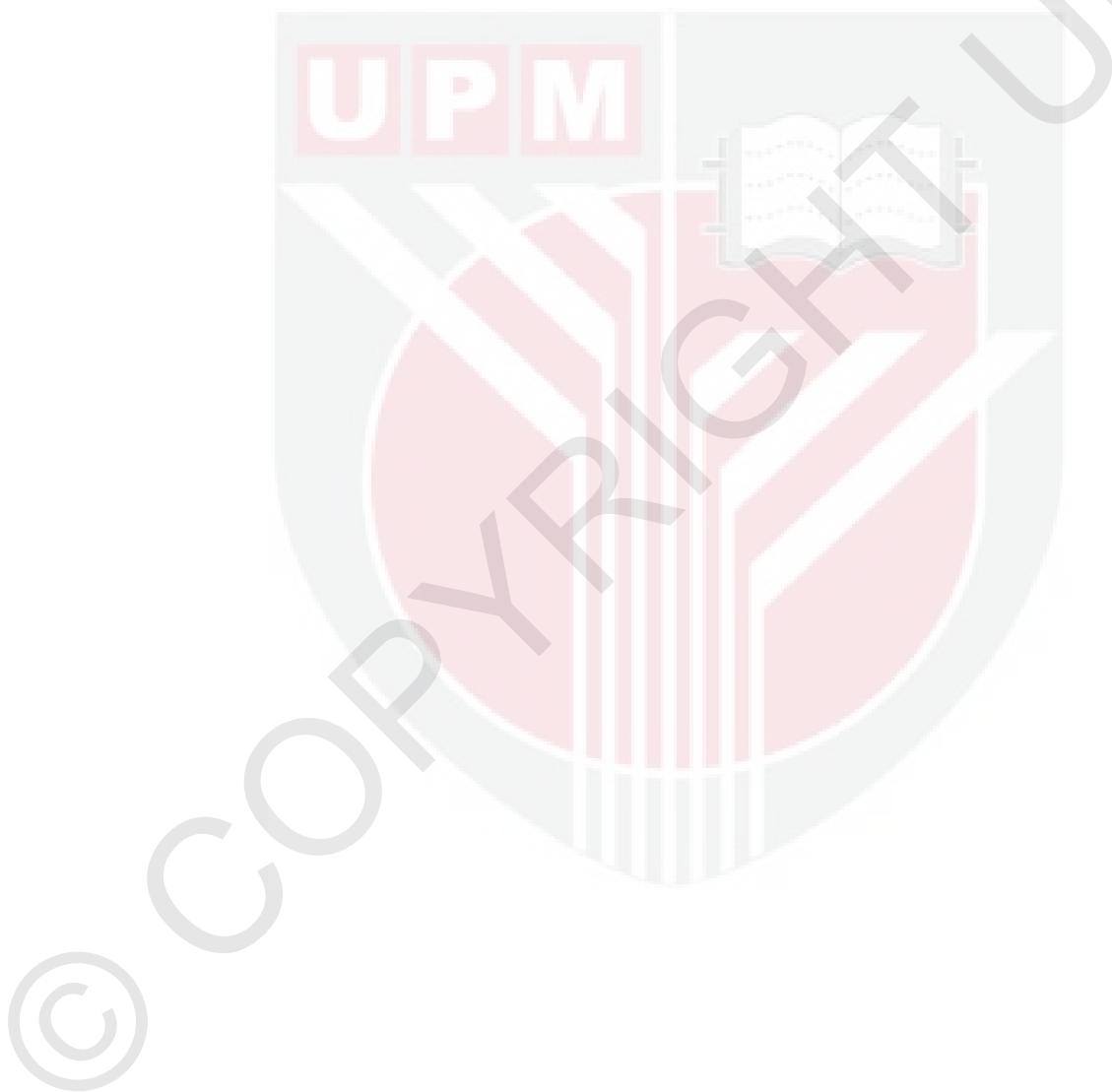
Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
Sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

SATU PEMBACAAN ONTOLOGI FOUCAULDIAN TERHADAP TEKNOLOGI DIRI DALAM NOVEL TERPILIH SAMUEL BECKETT

Oleh

JAVAD YAGHOOBI DERABI

May 2014

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Gambaran yang diberi oleh kajian lepas mengenai Samuel Beckett menunjukkan bahawa karya fiksyen beliau tidak dianalisis secara mendalam dengan menggunakan kerangka analisis yang konseptual dan standard untuk membolehkan kita membezakan sifat pasca/moden novel-novelnya secara akademik. Justeru, kajian ini bertujuan untuk menawarkan satu pembacaan kritikal karya fiksyen utama Samuel Beckett, iaitu *The Trilogy*.Sehubungan dengan itu, kajian ini bermatlamat untuk mencetuskan pelbagai interpretasi yang akan menggalakkan pembaca yang sudah biasa dengan novel Beckett untuk menilai semula karya Beckett dan implikasinya, serta untuk menggalakkan pembaca dan pelajar baharu kesusasteraan untuk menjalankan kajian kritikal selanjutnya terhadap fiksyen beliau. Untuk itu, kajian ini pertama-tamanya meneroka novel terpilih Beckett - *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* dan *The Unnamable* dengan menggunakan konsep 'teknologi diri' *Technologies of the Self*) Foucauldian untuk memahami bagaimana Beckett menggambarkan 'diri' sebagai satu konsep yang penting dalam asas dan ciri novel pascamoden. Kedua, tesis ini mengemukakan serta merumuskan kriteria asas yang boleh dijadikan kayu pengukur kepada dominasi intipati moden dan pascamoden dalam novel Beckett. Ini turut menjadi kemungkinan sebagai satu strategi akademik.Metodologi kajian ini adalah penilaian trilogi Beckett berdasarkan fokus kritikal yang sebelum inidan sehingga kinidibincangkan dalam konteks Historisisme Baru, khususnya melalui konsep Foucauldian *'Technologies of the Self'*. Dengan cara ini, satu lagi matlamat kajian ini adalah untuk mengulangi dan mengukuhkan nilai yang dirujuk oleh Brian McHale dalam *The Postmodern Fiction* sebagai versi pascamoden kesusasteraan modernis, serta menyumbang kepada penilaian semula berterusan novel pasca/moden sebagai perumpamaan bahasa yang kritikal. Ini telah menjadi fokus utama dalam bab empat kajian ini dalam membentangkan bacaan yang merangkumi perbincangan tentang *'Technologies of the Self'* dalam novel-novel ini. Ia juga menjelaskan tentang kewujudan sifat yang lebih ontologikal, dan bukannya yang epistemologikal demi menegakkan satu pendirian yang pascamoden (dan bukan yang moden) dalam karya-karya ini, lantas menangani persoalan ini: Bagaimanakah 'diri' digambarkan dan dimanifestasikan dalam *The Trilogy*?Pendedahan suara dalam *The Trilogy* menunjukkan kesignifikanan yang penting dalam menjawab soalan ontologikal yang perlu dijawab. Molloy, Moran, Malone, The Unnamable dan Mahood, berserta banyak watak tumpang yang lain, ingin

meninggalkan kesan dan jejak untuk menghibur, memberi keselesaan, atau membimbing pendengar mereka untuk mengenali siapa mereka. Oleh itu, kajian ini mendapati bahawa dalam *The Trilogy* pascamodenisme mendahului modenisme melalui '*Technologies of the Self* ' sekali gus mewujudkan model teladan yang standard untuk kajian kes yang lain yang dapat menentukan sempadan kabur antara novel moden atau pascamoden. Setiap satu daripada novel ini menyediakan pembaca dengan eksperimen yang menguji had apa yang ia adalah untuk menjadi manusia, persoalan ontologi yang saya di sini, soalan ontologi sebagai diri menyimpan bergema suara dalam penelitian yang begitu berterusan bahawa walaupun pembaca tersebut tidak dibiarkan tidak disentuh. Mereka membantu pembaca dalam mempunyai pengalaman sendiri dan dunia mereka, dan memberikan mereka pengetahuan yang semakin meningkat badan dan had linguistik mod pandangan mereka itu, dan mewujudkan rasa yang lebih kukuh fleksibiliti mereka sendiri.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Overview

Samuel (Barclay) Beckett was born in Dublin, Ireland, on April 13, 1906, to his middle-class Protestant parents. He attended the Portora Royal boarding school in Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, where he excelled in both academics and sports. In 1923, he entered Trinity College in Dublin to specialize in French and Italian. His DFDGHPLFUHFRUGZDVVRGLVWLQJXLVKHGWKDWXSRQUHFHLYLQJKLVEDFFDODX 1927, he was awarded a two- HDUSRVWDV OHFWHXU'DVVLVWDQWLQ(QJOLVKDWWKH Normale Supérieure in Paris. In France, Beckett soon joined the informal group surrounding the great Irish writer James Joyce and was invited to contribute the opening essay to the book *Our Exagmination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress*, a collection of twelve articles written as a defense and explanation of -RFHV VWLOO Onished *Finnegans Wake* EDJURXSRI-RFHV GLVFLSOHV EFNHWWDOVR moved in French literary circles.

During this first stay in Paris he won a prize for the best poem on the subject of time in a FRPSHWLWLRQVSRQVRUHGEWKHRXU3UHVV LVSRHPKRURVFRSH ZDVKLVILUVW separately published work and marked the beginning of his lifelong interest in the subject of time. Beckett returned to Dublin in 1930 to teach French at Trinity College but submitted his resignation after only four terms, saying that he could not teach others what he did not know himself. During that year he had obtained a Master of Arts degree. His penetrating essay on novelist Marcel Proust, published in 1931, indicates how many of his subsequent themes he was already beginning to consider at this time. After several years of wandering through Europe writing short stories and poems and working odd jobs, Beckett finally settled in Paris in 1937.

At the beginning of his career, Beckett spent his time in Dublin reading, in his own ZRUG LZLOOG URP -RKDQQ RHWKH WR)UDQ] ULOOSDU]HU WR LRYDQQL XDULQL KH finally settled into a single-minded concentration upon the life and work of Samuel Johnson. He began to collect information about Johnson, filling page after page in a large three-ring notebook with miscellaneous facts and quotations. Quite possibly this exercise was a means to keep his mind off *Murphy*, his first novel, which had recently been refused by the twenty-fifth publisher to see it, but also it represented a means to engage in a form of agreeable activity that counterbalanced his unpleasant circumstances. Something convinced Beckett that he must turn all the material he had collected about Dr. Johnson into a play, and by early summer 1936, he was calling it his iRKQVRQ)DQWDV FODLPHGWRKDYHWKHHQWLUHSODRXWOLQHGLQKLVKHDGDQ only needed to commit it to paper. His original idea was to write a long four-act play to EHFDOOHG XPDQ:LVKHV IDIWHU -RKQVRQ SRHP KH 9DQLWRI XPDQ:LVKHV Beckett once began to write a ten-page scene of the play, but the rest of the material remains unwritten and the notes are unedited. His work was halted by the realization that he could not accurately capture the eighteenth-century English language as Johnson and his contemporaries spoke it. Despite his early failures at playwriting, Beckett would later

return to the art form to create some of those his best-received works, including the play *Waiting for Godot*.

When World War II broke out in 1939, Beckett was in Ireland. He returned immediately to Paris, where, as a citizen of a neutral country, he was permitted to remain even after Nazi German occupation. He served in the Resistance movement until 1942, when he was obliged to flee from the German Gestapo, the Nazi secret state police, into unoccupied France, where he worked as a farmhand until the liberation of Paris by Allied troops in 1944. During these years he wrote another novel, *Watt*, published in WKHZRUNVWKDWILQDOOHVWDEOLVKHG%HFNHWW·VUHSXWDWLRQDVRQHRIWKHPR important literary forces on the international page and stage. Surprisingly, all were written in French. Beckett reached a much wider public through his plays than through his difficult, obscure novels. The most famous plays are *Waiting for Godot* (En Attendant Godot) (1953), *Endgame* (Fin de partie) (1957), *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958), and *Happy Days* (1961). The same themes found in the novels appear in these plays in more condensed and accessible form. Later, Beckett experimented successfully with other media: the radio play, film, pantomime, and the television play.

It has been always academically difficult to distinguish the whereabouts of Samuel %HFNHWW·VILFWLRQZLWKLQWKHWwr terrains Modernism and Postmodernism. Not because they do not lend themselves to the characteristics and features belonging to Modernism and Postmodernism but rather because the novels claim these characteristics both in general DQGLQSDUWLFXODU1RWZLWKVWDQGLQJWKHFKURQRORJLFDOHPHUJHQFHRIWKHVe which has imbued a chronic fever for a zest to ascribe them as modernist, they invite the readers to a comprehensive stipulation in ascertaining the dilemma. A very important DQFKRUVRXUFHRUVXFKDEHJLQQLQJLVLQJLV%ULDQ0F+DOH*s *Postmodernist Fiction* wherein he FODULILHV WKDW 6DPXHO %FNHWW PDNHV WKH WUDQVLWLRQ IURP PRGHUQLVW V poetics in the course of his trilogy of novels of the early 1950s, *Molloy* (French, 1950; English, 1955), *Malone Dies* (French, 1951; English, 1956) and *The Unnamable*)UHQFK(QJOLVK´ (12).

Practically speaking, those who have been engaged in compiling literary anthologies had normally taken the chronological ordering of their material as the basis of the procedure in preparing such references. The case for modern writers and postmodern writers has not been an exception to this norm. Although the word postmodernism guarantees itself for a presupposition of the suffix it bears, but still it transcends the idea it promulgates. This chronological and historical demarcation proves fruitless especially once we read 6DPXHO %FNHWW·V ZRUNV VLQFH FKURQRORJLFDOO\WKH\PD\EHORQJWRPRGHUQHUD fabric and texture they bear substantial potential of the postmodern label. Here, as a SRLQWRIGHSDUWXUH,ZRXOGOLNHWRLQWURGXFH%ULDQ0F+DOH·VXQLTXHVWLRQDVV for my depiction and theoretical basis for differentiating modernism form postmodernism.

In *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodernism* 6WHYHQ&RQQHUVXJJHVWVWKDW´LWHUDU\ postmodernism has tended to be focused on one kind of writing, namely, narrative ILFWLRQµ 2). This is the very reason , KDYH FKRVHQ WR IRFXV RQ 6DPXHO %FNHWW·V selected novels rather than his plays of which he is universally known and acclaimed.

7DNLQJ WKLV LQWR FRQ... in his famous book *Postmodernist Fiction*, LGHD
it becomes significant enough for the present study as he says that ¥WKH GRPLQDQW RI
modernist fiction is *epistemological* (9)ZKLOH KH FRQWLQXHV RQ WKH H[SDJH DVVHUW
WKDW ¥WKH GRPLQDQW RI SRVWPRGHU QLVW LV ¦WLR RU WKH OLJKW RQ ¥LDQ
0FDOH¥ WKHRU\OHW PH KHUH TXRWH 6WHYHQ &RQQHU¥V *D Cultural* LRQ LQ
Companion to Postmodernism. He says:

> ¥LDQ 0FDOH¥ LQIOXHQWLDO VXJJHVWLRQ LV WKDW ZKHUH PRGHUQLVW ILFW
> epistemological ±that is, concerned with problems of knowledge and
> understanding, postmodernist fiction is ontological ±that is, concerned with
> the creation and interrelation of worlds of being. This distinction has been
> troublesome for those who have failed to see that the latter is an
> intensification of the former, rather than a clean break with it. To move from
> epistemology to ontology, from world-witnessing to world-making and
> world-navigation, is to recognize that the problems of knowing are both
> intensified and transformed when the very acts of seeing and understanding
> are themselves taken to generate new worlds or states of being. (65±66)

On one dimension, the novels are modernist for they characterize striking modernist
qualities, such as disintegrated character dispositions and narrative flows, and a
possession of a richly meaningful syntactic and semantic text. In *The Unnamable*,
Malone implicates how he trivializes and recognizes his looming death through creating
PXOWLSOH OHOLYHV¥ DOWKURXJK RXW ¥%FNHWW¥ WULORJ\ 0DORQH ZKLFK UHSHDWV LWV V
Trilogy, exists and sub-H[LVWV LQ YDULRXV SDVW OLIH WLPHV HV LQ RWKHU DOOO GHYLFH
vice-existers are discrete events, satiated with broken intercourse with oneself and the
readers. This lack of self-uncertainty contends the conflict of self-uncertainty, wherein
OD\V LPSOLFDWLRQV RI D VWUXJJOH WR FRQWURO RQH¥V GLVWLQDG DERXW ORVH W
unrestrained imaginings. Ambiguous as the characters and the narrative may be for the
Modernist Beckett, they construe the corruption and realism of the twins of human
tragedy and comedy.

Even before Beckett became a playwright the silent written ontological voice of his early
novels was already aspiring to the public performance. The ontological voice in *The
Unnamable*, as S. E. Gontarski comments LQ ¥Beckett and the Unnamable Voice of
(XURSHDQ0RGHUQLVP¥ in *Journal of Beckett Studies* (Gontarski 184) LV DOUHDG\ LQ
need of an auditor, a spectator, an audience´¨ LW ZDQWV WR EH SDUW RI WKH VKRZ´

> ZHOO ZHOO VR WKHUH¥V DQ DXGLHQFH LW¥V D SXEOLF VKRZ RX EX\ RXU
> VHDW DQG ZDLW SHUKDSV LW¥V IUHH D IUHH VKRZ RX WDNH RXU VHDW DQG
> RX ZDLW IRU LW WR EHJLQ RU SHUKDSV LW¥V FRPSXOVRU\ D FRPSXOVRU\
> show, you wait for the compulsory show to begin, it takes time, you
> KHDU D YRLFH SHUKDSV LW¥V D UHFLWDWLRQ WKDW¥V WKH VKRZ VRPHRQH
> reciting, selected passages, old favourites, a poetry matinée, or
> VRPHRQHLPSURYLVLQJ\RXFDQEDUHO\KHDUKLPWKDW¥VWKHVKRZ (the
> *Trilogy* 351).

Not only does this voice anticipate the central role that Beckett would assign it in the plays that were to follow his challenge with novel, but, as Enoch Brater in *The Drama in the Text: Beckett's Late Fiction* argues, the language that it speaks already seems worthy of performance. Lines from the novel *Molloy* are memorable, he says, because they are VR ZRQGHUIXQ *speakable*: they are written for the performative voice, a resonant KXPDQYRLFHDQGWKHDWWDLQWKHLUIXOOVSRQWDQHLWRQ(4)ZKHQVSRNHQDORXG

Modernism becomes Beckett in a glance, but a New Historicist approach divulges %FNHWWV RQWRORJLFDO QDUUDWLYH DQG FKDUDFWHU WUHDWPHQW LV LQ power, knowledge and identity, produce semantic and syntactic postmodern motifs, method, textures and design. For example the concept of power in *Murphy* simulates postmodernism, because power in this context implicates the salutation of human weaknesses. A struggle between powerlessness and powerfulness deifies the human ZLOOV UHLQWHUSUHWDWLRQ RI SRZHU IHHOHYHO ash through thoughts and language where the wheelchair-bound Mr. Kelly imagines flying his kite out of sight and beyond the reach of his ruined, wheelchair-bound body. Thus, the novels exemplify modernism, entirely and only because the genre of novels belongs to postmodernism, which resembles modernism in some aspects of classical discreteness and also reactive literature, but the totality of taste, motifs, design and method fundamentally cries of postmodernism, with a boundless array of discontinuous self-expression of human strength and comedy submersed in a thoroughly genuine pool of human tragedies and struggles.

It is important here to allude to the idea of the absurd and its relation to modern and SRVWPRGHUQ DUW LQ JHQHUDO DQG 6DPXHO %FNHWWV QRYHOV LQ SDUWLFXODU &DPXV penetrating analysis of the absurdity of the human condition appears in his famous *Myth of Sisyphus*. The one existentialist concept that became most important for postmodern fiction is the idea of the absurd. One of the reasons for this is that the absurd in the meaning Camus gave it is already a reduction of existential concepts promoted by Kierkegaard, Sartre, Heidegger, or Jaspers. Camus renounces the possibility of conTXHULQJ WKH DEVXUG WKURXJK ZKDW ZDV FDOOHG WKH OHDS WKH MXPS WR (Kierkegaard), the affirmation of the circle of life, the recourse to ½LQJ WUXWWK essential freedom. In the search of meaningfulness, these philosophers acknowledge different types of essential experience, which the modernist writers also reflect in their own texts. In *The Myth of Sisyphus* KLFK LV WKH FODVVLFDO WH[W IRU &DPX\$ FRQFHSWR the absurd, even though he modified some of his positions in later writings, there is no PHWDSK\VLFV RU HVVHQFH QRU DQ\ VDYLQJ OHDS LQWR D VRUW RI PHWDSK\VLFV RI H[L there is only the disjunction between the human being and the universe.

HQHUDOO\ FRQVLGHUHG WKH PRVW H[WHQGHG WUHDWPHQW RI WKH SKLORVRSKLFDO QRWLRQV RI VRSKLFDO &DPXV *The Myth of Sisyphus* provides valuable insight for anyone approaching the work of Samuel Beckett, an author whose novels present a vision of a bleak universe that, in absurd, existentialist fashion, lacks meaning or inherent values. 7KH DEVXUG PDQ OLYHV D VDLQW HQ VHO D VSRVVLEOH ZLWK RXW JXLOW KRSH RU IXWXUH H[SHULHQF H[LVWLQJ VROHO\ LQ WKH VXFFHVV VLRQ RI SUHVHQWV L.H. his adventure within the VSDQ RI KLV OLIH WLPH PDNHV WKH OHDS LQWR PHDQLQJ QRW YHUWLFDOO\ EXW WR WR SHDN KRUL]RQWDOO\ DQG TXDQWLWDWLYHO\ WKH FROOHFWLRQ RI VLPXOWDQH and diverse moments of existential experience.

4

)RU &DPXV   WKH LQGLYLGXDO LV OLNHO\ WR SRVVHVV D
WKHP D UHDVRQ IRU OLYLQJ´ $V ORQJ DV WKH KXP

illusion, he or she will remain content, despite living what Martin Esslin in *The Theatre of the Absurd* GHVFULEHVDV ¶DQH[LVWHQFHWKDWKDVEHFRPHWULWHPHFKDQLFDODF (291). The illusory sense of comfort one feels towards his or her existence results from the unquestioning acceptance of some guiding principle arranging human life into an easily understood and recognizable pattern. The familiarity one feels towards the structure of his or her life fosters an illusory sense of certainty that the authority determining the structure is infallible. For some people, however, a moment arises when ¶WKH FKDLQ RI GDLO\JHVWXUHV LV EURNHQ´DQG KH RU VKH PXVW FRQIURQW WKH absurdity lurking behind his or her hitherto comfortable life (Camus 12). According to Albert &DPXV WKH ¶DEVXUG PRPHQW´RFFXUV ZKHQ WKH LQGLYL¶GXDO FRQIURQW WKH inhumanity of humankind:

> At certain moments of lucidity, the mechanical aspect of their
> gestures, their meaningless pantomime makes silly everything
> that surrounds them. A man is talking on the telephone behind
> a glass partition; you cannot hear him, but you see his
> incomprehensible dumb show: you wonder why he is alive.
> 7KLV GLVFRPIRUW LQ WKH IDFH RI PDQ¶V RZQ LQKXPDQLW\WKLV
> incalculable tumble before the image of what we are, this
> ¶QDXVHDDVDZULWHURIWRGD\FDOOVLWLVDOVRWKHDEVXUG
> 15)

The sudden realization that humanity succumbs to the yoke of essentially arbitrary routine invites the suddenly lucid individual to consider the implications this new consciousness has upon his or her life:

> Beginning to think is beginning to be undermined [...] the
> primitive hostility of the world rises up to face us across
> millennia. For a second we cease to understand it because for
> centuries we have understood in it solely the images and
> designs that we had attributed to it beforehand...the world
> evades us because it becomes itself again. That stage scenery
> masked by habit becomes again what it is. It withdraws at a
> distance from us (14).

,WLVKHUHLQZKDW0DUWLQ(VVOLQFDOODV ¶DXQLYHUVHGHSULYHGRIZKDWZDVRQ and its living purpose, a world deprived of a generally accepted integrating principle, which has become disjointed, purposeless DEVXUG´WKDW 6DPXHO %HFNHWW¶V ILFWLRQ unfolds (290). The extreme strain Beckett's meaningless universe imposes upon his protagonists crushes the human spirit and leads to a definitive confrontation with mortality, the only certainty such an existence allows. Yet, as David M. Craig argues, %HFNHWW QHYHU DFFHSWV GHDWK 7KH HQGLQJV RI KLV QRYHOV YLUWXDOO\VKU inevitability, but death remains an opponent to be grappled with, even though it cannot EHRYHUFRPH ©$WKRXJK %HFNHWW¶V VXEMHFWPDWWHUKDVYDULHGIURPQRYHOWRQ KHUHSHDWHGO\UHWXUQVWRWKHLQGLYLGXDO¶VVWUXJJOHWRZUHQFKPHDQLQJI

5

unflinchingly moving tRZDUGV WKH LQHYLWDELOLW\ RI GHDWK 7DNHQ DV D ZKROH [FN QRYHOV UHSUHVHQW D KDOI FHQW XU\ VWUXJJOH WR DUWLFXODWH D ZD\ IRU WKH LQ dignified and genuine existence in the face of the Absurd.

In order to make a convincing case for his worldview, Beckett initially bombards his reader with evidence testifying to the spurious nature of generally accepted truths about the world, forcing the reader to encounter the Absurd as his protagonists discover the KXPDQ FRQGLWLRQ [FNHWW\ QRYHOV uncover the relativity behind such accepted structures Western religion, Western philosophy, and the historical record in order to reveal the dark secret at the root of human suffering: the insatiable human appetite for power, prestige, and pURILW 2QFH WKH UHDGHU MRLQV [FNHWW\ SURWDJRQL recognizing the malignant motives lurking behind the illusory guiding principles of KXPDQ H[LVWHQFH KH RU VKH PXVW DORQJ ZLWK [FNHWW\ ILFWLRQDO KHURHV DQ antihero, find a way to respond to the unfeeling cosmos.

The absurd is used by modern and postmodern writers as an undefined word for purposes of reference, as a framework for reflection, a philosophical matrix for the fictional design, or as atmospheric background of existential fears and needs. They transfer the absurd from one role to the other, deconstruct and reconstruct, playfully de-existentialize and re-existentialize it.

CamXV\ allegedly post-existential interpretation of absurd consciousness retains the existentialist fixity of perspective and worldview. It has as its basis pain and suffering. What makes the absurd still attractive and fertile for the modern postmodern imagination, however, is exactly its paradoxical character: the contradictions between meaningless universe and the meaning-setting gesture of the individual, between acceptance of unreasonableness and resistance against it, between the rigidity and painfulness of absurd consciousness and the joyful fXOILOOLQJRIRQH\ OLIH VSDQ EHWZHHQ WKH TXDQWLW\ HW KLF RI H[SHULHQFLQJ GLYHUVLW\ DQG WKH TXDOLW\ HW KLF RI H[intensity, between the self-asserting clarity of mind and the self-abandoning ecstasy of love, between, finally, consciousness and ´OLIH´ 7KH FRQFHSW RI WKH DEVXUG LV particularly interesting to modern and postmodern fiction, because, being a kind of ´UHGXFWLRQ PRGHO RI H[LVWHQWLDO LVVXH WKRXJKW LWV SDUDGR[LFDO IHDWXUHV R variations and quite different accentuations.

In postmodern fiction the absurd is used as the aesthetic conceptual frame for anxiety and anguish as well as for rebellion against meaninglessness. [FNHWW GRHVQ\W IDEULFDWH characters that embrace an absurd, meaningless existence in the existentialist tradition EXW UDWKHU DQ DFFHSWDQFH RI H[LVWHQWLDO PHDQLQJOHVVQHVV ZRXOG U characters to remain situated within an abstract idealism that still presumes the existence of an isolated, *a priori* subject. These said, it is also noted that his works have been KLVWRULFDOO\ FRQVLGHUHG WR EH UDWKHU PHDQLQJOHVV´ DEVXUG´ DQG FRQF nothingness, the impossibility of artistic expression, failure and nihilism.

II [FNHWW\ ZRUNV QRW WR PHQWLRQ KLV LQWHOOHFWXDO XGDSL]HGGHDGLQJV VKXQ that might utilize a methodology of interpretation which seeks to uncover a type of meaning or message, how then is it possible to offer up an interpretation of them without

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falling into the trap of standardized readings and professionalized hermeneutic practices? Theories of reading and interpretation aside how are we to even read %HFNHWW¶V ZRUNV WKDW EHOLH PHDQLQJ H[SUHVVLRQ DQG XQGHUVWDQGLQJ"

6DPXHO %HFNHWW¶V ZRUNV GHPRQVWUDWH WKLV HDUWKHWLF theory: the truth content of artworks are less and less able to be interpreted by DV WKH RD VW KH twentieth century progresses, because to do so would be akin to occluding their singular expression and replacing it with prefabricated logical assessments inherent to the increasing mastery and professionalization of discursive practices. Conversely, if conceptual communication inherent to such interpretations is entirely abandoned, the work dissolves into nonsensical blather. It is this paradox that drives modern art forward to silence because it increasingly exemplifies the atmosphere of a late capitalist society, in which all forms of meaning become engulfed by notions of abstract rationality, false reconciliation and overstated harmony, even if termed meaningless or existentialist.

AIWHU %HFNHWW FRPSOHWHG KLV IDPRXV WULORJ\ RI QRYHOV LQ WKH ODWH¶V KH VSHQW several years focusing on his career as a playwright and establishing a reputation as such, achieving worldwide fame with *Waiting for Godot*. He felt that he had exhausted the novel as form; he said about novel writing, ³LQ the last book *L' Innommable²* WKHUH·V QRWKLQJ OHIW WR H[SUHVV QR SRZHU WR H[SUHVV´ (Richetti 842) However, his plays, like his novels, eventually deteriorated into shorter and shorter vignettes with less and less dialogue, sometimes containing no dialogue whatsoever.(Kalb 145) He did produce a series of fragmented stories in 1955, simply called *Texts Pour Rien,* or, *Texts For Nothing*. The title refers to WKH PXVLFDO WHUP ´PHVXUH SRXU ULHQµ PHDQLQJ ¶D EDU¶V UHVW 7KLV DGRSWLRQ RI musical term points towards a need for a rest from the literary voice of *The Unnamable* that goes on incessantly, a pause in the narrative linearity implicit to storytelling and the journeys undertaken by the characters that tend to end in collapse and breakdown. It also foreshadows his later works ±both prose and performance - that have a tendency to remain static and mired in darkness and silence or simply be comprised by a sequence-less juxtaposition of words.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

'HVSLWH %HFNHWW¶V ZDUQLQJ WKDW ³WKH GDQJHU LV LQ WKH QHDWQHVV RI LGHQWLILFDWLRQV´ (*Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment* 19) attempts to fit %HFNHWW¶V ZRUN LQWR DQ DUWLVWLF RU WKHRUHWLFDO IUDPHZRUN KDYH EHHQ QXPHURXV ,Q an introduction to a volume of critical essays entitled *Rethinking Beckett: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Lance Butler and Robin Davis listed the dLIIHUHQW %HFNHWWV¶ WKDW FULWLFDO VWXGLHV KDG SURGXFHG WR GDWH DV IROORZV %HFNHWW *WKH ZULW*HU LQWHVVHQ *romancier,* Beckett the Cartesian, Beckett the Existentialist... Beckett the nihilist, %HFNHWW WKH P\VWLF %HFNHWW WKH GUDPDWLVW RU %HFNHWW WKH H[SORUHU of the OLPLWDWLRQV RI ODQ*J*XDJH $V Daniel Katz points out in the introduction to his own FULWLFDO VWXG\ RQ %HFNHWW %XWOHU DQG 'DYLV FRXOG HDVLO\ KDYH JRQH RQ WR DGG ¶%HFNHWW WKH SRVWPRGHUQLVW¶ RU %Hckett the avant-JDUGLVW¶ 2U, as in *Beckett Writing Beckett: The Author in the Autograph* -RKQ 3LOOHWFKHU KDV GHVFULEHG KLP %HFNHWW WKH SRVWPRGHUQ PRGHUQLVW´ (Abbott 25).

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% H F N H W W Wː*Molloy, Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable* famRXVDVʎKH7ULORJʺ
from now on all through the thesis *The Trilogy* ±exemplify modernist characteristics for
their: 1) utilization of classical paradigms, such as losing self-certainty, 2) critique of
imperialism through the use of   Colonial context, 3) FRQYHDQFH RI ʎDVVRFLDWHG
DPELJXLW\ DPELJXRXV QDUUDWLYHV DQG FKDUDFWHUV UHODWLYH FRPPLWWHG
illuminate the realistic form and substance of humanity on a syntagmatic level, 6) use of
poetic prose, and 7) a self-conscious and fragmented form of collages of different
materials. Such epistemological constructs persist in one way or another.

On the other hand, these modernist dimensions are also integral to the postmodernist
WUHQGVLQOLWHUDWXUHLQ ʎFNHWWʺQRYHOVDVSRVRPRGHUHXVRQHVDPH FKHRQWLQXH
diverts from modernist characteristics in literature. Some diverging qualities are the
commemoration of individualistic interpretations of human conflict through poetic and
meaningful ponderings, and the construction of a coherent metaphysical experience and
self-expression, to the point of ultimately lacking physical coherence, as postmodernism
equips writers with a sense of infinite possibility, the other aspect of which is a sense of
limitless futility.

These all taken into our account, we have several bodies of research that analyze
ʎFNHWWʺQRYHOVDQGH[SUHVVWKHSUHSRQGHUDQFHRIGHOLEHUDWLRQRQWKHF
the modern and postmodern genre .This can be highly problematic as modernism and
postmodernism diverge in their epistemological and ontological nature of narration.
7KHVH ʎLVPʺ DUH QRW LGHQWLFDO WZLQV DW DOO EXW FDQ EH FRQ·WLGHUHG DV D
chapter of history and literature. Modernist and postmodernist novels themselves can be
seen as ambiguous, for they are connected and at the same time fragmented from each
other, as their texts are fragmented themselves.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

An overview of past studies on Samuel Beckett shows that his fiction is not thoroughly
analyzed in a framework which is both conceptual and standardized so that we can
academically differentiate the modern and postmodern nature and essence of his novels.
7KXV WKH REMHFWLYHV RI WKH VWXG\DUH ILUVW WR H[SORUH ʎFNHWWʺ VHOHFWL
light of)RXFDXOGLDQFRQFHSWRIWKHʎHFKQRORJLHVRIWKHVHOIʺto understand how does
he depict and portray the rudiments and characteristics of the postmodern novel ;
second, to represent and formulate a basic criterion by means of which we can yardstick
the preponderance of modern or postmodern nature in novels as an academic rule ; third,
to explore the way that Beckett has laid the stones for the postmodern fiction as how to
build up the narrative structure and create the relevant aura.

The purpose of the present study is, thus, to offer a critical reading of the selected major
fictional works of Samuel Beckett. Its goals are to suggest a variety of interpretations
WKDW ZLOO HQFRXUDJH UHDGHUV DOUHDG\IDPLOLDU ZLWK ʎFNHWWʺ QRYHOV WK
works and their implications and also to encourage new readers and students of literature
WRXQGHUWDNHIXUWKHUFULWLFDOVWXGLHVRIWKHDXWKRUʺILFWLRQ7KHVWXG
EHWRHYDOXDWHWKHDXWKRUʺQRYHOVLQWKHOLJKWRIFULWLFDOFRQFHUQVW

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been, and are currently, discussed in the context of New Historicism. In doing so, a further goal of this study is to reiterate and reinforce the value of what Brian McHale, in *Postmodernist Fiction*, refers to as a postmodern version of modernist literature and to contribute to the ongoing reevaluation of modernism and postmodernism as critical idioms.

1.4 Research Questions

The following questions are the relevant queries that the present research seeks answers for:

1. How does the Beckettian narrative - in his selected novels - lend itself to the postmodern fiction?

2. How does the Foucauldian concept of the ʃHFKQRORJLRﬀWKH 6HOﬂpport the ontological nature of the Beckettian selected novels?

3. How can the ontological nature of the Beckettian narrative fiction provide a substantial ground for a scholarly demarcation between modern and postmodern nature of his selected novels?

4. How can this formula, and the case studies dealt with here, be a criterion and example for further assessments of the modern and postmodern novel in general and the novel as a genre?

1.5 Significance of the Study

6KRUWO\ DIWHU %HFNHWW¶V GHDWK WKH ,ULVK QRY comment about his literature in an obituary that appeared in *The Irish Times*:

> The novels and plays make a sort of broken Ark of the Covenant,
> wherein we find preserved the jumbled remnants of our culture: a
> VQDWFK RI 6FKXEHUW D PHPRU\RI 0LOWRQ¶ FRVPRORJ\D QLJKW
> temptuous and bright, such as Kaspar David Friedrich loved. This is
> the shattered song of our time. (31)

7KHSKUDVH WKHVKDWWHUHGVRQJRIRXUWLLPH Hﬂ PV JRRG.SDU to encapsulate WKHQDWXUHRI%FNHWW¶V DFKLHYHPHQW1RWRQO\GRHVLWFRQYH\WKHIUDJPHQW Beckett incorporated the past into a body of work that was highly innovative and H[SHULPHQWDOEXWWKHZRUGVKDWWHUHGVXJJHVWVWWKHLGHD Beckett did not share the idea that art could give meaning and coherence to the malaise of PRGHUQ OLIH IURP WKH RXWVHW RI KLV ZULWLQJ FDUHHU KH VWDWHG FDWHJRULF nothing to do with clarity, does not dabble in the FOHDU DQG GRHV QRW PDNH FOHDU´ (*Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment* 94). Nor did he see the contemporary artist as part of a heroic mission to bring social and political change. A play like *Not I,* depicting a floating mouth spewing out incomprehensible words, may find sound and image parallels in Surrealism and Dadaism, but Beckett did not share WKHLU LGHDOV RU WKHLU JURXSLGHQWLW\KHEHOLHYHG WKDW WKHDUWLVW ZDV on behalf of ɦLPVHOI:LWK KLV VHOYHV RQ EHKDOI RI KDV VHOYHV (*Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment* 91). For Beckett, as he pronounced in *Proust, ÐUWLV WKHDSRWKHRVLVRIVRO LWXGH* (64).

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Although Beckett did not associate himself with a particular artistic or literary movement, he held strong views on artistic practice that he expressed in critical essays on writers and painters spanning the period 1929-1954. These essays provide valuable LQVLJKWVLQWR%FNHWW¶VWKLQNLQJRQZULWLQJDQGDUWHVSHFLDOO\JLYHQWKI interviews, and that a collected edition of his correspondence has yet to be published. Some commentators have argued that his critical work constitutes an articulation of an aesthetic that finds artistic representation in his poems, prose and plays. For example, Lawrence Harvey, in his informative early study of the reviews and essays, *Samuel Beckett Poet and Critic* finds Beckett proposing the need for an ontological enquiry through art, one that he would creatively explore in his later writing. What kind of DHVWKHWLF %FNHWW¶V FULWLFDO ZRUNV SUHFLSLWDWH DQG I can be SURSHUO\WHUPHGDQ DHVWKHWLF¶PD\EHDERQHRIFRQWHQWLRQDPRQJFRPPHQWDV this early writing undoubtedly sheds light on key artistic concerns which Beckett would represent in his creative work.

To date, I have already referred to the significance that the present research bears upon itself in previous parts, but here I would elaborate it in more details. Despite studies GRQH VXJJHVWLQJ %FNHWW¶V PRGHUQLVP DQG SRVWPRGHUQLVP ZULWLQJ WKI problematic scholarly deficiency in exploring the postmodernist qualities in his mentioned novels. This postmodernist analysis can be reconstructed using a New Historicist methodology of critical literary analysis. This approach surmises that postmodernism precedes modernism through the technologies of the VHOILQDOO%FNHWW¶V mentioned novels thereby creating a standard exemplary model for other possible case studies. That is the significance where the present research has found an issue worth challenging to solve therein.

A postmodernist treatment of Beckett¶VQRYHOVprovides its gush of contribution unto the gap of postmodernist reading of Beckett, and consequently, propels another bulk of studies on postmodernist literature in general. Meanwhile the study also develops itself into another redefinition and reexamination of the divergence between modernist and postmodernist novels in their essentialist epistemological/ontological difference.

Just as Beckett worked out his ideas on artistic practice before materializing them in his post-war novels and stories, so his prose fiction similarly informed his dramatic works. For example, stage images may be described in prose long before they take a visual IRUP $Q LQVWDQFH RI WKLV LV ¶WKH LPDJH RI D YDVW FUHWLQRXV PRXWK UHG VOREEHULQJLQVROLWDU\FRQWHPSOHPHQW¶(*Tin Peillon359) in *The Unnamable*, which bears striking resemblance to the mouth that Beckett was later to stage in *Not I.* Alternatively, entire plays could be based on earlier, often unfinished, works of fiction. Plays which KDYH UHVXOWHG IURP ZKDW 6(¶RQWDUVNL KDV UHIHUUHG WR DV ¶JHQHULF DQG Acheson Kateryna 35) are *Waiting for Godot*, which drew heavily on the earlier novel *Mercier and Camier* , and *Krapp's Last Tape*, which was developed from the prose text *From an Abandoned Work*. Beckett also tended to experiment with stylistic changes in KLVSURVHILFWLRQEHIRUHKHLQWURGXFHGWKHPLQWRDGUDPDWLFIRUP)RUH[DP internal monologue in the radio play *Cascando* is reminiscent of that used in *The Unnamable,* and the visual and poetic images of the minimalist theatre and television plays from the mid-¶FDQDOVREHWUDFHGEDFNWRSURVHZRUNVZULWWHQLQWKH¶

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For example, the black, white and grey world of surface described in *Lessness* bears similarities to the later television play *Ghost Trio*, and the description of a reader and OLVWHQHUZLWKLQDGDUNURRPLQ RUQ&DPH0OZDV́ual parallel in the stage play *Ohio Impromptu.*

7KHQDWXUHRI%FNHWW̛V OLWHPSDUH largely intellectual. His subject was, to TXRWH%FNHWWKLPVHOIRQWRVSKLXWRURĹnd Pilling xiii), and his task was to excavate the human mind where he was searching the epistemological and ontological questions of life in the caves of human thought. However, in order to tap the voices inside the heads of his characters, he was aware that he would also have to deal with the bodies in which they were dwelling. Beckett had sat, or, most probably lain down for many hours during an intensive two-year period of psychotherapy in London in the early ́ - %FNHWW̛V WZR\HDUV RI SV\FKRWKHUDS\LQ /RQGRQ ZLWK 'U :LOIUHG 5XSUHFḰ Bion (Knowlson 175). This personal experience might partially account for the stilling, or stillness, of his FKDUDFWHUV̛ ERGLHV LQ RUGHU WR JDLQ DFFHVV WR WKH PRYHPHQ́ minds, as well as the inclusion of an auditor in many of his plays.

Given that Beckett often introduced ideas and techniques into his prose writing - his rehabilitation of modern and postmodern aesthetic strategies - before reshaping them in his dramatic works, it seems practical to briefly consider the way in which the ontological ponderings manifest themselves in the pre-dramatic prose fiction before such an examination can be applied to the ontological essence of his other works in general.)RU LQVWDQFH LQ %FNHWW̛V HDUO\ QRYHO *Murphy*, written while he was undergoing psychotherapy, the protagonist, a kind of Cartesian-Buddhist, pictures himself as split into a body and mind (*Murphy* 64). 0XUSK\̛V PLQG LV D GLVFUHWH HQWLW\ D ODUJH hollow sphere, he UPHWLFDOO\FORVHGWRWKHXQLYHUVHZLWKRXW (*Murphy* 63). He must first release himself from his corporeal state in order to enter his mental world. This he achieves by tying himself to a rocking chair and setting it in motion until he reaches the nirvana-OLNHVWDWHKHLVVHHNLQJ ̛RRQKLVERG\ZRXOGEHTXLHWVRRQKHZRXOGÉ (*Murphy* 9). -XVWDVSK\VLFDOVWLOOQHVVDOORZV0XUSK\WRPRYHDPRQJWKH̛WUHDV́ his mind (*Murphy* 65), so immobility privileges the protagonists of BeckHWW̛VVXEVHTXHQW novels to be listeners of their own private auditory worlds.

:KHQ0ROOR\KHDUVDGLVWDQWPXVLFKHVWRSV̛WKHEHWWHUWROLVWHQ́ (*Molloy* 51) and Beckett seems to give his prose characters the potential for being good listeners by limiting their powers of movement which provides them stillness but a momentous time thinking as who they are, or in other words trying to answer their ontological questions in inertia . Or instilled to mar the traditional conventions of dialogue ,which was VRPHWLPHV%FNHWW UHIHUV WR WKHP ZKDW :DWW GHVFULEHV DV WKH ̛RWKHU YRĹ 7KH\PD\EHSK\VLFDOO\LPSDLUHGOLNHWKH̛YLUWXDOO\QRQ́RR (*The Trilogy* 34), the impotent-ERGLHG 0DORQH ̛WKHUH LV YLUWXDOO\ QRWKLQJ LW FDQ GŔ (*The Trilogy* 171) RU WKH WRWDOO\ PRWLRQOHVV 8QQDPDEOH ̛GR QRW PRYH́ (*The Trilogy* 268); or they may restrict themselves in some way, like Murphy tied to his chair, or Watt self-LPSULVRQHGLQ0U.QRWW̛VKRXVH

7KH FKDUDFWHUV VHHP WR NQRZ WKH\DUH DORQH ̛DP RI FRXUVH DORQH́RQHVD\V Unnamable, (*The Trilogy* 267), and yet they harbor the suspicion that they may have

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EHHQ WDNHQ RYHU E\ DQRWKHU ³ZKR¶ Mace\WKLV GL
XVXUSHG KLV OLIH (The *Complete Short Prose* 150) DP , WR VXSSRVH , DP LQKDELWHG´
(*The Trilogy* 371). Despite the constant pleas for the speaking voice to name itself,
³KR VDV WKLV VDLQJ LW¶ PH" QVZHU VLPSO\VRPHRQH DQVZHU VLPSO\ (*Samuel*
Beckett :The Complete Short Prose 114) WKH LGHQWLW\RI WKH YRLFHV LQ %FNHWW¶ HDU
prose work is far from straightforward given the rupture that often exists between the
VWRU\DQG LWV VWHOOHU 7KHGLIILFXOWH[SHULHQFHG E\%FNHWW¶ SURVH QDUUDWH
primarily linguistic: they cannRW FROODSVH WKHLU EHLQJLQWR DSURQRXQWKHUHLV QR
IRU PH QR SURQRXQ IRU PH (*The Trilogy* 372). When the Unnamable tries to force
KLPVHOI WR DVVXPH KLV RZQ LGHQWLW\E\SURQRXQFLQJ KLPVHOI DV ¶KH UHPDLQV
XQFRQYLQFHG³VD\8QEHOLHYLQJ (*The Trilogy* 267).

The shortcomings of language or rather the inability of language to verbalize the
ontological question, let alone an answer for, seems to lie at the heart of the
XQQDPDELOLW\RI WKH QDUUDWLQJ ERG\LW¶ WKH IDXOW RI WKH SURQRXQV´VI
Unnamable (*The Trilogy* 331). Furthermore this inability, to put a name to the subject,
has the effect of putting into question its very existence. The multiple bodies, comprising
OLQJXLVWLFDOO\GLIIHUHQW SHUVRQV DSSHDU WR TXHVWLRQ WKH WHFKQRORJLH
%FNHWW¶ HDUO\SURVHZRUNWKXVPDNLQJWKHPLGHDOFDQGLGDWHVIRUVFUXWLQ\
Foucauldian modification in this case. The narrating body de-centers and splits the self;
LW VSHDNV RI LW DV RWKHU DQG HYHQ KDV WKH SRZHU WR HUDVH LW DOWRJHWKHU
GR LV VD\RX VDLG QRWKLQJ DQG VR VD\QRWKLQJ (*Samuel Beckett : The Complete*
Short Prose 124).

,Q %FNHWW¶ OLWHUDWXUH WKLV ³VWDLQ VHHPV WR FRPH IURP DQ LQQHU YRLFHZKL
VWLOO IRU ORQJ WKHUHLV DOZD\V VRPHWKLQJ WR OLVWHQ WR RQFH %FNHWW VDLG \
to make his prose narrators the tympanum, providing the connection between inner and
outer worlds, saying it as they hear it:

> ,YH WZR VXUIDFHV DQG QR WKLFNQHVV SHUKDSV WKDW¶ ZKDW , IHHO
> P\VHOIYLEUDWLQJ,¶PWKHW\PSDQXPRQWKHRQHKDQGWKHPLQGRQWKH
> RWKHUWKHZRUOG,GRQ¶WEHORQJWRHLWKHU (*The Trilogy* 352).

7KH RQWRORJLFDO SDUDGR[DQG JURWHVTXH WKDW XQGHUSLQV %FNHWW¶ OLW
already present in his early prose work, and is described by the Unnamable when he
says:

> Yes, in my life, since we must call it so there were three things, the
> LQDELOLW\WR VSHDN WKH LQDELOLW\WR EH VLOHQW DQG VROLWXGH WKDW¶
> ,YHKDGWRPDNHWKHEHVWRI (*The Trilogy* 365).

The need to speak seems to be a form of indemnification for an unknown sin, perhaps
that of being born ± ³The tragic figure represents the expiation of original sin, of the
original and eternal sin RIKLPDQGDOOKLVVRFLLPDORUXP´WKHVLQRIKDYLQJEHHQERUQ
(*Proust* 67) The impossibility of ontological expression of their existence appears to
stem from the failure of language to satisfactorily express anything especially the answer
they are looking for as who they are, and silence and solitude are the states which are
DPELYDOHQWO\VRXJKW DQG IHDUHG 7KH SXUSRVH RI WKH ERG\RI WKHVH YRLFHV LQ

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early prose work therefore appears to be creative in answering the ontological question they are created to find one for. They want to leave stains and traces, to entertain, comfort, or guide their listeners as to whom they are. Their powers of creativity, however, appear both enforced and limited in scope. Not only are the voices compelled to speak, they are also forced to use words which seem to have lost their power to convey meaning.

1.6 Scope of the Study

)URP WKH ODWH ¶V WR WKH HQG RI WKH ¶V %HFN of structuralism, post-structuralism, feminist and psychoanalytic criticism, among others, but the main split among commentators was along modernist and postmodernist lines. As H. Porter Abbott has pointed out in *Beckett Writing Beckett: The Writer in the Autograph* WKH UHDVRQ RU WKLV WKLIDU LV EHFDXVH", like Virginia Woolf (modernist) or John Cage (postmodernist), Beckett has remained a categorical rift, JLYLQJ WKH OLH WR FDWHJRULHV. In this "very important book Abbott also provides a useful summary of this debate and an ample bibliography. In *The Painted Word: Samuel Beckett's Dialogue with Art*, Lois Oppenheim dedicates a chapter to what she callV 7KH (QGJDPH RI WKH 0RGHUQLVW 3RVWPRGHUQLVW &RQWURYHUV\, one of the most helpful guides through the Beckettian criticism, which also deals with the modern and postmodern GHEDWH LV 'DYLG 3DWWLH¶V *The Complete Critical Guide to Samuel Beckett*.

7VWDWHGHDUOLHU WKLV WKHVLV GHSLFWV 6DPXHO %HFNHWW¶V PDMRU QRYHOV IRU WKH VDNH to discern the ontological/epistemological essence of his novels by means of which we can ascertain their modern or postmodern stance .The reason why I have chosen Samuel %HFNHWW¶V QRYHOV OLHV LQ WKH IDFW WKDW DV *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodernism* VXJJHVWV ³LWV HUDS RVWPRGHUQLVP KDV DVWHQHG WRE H LRFXVHG RQ QN LQ RI ³ OLWLQDQ DPHO\ DUUDWLYH ILFWLRQ´. 2Q FRQWLQXHV ³I PRGHUQLVP PHDQV WKH assumption that literature approaches to the condition of poetry, postmodernism means WKH WHQGHQF\ WR DVVXPH WKDW OLWHUDWXUH LV (70). Further he argues, QDUUDWLYH WKDW ³Q QRQH VHQVH %HFNHWW¶V UHIXVDO RI WKH DUWV RI VXFFHVV PLJKW EH VDLG inauguration of postmodernism, in that it involves a refusal of modernist poteQF\ (70). My second rationale is that the basic anchor book, upon which I have built the hypothesis in differentiating modern and postPRGHUQ ILFWLRQ LV %LDQ 0F+DOH¶V *Postmodernist Fiction* in which ±apart from the explicit title the book bears upon itself ± KH HODERUDWHV WKH ZD\ KH ILQGV WKH GRPLQDQW LQ modern and postmodern literature are different from each other. The choice of the novels as the case studies for the present thesis is thus built upon these major novels before Beckett turned to drama. A quite personal reason for such a choice I had was the fact that Beckett is known through his plays to a majority of the readers. I personally believe that whatsoever we witness as the greaWQHVV LQ %HFNHWW¶V GUDPD LV GHHSO\URRWHG LQ KLV DUW RI VWRU\WHOO experimented quite rigorously in his novels. Therefore, the present thesis delimits itself to his major novels *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable* famous as *The Trilogy*.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

The basic question that the present study puts forth, as stated earlier is the essence of the Beckettian fiction. The technicality of such an area of speculation in an academic research necessitates a conceptualized assumption and a critical approach which both comprehensively defines and lays the grounds for. Therefore, to begin with, I have taken %LDQ0FDOH¶VK\SRWKHVLVDVIRUKRZZHFDQGLIIHUHQWLDWHDQGUHFRJQL]HDQGMX modern and postmodern novel adapting the epistemological/ontological discourse which KHREVHUYHVDVWKHGLIIHUHQW GRPLQDQW¶RUPRGHUQDQGSRVWPRGHUQQRYHO YHU\UHDVRQEHKLQGWKHIDFWWKDWWKHSUHVHQWVWXG\GHDOVZLWK6DPXHO%H rather than his plays for which he is internationally renowned. Moreover, Brian 0FDOH¶V *Postmodernist Fiction* has been basically referred to as the anchor theoretical book where he benchmarks the importance of the epistemological and ontological GRPLQDQW¶DVWKHFULWHULDIRUDGHPDUFDWLRQVWDQGDUGEHWZHHQPRGHUQIc fiction. Since ontology refers to the philosophical investigation of existence, the Foucauldian concept of WKH¶HFKQRORJLHVRIWKH¶VHOI adopted to the present study through the New Historicist perspective.

6LQFHWKHVHRQWRORJLFDORYHUWRQHVDUHDOOPDQLIHVWDWLRQVRIDFHUWDLQ theses selected novels the present research would follow a strictly detailed textual analysis of the selected novels by adapting a close reading to them all. Here, I have made a distinction between the approach used in this thesis and the working methodology since it would be a mistake, I think, if one does not differentiate between the two. To illustrate, I would say, the approach is the grounding theories and the methodology is the strategy by means of which the theories are practically applied to a work. The conceptual framework would be discussed in details, as much as the present thesis necessitates, in chapter two of the present research.

1.8 Methodology

DesSLWH ³FNHWW¶V ZDUQLQJ WKDW ³WKH GDQJHU LV LQ WKH QHDWQHVV RI LGH (*Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment* 19) attempts to fit ³FNHWW¶VZRUNinto an artistic or theoretical framework have been numerous. As Beckett took great care with both the writing and the structure with which he portrayed his ontological voices in his novels, I have chosen to analyze my subject in question and the case studies through the close reading of his scripts, making reference to his locution and word-hoard, while cautiously tracing the epistemological/ontological overtones of them all. The necessity of this close reading as the strategy I have chosen for my reading was LQVSLUHG E\DQ LPSRUWDQW DVVHUWLRQ , UHDG LQ $QGUHZ %HQQHWW¶V *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* .He strongly maintains that:

> It should be added that new historicism, in spite of its foregrounding RIWKHZRUG¶KLVWRULFLVP¶UHDOO\UHSUHVHQWVDVLJQLILFDQWH[WHQVLRQ WKHHPSLUHRIOLWHUDU\VWXGLHVIRULWHQWDLOVLQWHQVLYH FORVHUHDU the literary-critical manner, of non-literary texts (177).

For what reason Peter Barry believes that

the page's approach in which context is disp

the decontextualised, isolated poems which I. A. Richards ofIHUHGIRUFULWLFLVPLQV´
(177).Thus, this textual close reading entails an understanding of the ontological and
epistemological overtones of the novels in question and as a consequence the modern or
rather postmodern nature of them.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

Discourse: M. H. Abrams in *A Glossary o Literary Terms* clarifies that the way it is used
LQ SRVWVWUXFWXUDOLVP ³WKH WHUP LV QRW FRQILQHG WR FRQYHUVDWLRQDO
³ZULWLQJ´GHVLJQDWHV DOO YHUEDO FRQVWUXFWLRQV RQ YHUEDOO\ LPSO\ WKH
boundaries between literary and non-OLWHUDU\PRGHV RI VLJQLILFDWLRQHPDLQWDLQV WKH
³Q 0LFKHO)RXFDXOW GLVFRXUVHis the central subject of analytic concern.
)RXFDXOW FRQFHLYHV WKDW GLVFRXUVH LV WR EH DQDO\]HG DV(208) To fully anonymous
pertinent to this thesis I think it is necessary to add here what Peter Barry asserts in
Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory .He accentuates that
GLVFRXUVH LV QRW MXVW D ZD\ RI VSHDNLQJ RUZULWLQJKRQEHWWWQWDO VHW´RI DQG
LGHRORJ\ZKLFKHQFORVHVWKHWKLQNLQJRIDOOPHPEHUVRI (Barry 39)LYHQVRFLHW\

Dominant: According to *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms* LW LV ³WKDW
component of a work which sets in motion and determines the relations between all
RWKHUFRPSRQHQWV(Childs and Fowler 179).

Episteme: As defined in *Michel Foucault* LW ³UHIHUV WR WKH RUGHUO\XQFRQVFLRXV
VWUXFWXUHVRULHSLVWHPRORJLFDOILHOG\XQGHUO\LQJWKHSURGXFWLRQRIVFLHQ
a particular time and place. Foucault remarkV LQ DQ\JLYHQ FXOWXUH DQG DW DQ\JLYHQ
moment, there is always only one episteme that defines the conditions of possibility of
DOONQRZOHGJH´(Barrell)

Foregrounding and Backgrounding: These two are important imprints of Formalism but
actually they help us in our close reading. It should be taken into our account that the
³OLWHUDULQHVVRIDZRUNDV-DQ0XNDURYVNDPHPEHURIWKH3UDJXH&LUFOHGHVFU
LQWKHVFRQVLVWVLQWKHPD[LPXPRIIRUHJURXQGLQJRIWKHXWWHUDQFHWKDW
IRUHJURXQGLQJRIWKHDFWRIH[SUHVVLRQWKHDFWRIVSHHFKLWVHOI7R³IRUHJURXQGLVWR
bring something into the highest prominence, to make it dominant in perception.) By
³EDFNJURXQGLQJWKHUHIHUHQWLDODVSHFWDQGWKHORJLFDOFRQQHFWLRQVLQOD
DVVHUWV WKDW ³WKH ZRUG VWDQGVIRUWKHREMHFWVKRQLF VLJQ(Abrams and Harpham
108).

Epistemology: Epistemology refers to the study of how we are able to discern our
existing knowledge, and can be employed in studying the external aspects of narratives.
,W SRVVHVVHV ERWK ³V\QWDFWLF´WKH GHVFULSWLRQ LWVHOI DQG ³VHPDQWLF´WK
LQWHUSUHWDWLRQDODVSHFWV´ Edward Quinn in *A Dictionary of Literary and
Thematic Terms* defines, it is:

"The study of knowledge what it mean
we acquire knowledge. The two broad theories of knowledge are empiricism and rationalism. The empiricist maintains that knowledge exists when what we know corresponds to observable reality. The rationalist holds that since we can only know ideas, knowledge consists of a system of logical, coherent ideas. The question of the elusive nature of truth, such as that relating to APPEARANCE/REALITY, plays a prominent role in literature. It takes a specifically epistemological turn in modern texts such as Henry James' *What Maisie Knew* (1897), in which the young protagonist is forced to confront the knowledge of her parents' transgression."

Grand Narrative: A term used by Jean-François Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, it outlines a theory of postmodern knowledge that directs attention to the 'grand' or 'small narratives' at the expense of 'petits récits' (an narratives or meta narratives' toward a rage that the postmodern is defin incredulity to metanarratives, an idea that has become known as the death of the grand narratives, in which the organizing principles of the Enlightenment are challenged because they no longer seem tenable as forms of knowledge. According to him grand narratives have failed as ways of organizing information because their structuring principle is based on the legitimation of knowledge by reference to the grand narrative. This means that knowledge is created not by reference to ontology but gains legitimacy only if it accords with the ideological and discursive system of the grand narrative itself.
Identity: In formal ontological analysis, identity is a product of our perception of reality and is part of a set of relevant entities. This makes identity hard to delimit and define, as it is a component of our informative constraints. Epistemologically speaking, identity does not entail an ascription of sameness that elides group difference, but it does imply a constitutive relation of the individual to the Other, as well as between self and community, and that the refusal of identity is nothing less than the futile hope of avoiding the Other's power to name to characterize and to judge. Fouc identity as a form of subjugation and a way of exercising power over people and preventing them from moving outside fixed boundaries. As Farrell Knowledge: In its modernist terms, knowledge is based on science; it is based on the grand narrative, while in its Postmodernist terms, knowledge is more based on utility, and is as Mary Klages puts it in *Literary Theory: A Guide for the Perplexed* also distributed, stored, and arranged differently in Postmodern societies than in modern ones (72). Furthermore she maintains that knowledge in postmodern literature deviates from the grand narrative, and arises more from the little narratives .For Foucault, knowledge is made up of perspectives ideas narratives commentari categories, laws, terms, explanations and definitions produced and valorized by disciplines, fields and institutions through the application of scientific principles. Different and new knowledge emerges from the struggle between the different areas within a culture (Klages xiii).

Modernism Quinnbelieves that it is phenomenon literature and tha in the late 19th century and, in a variety of evolving forms, dominated the cultural

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O D Q G V F D S H   X Q W L O   W K H   V   Z K H Q   L W   E H J D Q   W R
H O D E R U D W H V   R Q   W K H   G H I L Q L W L R Q   E \   V D \ L Q J   W

modernism is its determinaWLRQ WR GLVSHQVH ZLWK WKH SDVW LQ (]UD 3RXQG V SKUDV

PDNH LW QHZ (266).As Chris Baldick in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* REVHUYHV 0RGHUQLVW OLWHUDWXUH LV FKDUDFWHUL]HG FKLHIO\ E\ D UHMHF

FHQWXU WUDGLWLRQ DQG RI WKHLU FRQVHQVXV EHWZHHQ DXWKRU DQG UHDGHU´

Modernist Novel: Modernist novels stress on impressionism and subjectivity in writing because it attaches more importance to *how* things are to be perceived, instead of emphasizing on a traditional clear-cut *what* should be seen. These novels represent a fragmented view of human subjectivity and history and treat it as a tragedy or loss. Modernist novels commemorate the richness of cultural exchanges.

New Historicism: Once more Quinn in a very concise and exacting way writes that new historicism is:

> A general term for a loosely organized approach to literary study that
> looks at the historical context of a work from a perspective influenced
> by POSTSTRUCTURALISM, New Historicism rejects the traditional
> distinction between the TEXT and the CONTEXT that is, between
> the play or poem and the historical conditions existing at the time it
> was written. Where traditional historical criticism sees a literary text
> against a backdrop of historical events, New Historicism views the
> text as a participant in a historical or political process that it
> UHFRQFHLYHV ,Q WKH ZRUGV RI WKH 1HZ +LVWRULFLVW /RXLV 0RQWURVH
> WKLV DSSURDFK LV LQWHUHVWHG LQ WKH KLVWRULFLW\ RI WH[WV DQG WK
> RI KLVWRU\ 1HZ +LVWRULFLVW WKRXJKW KDV EHHQ VWURQJO\ LQIOXHQFHG
> the theories of the French poststructuralist Michel Foucault,
> particularly his conception of the shifting dynamics of POWER, and
> the methods of the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz, whose
> WKLFN GHVFULSWLRQV RI FXOWXUDO SUDFWLFHV SURYLGH D SURFHGXUD
> A New Historicist analysis often begins with an anecdote describing
> an event seemingly far removed from literature, an account of a
> dream, for example. The analysis will then relate the anecdote to a
> literary text, not in terms of a direct connection, but as a parallel
> experience, or key both text and event to a political or social question.
> (286).

Ontology: Ontology pertains to the study of the nature of the phenomenon we are examining. It determines the known independently so to say of the idiosyncrasies of their own cognitive processes. It renders a semantic viewpoint and GHDOV ZLWK LQWHUQDO´ processes and concepts.

Postmodernism: As Abrams observes in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*:

> The term postmodernism is often applied to the literature and art after
> World War II (1939-45), when the effects on Western morale of the
> first war were greatly exacerbated by the experience of Nazi
> totalitarianism and mass extermination, the threat of total destruction

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> by the atomic bomb, the progressive devastation of the natural environment, and the ominous fact of overpopulation. Postmodernism involves not only a continuation, sometimes carried to an extreme, of the countertraditional experiments of modernism, but also diverse attempts to break away from modernist forms (176).

Postmodernist literature is characterized as subjective, self-conscious and discontinuous, as opposed to the great narrative .It is different from Modernist literature because it celebrates, rather than bemoans, the human tragedy of fragmentation and discontinuity. It is also considered as an extension, response and reaction to modernist literature, by deconstructing traditional notions.

Power)RU)RXFDXOW,SRZHULVQRWDWKLQJWKDWLVKHOGDQGXVHGELQGLYLGXDOV. Rather, it is both a complex flow and a set of relations between different groups and areas of society which changes with circumstances and time. The other point Foucault makes about power is that it is not solely negative (working to repress or control SHRSOHLWLVDOVRKLJKOSURGXFWLYH(Klages xiv).

Power-Knowledge: "WLV)RXFDXOW'VFRQFHSWWKDWNQRZOHGJHLVVRPHWKLQJWKDW its subjects, because we make sense of ourselves by referring back to various bodies of NQRZOHGJH (Klages xiv).

Self: 4XLQQGHILQHVVHOIDVDFRQFHSWLQZKLFKKDVJLYHQZDWRWKHWHUP 68%-&7 VXJJHVWDEHLQJFRQVWUXFWHGERXU-cultural, culturally-driven modes of WKLQNLQJPRQJWKHLOOXVLRQVHQWHUWDLQHGEWKH VXEMHFWLVWKDWKHRUVKHKDVDQ LQQHUDXWRQRPRXV (VHOI) .

Technologies of the Self: Michel Foucault described how power can be seen to operate within and through society, EDVHG RQ ZKDW KH FDOOHG WHFKQRORJLHVRI' Technologies, for Foucault, were sets of socially enacted practices and techniques through which people police their own behavior. These practices show power to be something not just residing in the hands of a single controlling group or being imposed from above, but existing in complex networks and relationships between individuals or groups. To FoucDXOWLWLVDIXQFWLRQZKLFKDOORZV LQGLYLGXDOVWRVKDSHWKHLU DQGWKRXJKWV (Klages 15).

1.10 Structure of the Thesis

For the purpose the present study pursues I have divided the thesis in the following chapter-wise order.

In Chapter 1 I have included a General OYHUYLHZRI6DPXHO%FNHWW'V works as well as the Statement of The problem , Objectives of the Study, Research Questions , Significance of the Study , Scope of the Study ,Conceptual Framework , Methodology , Definition of Key Terms as well as the chapter-wise structure of the present thesis.

Chapter 2 which covers the thesis Literature Review is totally dedicated to a review of the related literature - be it books, scholarly papers, thesis, dissertations and journal entries - presented in a quadric-fold thematic structure: the review of literature written on New Historicism and the Foucauldian contribution to it, those pertinent to Samuel %FNHWWV QRYHOV the respective cases studies, Modernism and Postmodernism as well as Ontology and Epistemology.

Chapter 3 entitled Conceptual Theory and Methodology consists of a detailed explanation of the conceptual theory and methodology at work in the present thesis. In addition to a short description of New Historicism, the principles of this conceptual theory as a critical instrument in the hands of a literary critic will be discussed. Moreover, the Foucauldian concept of the WHFKQRORJLHV RdMV should be discussed as it should be dealt with all thru the thesis.

Chapter HQWLWOHG %FNHWWV 1RYHOV 7KH 7HFKQRORJLHV RI WKH 6HOI DQG WKH 2QW Quest, is a reading which encapsulates a discussion of the concept of 7HFKQRORJLHV RI WKH6HOIacross the Beckettian selected novels: *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, *The Unnamable*. It also explicates on the existence of a more ontological nature, rather than that of an epistemological one to designate the postmodern stance rather than that of the modern one in these works. This chapter addresses the inquiry: How is VHOI depicted and manifested in *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable*?

Chapter 5 provides the Conclusion of the Study and presents the portrayal of the Self in 6DPXHO %FNHWWV VHOHFWHG QRYHOV 7KLV ILQDO FKDSWHU LQFOXGHV WKHUH VHD RI %FNHWWV FKDUDFWHUV DQG WKHLU GHSLFWLRQ E\WKH DXWKRU LQ WKH OLJKW concept of WKH 7HFKQRORJLHV RI WKH 6 as well as the representation of the of the postmodern ontological wonderings of the Beckettian characters .This concluding chapter will make it clear ± in a nutshell ± what is meant by self and how such a modified representations could make a new yardstick for the readers to distinguish the whereabouts of the Beckettian oeuvre in the modern or postmodern classification of the genre.

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