



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

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

**JAVAD YAGHOوبي DERABI**

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By

**JAVAD YAGHOOBI DERABI**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in  
Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**May 2014**

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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**JAVAD YAGHOوبي DERABI**

**May 2014**

**Chairperson: Associate Professor Noritah Omar, PhD**

**Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication**

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 YAGHOوبي DERABI**

**May 2014**

**Pengerusi: Profesor Madya Noritah Omar, PhD**

**Fakulti: Bahasa Moden dan Komunikasi**

Gambaran yang diberi oleh kajian lepas mengenai Samuel Beckett menunjukkan bahawa karya fiksiyen 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 fiksiyen 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 fiksiyen 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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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 12 May 2014 to conduct the final examination of Javad Yaghoobi Derabi on his thesis entitled "An Ontological Foucauldian Reading of Technologies of the Self in Selected Novels of Samuel Beckett" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

Members of the Thesis Examination Committee were as follows:

**Yap Ngee Thai, PhD**

Senior Lecturer  
Faculty of Modern Language and Communication  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Chairman)

**Rosli bin Talif, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Faculty of Modern Language and Communication  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Internal Examiner)

**Ruzy Suliza Hahsim, PhD**

Professor  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia  
Malaysia  
(External Examiner)

**John McLaren, PhD**

Professor  
Victoria University  
Australia  
(External Examiner)



---

**NORITAH OMAR, PhD**  
Associate Professor and Deputy Dean  
School of Graduate Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: 23 June 2014

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the supervisory committee were as follows:

**Noritah Omar, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Chairperson)

**Mardziah Hayati Binti Abdullah, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Member)

**Wan Roselezam Binti Wan Yahya, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Member)

---

**BUJANG BIN KIM HUAT, PhD**

Professor and Dean  
School of Graduate Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date:

## DECLARATION

### Declaration by graduate student

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of  
Chairman of  
Supervisory  
Committee:

**Noritah Omar, PhD**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of  
Member of  
Supervisory  
Committee:

**Mardziah Hayati Binti Abdullah, PhD**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of  
Member of  
Supervisory  
Committee:

**Wan Roselezam Binti Wan Yahya, PhD**

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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-HDU SRVW DV ØHFVHXUØVVLVWDQWLQ (QJOLVK DW WKH 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 -RFHΨVWLOØØ finished *Finnegans Wake* EDJURXSRI-RFHΨGLVFLSOHVØFNHWWDOVR 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 FRPSHWLWLRQVSRQVRUHGEWKRHXUV3UHVVLVSRHPØKRURVFRSHØDVKLVILUVW 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 ZRUGØLOGOØØURP-RKDQQØHVKHWR)UDQ]ØLOOSDU]HUWRØRYDQQLØDULQLKH 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 ØRKQVRQ)DQWDVØØFODLPHGWRKDYHWHKHQWLUHSODRXWOLQHGLQKLVKHDGDQØ only needed to commit it to paper. His original idea was to write a long four-act play to EHFDOOHGØØPDQ:LVKHVØØIWHU-RKQVRQØØSRHPØØKHØDQLWRIØØPDQ:LVKHVØØ 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 1947. Beckett's novels and plays were among the most 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 Beckett's novels and plays from 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 and in specific. The novels, 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 example is *Watt*, a *Postmodernist Fiction* wherein he explores the 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* (1957). (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 Beckett's novels. The fabric and texture they bear substantial potential of the postmodern label. Here, as a result, the novels are selected for my depiction and theoretical basis for differentiating modernism from postmodernism.

In *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodernism*, Beckett's postmodernism has tended to be focused on one kind of writing, namely, narrative novels (12). This is the very reason, Beckett selected novels rather than his plays of which he is universally known and acclaimed.



7 D N L Q J W K L V L Q W R F R n O i v f a n c o u s b o o k P o s t m o d e r n i s t F i c t i o n , O H ¶ V L C  
 it becomes significant enough for the present study as he says that WKHGRPLQDQWRI  
 modernist fiction is *epistemological* (9) ZKLOHKHFRQWLQXHVRQWKHQH[WSDJHDVVHUW  
 WKDWWKHGRPLQDQWRISRVPGRGHUQLWVWILFWMORQWKHGO LJKWRQWLDQ  
 OFDOH¶ WKHRU\OHW PH KHUH TXRWH 6WHYHQ &RQQHU¶ FODUCLHFDWLRQLQ  
*Companion to Postmodernism*. He says:

WLDQ OFDOH¶ LQIOXHQLWDO 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. (6566)

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  
 PXOWLSOHOLYHVQOWKURXJKRXW¶FNHWW¶WULORJQDORQHZKLFKUHSHDWVWLWV  
 Trilogy, exists and sub-H[LVWVLQYDULRXVSDVWOLIHWPVH¶DQ\RWKUHSHDWVWLWV  
 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  
 ODV LPSOLFQDWLRQV RID VWUXJJOH WR FRQWURO RQH¶ OSHDQDQ DOWR  
 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  
 (XURSHDQORGHUQLW¶¶*Journal of Beckett Studies* (Gontarski 184 )LVDOUHDG¶LQ  
 need of an auditor, a spectator, an audience´ LWZDQWVWREHSDUWRIWKHVKRZ´

ZHOOZHOO VR WKHUH¶ DQDXGLHQFHLW¶DSXEOLFVKRZRXXEXRXU  
 VHDWDQGGZDLW SHUKDSVLW¶IUHHDIUHHVKRZRXXWNRXUVHDWDQGG  
 RXZDLW IRU LW WR EHJLQRU SHUKDSV LW¶FRPSXOVRU\DFRPSXOVRU\  
 show, you wait for the compulsory show to begin, it takes time, you  
 KHDU D YRLFH SHUKDSV LW¶ D UHFLWDWLRQ WKDW¶ WKH VKRZ VRPH  
 reciting, selected passages, old favourites, a poetry matinée, or  
 VRPHRQHLPSURYLVLQJRXFDQEDUHOKHDUKLPWKDW¶WKHVKRZ  
*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 speakable: they are written for the performative voice, a resonant

Modernism becomes Beckett in a glance, but a New Historicist approach divulges 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 defies the human ZOO UHLQWHUSUHWDLRQ RI SIZHEHOHWQH 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 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 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* the absurd, even though he modified some of his positions in later writings, there is no there is only the disjunction between the human being and the universe.

*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. The work of Beckett, an author whose novels present a vision of a bleak universe that, in absurd, existentialist fashion, lacks meaning or inherent values. The work of Beckett, an author whose novels present a vision of a bleak universe that, in absurd, existentialist fashion, lacks meaning or inherent values. The work of Beckett, an author whose novels present a vision of a bleak universe that, in absurd, existentialist fashion, lacks meaning or inherent values.

)RU & DPXV WKH LQGLYLGXDO LV OLNHO\ WR SRV  
 WKHP D UHDVRQ IRU OLYLOJ' \$V ORQJ DV WK  
 illusion, he or she will remain content, despite living what Martin Esslin in *The Theatre of the Absurd* (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 EURNHQDQG 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 LQGLYLGXDO FRQIURQ 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 PDQW RZQ LQKXPDQLW\WKLV incalculable tumble before the image of what we are, this QDXVHDDVDZULWHURIWRGDFDOOVLLVDOVRWKHDEVXUG 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(VVOLQFDOOVDXQLYHUVHGHLSULYHGRIZKDWZDVRQ and its living purpose, a world deprived of a generally accepted integrating principle, which has become disjointed, purposelessDEVXUGWKDW 6DPXHO MFNHWVW 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, MFNHWVW QHYHU DFFHSWV GHDWK 7KH HQGLQJV RI KLV QRYHOV YLUWXDOO\VKU inevitability, but death remains an opponent to be grappled with, even though it cannot EHRVYHFRPHQDWKRXJKMFNHWVW VVXEMHFWPDWWHU KDVYDULHGIURPQRYHOWRQ KHUHSHDWHGOUHWXUQVWRWKHLQGLYLGXDOVWVWUXJJOHWWRZUHQFKPHDQLQJ

unflinchingly moving through the absurd, 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 relative nature of 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 recognition, recognizing the malignant motives lurking behind the illusory guiding principles of the antihero, find a way to respond to the unfeeling cosmos.

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 relative nature of 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 recognition, recognizing the malignant motives lurking behind the illusory guiding principles of the 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.

Camus' 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 intensity of the self-asserting clarity of mind and the self-abandoning ecstasy of love, between, finally, consciousness and the particularly interesting to modern and postmodern fiction, because, being a kind of 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. Characters that embrace an absurd, meaningless existence in the existentialist tradition 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 nothingness, the impossibility of artistic expression, failure and nihilism.

Beckett's works 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

falling into the trap of standardized readings and professionalized hermeneutic practices? Theories of reading and interpretation aside how are we to even read

6DPXHO... scientific theory: the truth content of artworks are less and less able to be interpreted by 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... 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, "the last book" *Innommable*<sup>2</sup> (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 a 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... (Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment 19) attempts to fit an introduction to a volume of critical essays entitled *Rethinking Beckett: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Lance Butler and Robin Davis listed the *romancier*, Beckett the Cartesian, Beckett the Existentialist... Beckett the nihilist, Daniel Katz points out in the introduction to his own *Beckett Writing Beckett: The Author in the Autograph* (Abbott 25).

Woolly, *Molon De O* and *The Unnamable* 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) 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 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 the modern and postmodern genre. This can be highly problematic as modernism and postmodernism diverge in their epistemological and ontological nature of narration. 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. In light of he depicts 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 works and their implications and also to encourage new readers and students of literature WRXQGHUWDNHIXUWKHUFULWLFDOVWXGLHVRIWKHDXWKRUWILFWLRQ7KHVWXEH WRHYDOXDWHWKHDXWKRUW QRYHOVLQWKHOLJKWRIFULWLFDOFRQFHUQVW

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 *heterotopia* support 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

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 temptuous and bright, such as Kaspar David Friedrich loved. This is the shattered song of our time. (31)

To encapsulate Beckett incorporated the past into a body of work that was highly innovative and did not share the idea that art could give meaning and coherence to the malaise of nothing to do with clarity, does not dabble in the *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 on behalf of *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment* 91). For Beckett, as he pronounced in *Proust*, *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment* 94).

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 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 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 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 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 provides 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 VOREEHULQJLQVROLWDFRQTLQFFHQW359) 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 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 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-



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 OL VWHQH UZLWKLQDGDUNURRPLQRUQ&DTHS ZDV usual parallel in the stage play *Ohio Impromptu*.

7KH QDWXUH RI MFNHWW Olwynise was largely intellectual. His subject was, to TXRWH MFNHWW KLPVHOIRQWRV SKIOMBOR (and 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 W - MFNHWW WZR HDUV RI SVFKRWKH UDS\ LQ /RQGRQ ZLWK 'U :LOIUHG 5XSUHF Bion (Knowlson 175). This personal experience might partially account for the stilling, or stillness, of his FKDUDFWHU ERGLHV LQRUGHU WR JDLQ DFFHVVR WKH PRYHPHQ 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 MFNHWW HDUOQRYHO 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 PLQG LV D GLVFUHHW HQWLW ODUJH hollow sphere, he UPHWLFDOO FORVHG WR WKH XQLY (HUWPHZLW) KR XW 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-OLNHVWDWHKHLV VHHNLQJ RRRQKLVERGZRXOGEHTXLHWVRRQKHZRXOGE (*Murphy* 9)-XVWDVSK VLFDO VWLOOQHVV DOORZV 0XUSK WR PRYHDPRQJ WKH WUHDV his mind (*Murphy* 65), so immobility privileges the protagonists of Becket W VXEVTXH QW novels to be listeners of their own private auditory worlds.

:KHQ 0ROOR KH DUVD GLVWDQW PXVLF KH VWRSV WKHEHWWHUWR OLN,WHQ 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 MFNHWW UHIHUV WR WKHPZKDW :DWWGHVFULEHV DWZKH RWKHU YRL 7KHPDEH SK VLFDOO LPSDLUH G OLNH WKH YLUW XDOORQOR (*The Trilogy* 34), the impotent-ERGLHG 0DORQH 3 WKHUHLV YLUWXDOO QRWK LQ LW EDQ GR (171)RU WKH WRWDOOPRWLRQOHVV 8QQDPDEOH 3GRQWRBYH (268); or they may restrict themselves in some way, like Murphy tied to his chair, or Watt self-LPSULVRQHGLQ 0UQRWW KR XVH

7KH FKDUDFWHUV VHHP WR NQRZ WKH DUH DORQH 3 DPRIFRXUVH DORQH 0RQH VDVV Unnamable, (*The Trilogy* 267), and yet they harbor the suspicion that they may have



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

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* like Virginia Woolf (modernist) or John Cage (postmodernist), Beckett has remained a categorical rift, a 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 calls Beckettian criticism, which also deals with the modern and postmodern critical approaches to Beckett. *A Complete Critical Guide to Samuel Beckett*.

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 Beckett's 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 inauguration of postmodernism, in that it involves a refusal of modernist poetics (70).

My second rationale is that the basic anchor book, upon which I have built the hypothesis in differentiating modern and postmodernist fiction in which apart from the explicit title the book bears upon itself modern 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 inauguration of postmodernism, in that it involves a refusal of modernist poetics (70).

## 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 modern and postmodern novel adapting the epistemological/ontological discourse which rather than his plays for which he is internationally renowned. Moreover, Brian YHU\UHDVVRQEHKLQGWKHIDFWWKDWWKHSUHVHQWVWXG\GHDOVZLWK6DPXHO rather than his plays for which he is internationally renowned. Moreover, Brian 0FDOH\ *Postmodernist Fiction* has been basically referred to as the anchor theoretical book where he benchmarks the importance of the epistemological and ontological fiction. Since ontology refers to the philosophical investigation of existence, the Foucauldian concept of WKH\HFKQRORJLHVRIWKH\ adopted to the present study through the New Historicist perspective.

6LQFHWKHVHRQWRORJLFDORYHUWRQHVDUHDQOPDQLIHVVDWLRQVRIDFHUWDL these 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\FNHW\ ZDUQLQJWKDWWKHGDQJHULV LQWKHQHDWQHVVRI LGF (*Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment* 19) attempts to fit into 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 DVVHUVLRQ , UH DG LQ *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\UHDQ\UHSUHVHQVDVLJQLILFDQWH\WHQWKHHPSLUHRIOLWHUDU\WXGLHVIRULWHQWDLOVLQWHQVLYH\FORVHU the literary-critical manner, of non-literary texts (177).

)RU WKDW UH D V R Q 3 H W H U % D U U \ E H O L H Y H V W K D W  
 W K H S D J H ¶ D S S U R D F K L Q Z K L F K F R Q W H [ W L V G L V S  
 the decontextualised, isolated poems which I. A. Richards of (HUHGIRUFULWLFLVPLQV´  
 (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 of Literary Terms* clarifies that the way it is used  
 LQ SRVWVWUXFWXUDOLVP WKH WHUP LV QRW FRQILQHG WR FRQYHUVDWLRQDO  
 ZULWLQJ´GHVLJQDWHV DOO YHUEDO FRQVWUXFWLRQDOOLYPSOL He  
 boundaries between literary and non-LWHUDUPRGHV RIVLJQLILFDWLRQHHPDLQWDLQVW  
 ¶Q OLFKHO )RXFDXOW GLVFRXUVH is the central subject of analytic concern.  
 )RXFDXOW FRQFHL YHV WKDW GLVFRXUVH LV WR EH DQDO]HG DV (SRVWDOO DQRQPRX  
 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 MXVWDZDRI VSHDNLQJ RU ZKHWKROEHW QWDO VHW ¶RIDQG  
 LGHRORJZKLFKHQFORVHVWKHWKLNQJRIDOOPHEHUVRID ¶L YHQVRFLHW\

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

Episteme: As defined in *Michel Foucault* LW UH IHUV WR WKH RUGHUO \ XQFRQVFLRXV  
 VWUXFWXUHVRUHSLVVHPRORJLFD OILHOG ¶QGHUOLQJWKHSURGXFWLRQRIVFLHQ  
 a particular time and place. Foucault remark V LQ DQJLYHQ FXOWXUH DQG DW DQJLYHQ  
 moment, there is always only one episteme that defines the conditions of possibility of  
 DOONQRZOHGJH ¶DUUHO

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  
 ¶LWHUDULQHVVRIDZRUNDV -DQ0XNDURYVND ¶PHPEHURIWKH3UDJXH&LUFOHGHV  
 LQWKHVFRQVLVWV LQWKHPD [LPXPRIIRUHJURXQGLQJRIWKHXWWHUDQFHWKDW  
 IRUHJURXQGLQJRIWKHDFWRIH [SVKHYDQ RIVSHHFKLWVHOI7RIRUHJURXQGLVWR  
 bring something into the highest prominence, to make it dominant in perception.) By  
 EDFNJURXQGLQJWKHUH HUH QWLDODVSHFWDQGWKHORJLFD OFRQQHFWRQVLQO  
 DVVHUWV WKDW WKHZRUGV ¶WOSIDEDIDMSKRQLFVLAQ Mims 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 SRVVHVHV ERWK ¶QWDFWLF ¶WKH GHVFULSWLRQ LWVHOI DQG ¶HPDQWLF ¶WK  
 LQWHUSUHWDLRQ (D VSHFWA´ Edward Quinn in *A Dictionary of Literary and  
 Thematic Terms* defines, it is:

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 *What Maisie Knew* (1897), in which the young

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 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 identity as a form of subjugation and a way of exercising power over people and

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* distributed, stored, and arranged differently in Postmodern societies than in modern (72). Furthermore she maintains that knowledge in postmodern literature deviates from the grand narrative, and arises more from the little narratives .For Foucault, 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

Modernism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and, in a variety of evolving forms, dominated the cultural

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 F  
 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 (JUD 3RXQG W SKUDV  
 PDNHLW QH Z 266). As Chris Baldick in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary  
 Terms* REVHUYHV ØRGHUQLVW OLWHUDWXUH LV FKDUDFWHULJHG FKLHIO\ED UHMI  
 FHQWXUWUDGLWLRQVDQGRIWKHLUFRQVHQVXVEHWZ(H5QDXWKRUDQGUHDGHU  
 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 ÆVWRULFLVW /RXLV ØRQWURVH  
 WKLVDSSURDFKLVLQWHUHVWHGLQWKHKLWVRULFLWRWH[WVDQGWKH  
 RIKLVWRU\HZEÆVWRULFLVW WKRXJKWKDV EHHQ VWURQJO\ LQIOXH QFHG  
 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  
 WKLFNGHVFULSWLRQVRIFXOWXUDOSUDFWLHV SURYLGHDSURFHGXUD  
 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 GHDOVZLWK 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





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 Beckett and 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 *episteme* should be discussed as it should be dealt with all thru the thesis.

Chapter 4, titled *Quest*, is a reading which encapsulates a discussion of the concept of *episteme* across 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 *episteme* 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 the concept of *episteme* 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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