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The Exhausted

Being exhausted is much more than being tired.[1] "It's not just tiredness, I'm not just tired, in spite of the climb."[2] The tired person no longer has any (subjective) possibility at his disposal; he therefore cannot realize the slightest (objective) possibility. But the latter remains, because one can never realize the whole of the possible; in fact, one even creates the possible to the extent that one realizes it. The tired person has merely exhausted the realization, whereas the exhausted person exhausts the whole of the possible. The tired person can no longer realize, but the exhausted person can no longer possibilize. "That the impossible should be asked of me, good, what else could be asked of me."[3] There is no longer any possible: a relentless Spinozism. Does he exhaust the possible because he is himself exhausted, or is he exhausted because he has exhausted the possible? He exhausts himself in exhausting the possible, and vice-versa. He exhausts that which, in the possible, *is not realized*. He has had done with the possible, beyond all tiredness, "for to end yet again."[4]

God is the originary, or the sum total of all possibility. The possible is realized only in the derivative, in tiredness, whereas one is exhausted before birth, before realizing oneself, or realizing anything whatsoever ("I gave up before birth").[5] When one realizes some of the possible, one does so according to certain goals, plans, and preferences: I put on shoes to go out, and slippers when I stay in. When I speak, for example, when I say "it's daytime," the interlocutor answers, "it's possible . . ." because he is waiting to know what purpose I want the day to serve: I'm going to go out because it's daytime . . .[6] Language

states the possible, but only by readying it for a realization. And I can no doubt make use of the day to stay at home, or I can stay at home because of some other possibility ("it's night"). But the realization of the possible always proceeds through exclusion, because it presupposes preferences and goals that vary, always replacing the preceeding ones. In the end, it is these variations, these substitutions, all these exclusive disjunctions (daytime/nighttime, going out/staying in . . .) that are tiring.

Exhaustion is something entirely different: one combines the set of variables of a situation, on the condition that one renounce any order of preference, any organization in relation to a goal, any signification. The goal is no longer to go out or stay in, and one no longer makes use of the days and nights. One no longer realizes, even though one accomplishes something. Shoes, one stays in; slippers, one goes out. Yet one does not fall into the undifferentiated, or into the famous unity of contradictories, nor is one passive: one remains active, but for nothing. One was tired of something, but one is exhausted by nothing. The disjunctions subsist, and the distinction between terms may become ever more crude, but the disjointed terms are affirmed in their nondecomposable distance, since they are used for nothing except to create further permutations. It is enough to say about an event that it is possible, since it does not occur without merging with nothing, and abolishing the real to which it lays claim. There is no existence other than the possible. It is night, it is not night, it is raining, it is not raining.[7] "Yes, I was my father and I was my son."[8] The disjuction has become *inclusive:* everything divides, but into itself; and God, who is the sum total of the possible, merges with Nothing, of which each thing is a modification. "Simple games that time plays with space, now with these toys, and now with those."[9] Beckett's characters play with the possible without realizing it; they are too involved in a possibility that is ever more restricted in its kind to care about what is still happening. The permutation of "sucking stones" in *Molloy* is one of the most famous texts. In *Murphy,* the hero devotes himself to the combinatorial of five small biscuits, but on the condition of having vanquished all order of preference, and of having thereby conquered the hundred and twenty modes of total permutability: "Overcome by these perspectives Murphy fell forward on his face in the grass, beside those biscuits of which it could be said as truly as of the stars, that one differed from another, but of which he could not partake in their fullness until he had learnt not

to prefer any one to any other."[10] *I would prefer not to,* following Bartleby's Beckettian formula. Beckett's entire oeuvre is pervaded by exhaustive series, that is, exhausting series—most notably *Watt,* with its series of footwear (sock-stocking; boot-shoe-slipper) or furniture (tallboy—dressing table—night stool—wash stand; on its feet—on its head—on its face—on its back—on its side; bed-door-window-fire: fifteen thousand arrangements).[11] *Watt* is the great serial novel, in which Mr. Knott, whose only need is to be without need, does not earmark any combination for a particular use that would exclude the others, and whose circumstances would still be yet to come.

The combinatorial is the art or science of exhausting the possible through inclusive disjunctions. But only an exhausted person can exhaust the possible, because he has renounced all need, preference, goal, or signification. Only the exhausted person is sufficiently disinterested, sufficiently scrupulous. Indeed, he is obliged to replace his plans with tables and programs that are devoid of all meaning. For him, what matters is the order in which he does what he has to do, and in what combinations he does two things at the same time—when it is still necessary to do so, for nothing. Beckett's great contribution to logic is to have shown that exhaustion (exhaustivity) does not occur without a certain physiological exhaustion, somewhat as Nietzsche showed that the scientific ideal is not attained without a kind of vital degeneration—for example, in the Man with leeches, "the conscientious in spirit" who wanted to know everything about the leech's brain.[12] The combinatorial exhausts its object, but only because its subject is himself exhausted. The exhaustive *and* the exhausted. Must one be exhausted to give oneself over to the combinatorial, or is it the combinatorial that exhausts us, that leads us to exhaustion—or even the two together, the combinatorial and the exhaustion? Here again, inclusive disjunctions. And perhaps it is like the front and back side of a single thing: a keen sense or science of the possible, joined, or rather disjoined, with a fantastic decomposition of the self. What Blanchot says about Musil is equally true of Beckett: the greatest exactitude and the most extreme dissolution; the indefinite exchange of mathematical formulations and the pursuit of the formless or the unformulated.[13] These are the two meanings of exhaustion, and both are necessary in order to abolish the real. Many authors are too polite, and are content to announce the total work and the death of the self. But this remains an abstraction as long as one does not show "how it is": how one makes an "inventory,"

errors included, and how the self decomposes, stench and agony included, in the manner of *Malone Dies*. A double innocence, for as the exhausted person says, "the art of combining is not my fault. It's a curse from above. For the rest I would suggest not guilty."[14]

More than an art, this is a science that demands long study. The combiner is seated at his school desk: "In a learned school / Till the wreck of body / Slow decay of blood / Testy delirium / Or dull decrepitude . . ."[15] Not that the decrepitude or the wreck interrupts one's studies; on the contrary, they complete them, as much as they condition and accompany them: the exhausted person remains seated at his school desk, "bowed head resting on hands," hands sitting on the table and head sitting on the hands, the head level with the table.[16] This is the posture of the exhausted person, which *Nacht und Träume* will take up again and duplicate. Beckett's damned together present the most astonishing gallery of postures, gaits, and positions since Dante. Macmann had no doubt remarked that he felt "happier sitting than standing and lying down than sitting."[17] But this was a formula more suited to tiredness than to exhaustion. Lying down is never the end or the last word; it is the penultimate word. For if one is sufficiently rested, there is the risk that one will, if not get up, at least roll over or crawl. To be kept from crawling, one must be put in a ditch or stuck in a jar where, no longer able to stir one's limbs, one will nonetheless stir some memories. But exhaustion does not allow one to lie down; when night falls, one remains seated at the table, empty head in captive hands, "head sunk on crippled hands," "one night as he sat at his table head on hands . . . Lift his past head a moment to see his past hands . . . ," "skull alone in a dark place pent bowed on a board . . . ," "hands and head a little heap."[18] This is the most horrible position in which to await death: seated, without the strength either to get up or to lie down, watching for the signal that will make us stand up one last time and then lie down forever. Once seated, one cannot recover, one can no longer stir even a single memory. The rocking chair is still imperfect in this regard: it must come to a stop.[19] We should perhaps distinguish between Beckett's "lying down" work and his "seated" work, which alone is final. This is because there is a difference in nature between "seated" exhaustion and the tiredness that "lies down," "crawls," or "gets stuck." Tiredness affects action in all its states, whereas exhaustion only concerns an amnesiac witness. The seated person is the witness around which the other revolves while developing all the degrees

of tiredness. He is there before birth, and before the other begins. "Was there a time when I too revolved thus? No, I have always been sitting here, at this selfsame spot . . ."[20] But why is the seated person on the lookout for words, for voices, for sounds?

Language names the possible. How could one combine what has no name, the object = x? Molloy finds himself before a small, strange thing, made up of "two crosses joined, at their point of intersection, by a bar," equally stable and indiscernible on its four bases.[21] Future archaeologists, if they find one in our ruins, will, as is their wont, probably interpret it as a religious object used in prayers or sacrifices. How could it enter into a combinatorial if one does not have its name, "knife holder"? Nonetheless, if the ambition of the combinatorial is to exhaust the possible with words, it must constitute a metalanguage, a very special language in which the relations between objects are identical to the relations between words; and consequently, words must no longer give a realization to the possible, but must themselves give the possible a reality that is proper to it, a reality that is, precisely, exhaustible: "Minimally less. No more. Well on the way to inexistence. As to zero the infinite."[22] Let us call this atomic, disjunctive, cut and chopped language in Beckett *language I,* a language in which enumeration replaces propositions and combinatorial relations replace syntactic relations: a language of names. But if one thereby hopes to exhaust the possible with words, one must also hope to exhaust the words themselves; whence the need for another metalanguage, a *language II,* which is no longer a language of names but of voices, a language that no longer operates with combinable atoms but with blendable flows. Voices are waves or flows that direct and distribute the linguistic corpuscles. When one exhausts the possible with words, one cuts and chops the atoms, and when one exhausts the words themselves, one drys up the flows. It is this problem, to have done now with words, that dominates Beckett's work from *The Unnamable* onward: a true silence, not a simple tiredness with talking, because "it is all very well to keep silence, but one has also to consider the kind of silence one keeps."[23] What will be the last word, and how can it be recognized?

To exhaust the possible, the *possibilia* (objects or "things") must be related to the words that designate them through inclusive disjunctions within a combinatorial. To exhaust words, they must be related to Others who pronounce them—or rather, who emit them, secrete them—following flows that sometimes intermingle and sometimes separate

off. This second, very complex, moment is not unrelated to the first: it is always an Other who speaks, since the words have not waited for me, and there is no language other than the foreign; it is always an Other, the "owner" of the objects he possesses by speaking. It is still a question of the possible, but in a new fashion: the Others are *possible worlds,* on which the voices confer a reality that is always variable, depending on the force they have, and revocable, depending on the silences they create. Sometimes they are strong, sometimes they are weak, until a moment arrives when they fall silent (a silence of tiredness). Sometimes they separate and even oppose each other, sometimes they merge together. The Others—that is, the possible worlds, with their objects, with their voices that bestow on them the only reality to which they can lay claim—constitute "stories." The Others have no other reality than the one given to them in their possible world by their voices.[24] Such are Murphy, Watt, Mercier, and all the others—"Mahood and Co."[25] Mahood and Company: How can one have done with them, with both their voices and their stories? To exhaust the possible in this new sense, the problem of exhaustive series must be confronted anew, even if it means falling into an "aporia."[26] One would have to succeed in speaking of them—but how can one speak of them without introducing oneself into the series, without "prolonging" their voices, without passing through each of them, without being in turn Murphy, Molloy, Malone, Watt, and so on, and coming back once again to the inexhaustible Mahood? *Or else* one would have to succeed in arriving at the self, not as a term in the series, but as its limit: me, the exhausted one, the unnamable, me, sitting alone in the dark, having become Worm, "the anti-Mahood," deprived of any voice, so that I could speak of myself only through the voice of Mahood, and could only be Worm by becoming Mahood yet again.[27] The aporia lies in the inexhaustible series of all these exhausted beings. "How many of us are there altogether, finally? And who is holding forth at the moment? And to whom? And about what?"[28] How can one imagine a whole that holds everything together [*un tout qui fasse compagnie*]? How can one make a whole out of the series? By going up the series, by going down it, by mutiplying it by two if one speaks to the other, or by three if one speaks to the other of yet another?[29] The aporia will be solved if one considers that the limit of the series does not lie at the infinity of the terms but can be anywhere in the flow: between two terms, between two voices or the variations of a single voice—a point

that is already reached well before one knows that the series is exhausted, and well before one learns that there is no longer any possibility or any story, and that there has not been one for a long time.[30] Long since exhausted, without our knowing it, without his knowing it. The inexhaustible Mahood and Worm the exhausted, the Other and myself, are the same character, the same dead foreign language.

There is therefore a *language III,* which no longer relates language to enumerable or combinable objects, nor to transmitting voices, but to immanent limits that are ceaselessly displaced—hiatuses, holes, or tears that we would never notice, or would attribute to mere tiredness, if they did not suddenly widen in such a way as to receive something from the outside or from elsewhere. "Blanks for when words gone. When nohow on. Then all seen as only then. Undimmed. All undimmed that words dim. All so seen unsaid."[31] This something seen or heard is called Image, a visual or aural Image, provided it is freed from the chains in which it was bound by the other two languages. It is no longer a question of imagining a "whole" of the series with language I (a combinatorial imagination "sullied by reason"), or of inventing stories or making inventories of memories with language II (imagination sullied by memory), although the cruelty of voices never stops piercing us with unbearable memories, absurd stories, or undesirable company.[32] It is extremely difficult to tear all these adhesions away from the image so as to reach the point of "Imagination Dead Imagine."[33] It is extremely difficult to make a pure and unsullied image, one that is nothing but an image, by reaching the point where it emerges in all its singularity, retaining nothing of the personal or the rational, and by ascending to the indefinite as if into a celestial state. *A* woman, *a* hand, *a* mouth, *some* eyes . . . some blue and some white . . . a little green with white and red patches, a small field with crocuses and sheep: "little scenes yes in the light yes but not often no as if a light went on yes as if yes . . . he calls that the life above yes . . . they are not memories no."[34]

To *make* an image from time to time ("it's done I've done the image"): Can art, painting, and music have any other goal, even if the contents of the image are quite meagre, quite mediocre?[35] In one of Lichtenstein's porcelain sculptures, sixty centimeters high, there stands a brown-trunked tree, topped with a ball of green, and flanked by a little cloud on the left and a patch of sky on the right, at different heights: what force! One asks nothing more, neither of Bram van Velde nor of

Beethoven. The image is a little ritornello, whether visual or aural, once the time has come: "the exquisite hour . . ."[36] In *Watt,* the three frogs intermingle their songs, each with its own cadence, Krak, Krek, and Krik.[37] Image-ritornellos run throughout Beckett's books. In *First Love,* "he" watches a patch of starry sky as it comes and goes, and "she" sings in a low voice. The image is not defined by the sublimity of its content but by its form, that is, by its "internal tension," or by the force it mobilizes to create a void or to bore holes, to loosen the grip of words, to dry up the oozing of voices, so as to free itself from memory and reason: a small, alogical, amnesiac, and almost aphasic image, sometimes standing in the void, sometimes shivering in the open.[38] The image is not an object but a "process." We do not know the power of such images, so simple do they appear from the point of view of the object. This is *language III,* which is no longer a language of names or voices but a language of images, resounding and coloring images. What is tedious about the language of words is the way in which it is burdened with calculations, memories, and stories: it cannot avoid them. Nevertheless, the pure image must be inserted into language, into the names and voices. Sometimes this will occur in silence, by means of an ordinary silence, when the voices seem to have died out. But sometimes it will happen at the signal of an inductive term, in the current of the voice, Ping: "Ping image only just almost never one second light time blue and white in the wind."[39] Sometimes this is a very distinctive flat-toned voice, as if it were predetermined or preexisting, that of an Announcer or Opener who describes all the elements of the image to come, but which still lacks form.[40] Sometimes, finally, the voice manages to overcome its repugnances, its loyalties, its ill will, and, carried along by the music, it becomes speech, capable in turn of making a verbal image, as in a lied, or of itself making the music and color of an image, as in a poem.[41] Language III, then, can bring together words and voices in images, but in accordance with a special combination: language I was that of the novels, and culminates in *Watt;* language II marks out its multiple paths throughout the novels (*The Unnamable*), suffuses the works for theater, and blares forth in the radio pieces. But *language III,* born in the novel (*How It Is*), passing through the theater (*Happy Days, Act without Words, Catastrophe*), finds the secret of its assemblage in television: a prerecorded voice for an image that in each case is in the process of taking form. There is a specificity to the works for television.[42]

This outside of language is not only the image, but also the "vastitude" of space. Language III does not operate only with images but also with spaces. And just as the image must attain the indefinite, while remaining completely determined, so space must always be an any-space-whatever, disused, unmodified, even though it is entirely determined geometrically (a square with these sides and diagonals, a circle with these zones, a cylinder "fifty metres round and sixteen high").[43] The any-space-whatever is populated and well-trodden, it is even that which we ourselves populate and traverse, but it is opposed to all our pseudoqualified extensions, and is defined as "neither here nor there where all the footsteps ever fell can never fare nearer to anywhere nor from anywhere further away."[44] Just as the image appears as a visual or aural ritornello to the one who makes it, space appears as a motor ritornello—postures, positions, and gaits—to the one who travels through it. All these images compose and decompose themselves.[45] The "Pings," which activate the images, are mixed together with the "Hups," which activate strange movements within the spatial directions.[46] A manner of walking is no less a ritornello than a song or a tiny colored vision: for example, the gait of Watt, who moves east by turning his bust toward the north and throwing the right leg toward the south, then the bust toward the south and the left leg toward the north.[47] We can see that this gait is exhaustive, since it invests all the cardinal points at the same time, the fourth obviously being the direction from which he comes, without ever moving away from it. It is a matter of covering every possible direction, while nonetheless moving in a straight line. There is an equality between the straight line and the plane, and between the plane and the volume: the consideration of space gives a new meaning and a new object to exhaustion—exhausting the potentialities of an any-space-whatever.

Space has potentialities inasmuch as it makes the realization of events possible; it therefore precedes realization, and potentiality itself belongs to the possible. But was this not equally the case for the image, which had already put forth a specific means for exhausting the possible? This time, it would seem that an image, inasmuch as it stands in the void outside space, and also apart from words, stories, and memories, accumulates a fantastic potential energy, which it detonates by dissipating itself. What counts in the image is not its meager content, but the energy—mad and ready to explode—that it has harnessed, which is why images never last very long. The images merge with the

detonation, combustion, and dissipation of their condensed energy. Like ultimate particles, they never last very long, and Ping activates an "image only just almost never one second."[48] When the protagonist says, "Enough, enough . . . images,"[49] it is not only because he is disgusted by them, but also because their existence is purely ephemeral. "No more blue the blue is done."[50] We will not invent an entity that would be Art, capable of making the image endure: the image lasts only as long as the furtive moment of our pleasure, our gaze ("I stood for three minutes before Professor Pater's smile, to look at it.")[51] There is a time for images, a right moment when they can appear or insinuate themselves, breaking the combination of words and the flow of voices. There is a time for images, as when Winnie feels that she can sing *L'heure exquise,* but it is a moment very near the end, an hour close to the last. The rocking chair is a motor ritornello that tends toward its own end, pushing all the possible toward it, going "faster and faster," "shorter and shorter," until, quite suddenly, it abruptly stops.[52] The energy of the image is dissipative. The image quickly ends and dissipates because it is itself the means of having done with itself. It captures all the possible in order to make it explode. When one says, "I've done the image," it is because this time it is finished, *there is no more possibility.* The only uncertainty that makes us continue is that even painters, even musicians, are never sure they have succeeded in making the image. What great painter has not said to himself, on his deathbed, that he had failed to make a single image, even a small or simple one? It is, rather, the end, the end of all possibility, that teaches us that we have made it, that we have just made the image. And it is the same with space: if the image, by its very nature, has a very short duration, then space perhaps has a very restricted place, as restricted as the one that cramps Winnie, when she says, "la terre est juste" ["the earth is tight"] and Godard, "juste une image" ["just an image"].[53] No sooner is the space made than it contracts into a "pinhole," just as the image contracts into a microfraction of time: a singular darkness, "again that certain dark that alone certain ashes can," "ping silence ping over."[54]

There are thus four ways of exhausting the possible:

—forming exhaustive series of things,
—drying up the flow of voices,
—extenuating the potentialities of space,
—dissipating the power of the image.

The exhausted is the exhaustive, the dried up, the extenuated, and the dissipated. The last two ways are united in language III, the language of images and spaces. It maintains a relationship with language in its entirety, but rises up or stretches out in its holes, its gaps, or its silences. Sometimes it operates in silence, sometimes it presents itself through the use of a recorded voice; moreover, it forces speech to become image, movement, song, poem. No doubt this language is born in the novels and the novellas, and passes through the theater, but it is in television that it accomplishes its own mission, distinct from the first two. *Quad* will be Space with silence and eventually music. *Ghost Trio* will be Space with a presenting voice and music. . . . *But the clouds . . .* will be Image with voice and poetry. *Nacht und Träume* will be Image with silence, song, and music.

Quad, without words, without voice, is *a* quadrilateral, *a* square. Nonetheless, it is perfectly determined, possessing certain dimensions; but it has no other determinations than its formal singularities, four equidistant vertices and a center, and no other contents or occupants than the four identical characters who ceaselessly traverse it. It is a closed, globally defined, any-space-whatever. Even the characters—short and thin, asexual, wrapped in their cowls—have no other singularities than the fact that each of them departs from a vertex as from a cardinal point, "any-characters-whatever" who traverse the square, each following a given course and direction. They can always be modified with a light, a color, a percussion, or a particular sound of footsteps, which would allow us to distinguish between them. But this is merely a means of recognizing them; in themselves, they are only determined spatially; in themselves, they are modified by nothing other than their order and position. They are unmodified protagonists in an unmodifiable space. *Quad* is a ritornello that is essentially motor, whose music is the shuffling of slippers—like the sound of rats. The form of the ritornello is the series, which in this case is no longer concerned with objects to be combined, but only with journeys having no object.[55] The series has an *order,* according to which the series increases and decreases, increases and decreases again, depending on the appearance and disappearance of the protagonists at the four corners of the square: it is a canon. It has a continuous *course,* depending on the succession of the segments that are traversed: one side, the diagonal, another side, and so on. It has a *set,* which Beckett describes as follows:

"Four possible solos all given. Six possible duos all given (*two twice*). Four possible trios all given *twice*";[56] four times a quartet. The order, the course, and the set render the movement all the more inexorable inasmuch as it has no object, like a conveyor belt that makes moving objects appear and disappear.

Beckett's text is perfectly clear: it is a question of exhausting space. There is no doubt that the characters will become tired, and will drag their feet more and more. Yet tiredness primarily concerns a minor aspect of the enterprise: the number of times one possible combination is realized (for example, two of the duos are realized twice, the four trios twice, the quartet four times). The protagonists become tired depending on the number of realizations. But the possible is accomplished, independently of this number, by the exhausted characters who exhaust it. The problem is: in relation to what is exhaustion (which must not be confused with tiredness) going to be defined? The characters realize and tire at the four corners of the square, and along the sides and diagonals. But they accomplish and exhaust at the center of the square, where the diagonals cross. This is where the potentiality of the square seems to lie. Potentiality is a double possible. It is the possibility that an event, in itself possible, might be realized in the space under consideration: the possibility that something is realizing *itself,* and the possibility that some place is realizing *it.* The potentiality of the square is the possibility that the four moving bodies that inhabit it will collide—two, three, or all four of them—depending on the order and the course of the series.[57] The center is precisely that place where they can run into each other; and their encounter, their collision is not one event among others, but the only possibility of an event—that is, the potentiality of the corresponding space. To exhaust space is to extenuate its potentiality by making any encounter impossible. Consequently, the solution to the problem lies in this slight dislocation at the center, this sway of the hips, this deflection, this hiatus, this punctuation, this syncope, this quick sidestep or little jump that foresees the encounter and averts it. The repetition takes nothing away from the decisive and absolute character of such a gesture. The bodies avoid each other respectively, but they avoid the center absolutely. They sidestep each other at the center in order to avoid each other, but each of them also sidesteps in solo in order to avoid the center. What is depotentialized is the space, a "track . . . just wide enough for one. On it no two ever meet."[58]

Quad is close to a ballet. The general similarities between Beckett's

work and modern ballet are numerous: the abandonment of the privileging of vertical stature; the agglutination of bodies as a means of remaining upright; the substitution of an any-space-whatever for qualified and extended spaces; the replacement of all story and narration by a "gestus" as a logic of postures and positions; the quest for a minimalism; the introduction of walking and its various accidents into dance; the conquest of gestural dissonances. It is not surprising that Beckett asks that the walkers of *Quad* have "some ballet training." Not only does the walking require it, but so does the hiatus, the punctuation, and the dissonance.

It is also close to a musical work. A work by Beethoven, "Ghost Trio," appears in another of Beckett's pieces for television, and gives it its title. The second movement of the trio, which Beckett utilizes, presents us with the composition, decomposition, and recomposition of a theme with two motifs, with two ritornellos. It is like the increase and decrease of a more or less dense compound along melodic and harmonic lines, its sonorous surface traversed by a continual movement, obsessive and obsessional. But there is something else as well: a kind of central erosion that first arises as a threat among the bass parts and is expressed in the trill or wavering of the piano, as if one key were about to be abandoned for another, or *for nothing,* hollowing out the surface, plunging into a ghostly dimension where dissonances would appear only to punctuate the silence. And this is precisely what Beckett emphasizes whenever he speaks of Beethoven: a hitherto unknown art of dissonances, a wavering, a hiatus, "a punctuation of dehiscence," a stress given by what opens, slips away, and disappears, a gap that punctuates nothing other than the silence of a final ending.[59] But if the trio effectively displays these traits, why was it not used to accompany *Quad,* to which it is so well suited? Why is it used to punctuate another piece? Perhaps because there is no need for *Quad* to illustrate a piece of music that will take on a role elsewhere by developing its ghostly dimension in a different manner.

Ghost Trio is made up of both voice and music. It is still concerned with space, with exhausting its potentialities, but it does so in a completely different manner than does *Quad*. One might at first think it is an extended space qualified by the elements that occupy it: the floor, the walls, the door, the window, the pallet. But these elements are defunctionalized, and the voice names each of them successively while

the camera shows them in close-up—homogenous, gray, rectangular parts homologous with a single space distinguished solely by nuances of gray: in the order of succession, *a* sample of the floor, *a* sample of the wall, *a* door without a knob, *an* opaque window, *a* pallet seen from above. These objects in space are strictly identical to the parts of space. It is therefore an any-space-whatever, in the previously defined sense: it is completely determined, but it is determined locally—and not globally, as in *Quad*—by a succession of even gray bands. It is an any-space-whatever in fragmentation, in close-ups, whose filmic vocation was indicated by Robert Bresson: fragmentation "is indispensable if one does not want to fall into representation. . . . Isolate the parts. Make them independent as a way of giving them a new dependence."[60] Disconnect them to allow for a new connection. Fragmentation is the first step in a depotentialization of space, through local paths.

To be sure, a global space had been given at the outset, in a long shot. But even here, it is not as in *Quad*, where the camera is fixed and elevated, exterior to the space of a closed shot, necessarily operating in a continuous manner. To be sure, a global space can be exhausted by the simple power of a fixed camera, immobile and continuous, operating with a zoom. One famous example is Michael Snow's *Wavelength:* a forty-five-minute zoom explores a rectangular any-space-whatever, and rejects the events it encounters as it moves forward by endowing them with little more than a ghostly existence (through negative superimposition, for example) until it reaches the far wall, on which is hung an image of the empty sea, into which the entire space is swallowed up. It is, as has been said, "the story of the diminishing area of pure potentiality."[61] But apart from the fact that Beckett does not like special effects, the conditions of the problem, from the point of view of a localized reconstruction, require that the camera be both mobile (with tracking shots) and discontinuous (with jump cuts): everything is written down and quantified. This is because the space of *Trio* is only determined on three sides, east, north, and west, the south being constituted by the camera as a mobile partition. This is not the closed space of *Quad,* with a single central potentiality, but a space with three potentialities: the door to the east, the window to the north, and the pallet to the west. And since these are the parts of space, the camera movements and cuts constitute the passage from one to the other, as well as their succession, their substitution, all these gray bands that compose the space in accordance with the demands of the local treat-

ment. But moreover (and this is the most profound aspect of *Trio*), all these parts plunge into the void, each in its own way, each revealing the emptiness into which they are plunging: the door opening onto a dark corridor, the window looking out onto a rainy night, the flat pallet that reveals its own emptiness. So that the passage and the succession from one part to another *only serves to connect or link together unfathomable voids.* Such is the new connection, specifically ghostlike, or the second step of depotentialization. It corresponds to Beethoven's music when the latter succeeds in punctuating the silence, and when a "path of sound" no longer connects anything but "unfathomable abysses of silence."[62] This is particularly the case in Beethoven's "Trio," in which the wavering, the tremolo, already indicates holes of silence across which the sonorous connection passes, at the price of dissonances.

The situation is as follows: the voice of a woman, prerecorded, predetermined, prophetic, whose source is off-screen, announces in a whisper that the protagonist "will think he hears her."[63] Seated on a stool near the door and clutching a small cassette player, the protagonist gets up, sets the cassette player down, and like a ghostly night watchman or sentinel moves toward the door, then the window, then the pallet. There are startings-over, returns to the seated position, and the cassette player emits music only when the protagonist is seated, leaning over the machine. This general situation is not unlike the one in *Eh Joe,* which was Beckett's first piece for television.[64] But the differences between it and *Trio* are even greater. In *Eh Joe,* the female voice did not present the objects, and the objects were not identified with the flat and equivalent parts of the space. In addition to the door and the window, there was a cupboard that introduced an interior depth to the room, and the bed had a space beneath it, rather than simply being a pallet laid on the floor. The protagonist was tracked, and the function of the voice was not to name or to announce, but to remind, to threaten, to persecute. This was still language II. The voice had intentions and intonations, it evoked personal recollections that were unbearable to the protagonist, and sunk into this dimension of memory without being able to rise to the ghostly dimension of an indefinite impersonal. It is only in *Ghost Trio* that this latter dimension is attained: a woman, a man, and a child, without any personal coordinates. From *Eh Joe* to *Trio,* a kind of vocal and spatial purification takes place, which gives the first piece a preparatory value that serves

to introduce the works for television, rather than being fully a part of them. In *Trio,* the whispering voice has become neutral, blank, without intentions, without resonance, and the space has become an any-space-whatever, without depth and with no underside, having no other objects than its own parts. This is the final step of depotentialization—a double step, since the voice dries up the possible at the same time as the space extenuates its potentialities. Everything indicates that the woman who speaks from the outside and the woman who could suddenly appear in this space are one and the same. Between the two, however, between the off-screen voice and the pure field of space, there is a scission, a line of separation, as in Greek theater, Japanese No, or the cinema of the Straubs and Marguerite Duras.[65] It is as if a radio piece and a silent film were being played simultaneously: a new form of the inclusive disjunction. Or rather, it is like a split frame, on one side of which are inscribed the silences of the voice, and on the other, the voids of space (jump cuts). It is onto this ghostly frame that the music is hurled, connecting the voids and the silences, following a ridge line like a limit to infinity.

There are numerous trios: voice, space, and music; woman, man, and child; the three principal positions of the camera; the door to the east, the window to the north, and the pallet to the west, three potentialities of space . . . The voice says: "He will now think he hears her."[66] But we should not think he is afraid and feels threatened; this was true in *Eh Joe,* but not here. He no longer wants or is waiting for the woman; on the contrary. He is merely waiting for the end, the latest end. The whole of *Trio* is organized in order to put an end to it, and the end so earnestly desired is at hand: the music (absent from *Eh Joe*), the music of Beethoven, is inseparable from a conversion to silence, from a tendency to abolish itself in the voids that it connects. In truth, the protagonist has extenuated all the potentialities of the space, inasmuch as he has treated the three sources as simple, identical, and blind parts, floating in the void: *he has made the arrival of the woman impossible.* Even the pallet is so flat that it bears witness to its emptiness. Why does the protagonist nevertheless start over again, long after the voice has fallen silent? Why does he again go to the door, to the window, to the head of the pallet? We have seen why: it is because the end *will have been,* long before he could know it: "everything will continue automatically, until the order arrives, to stop everything."[67] And when the little mute messenger suddenly appears, it is not to announce that

the woman will not be coming, as if this were a piece of bad news, but to bring the long-awaited order to stop everything, everything being well and truly finished. At least the protagonist has a means of sensing that the end is at hand. Language III involves not only space but also the image. There is a mirror in *Ghost Trio* that plays an important role, and must be distinguished from the door-window-pallet series because it is not visible from the "camera position general view," and it does not figure in the presentations given at the beginning; moreover, it will be paired with the cassette player ("small gray rectangle, same dimensions as cassette") and not with the three objects.[68] Furthermore, the only time the prophetic voice is taken by surprise, caught off guard—"Ah!"—is when the protagonist leans over the mirror for the first time, before we are able to see it. When at last we see the mirror, in an extreme close-up, what suddenly appears in it is the Image, that is, the face of the abominable protagonist. The image will leave its support and become a floating close-up, while the final, amplified bars of the second movement of the "Trio" are being played. The face starts to smile, the astonishingly treacherous and cunning smile of someone who has reached the goal of his "testy delirium": he has *made* the image.[69]

Trio goes from the space to the image. The any-space-whatever already belongs to the category of possibility, because its potentialities make possible the realization of an event that is itself possible. But the image is more profound because it frees itself from its object in order to become a process itself, that is, an event as a "possible" that no longer even needs to be realized in a body or an object, somewhat like the smile without a cat in Lewis Carroll. This is why Beckett takes such care in making the image. Already in *Eh Joe,* the smiling face appeared in an image, but without our being able to see the mouth, the pure possibility of the smile being in the eyes and in the two upward-rising commisures, the rest not being included in the shot. A horrible smile without a mouth. In . . . *but the clouds* . . . , the female face "has almost no head, a face without head suspended in the void"; and in *Nacht und Träume,* the dreamed face seems as if it were wrested from the cloth which mops away its sweat, like a face of Christ, and is floating in space.[70] But if it is true that the any-space-whatever cannot be separated from an inhabitant who extenuates some of its potentialities, the image, with even greater reason, remains inseparable from the movement through which it dissipates itself: the head bows, turns away,

fades, or disperses like a cloud or a puff of smoke. The visual image is carried along by the music, the sonorous image that rushes toward its own abolition. Both of them rush toward the end, all possibility exhausted.

The *Trio* leads us from space to the thresholds of the image. But . . . *but the clouds* . . . enters into the "sanctum." The sanctum is the place where the protagonist will make the image. Or rather, in a return to the post-Cartesian theories of *Murphy,* there are now two worlds, the physical and the mental, the corporeal and the spiritual, the real and the possible.[71] The physical world seems to be made up of a qualified, extended space: to the left, there is a door that opens onto some "back roads," and through which the protagonist leaves and returns; to the right, a closet in which he changes his clothes; and up above, the sanctum into which he disappears. But all this only exists in the voice, which is that of the protagonist himself. What we see, by contrast, is only an any-space-whatever, determined as a circle surrounded by black, which becomes darker as one moves toward the periphery and brighter as one moves toward the center. The door, the closet, and the sanctum are merely directions in the circle: west, east, north; and far to the south, outside the circle, lies the immobile camera. When the protagonist moves in one direction, he simply disappears into the shadow; when he *is* in the sanctum, he only appears in close-up, from behind, "sitting on invisible stool bowed over invisible table."[72] The sanctum, then, only has a mental existence; it is a "mental chamber," as Murphy said, and corresponds to the law of inversion as formulated by Murphy: "But motion in this world [of the mind] depended on rest in the world [of the body]."[73] The image is precisely this: not a representation of an object but a movement in the world of the mind. The image is the spiritual life, the "life above" of *How It Is.* One can exhaust the joys, the movements, and the acrobatics of the life of the mind only if the body remains immobile, curled up, seated, somber, itself exhausted: this is what Murphy called "collusion,"[74] the perfect accord between the needs of the body and the needs of the mind, the double exhaustion. The subject of . . . *but the clouds* . . . is this spiritual need, this life above. What matters is no longer the any-space-whatever but the mental image to which it leads.

Of course, it is not easy to make an image. It is not enough simply to think of something or someone. The voice says: "When I thought of

her . . . No . . . No, that is not right . . ." What is required is an obscure spiritual tension, a second or third *intensio*, as the authors of the Middle Ages put it, a silent evocation that is also an invocation and even a convocation, and a revocation, since it raises the thing or the person to the state of an indefinite: *a* woman . . . "I call to the eye of the mind," exclaims Willie.[75] Nine hundred and ninety-eight times out of a thousand, one fails and nothing appears. And when one succeeds, the sublime image invades the screen, a female face with no outline; sometimes it disappears immediately, "in the same breath,"[76] sometimes it lingers before disappearing, sometimes it murmurs some words from Yeats's poem. In any case, the image answers to the demands of Ill seen Ill said, Ill seen Ill heard, which reigns in the kingdom of the mind. And as a spiritual movement, it cannot be separated from the process of its own disappearance, its dissipation, whether premature or not. The image is a pant, a breath, but it is an expiring breath, on its way to extinction. The image is that which extinguishes itself, consumes itself: a fall. It is a pure intensity, which is defined as such by its height, that is, by its level above zero, which it describes only by falling.[77] What is retained from Yeats's poem is the visual image of clouds moving through the sky and dispersing on the horizon, and the sonorous image of the bird's cry fading into the night. It is in this sense that the image concentrates within itself a potential energy, which it carries along in its process of self-dissipation. It announces that the end of the possible is at hand for the protagonist of . . . *but the clouds* . . . , just as it was for Winnie, who felt a "zephyr," a "breath,"[78] right before the eternal darkness, the dead end of the black night. There is no longer an image, any more than there is a space: beyond the possible there is only darkness, as in Murphy's third and final state, where the protagonist no longer moves in spirit but has become an indiscernible atom, abulic, "in the dark . . . of . . . absolute freedom."[79] This is the final word, "nohow."[80]

It is the entire last stanza of Yeats's poem that ties in with . . . *but the clouds* . . . : it takes two exhaustions to produce the end that carries off the Seated person. But Beckett's encounter with Yeats goes well beyond this piece; it is not that Beckett takes up Yeats's project of introducing Japanese No as the fulfillment of the theater. But the convergences between Beckett and No, even if involuntary, perhaps presuppose the theatre of Yeats, and appear for their part in the works for television.[81] This is what has been called a "visual poem," a theater of

the mind that does not set out to recount a story but to erect an image: the words provide a decor for a network of circuits in an any-space-whatever; these finely detailed circuits are measured and recapitulated in space and time in relation to what must remain indefinite in the spiritual image; the characters are like "supermarionettes"; the camera, as a character, has an autonomous, furtive, or dazzling movement that is antagonistic to the movement of the other characters; artificial techniques (slow motion, superimposition) are rejected as being unsuited to the movements of the mind . . .[82] According to Beckett, only television is able to satisfy these demands.

Making the image is still the operation of *Nacht und Träume.* In this case, however, the protagonist has no voice with which to speak and does not hear any voices; he is unable to move about, seated, empty head in crippled hands, "clenched staring eyes."[83] This is a new purification, "Nohow less. Nohow worse. Nohow nought. Nohow on."[84] It is night, and he is about to dream. Are we supposed to think he is falling asleep? We would do better to believe Blanchot when he says that sleep betrays the night because it introduces an interruption between two days, permitting the following day to succeed the preceding one.[85] We are often content to distinguish between daydreams or waking dreams and the dreams of sleep. But these are questions of tiredness and repose. We thereby miss the third state, which is perhaps the most important one: insomnia, which alone is appropriate to night, and the dream of insomnia, which is a matter of exhaustion. The exhausted person is the wide-eyed person. We dreamed *in* sleep, but we dream *alongside* insomnia. The two exhaustions, the logical and the psychological, "the head and the lungs," as Kafka said, meet up behind our backs. Kafka and Beckett hardly resemble each other, but what they do have in common is the insomniac dream.[86] In the dream of insomnia, it is a question not of realizing the impossible but of exhausting the possible, either by giving it a maximal extension that allows it to be treated like a real waking day, in the manner of Kafka, or else by reducing it to a minimum that subjects it to the nothingness of a night without sleep, as in Beckett. The dream is the guardian of insomnia that keeps it from falling asleep. Insomnia is the crouching beast that stretches out as long as the days and curls up as tightly as the night. The terrifying posture of insomnia.

The insomniac of *Nacht und Träume* is preparing himself for what

he has to do. He is seated, his hands seated on the table, his head seated on his hands: a simple movement of the hands, which could be placed on the head or simply separated from each other, is a possibility that can only appear in a dream, like a flying footstool . . . But this dream has to be *made*. The dream of the exhausted, insomniac, or abulic person is not like the dream of sleep, which is fashioned all alone in the depths of the body and of desire; it is a dream of the mind that has to be made, fabricated. What is "dreamed," the image, will be the same character in the same seated position, but inverted, left profile instead of right profile, above the dreamer. But in order for the dreamed hands to be released into an image, other hands, those of a woman, will have to flutter about and raise his head, make him drink abundantly from a chalice, and wipe his brow with a cloth—all in such a way that, with his head now raised, the dreamed character can extend his hands toward one of these other hands that condense and dispense the energy in the image. This image seems to attain a heartrending intensity until the head again sinks down onto three hands, the fourth resting gently on top of the head. And when the image is dissipated, we might imagine we heard a voice: the possible is accomplished, "it is done I've made the image." But there is no voice that speaks, any more than in *Quad*. There is only the male voice, which hums and sings the last bars of the humble ritornello carried along by the music of Schubert, "Soft dreams come again . . . ," once before the appearance of the image, and once after its disappearance. The sonorous image, the music, takes over from the visual image, and opens onto the void or the silence of the final end. In this case, it is Schubert, so admired by Beckett, who brings about a hiatus or a leap, a kind of uncoupling whose mode is very different from Beethoven's. The monodic, melodic voice leaps outside the harmonic support, here reduced to a minimum, in order to undertake an exploration of the pure intensities that are experienced in the way the sound fades. A vector of abolition straddled by music.

In his works for television, Beckett exhausts space twice over, and the image twice over. Beckett became less and less tolerant of words. And he knew from the outset the reason he became increasingly intolerant of them: the exceptional difficulty of "boring holes" in the surface of language so that "what lurks behind it" might at last appear. This can be done on the surface of a painted canvas, as in Rembrandt, Cézanne,

or van Velde; or on the surface of sound, as in Beethoven or Schubert, so as to allow for the emergence of the void or the visible in itself, the silence or the audible in itself; but "is there any reason why that terrible materiality of the word surface should not be capable of being dissolved . . . ?"[87] It is not only that words lie; they are so burdened with calculations and significations, with intentions and personal memories, with old habits that cement them together, that one can scarcely bore into the surface before it closes up again. It sticks together. It imprisons and suffocates us. Music succeeds in transforming the death of *this* young girl into *a young girl dies;* it brings about this extreme determination of the indefinite like a pure intensity that pierces the surface, as in the "Concerto in Memory of an Angel." But words are unable to do this, given the adhesions that keep them bound to the general or the particular. They lack that "punctuation of dehiscence," that "disconnection" that comes from a groundswell peculiar to art. It is television that, in part, allows Beckett to overcome the inferiority of words: either by dispensing with spoken words, as in *Quad* and *Nacht und Träume;* or by using them to enumerate, to expound, or to create a decor, which loosens them and allows things and movements to be introduced between them (*Ghost Trio, . . . but the clouds . . .*); or by emphasizing certain words according to an interval or a bar, the rest passing by in a barely audible murmur, as at the end of *Eh Joe;* or by including some of the words in the melody, which gives them the accentuation they lack, as in *Nacht und Träume.* In television, however, there is always something other than words, *music or vision,* that makes them loosen their grip, separates them, or even opens them up completely. Is there then no salvation for words, like a new style in which words would at last open up by themselves, where language would become poetry, in such a way as to actually produce the visions and sounds that remained imperceptible behind the old language ("the old style")?[88] Visions or sounds: how can they be distinguished? So pure and so simple, so strong, they are said to be *ill seen ill said* whenever words pierce themselves and turn against themselves so as to reveal their own outside. A music proper to a poetry read aloud without music. From the beginning, Beckett employed a style that would at the same time proceed through a perforation and a proliferation of tissue ("a breaking down and multiplication of tissue").[89] It is worked out through the novels and theater pieces, shows itself in *How It Is,* and explodes in the splendor of his final texts. Sometimes short segments

are ceaselessly added to the interior of the phrase in an attempt to break open the surface of words completely, as in the poem *What Is the Word:*

> folly seeing all this—
> this—
> what is the word—
> this this—
> this this here—
> all this this here—
> folly given all this—
> seeing—
> folly seeing all this this here—
> for to—
> what is the word—
> see—
> glimpse—
> seem to glimpse—
> need to seem to glimpse—
> folly for to need to seem to glimpse—
> what—
> ....[90]

And sometimes the phrase is riddled with dots or dashes [*traits*] in order to ceaselessly reduce the surface of words, as in the piece *Worstword Ho:*

> Less best. No. Naught best. Best worse. No. Not best worse. Naught not best worse. Less best worse. No. Least. Least best worse. Least never to be naught. Never to naught be brought. Never by naught be nulled. Unnullable least. Say that best worst. With leastening words say least best worst.
> ....Blanks for when words gone[91]

able comments can be found in Gilles-Gaston Granger, *Essai d'une philosophie du style,* 2d ed. (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1988), though the author has a completely different conception of style in mathematics (pp. 20–21).

13. Spinoza, *Ethics,* in *The Collected Works of Spinoza,* ed. and trans. Edwin Curley (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 601.

18. The Exhausted

1. [This essay was originally published as a postface to Samuel Beckett, *Quad et autres pièces pour la télévision,* trans. Edith Fournier (Paris: Minuit, 1992). The translation, by Anthony Uhlmann, first appeared in *Sub-stance* 78 (1995), pp. 3–28, and is here published in revised form.—Trans.]

2. Samuel Beckett, *Texts for Nothing,* in *Collected Shorter Prose 1945–1980* (London: Calder, 1984), p. 72.

3. Samuel Beckett, *The Unnamable* (New York: Grove, 1958), p. 70.

4. [Samuel Beckett, *For to End Yet Again,* in *Collected Shorter Prose: 1945–1980,* pp. 179–182.—Trans.]

5. Samuel Beckett, *I Gave Up Before Birth,* in *Collected Shorter Prose: 1945–1980,* pp. 197–98.

6. See Brice Parain, *Sur la dialectique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1953): language "does not say what is, it says what might be. . . . You say there is thunder, and in the country someone answers you: 'it's possible, that might be . . .' When I say that it is daytime, it is not at all because it is daytime . . . [but] because I have an intention to realize, one which is particular to me, and which makes use of the day only as an occasion, a pretext, or an argument" (pp. 61, 130).

7. [See Samuel Beckett, *Molloy* (New York: Grove, 1955), pp. 125, 241.—Trans.]

8. Beckett, *Texts for Nothing,* in *Collected Shorter Prose,* p. 74.

9. Samuel Beckett, *Watt* (London: Picador, 1988), p. 71.

10. Samuel Beckett, *Murphy* (London: Picador, 1973), p. 57.

11. Beckett, *Watt,* pp. 200–201, 204–6. François Martel has made a very rigorous study of the combinatorial science, of the series and disjunctions in *Watt:* "Jeux formels dans Watt," *Poétique* 10 (1972). See Samuel Beckett, *Malone Dies* (New York: Grove, 1956), p. 4: "Everything divides into itself."

12. [Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* fourth part, section 4, "The Leech," in *The Portable Nietzsche,* ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Viking, 1954), p. 362.—Trans.]

13. Maurice Blanchot, *Le livre à venir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), p. 211. The exacerbation of the meaning of the possible is a constant theme in Musil's *The Man without Qualities.*

14. Beckett, *Enough,* in *Collected Shorter Prose,* p. 140.

15. See Yeats's poem "The Tower," which inspired Beckett's piece for television, *. . . but the clouds . . . ,* in *Selected Poems and Two Plays of William Butler Yeats,* ed. M. L. Rosenthal (New York: Collier, 1966), pp. 101–2.

16. [Samuel Beckett, *Nacht und Träume,* in *Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber, 1986), p. 465.—Trans.]

17. [Beckett, *Malone Dies,* p. 70.—Trans.]

18. Samuel Beckett, "Worstward Ho," in *Nohow On* (London: Calder, 1989), p. 103; *Stirrings Still,* in *As the Story Was Told* (London: Calder, 1990), pp. 113, 118; *For to End Yet Again,* in *Collected Shorter Prose,* p. 179; *Afar a Bird,* in *Collected Shorter Prose,* p. 195.

19. [See Samuel Beckett, *Rockaby,* in *Complete Dramatic Works,* pp. 431–42.—Trans.]

20. Beckett, *The Unnamable,* p. 269.

21. Beckett, *Molloy,* p. 59.

22. Beckett, *Ill Seen, Ill Said,* in *Nohow On,* p. 93.

23. Beckett, *The Unnamable,* p. 28. Cf. Edith Fournier, in *Samuel Beckett, Revue d'esthétique* (Paris: Privat, 1986), p. 24: "Beckett breaks the necessary bone, neither the sentence nor the word, but their incoming tide; his greatness lies in having known how to dry it up."

24. It is here that the great "theory" of *The Unnamable* seems to become circular. Whence the idea that the voices of the protagonists perhaps refer to "masters" who are different from the protagonists themselves.

25. [Beckett, *The Unnamable,* p. 82.—Trans.]

26. [See Beckett, *The Unnamable,* p. 3: "What am I to do, what shall I do, what should I do, in my situation, how proceed? By aporia pure and simple? Or by affirmations and negations invalidated as uttered, or sooner or later?"—Trans.]

27. Beckett, *The Unnamable,* p. 84.

28. [Beckett, *The Unnamable,* p. 114.—Trans.]

29. Samuel Beckett, *How It Is* (New York: Grove, 1964), pp. 128–29, and *Company,* in *Nohow On,* pp. 5–52.

30. Beckett, *The Unnamable,* p. 115.

31. Beckett, *Worstward Ho,* p. 124. And already in a letter of 1937, written in German (in *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment,* ed. Ruby Cohen [London: Calder, 1984], p. 172), Beckett had written: "As we cannot eliminate language all at once, we should at least leave nothing undone that might contribute to its falling into disrepute. To bore one hole after another in it, until what lurks behind it—be it something or nothing—begins to seep through." (*Worstward Ho,* on the contrary, would say: "No ooze then.")

32. Often the image does not fully succeed in disengaging itself from a memory-image, notably in *Company.* And sometimes the voice is animated by a perverse desire to impose a particularly cruel memory: for example, in the television piece *Eh Joe.*

33. [See *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *All Strange Away,* both in *Collected Shorter Prose.*—Trans.]

34. Beckett, *How It Is,* p. 97 (and concerning a little blue and a little white, and the "life above," pp. 70, 72, 75).

35. [Samuel Beckett, *The Image,* in *As the Story Was Told,* p. 40 (and *How It Is,* p. 27: "a fine image fine I mean in movement and colour").—Trans.]

36. [See Samuel Beckett, *Happy Days/Oh les beaux jours* (London: Faber, 1978), esp. pp. 52–53 and 82–83. In *Happy Days,* Winnie possesses a small music box that "plays the Waltz Duet 'I love you so' from The Merry Widow" (pp. 52–53); in *Oh les beaux jours,* the lyrics of "I Love You So" are replaced by those of the French song "L'heure exquise," "The Exquisite Hour" (pp. 82–83). This is the song Winnie refers to throughout the play, carefully awaiting the right time to sing it, which she does at the very end.—Trans.]

37. [Beckett, *Watt,* pp. 135–37.—Trans.]

38. Samuel Beckett, "Le monde et le pantalon," in *Disjecta,* p. 118 (and on the two types of image in Bram and Geer van Velde, the congealed and the shuddering image).

39. Beckett, *Ping,* in *Collected Shorter Prose,* p. 150. Ping activates a murmur or a silence, usually accompanied by an image.

40. Cf. the voice in the television piece *Ghost Trio,* in *Complete Dramatic Works,*

pp. 405–14. In *Catastrophe,* pp. 455–61, the voice of the Assistant and that of the Director respond to one another so as to describe the image to be made and to make it.

41. In *Words and Music* (piece for radio, in *Complete Dramatic Works*) we witness the ill will of Words, too attached to the rehashing of personal memory, who refuses to follow Music.

42. The works for television consist of *Ghost Trio,* 1975, . . . *but the clouds* . . . , 1976, *Nacht und Träume,* 1982, *Quad,* 1982, as well as *Eh Joe,* 1965, which are all contained in *Complete Dramatic Works.* We will see below why *Eh Joe* is considered separately from the others.

43. [See *The Lost Ones,* in *Collected Shorter Prose,* p. 159.—Trans.]

44. Beckett, *For to End Yet Again,* in *Collected Shorter Prose,* p. 181.

45. Already with animals, ritornellos are made up not only of cries and chants, but also of colors, postures, and movements, as can be seen in the marking of territories and mating displays. This is also true of human ritornellos. Félix Guattari has studied the role of the ritornello in the work of Proust, in "Les ritournelles du temps perdu," in *L'inconscient machinique* (Paris: Encres, 1979), for example, the combination of Vinteuil's little phrase with colours, postures, and movements.

46. [In the original French version of *Bing,* Beckett makes use of the words *bing* and *hop,* both of which are rendered as *ping* in his English translation. Since Deleuze here maintains the French distinction, I have translated *hop* as *hup.* The French term is an interjection used to get someone to leap into action, as in "Allez, hop!" or "Hop là!"—Trans.]

47. Beckett, *Watt,* p. 28.

48. [Beckett, *Ping,* in *Collected Shorter Prose,* 150.—Trans.]

49. Beckett, *Nouvelles et textes pour rien* (Paris: Minuit, 1991), p. 109 [Beckett's English rendition of this phrase reads, "enough, enough . . . visions," in *The End,* in *Collected Shorter Prose,* p. 68.—Trans.]; *How It Is,* p. 106.

50. Beckett, *How It Is,* p. 106; cf. pp. 103–6.

51. Beckett, "La peinture des van Velde ou le Monde et le Pantalon," in *Disjecta,* p. 123.

52. Beckett, *Murphy,* pp. 141–42. [The French term *la berceuse* means both "rocking chair" and "lullaby," and can also refer to the female protagonist rocking herself in the chair.—Trans.]

53. [Beckett, *Happy Days/Oh les beaux jours,* pp. 40–41; the original English version reads, "the earth is very tight today." The second reference is to Jean-Luc Godard's famous formula, "pas une image juste, juste une image" ("not a correct image, just an image").—Trans.]

54. Beckett, *For to End Yet Again,* p. 182; and *Ping,* p. 151.

55. In novels like *Watt,* the series might already put movements into play, but always in relation to objects or behaviors.

56. [Beckett, *Quad,* in *Complete Dramatic Works,* pp. 451–52.—Trans.]

57. *Molloy* and *The Unnamable* both include, in their first pages, meditations on the encounter of two bodies.

58. Beckett, *Closed Space,* in *Collected Shorter Prose,* pp. 199–200.

59. See *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (1932; New York: Arcade, 1993), and the letter of 1937 to Axel Kaun. Beckett emphasizes, in Beethoven, "a punctuation of dehiscence, flottements, the coherence gone to pieces . . ." (*Disjecta,* p. 49). André Bernold has commented on these texts by Beckett on Beethoven in a very beautiful article, "Cupio dissolvi, note sur Beckett musicien," in *Détail* 3/4 (Royaumont: Atelier de la Fondation Royaumont, 1991). Musicologists analyzing the second movement of Beethoven's trio

emphasize the notation in tremolo for the piano, which is followed by a finale "that soars straight towards the wrong key and stays there . . ." (Anthony Burton).

60. Robert Bresson, *Notes on Cinematography,* trans. Jonathan Griffen (New York: Urizen, 1977), p. 46, translation modified.

61. On Snow's film, see P. Adams Sitney, "Structural Film," in *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 375. Before Snow, Beckett had undertaken an analogous operation, but in purely radiophonic conditions: *Embers.* The protagonist, who we hear walking on pebbles close to the sea, evokes sound-memories that respond to his call. But soon they stop responding, the potentiality of the sonorous space being exhausted, and the sound of the sea engulfs everything.

62. See *Disjecta,* letter to Axel Krun, p. 172. On punctuation, the musical connection of silences, and the conversion of music into silence, see André Bernold, pp. 26, 28.

63. [Beckett, *Ghost Trio,* p. 410.—Trans.]

64. [Beckett, *Eh Joe,* in *Complete Dramatic Works.*—Trans.

65. The visual voice-image scission can have opposite consequences: in Beckett, there is a depotentialization of space, while in the Straubs or Marguerite Duras, on the contrary, there is a potentialization of matter. A voice is raised to speak of what has happened in the empty space, which is currently being shown. Voices are raised to speak of an ancient ball that took place in the same hall as the silent ball being put on today. The voice is raised to evoke what is buried in the earth as a still-active potential.

66. [Beckett, *Ghost Trio,* p. 410.—Trans.]

67. Beckett, *The Unnamable,* p. 115.

68. Beckett, *Ghost Trio,* p. 413.

69. "Testy delirium" appears in Yeats's poem "The Tower," as cited in . . . *but the clouds . . .*

70. Jim Lewis, Beckett's cameraman for the pieces for television produced in Stuttgart, speaks of the technical problems corresponding to these three cases in "Beckett et la camera," in *Revue d'esthéthique,* pp. 371 ff. Notably for *Eh Joe,* Beckett wanted the corners of the lips to enter into the image a quarter of a centimeter, and not half a centimeter.

71. This is from the great sixth chapter of *Murphy,* "Amor intellectualis quo Murphy se ipsum amat," p. 63.

72. [Beckett, . . . *but the clouds . . .*, p. 417.—Trans.]

73. [Beckett, *Murphy,* p. 64.—Trans.]

74. [Beckett, *Murphy,* p. 65.—Trans.]

75. Beckett, *Happy Days/Oh les beaux jours,* pp. 74–75. This is a phrase borrowed from Yeats's play *At the Hawk's Well.* Similar phrases can be found in Klossowski: "instead of naming the spirit to Roberte, the reverse took place . . . Suddenly Roberte becomes the object of a pure spirit . . ." Pierre Klossowski, *Roberte ce soir,* trans. Austryn Wainhouse (New York: Grove, 1969), p. 24, translation modified. Klossowski, for his part, links together invocation and revocation, in relation to voices and breaths.

76. [Beckett, . . . *but the clouds . . .*, p. 420.—Trans.]

77. The problem of the dissipation of the image, or the Figure, appears in very similar terms in Francis Bacon's paintings.

78. [Beckett, *Happy Days,* pp. 78–79.—Trans.]

79. Beckett, *Murphy,* p. 66.

80. [See Beckett, *Worstward Ho.*—Trans.]

81. See Jacqueline Genet, "Yeats et le Nô"; she draws the connections with Beckett in her book *William Butler Yeats* (Paris: L'Herne, 1981), pp. 336–53. On the possible relationships between Beckett and Japanese No, see Takahashi Yasunari, "Qu'est-ce qui arrive? Some Structural Comparisons of Beckett's Plays and Nô" in *Samuel Beckett: Hu-*

manistic Perspectives, ed. M. Beja, S. E. Gontarski, and P. Astier (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1983), pp. 99–106); and Kishi Tetsuo, "Des voix de nulle part: Langage et espace dans le theatre de Beckett et le No," in *Cahiers Renaud-Barrault* (Paris: Numero 102, 1981), pp. 85–92.

82. It is in *Film* that the camera acquires the maximum of antagonistic movement; but cinema has greater need of "trickery" than does television (cf. the technical problem of *Film,* in *Complete Dramatic Works,* p. 331), and control of the image here is much more difficult.

83. [Beckett, *Worstward Ho,* p. 103.—Trans.]

84. Beckett, *Worstward Ho,* p. 128.

85. Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature,* trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), p. 266: "night, the essence of night, does not let us sleep."

86. See Franz Kafka, "Wedding Preparations in the Country," trans. Ernst Kaiser and Eithne Wilkins, in *Wedding Preparations in the Country and Other Stories* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), p. 10. "I don't even need to go to the country myself, it isn't necessary. I'll send my clothed body. . . . For I myself am meanwhile lying in my bed, smoothly covered over with the yellow-brown blanket, exposed to the breeze that is wafted through that seldom-aired room." See also Bernard Groethuysen, "A propos de Kafka," in *Obliques* 3 (Paris, n.d.), special issue on Kafka, pp. 1, 88: "They remained awake during their sleep; they had kept their eyes open while they slept. . . . It is a world without sleep. The world of the waking sleeper. Everything, with a frightening clarity, is clear."

87. Cf. the two texts reprinted in *Disjecta,* p. 172.

88. [Cf. *Happy Days,* where this phrase recurs throughout the text.—Trans.]

89. [In English in the original.—Trans.]

90. Beckett, *What Is the Word,* in *As the Story Was Told* (London: Calder, 1990), p. 132.

91. Beckett, *Worstword Ho,* in *Nohow On,* pp. 118, 124.