

INTO THE SILENCE OF THE OBJECTS: ANALYZING SAMUEL BECKETT'S NOTHINGNESS

Florina Catalina Florescu

Abstract:

Objects have always played a fundamental role in our lives, as they passively keep us company and tacitly impart their innate quietude. However, what happens when objects become such a powerful presence that, as a result, they dominate characters' lives? Put differently, what happens when objects overwhelm people with their potent (that is literally, *always there*) presence?

Into the silence of the objects is a place where we become aware of our nothingness, identity crisis, language anxiety, and stasis. In Samuel Beckett's plays *Endgame* (1958) and *Act without Words I* (1956), the playwright gradually captures the uselessness of the main characters' lives and the transformation of their minds and bodies into a collection of archived objects. Without interacting with other people and by self-incarcerating themselves, these Beckettian characters forget what is to be human and become "not-a-thing, nothing." There may be a disturbing fact in this realization, and, arguably, even an unfortunate alliteration; nonetheless, what is even more shocking is that these characters are paradigmatic for what it means to have stepped into premature ontological and existential annihilation. They are now abandoned objects among other objects, an ineffectual collection of sorts.

Based on these arguments, this essay shows Beckett's tremendous influence toward the development of the theory of de-carnalizing and/or de-materializing of the people's body and mind, culminating to the technological revolution when we want to be stacked up within uncountable computer files. The main argument proposes a reflection on how much we endanger our emotional and social sophistication by playing this digital, tricky "game."

Keywords: silence, anxiety, self-annihilation, identity, destruction

Resumo:

Os objetos têm sempre desempenhado um papel fundamental nas nossas vidas, pela forma como eles, passivamente, fazem-nos companhia e transmitem tacitamente a sua quietude inata. Contudo, o que acontece quando os objetos se tornam uma presença tão poderosa que, como resultado, dominam a vida das pessoas? Noutras palavras, o que é que acontece quando os objetos sobrecarregam as pessoas com as suas potentes (falando literalmente, *sempre lá*) presenças?

No silêncio dos objetos há um lugar onde nos tornamos conscientes da nossa insignificância, da nossa crise de identidade, ansiedade de linguagem e entorpecimento. Mas nas peças *Endgame* e *Act without Words I* de Samuel Beckett, o dramaturgo gradualmente capta a inutilidade da vida das personagens principais e a transformação das suas mentes e corpos numa coleção de objetos arquivados. Sem interagir com outras pessoas e por se autoencarcerarem estas personagens de Beckett esquecem-se o que é ser humano e tornam-se «uma não-coisa, nada». Pode haver um facto

perturbador nesta realização, e, sem dúvida, até mesmo uma infeliz aliteração; mesmo assim, o que é ainda mais chocante é que estas personagens são paradigmáticas em relação ao que significa ter pisado uma aniquilação prematura ontológica e existencial. Estas são agora objetos abandonados entre outros objetos, uma espécie de coleção ineficaz.

Com base nestes argumentos, este ensaio mostra uma tremenda influência de Beckett no desenvolvimento da teoria da descarnalização e da desmaterialização do corpo e mente do povo, culminando na revolução tecnológica onde queremos ser empilhados dentro de incontáveis arquivos de computador. O principal argumento propõe uma reflexão sobre como podemos pôr em perigo a nossa sofisticação emocional e social, jogando este complicado «jogo» digital.

Palavras-chave: silêncio, ansiedade, aniquilação própria, destruição de identidade.

With love, to John, my husband, whose silence
is to this day unbeatable. With gratitude, to my
parents, whose silence is eternal.

Why this farce, day after day? (*Endgame* 15)
The rest is silence. (*Hamlet* 5.2.688)

I. Introduction

If silence is a disguise of nothingness, then we may claim that to be silent is part of the process of becoming whole. In his book, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (1987), David Bohm believes the word health “[i]s based on an Anglo-Saxon word ‘hale’ meaning ‘whole,’ that is, to be healthy. Likewise, the English ‘holy’ is based on the same root as ‘hole’” (3). Paradoxically, we experience wholeness through fragmentation. Every now and then, we would like to be as simple and tacit as nature and natural phenomena are. Just as the trees quietly stretch into the ramification of branches, just as the winds coil into a speechless dance with nature, sometimes we would like to trade our cacophonous, noisy lives for some peaceful episodes. Or, as Max Picard contends, “[s]ilence reveals itself in a thousand inexpressible forms: in the quiet of the dawn, in the stealthy descent of night, in the silent changing of the seasons, but above all in the silence of the inward soul” (26).

A reflection of silence, anxiety, word, becoming, and nothingness permeates this essay that analyzes two dramatic works of Samuel Beckett, *Endgame* and *Act without Words I*. In the realm of drama, silences are not a product of the modern period. Leslie Kane points to Aeschylus’ Cassandra whose “[w]all of silence contains and is ultimately shattered by her unspeakable apocalyptic vision” (24). Another important development into incorporating silence in the dramatic spectacle was William Shakespeare’s “[i]nnovative and extensive use of soliloquy” (Kane 24). The modern silence, however, is em-

ployed with a bit of a twist because it alludes to “evanescence and entrapment” (Kane 24). Beckett’s quasi-silent characters are more symbols than reflections of human beings. Confined in one room, like in a prison cell, the characters in *Endgame* stage the terror of being abusively kept captive. In *Act without Words I*, the author exposes his version of an almost perfect quietude.

II. Trapped in the Mind

In mid-19th century, Friedrich Nietzsche declared God dead. This assertion coincided with the advent of the modern man. Later, in 1961, Martin Esslin coined the concept “Theater of the Absurd”. A modern man still believes, but his ideology resounds more “[t]he medieval *credo quia absurdum*” (Balota 24). In other words, “I believe because it is absurd.” Absurdity is defined primarily by a lack of certainties. We have embraced the concept of the absurd precisely because our minds cannot operate any longer from a Cartesian perspective of *cogito, ergo sum*, which used to provide existence with highly formulaic, ineffectual answers. As long as God was “alive,” human beings had the reassurance in a coherent universe, as well as in the benediction of an afterlife.

By contrast, with God “dead,” man has to provide for himself a new set of beliefs. Life is not a vacuum; yet it cannot have fixed meanings. In other words, life is changing constantly, and by so doing our beliefs are also changing. While constituting a paradox, a modern human being realizes that his only constancy is to experience his existence in a permanent change. As a consequence, he cannot help have a feeling of being “[s]urrounded by areas of impenetrable darkness, that he can never know his true nature and purpose, and that no one will provide him with ready-made rules of conduct” (Esslin 374).

Because life is finally understood as an open and unpredictable system, a modern man appreciates more his existence *hic et nunc*, that is, “here and now.” We are temporal beings, and our main comfort is found in the moment. And in the moment there are boredom, anxiety, despair, and absurdity. However, there is also laughter. Aristotle in the *Poetics* spoke about catharsis as a short moment of intersecting our feelings with the elaborately fabricated emotions of characters on stage. This way, we would purge our fear and would gain a more profound perspective on life. In modern theater, however, where gods are “dead,” we have a “dianoetic laughter,” which “[p]oints back to the idea of the tragic, but also forward to a world that has become more arbitrary and absurd than that of Aeschylus, Sophocles: a world from which the gods have retreated even further” (Esslin 16). If we are laughing instead of crying, this does not imply we are insensitive beings. It rather indicates our realization of a missing, unifying, and definite principle for our life. This may explain why we still push our “rock,” thus echoing the endeavors of the legendary Sisyphus.

Albert Camus, one of the forefathers of Existentialism, each related to the concept of Theater of the Absurd, writes in *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1955): “This universe without a master seems to Sisyphus neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night--filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man’s heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy ” (91). Beckett’s dramatic characters are Sisyphus-like. They know life is nothing but mastering a habit. Or, as the author remarks in his essay, “Proust” (1931), “[b]reathing is habit. Life is habit. Or rather life is a succession of habits, since the individual is a succession of individuals. The creation of the world did not take place once and for all time, but takes place every day” (8). Even if we develop several habits over the years, it is unhealthy for us to transform ourselves into a cliché because there is always something new and puzzling that provokes our intellect.

Endgame’s set is a symbolic skull. Its main character’s name is Hamm who, like the human mind, likes to multiply himself in a variety of thoughts. As he acknowledges, “Babble, babble, words like the solitary child who turns himself into children, two, three, so as to be together, and whisper together, in the dark” (70). The stage of this play is a room with a “[b]are interior and gray light” (1). Being caught in a room and cut off from the outside (reality), Hamm is just “[v]ox clamans in deserto, the voice speaking in the dessert” (Balota 402). While his voice represents the human mind, Clov, the second character, is an emblem for the human body. Hamm feels he has always been absent because he is, indeed, the mind which projects thoughts and fantasies, and concocts ideas. When it comes to materializing these ideas, he thinks he has been left offstage, inexplicably cut off from his own body.

HAMM. Absent, always. It all happened without me. I do not know what is happened (74).

To get a meaning for his life, he relies on his buddy/body, Clov, as well as on Nell and Nagg, who are just his previous thoughts, now morphed into memories.

The play starts with Clov uttering the terrifying words, “[f]inished, it is finished, nearly finished. Gray upon grain, one by one, and one day, suddenly, there is a heap, a little heap, the impossible heap” (1). To have arrived at the “impossible heap” is to have reached the end of life seen as a game, just as the title of this play suggests. When the curtains are pulled back, we notice two characters in search of their meaning. To that end, they rely on the fickle variations of their memories. As Beckett asserts, “[h]abit is the ballast that chains the dog to his vomit. The individual is the seat of a constant process of decantation. The pendulum [of a man] oscillates between two poles: suffering and boredom” (*Proust* 9).

HAMM. Is it night already?

CLOV. No.

HAMM. Then what is it?

CLOV. Gray. (31)

Moreover, when Hamm asks Clov, “What time is it?,” Clov replies dispassionately: “Zero.” On an empty stage, right in its middle, Hamm, the blind old man, is seated in a wheelchair. Time seems to have stopped or reached its “zero” hour. This is the ideal moment when, after a long life, Hamm cannot postpone to dig out his meaning.

Moreover, “[t]he present time is the instant of zero duration” (Calinescu 256). The passing of time is put in parentheses because what counts is only what one feels:

HAMM. What is happening?

CLOV. Something is taking its course (pause).

HAMM. We are not beginning to ... to... mean something? (32).

Despite the grayness, the motionless, the stasis, and the neutrality, “something is [still] taking its course.” It helps to note that something or someone starts its or his journey for the ultimate meaning towards the very end. On a smaller scale, a sentence acquires its message after all of its words have been uttered or written. Thus, to reach semantic value is just one completed phase in an otherwise interrupting process of accumulating *and* altering significations.

However, the fear of not having a(ny) meaning is confirmed by Hamm: “To think perhaps it won’t all have been for nothing” (33). We are lost in a universe with God absent. Or, as Esslin argues, “Where there is no certainty, there can be no definite meanings” (63). The interaction between Hamm and Clov is short and truncated. There seems to be an unresolved conflict between the mind (Hamm) and the body (Clov), the inside and the outside.

HAMM. Why do you stay with me?

CLOV. Why do you keep me?

HAMM. There is no one else.

CLOV. There is nowhere else. (6)

The conflict between them is generated by the fact that both the mind and the body are steeped in uncertainty, resulting in their boredom, suffering, and anxiety. Both Hamm and Clov crave for a meaning, that is, for *an* end. Clov goes to the kitchen to stare at the wall and catch a glimpse at his “light dying” (12). This passage reminds of Plato’s “Myth of the Cave” where people resided in a cave where they were fooled by images projected onto a wall through a keyhole. By contrast, Beckett’s characters have consciously turned into a closed system, where there is no natural, direct light, and, thus, they are condemned to project their lives backwards, in retrospect. For Ihab Hassan, “In Beckett’s world, epistemologically all things are ambiguous; and ontologically nothing is whole. Objects and persons are predetermined to be partial, and events are near events. Nothing is consummated; hence, time is viciously circular” (132).

These characters are also caught in a circle. While Hamm (the mind) and Clov (the body) move forward feeling “something is taking its course,” Nell and Nagg move back-

ward, into the realm of memories. With two simultaneous movements, time is indeed “zero,” at a perfect equilibrium. One movement, which is projected toward completion (into the future), annihilates the other, which comes from the already lived folds of being. As a consequence, time stands still.

HAMM. One day you [Clov] will come to a standstill, simply stop and stand still, the way you are now (36).

Beckett’s characters “[m]ove in opposite directions simultaneously, as if walking on the length of a Möbius strip searching for the other side of a one-sided surface” (Roach 309). This is the reason why Nell and Nagg are portrayed as white and are kept in a bin. They stand for Hamm’s memories and allude to his cyclical, quite predictable existence. Yet nothing has ended; everything continues its monotonous flow:

NELL. Nothing is funnier than unhappiness. It is the most comical thing in the world. We laugh, laugh, we laugh with a will, in the beginning. But it is always the same thing. Yes, it is the funny story we have heard too often, we still find it funny, but we do not laugh any more. (18)

Life is a continuum where past moments return obsessively. Even if Hamm says, “Silence. Have you [Nell] not finished? Will you never finish?” (23), memories can never *end* because they drag us constantly to the realm of yesterday. Their sole purpose is an anchorage into what *happened* (and cannot be changed). Barely discernable, Nell and Nagg recollect fragments of stories: of Ardennes, when they lost their “shanks,” of Lake Come, one day after they got engaged (16).

Endgame is a modern play because it does not have a traditional plot. Therefore, the presence of Nell and Nagg suggests something about the main character, Hamm. He does not say much, but his memories cannot be silenced. He is in a wheelchair, and, to relieve his physical pain, he needs a painkiller; but he cannot stop Nell and Nagg from remembering. In other words, Hamm does not possess a method to alleviate the trauma of his past. This is why he says, “Something [is] dripping in my head, ever since the fontanelles. Splash, splash, always on the same spot (pause). Perhaps is like a vein” (50). The vein is nothing else but Hamm’s mind fragmenting itself in countless tiny *exi(s)ts*, pulsating back and forth the blood of his being.

About Martin Heidegger’s theory of time, Piotr Hoffman asserts:

The ecstatic future is no ‘later’ than the ecstatic present, for at any moment of my life I am equally vulnerable to the power of death, and hence that vulnerability of mine is always an actual, live issue for me. My past, too, is not something that has simply elapsed and is now left behind, something existing ‘no longer now, but earlier.’ This is so because my past is nothing other than my ‘throwness’—that is my rootedness in a culture, my already established preferences, skills, and habits. (208)

Therefore, with time ticking its “zero” hour, as *Endgame* leads to believe, Hamm lives an ecstasy, a standing out of being. Moreover, it seems Hamm is at a moment in

his life where words have been spoken for too long. He says, “[a]h, the creatures, the creatures, everything has to be explained to them” (43). Hamm, the mind, is tired of offering explanations. He wants to rest for a while and starts using fewer words. He is verbally exhausted. Therefore, “[t]he pause is desired because it reverses the act of speaking, it is a return to a condition of interiority” (Brinzeu 232). In Hamm’s case, on the other hand, a return to a condition of interiority is not exactly bliss because he is blind and paralyzed.

HAMM. Quiet, quiet. You [Nell and Nagg] are keeping me awake (pause). If I could sleep I might make love. I’d go into the woods. My eyes would see... the sky, the earth. I’d run, run, they [his memories] would not catch me (18).

An alternative to quieting his memories is imagining, projecting, and thus dreamingly going out of his being. But when Hamm is kept inside of a room, when his eyes cannot see, and when his limbs cannot move, his imagination is limited to travel to few places. When existence is experienced isolated, our imagination and conscience are denied access into multiplicity and/or otherness. According to Jean-Paul Sartre, “[a]ll consciousness is consciousness of something. Consciousness enfolds its objects in a shell of nothingness, thus making itself a reflecting of them, a point of view of them” (261). Put differently, consciousness in itself is empty since it is relational. Having suffered too much too long, Hamm hopes Clov (the body) will come to rescue him (his mind).

HAMM. Why do not you [Clov] finish us? (37)

Hamm begs his body to die, so that the mind, with all its memories and fantasies, will also end (“finish *us*,” emphasis mine). The last lines of the play are a mediation between life and death, beginning and end.

CLOV. One day, suddenly, it [the mind] ends. It [the mind] changes. I do not understand, it [the mind] dies, or it is me [the body], I do not understand that either. I ask the words that remain—sleeping, waking, morning, evening. They have nothing to say (pause). I open the door of the cell and go. I am so bowed I only see my feet, if I open my eyes, and between my legs a little trail of black dust. (81)

It appears that we are situated on two axes: of activity (“sleeping” and “waking,” two verbal adjectives) and of rest, respectively (“morning” and “evening,” two nouns).

It is Hamm, however, who has one last puzzling and intriguing remark: “Moments for nothing, now as always, time was never and time is never” (83). Are we so insignificant that our existence seems to lack a temporal framework? And once we die, are we also washed away, forgotten? According to Heraclitus, the ancient Greek philosopher, “[m]an lights a light for himself in the night, because he is dead and yet still alive. In sleep he touches himself as dead when the light of his eyes has faded, but in waking he touches himself not dead but only asleep” (qtd. in Picard 156). Existence is as fragile as a dream whose meaning is teasingly deferred.

HAMM. Since that’s the way we are playing it [the life] ... (he unfolds handkerchief)...let’s play it that way...(he unfolds)...and speak no more about it...(he finishes unfolding)...speak no more. (he holds handkerchief spread out before him). Old stancher!

(pause) You...remain (pause; he covers his face with handkerchief, lowers his arms to armrests, remains motionless), (84). Beckett prefers to conclude this play ambiguously. Hamm (the mind) finally returns to its invisible origins where the “old stancher” may be his only silent posthumous validation.

Within the Theater of the Absurd a situation is staged presenting one possibility among many because “[i]t is trying to present a sense of being, it can neither investigate nor solve problems of conduct or morals. The spectator’s suspense consists in waiting for the gradual completion of this pattern which will enable him to see the image as a whole” (Esslin 366). But when the image of the play as a whole has finally been presented, we should silence our reactions to let our feelings and perceptions find their meanings. To achieve that, Beckett advises us to look at the objects around us because their balanced silence may teach us how to restore ours.

III. Among All Objects, Here I Am

Act without Words I is a return into the antechamber of language, where gestures, and not words, implicitly convey the message of the play. Beckett’s character is a pantomime performer, who has routinely transformed himself into an object. With him, we metaphorically go back inside the flesh of being, where we are as close to taciturnity and self-destruction as possible. According to Brendan Gill, “At the heart of pantomime is the sublimated anguish of lost speech; even as we are being entertained, we measure that loss and feel for the mute performer the sympathy aroused by any profound inescapable defect. To be in the presence of an imposed, unnatural silence is in effect to be rendered deaf” (qtd. in Leabhart 2)

In a pantomime, however, there is something more than an “unnatural silence.” It is the performer’s desire to symbolize rather than explicitly state something. After all, “[e]veryone in the world uses mime, although it is rarely given the name. When words are difficult to find, when emotion is great, gestures take over” (Walker 11). If gestures, and not words, are the quintessence of a pantomime performance, then what we see, and not what we hear, will transport us into the realm of interpretation.

Traditionally, the pantomime performer suggests objects by means of gestures. On the other hand, Beckett’s performer is helped by real objects, which descend from above. On an almost bare stage, these items function like cartoon captions. Beckett’s pantomime performer does not engage in a descriptive monologue with them because he may feel as soundless as them. Once they descend from above, they stay on stage a couple of minutes, enough to tease, and not release, the pantomime performer from his painful act of finding his role in this world.

In *All about Mime: Understanding and Performing the Expressive Silence* (1982), Maravene Sheppard Loeschke argues that “The pantomime uses sense memory in the

handling of all the imaginary objects that appear in his story. That is, the mime performer must remember what the real object looked like, felt like, smelled like, sounded, or tasted like, and must recreate it as if it were real" (7). By contrast, Beckett's performer, having been helped by genuine objects, should have spoken with them. His silence is perchance a way of reflecting on the old phrase according to which "words fail us." Leonard Shlain believes the verbs "to fail" and "to fall" have a common descendant from the Latin verb *fallare*, "to fail, to deceive" (308). Metaphorically speaking, we are afraid of falling: "Homo sapiens is first and foremost a primate. Although none of us flies among the treetops anymore, we still retain buried deep within our archaic collective memory an atavistic fear of falling" (Shlain 308).

When *Act without Words I* opens, we are induced a vague feeling of descending:

Dessert. Dazzling light.

The man is flung backwards on stage from right wing. He falls, gets up immediately, dusts himself, turns aside, reflects.

Whistle from right wing.

He reflects, goes out right.

Immediately flung back on stage he falls, gets up immediately, dusts himself, turns aside, reflects.

Whistle from left wing.

He reflects, goes out left. (125)

The man is flung back and forth, right and left by an unknown force. When he is on the ground, he "dusts" himself. He hears whistles and, one day, he will discover the last piece of his life's puzzle that will turn him almost alchemically into non-being.

Therefore, he is a fallen as well as a failed creature. Whatever he reflects upon, throughout the entire performance, is not going to be explicitly stated. Chronologically, the objects that appear from above are a tree, scissors, a carafe of water, three cubes, and a rope. The tree's "tuft of palms" helps him reflect upon his own hands (126). With the scissors he "trims his nails" (126). With the rope he tries unsuccessfully to commit suicide, prior having tested the stability of the three cubes.

The most puzzling and teasing of all these objects is the carafe of water. No matter how hard he tries to reach it, the carafe is pulled back from above. Because of this futile endeavor, Beckett's character reminds us of the mythological figure of Tantalus who was punished to crave for food and drink, and, whenever he needed them, they would retract further and further. Hence, we could say Beckett's performer's efforts to reach the carafe of water are tantalizing. Just to tease him even harder, when almost all other objects (with the exception of the tree) have been pulled back and disappeared "in flies" (132), "[t]he carafe descends from flies and comes to rest a few feet from his body. He does not move. Whistle from above. He does not move. The carafe descends further, dangles and plays about his face. He does not move. The carafe is pulled up and disappears in flies" (132).

The performance is nearly over. After unsuccessful attempts to reach the jug, Beckett's character has lost both his thirst and, by extension, his desire for accumulating knowledge and power. Afterwards, the play approaches an inevitably abrupt moment: "The bough returns to horizontal, the palms open, the shadow returns. Whistle from above. He does not move. The tree is pulled up and disappears in flies. He looks at his hand" (133). As readers or spectators, we are disoriented and abandoned because we have not been offered any closure.

The playwright does not create a traditional pantomime because he emphasizes the futility of his performer's life. When he came into this world, it was already full with objects. Beckett's character does not mime objects for his audience because they have always preceded us so their history is deeper than ours. Point in fact, he does not even give them a personal signifier. He does not speak either because he feels there have already been said too many words. *Act without Words I* ends with the character contemplating his hands, without being able to find them a utilitarian usage. The question is whether or not we take part in this desperate man's drama, or if have abandoned him altogether because his prolonged silence determined us to leave.

IV. Conclusion

We are constantly caught in a world of silence and word because "One's being is a tensional synthesis of the determinate and the nondeterminate, in which the latter is preeminent. This preeminence is manifested in the preeminence of silence" (Dauenhauer 162). In other words, the soul which desires, the body which feels, and the mind which thinks are tacit components of our be(com)ing.

We are afraid of the ultimate silence because we are afraid of annihilation. We feel we have been left in this world without any certainty, except that of our imminent death. According to Anton Ehrenzweig, "There was another tree in the paradise garden apart from the tree of knowledge; it was the tree of life. Had the first pair eaten from the tree of life they would have become immortal" (235). To reassure ourselves of our own short existence, we rush into speaking, without always verifying our ideas, thoughts, or even feelings. There is a certain *death* that approaches us from behind when we speak carelessly. We do not want to hear our last word vanishing in the air because that last uttered word will, again and again, reveal the limit of our "esse-nce."

Then, what are the words that we use? Clov (the body) tells Hamm (the mind): "I use the words you thought me. If they do not mean anything anymore, teach me others. Or let me be silent" (44). The mind is the one which dictates what to feel to the body. Once we have learned how to speak, we are unstoppable. By so doing, our bodies and minds are trapped in the *word*. As a result, "Words that merely come from other words [i.e., without

silence] are hard and aggressive. Such words are also lonely. Language is surrounded by the dark rim of melancholy, no longer by the rim of silence” (Picard 37).

To conclude, we arrange and structure our lives primarily by means of reasoning, when in fact our intellect pushes us away from ourselves. Just like the tree silently communicates with the earth, so should we, if we roll back into the vibrant rooms of feelings. This way, we dig deeper and deeper into our sentient layers of being. Our bodies are the ultimate objects that the mind chisel and alter time and time again. As implied by Beckett, the trick or challenge is to learn when to stop distancing ourselves from life’s short moments of excitement just to ensure that we do not become silent objects, that is, complete aliens whose time is unchangeably frozen or “zero.”

Works Cited

- Balota, Nicolae. *Literatura Absurdului*. Bucuresti: Universitas. Romania, 2000.
- Beckett, Samuel. Beckett, Samuel. *Endgame*. New York: Grove P, 1958.
- . *Krapp’s Last Tape and Other Dramatic Pieces*. New York: Grove P, 1960.
- . *Proust and Three Dialogues*. London: Calder Publications Ltd., 1989.
- Bohm, David. *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. New York: Routledge, 1987.
- Brinzeu, Pia. “Without a Word: Pauses in Beckett’s Drama.” *Samuel Beckett Today*. 2 (1993): 229-234.
- Calinescu, Matei. *Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism*. Durham: Duke UP, 1987.
- Camus, Albert. Camus, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Trans. Justin O’Brien. New York: Ransom House, 1955.
- Dauenhauer, Bernard P. *Silence: The Phenomenon and Its Ontological Significance*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1980.
- Ehrenzeig, Anton. *The Hidden Order of Art: A Study in the Psychology of Artistic Imagination*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1967.
- Esslin, Martin. *Theater of the Absurd*. Garden City: Anchor Books, 1969.
- Hassan, Ihab Habib. *The Literature of Silence: Henry Miller and Samuel Beckett*. New York: Knopf, 1967.
- Hoffmann, Piotr. “Death, Time, History: Division II of Being and Time.” *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*. Ed. Charles Guignon. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993. 195-215.
- Kane, Leslie. *The Language of Silence*. Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1984.
- Leabhart, Thomas. *Modern and Post-Modern Mime*. New York: St. Martin’s P, 1989.

- Loeschke, Maravene Sheppard . *All about Mime: Understanding and Performing the Expressive Silence*. Englewood: Prentice-Hall, 1982.
- Picard, Max. *The World of Silence*. Trans. Stanley Godman. Chicago: Regnery/Gateway, Inc., 1961.
- Roach, Joseph. "The Great Hole of History: Liturgical Silence in Beckett, Osofisan, and Parks." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 100.1 (2001): 307-317.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness: An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology*. Trans. Hazel Barnes E. New York: Philosophical Library, 1956.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Complete Works*. Eds. Gary Taylor and Stanley Wells. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988.
- Shlain, Leonard. *Art and Physics: Parallel Visions in Space, Time, and Light*. New York: Morrow, 1991.
- Sorley, Katherine Walker. *Eyes on Mime*. New York: The John Day Company, 1969.