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Cognitive Drama and the Plays of Samuel Beckett

By

Gregory Raymond

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of English Language, Literature, and Creative Writing
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2014

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Cognitive Drama and the Plays of Samuel Beckett

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ABSTRACT

Drama, due to its dual-medium nature, is a unique genre of literature, and is a genre that gains meaning in both textual and performance modes. This study considers the relationship between script and performance in terms of elements specific to either writing (i.e. typographical layout) or performance (i.e. visual elements on stage). Drawing on Reuven Tsur's theory of cognitive poetics, this study propounds any meaning created by an element in a script can be equally created in performance and vice-versa, regardless of how that element may appear restricted to either script or performance. The theatrical work of Samuel Beckett serves as a case study to demonstrate how information, cognitive effects, and meaning can be translated fully between writing and performance.

DEDICATION

For my parents. Without you, I wouldn't have gotten this far.

And for Nichole. Without you, I wouldn't know where to go next.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A tremendous thank you to my advisor, Johanna Frank, who put up with more procrastination, typos, and all around editing nightmares than anyone should expect.

And thank you to Erica Stevens Abbitt and Louis Cabri. Between pushing me towards grad school and inspiring the field of thought that lead to this thesis, you both helped me long before you sat on my reading committee.

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PAGE AND STAGE

Plays hold a unique place amongst the literary canon due to their multi-modal nature. They are both written and performed, recorded and live. As texts, they may engage elements that are seemingly entirely visual (such as typographical markers) and in performance, they may employ markers that seem impossible to record in writing (such as tone or pace in the delivery of a line). These aspects, which seem isolated to a single medium, may create difficulties when attempting to accurately reflect the script in performance or vice versa. How can an actor perform an unusual grammatical marker, such as a hyphen? How can a writer record the specific pace of a piece of dialogue? Considering the vast differences between the mediums of a typed script and a live performance, how is it possible for the two modes to accurately reflect one another completely?

The answer to these questions lies in an understanding of the meaning or effects that the various aspects which seem isolated to a single medium create. Because they are distinct mediums, it may be impossible to deliver the same information cues in both script and performance; however, the information itself can be delivered. To borrow semiotics terminology, different signifiers can suggest the same signified. In this way, the script can be considered a blue-print for a performance; as a blue-print is not a building, but a representation of information that can also be found through examining the building, a script is not a performance, but the same information can be found in both script and performance. Any information or meaning gleaned from reading a play can also be available when watching the play, and vice versa.

Of course, the assertion that meaning generated from watching a play should be evidenced in the script could prove problematic when one considers the fluid nature of human perception and interpretation. One person finding a specific meaning in a play does not, on its own, necessitate every other audience member coming to the same conclusion or finding the same meaning. Elements and events can be perceived and interpreted in as many different ways as there are people observing them. Because human understanding of an event is always modified by his or her own experiences, and because no two individuals have the same experiences, everyone will understand events differently. Moreover, considering the fact that anything from editorial practice to directorial choice can change a given play in almost innumerable ways, it is important to understand that a play itself is not static or immune to change. Original authorial meaning and intent becomes blurred or lost. This, on its own, is not necessarily a bad thing. To remain relevant to changing times and cultures, plays may have to shift and adapt.

However, while specific editions or performances of a play may change, the dual-medium nature (written and performed) of plays means that the evidence for supporting a given interpretation of information in a play should be found both in the written text and in the performed play. In other words, if a directorial choice emphasises that Phrase A is said ironically, there should be textual evidence that leads to that conclusion. Similarly, if a play script directs a character to "[*hesitate*]", then that hesitation should be recognizable on stage. In addition, while interpretation of meaning may differ from one person to another, the process of taking information to find meaning can be somewhat generalized across large groups of individuals. Cognitive processes are similar for large groups of people because these processes evolved for nonaesthetic purposes and groupings of

humans evolve similarly to one another (Tsur 4). Because the cognitive processes through which humans gain and understand information are the same, one can hypothesize the likely effects that given stimuli may have on cognitive processes.

Before furthering a discussion on how to find specific information in a play in both script and performance, I should clarify that there are some exceptions to the notion that this cross-medium information is useful. There are theories and genres of theatre that oppose the notion that plays should have both script and performance. Here, and below, the term "performance" is used to denote the enacting of the script by actors in front of an audience, as opposed to, for example, a recitation or a mental reading. Some would argue that not all plays are meant to be performed. An entire genre, closet drama, defines plays that do not fit into the performance-centric notion of theatre. Closet drama, simply put, is a name given to plays that are meant to be read by an individual reader and not performed for an audience (Fischer-Seidel 68). The possibilities for what one genders as closet drama are numerous – from ancient Greek tragedies such as *Oedipus Rex* through to modernist and post-modernist poetry such as Stéphane Mallarmé's *Le Livre*. Martin Puchner argues that many playwrights of the modernist era shared an aversion to overt theatricality, and he links their work with closet drama. In *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-Theatricality, and Drama*, Puchner suggests closet drama falls into two basic categories, which are focused on the reason a given play is not to be performed on stage: *restrained* closet drama and *exuberant* closet drama (14). Restrained closet drama, Puchner explains, resists staging through a focus on philosophical and/or poetic speeches and monologues, and its lack of scenic action. With little action, a performance of restrained closet drama would look more like a person or persons delivering speeches,

rather than a play. Exuberant closet drama is the opposite – it has so much specific theatrical action that it would be difficult to actually stage. For example, in a classic revenge tragedy, there may be a call for characters to be mutilated and killed on stage; it can be difficult to represent this without harming actors. While Puchner's arguments are not the first when it comes to closet drama, they are amongst the most recent and comprehensive examinations of the phenomenon.

In his review of Puchner's book, David Krasner suggests that Puchner overlooks a few bedfellows of anti-theatrical modernism, but views his examination of Beckett as succinct and complete. Krasner asserts that Puchner's book is an important study that "illuminates how anti-theatrical modernists reacted negatively to the rise of directors and the corporeality of actors" (574). Similarly, Geoffrey Baker reviews Puchner's book as a "provocative reassessment of modernism" that Baker aligns with political aesthetics, saying one might "envision closet drama as an authorial abdication of politics" (101). For each of these critics, the source of closet drama is the playwright; it emphasises the author's written word over the performance enacted by director or actors. Whether exuberant or restrained, the critical conversation around closet drama as a genre suggest that there are, indeed, some plays that are not meant to be performed.

While closet drama may be one extreme model of theatre or of the role of drama, there are theories that do not believe in the text at all. For example, Antonin Artaud's *Theatre of Cruelty* argues against scripts, and promotes improvised scenes that lead to realistic, guttural reactions from actors. Similarly, Performance Happenings, coined by Allan Kaprow, describes a "presentation which had its roots in art but which had taken the artist in the direction of theatre" (Bigsby 45). In these Happenings, an artist may

perform a specific action or repeatable event, but the often one-time nature of the Happening precludes the need for a textual recording of the script. There are also performance artists, such as Margaret Dragu, whose work combines elements from diverse areas like visual art, drama, dance, and fitness regimes (Forkert 206). Such work may be planned, rehearsed, and repeatable, but do not include a formal, written script. These are just a few examples in a large history of performance-centric theatre.

In light of these extremes of types of performance, most plays in the western theatrical cannon are situated within the spectrum of text-based and performance-based theatre and draw on elements from each end of the spectrum. They will have both script and performance. In some cases, the script is written first; a playwright will write a script that is performed at a later date. In other cases, such as plays created through collaborative creation, the opposite is true; a play will be performed, and only later will it be recorded as a script. In either case, however, when there is both performance and script, it should be possible to find the same information and meaning in both mediums.

The suggestion that meaning can be found in a play both in writing and performance seems like a fairly basic assertion; if the written text is indeed supposed to be a blueprint for the play, then of course information is represented in both forms. The problematic nature of such a position arises when one considers elements that seem inherently un-recordable in a specific medium. Problematic elements could include things that are entirely visual on the page: line breaks, ellipses, similar stage directions (i.e. [*pause*] versus [*hesitation*]), unusual spelling or grammatical and typographical elements, to name a few. In reading a script, these are clear and distinct; how can they be equally apparent and distinct in watching the play? The opposite – elements that seem entirely

contained on stage – can also be found; everything from pitch to duration of a spoken word is information contained through sound, for instance. How can this information be presented in a written medium, such as a script?

Samuel Beckett's work is particularly useful to answer the question of how one can perform what are seemingly entirely visual elements of a script and record aural elements of a performance. He has been linked to the closet dramatists, and has a good amount of work that has been "unperformative," filled with elements that are not meant to be staged (Puchner 4). This is likely due to the fact that his work is rife with the kinds of ambiguous typographical elements, oddly specific stage directions, and other seemingly distinctly visual elements of a written text that this project aims to examine. Moreover, Beckett was reluctant to allow his work to be edited or changed. Biographer James Knowlson writes that Beckett felt strongly about "the freedom and integrity of the artist to write and publish his work without fear of change or censorship" (391). This allows, to an extent, in exploring the translation of his texts into performance, an elimination of the concern of editorial choice changing the inherent meaning of the text. Of course, no work is immune to change entirely. Current editions of Beckett's play are likely formatted quite differently than the manuscripts fresh from Beckett's typewriter. However, Beckett's insistence on maintaining his work free from any real change – critic Lois Overbeck refers to it as "common lore that Beckett exercised absolute control over his text" (734), albeit this lessened somewhat in his later years – presumes that any changes present in official editions of his plays are mechanical. In other words, while it is true, for instance, that the pagination of *Waiting for Godot* will be quite different in a paperback anthology of his work than it was when he first wrote it in manuscript form,

the specific line breaks and pagination in that play do not hold integral meaning, and are free to be changed. In a play where there are specific line breaks created by factors other than simply the size of the page, such as those written or partially written in verse, like *Rockaby*, those line breaks should be maintained (or, at least, somehow represented, such as with a slash), regardless of physical size of edition.

In addition, Beckett was specific in the staging of his work; he directed a number of his plays himself, both officially and unofficially as a sort of back-seat director, giving instructions or advice to the official director (Knowlson 435). In fact, there are recorded versions of his plays that are directed by Beckett himself or with his approval. While a recorded version is different from a live performance, these recordings allow for an examination of how the mind behind the writing of the text envisioned it performed (removing some of the possibility of competing ideas between writer, editor, and director). Since Samuel Beckett died in 1989, these recordings and various testimony of how he possibly imagined staging (given by actors and directors with whom he worked) provide access to his personal vision of the staging of his work.

In order to use Beckett's work as a case study for analysis of meaning in both script and performance, it should be demonstrated that his work is intended to be found in both mediums, written script and live performance. Beckett was a writer – he wrote poetry and novels, along with plays – and he type manuscripts for his plays before having them performed, and have those manuscripts published. As such, it is safe to assume that he didn't mind his plays being recorded and read as written scripts. But are Beckett's plays meant to be performed? Puchner alleges that Beckett is closer to a closet dramatist, whose work is predominantly meant to be read, rather than performed. Knowing the two

possible types of closet drama, restrained and exuberant, does the work of Samuel Beckett fit into either of these categories? Puchner suggests that one sign of a closet drama is the presence of elements such as elaborate stage directions and explanatory notes (21). Beckett's works include these elements. *Endgame* opens with more than a page of stage direction before a character speaks; the hat-swapping scene in *Waiting for Godot* is described in stage directions that, according to Puchner, "not only choreographs this act [the trading of hats] but takes great care to indicate whose hat is put on whose head by whom, providing a specificity certainly lost on any audience and only perceptible to the reader of the text" (164). Puchner suggests the lengthy stage directions result in a complicated series of actions that would be clear to a reader, but not to an audience member, and that examples such as this illustrate the unperfomative nature of Beckett's work.

To point at the elaborate notes and specific stage directions found in Beckett's work and claim them as proof of his link to closet drama is, however, oversimplified. While it is true that these elements are particularly clear for a reader, it is important to note that they are not understandable by a reader alone, and they are not contained only within a written text. For example, the opening stage directions in *Endgame* are very detailed, but they are easily seen and understood when acted out. One could even argue, as Therese Fischer-Seidel suggests in "The Ineluctable Modality of the Visible," that when acted out, these stage directions are clearer than they would be when read. She asserts:

> The play [*Endgame*] begins with a very long (one-and-a-half-page) *Nerbentext* [non-dialogue text] describing the set in all its details, such as windows, door,

> curtains, and all properties, including dustbin, armchair, sheet. Then Clov's silent action makes the spectator *aware of all the details*. The blocking, Clov's movements, measuring the space of the stage in all three directions, brings to mind the three-dimensionality of the stage. (71, emphasis added)

With Clov wandering the stage, guiding the audience's attention to windows, ladder, and ashbins, an audience would have just as much, if not more, awareness of the physical layout of the stage as a reader. In the hat swapping scene of *Waiting for Godot* which Puchner uses as an example of complicated stage craft which is difficult for an audience to follow, the stage directions for this piece of vaudevillian-inspired entertainment are quite lengthy. They begin:

> *Estragon takes Vladimir's hat. Vladimir adjusts Lucky's hat on his head. Estragon puts on Vladimir's hat in place of his own which he hands to Vladimir. Vladimir takes Estragon's hat. Estragon adjusts Vladimir's hat on his head. Vladimir puts on Estragon's hat in place of Lucky's which he hands to Estragon. Estragon takes Lucky's hat. Vladimir adjusts Estragon's hat on his head.* (71-2)

The cycle continues, similarly phrased, with Vladimir going on to put back on his own hat and then Lucky's before ending with Vladimir in Lucky's hat and Estragon in his own, and handing Vladimir's hat back and forth between themselves twice. While the typed stage directions may seem complicated, the actual pattern the two characters and three hats follow is fairly simple. Considering the rather simple, circular nature of the passing of the hat, combined with the fact that the actors – and, most likely, the hats – would be visually distinct, it is problematic to suggest that an audience member would have trouble following the details of the exchange, as Puchner does. As the very nature of

stage directions are, usually, to provide actors with directions for physical action, citing the presence of elaborate stage directions in Beckett's work as a sign that his plays work better read rather than staged is, at the minimum, contradictory. These elaborate stage directions, while they may be complicated and lengthy to read, can be easily followed in the action of the actors. It is, after all, much simpler to watch two men exchange hats than it is to read, in detail, every specific action they take in the exchange. The detailed and lengthy stage directions do not indicate that this play is not meant to be performed; rather, just that there is a lengthy series of actions that Beckett wanted performed in a specific way.

Another aspect of Beckett's work that may point to him being a closet dramatist is his alleged dislike for actors 'acting' (Puchner 102). He wanted the dialogue and actions in his plays delivered as simply as possible – with no added depth or meaning. Knowlson tells of when Beckett directed *Endgame* in German: "'Keep it simple, everything simple,' he said on the opening day of rehearsal." (551). Knowlson also declares:

> Beckett was never an actor's director. He seemed to be unable to put himself into an actor's skin and appreciate the problems that he or she was experiencing with the text or with what seemed too often like an alien way of working. For him, pace, tone and, above all, rhythm, were more important that sharpness of character delineation or emotional depth. (502)

He wanted his actors to simply be vessels for the delivery of what he wrote, not, as characters, to hold meaning. Roger Blin – the French director who directed the world premieres of both *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* – claimed in an interview with Joan Stevens that he knew Beckett "had no idea about [the character's] appearance"

(Oppenheim 304), for instance; to Beckett, appearance – beyond that necessitated by the script, such as Vladimir and Estragon's hats – did not matter. There was no important information to be gathered from these superficial, visual elements that were not written into the script specifically.

None of this, however, suggests that the actor did not matter, nor is it proof of his closet dramatist nature. What Puchner calls the utter depersonalization of living human actors may well have been Beckett's attempt to get the staged presentation of a play as close to his vision of it – the vision he held while writing it – as possible (5). For him, the words of the play – and the delivery of those words, speed, rhythm, tone – held the importance (Knowlson 502). Proper pacing and rhythm were not solely important for Beckett, either; in interviews with Lois Oppenheim complied in *Directing Beckett*, a number of different theatre practitioners who directed Beckett's work all make similar claims about the importance of timing, rhythm, and pace in the plays, including Walter Asmus (44), Edward Albee (86), and JoAnne Akalaitis (139). To Beckett, the actor is a tool; because of that, it is true that he does depersonalize them. However, the actor-tool is being used not to separate the work from a performance, but to join the performance to how Beckett envisioned his work.

Billie Whitelaw, an actress with whom Beckett worked on several of his plays' debuts, suggests in her autobiography that coming to terms with this fact, simply delivering Beckett's script without adding to it, is how one must act in Beckett's plays. She writes:

> Often, when one is sent a play, the first thing that occurs to you is: 'What can I do with this to make it different?' With Beckett, I learned that *you don't do anything*

> *with it*, you don't try to make it 'different', you simply allow your own core to make contact with what comes off the page. Eventually everything then falls into place, the material takes off on its own. If you allow the words to breathe through your body, if you become a conduit, something magical *may* happen. (Whitelaw 120)

This description may be fairly poetic, but it does capture how Whitelaw views Beckett's work with actors: the actors that Beckett wants to perform without 'acting' are what allow Beckett's mental work to be properly represented on stage. According to her, Beckett's work is at its best when the actors do not try to add or change meaning in their portrayal of Beckett's characters; rather, they should simply use the words given to them, as Beckett desired. His stringent instructions to actors, then, are not a sign that he did not intend his work to be staged, but simply that he had every intention that his work should be staged in the manner he thought correct.

Beckett's belief that the "correct" staging of his work involved "no acting" on the part of his actors (not to mention the frequency with which he directed his own shows) demonstrates that Beckett may not be a closet dramatist, but the manner in which he writes his plays does not remove the plays entirely from the page, either (Whitelaw 80). This can be seen in his use of extra-linguistic signifiers. He writes plays that have excessive punctuation (*Not I*), non-traditional format on the page (*Rockaby*), and purposeful misspelling (*Krapp's Last Tape*), all of which seem to favour reading over performance. Neither fully embracing nor fully relegating the written text or the performance of a play, Beckett balances both text and performance. Fischer-Seidel writes "Of all modern dramatists Beckett was probably most conscious of the double semiotic

modality of drama as language and as translation of language into extralinguistic signs like visual images. Not only was Beckett very much aware of this double modality of drama, but he also makes his recipient very much aware of it" (68). Fischer-Seidel does not specify whether the recipient of Beckett is a reader or an audience member; for Beckett, Fischel-Seidel suggests, plays were both text and performance, and he worked quite diligently to ensure that all of the deep or hidden meaning that the typed text revealed could also be shown on stage, and vice versa.

What all this points to is that Beckett's work is a dual-medium art form that is meant to be written down and to be performed. It also raises the issue that some information cannot be transcribed exactly from performance to page and vice versa; that is to say, for example, there is no way to literally show a typographical symbol such as a slash found in a script on stage. Exact reproduction is not the goal; rather, the importance is a representation that best conveys the potential meaning of the text. To return to an earlier analogy, a blueprint is not a house, nor a house a blueprint; but through various techniques, the same information (dimensions of building, e.g.) can be found in both. If a slash in the script is a signifier, then there must be a signified; in representation on stage, some other signifier can replace the typographical symbol and the signified will still be represented.

While a close reading analysis of script and performance can serve to identify how written signifiers in a script are presented in performance and vice versa, it only provides the signifiers themselves, the information. In my case study of Beckett's plays that follows, I aim to demonstrate examples in which meaning is represented textually in a script (such as typographic symbols) and how that similar meaning can be represented

in performance, and vice versa. The actual meaning is not the focus here, as meaning is inherently individual (one reader and/or audience member may not come to the same conclusion about meaning when presented with the same information as another). Rather, my goal is to consider the tools used to represent the information that may lead to an interpretation of meaning in order to demonstrate possible ways for the information generated by a signifier that seems isolated to either writing or performance to be shown in the other medium. For this purpose, I draw upon elements from a combination of theatrical, literary, and psychological theories to examine which tools or techniques may generate specific meaning amongst the majority of readers and/or audience members of a play. This collaboration of theories – creating a tool with which to examine both written and performed plays, and to bridge the gap between writing and performance – will here be referred to as Cognitive Drama.

CHAPTER 2

TOWARDS A THEORY OF COGNITIVE DRAMA

In the introduction to *Toward a Theory of Cognitive Poetics*, Reuven Tsur states that cognitive poetics "offers cognitive theories that systematically account for the relationship between the structure of literary texts and their perceived effects. By the same token, it discriminates which reported effects *may* legitimately be related to the structures in question. And which may not" (1). He applies cognitive science – that is, the science of how a human mind perceives and interprets input – to textual analysis. He suggests that a specific given input (in his case, the signifiers found in reading a poem) generates a similar cognitive response from every reader. This is not to say that everyone will read or interpret something identically; one may misunderstand or misread a word, have a specific memory or emotional response triggered by a word, opt to consider a phrase literally or metaphorically, and so forth. While the eventual result of reading may differ, Tsur argues, the cognitive process to get to that result is the same.

There is more to cognitive poetics and what I will call cognitive drama than simply suggesting that humans use the same processes to evaluate and interpret input, however. Tsur suggests that writers can trigger aesthetic effects by de-automatizing the conversion from surface structure (signifier) to deep structure (signified) in readers (10). That is to say, for example, while the written word "Tree" standing alone may immediately cause a reader to think of the signified (a perennial plant with an elongated stem or trunk, supporting leaves or branches), poetic and aesthetic devices slow or change the transfer from "tree" to that "meaning." If one reads the metaphor "he stood as tall as a tree," the inclusion of leaves or wooden-ness of a tree is not important; rather,

when a reader reaches the signified, the focus is on the height of the tree (regardless of the fact that there exist short trees). Taking this example further, the shift from signifier to signified is changed in how the word itself is used. "Tree" written multiple times together ("treetreetreetreetree") can mean a forest. He also examines how new information can change established understanding. In Tsur's example, he provides a joke in which a son asks if his father is ready for dinner, and the mother responds that he's not done cooking yet (10). In this case, one gains information and establishes a belief about it (typically, that a son is hungry and wants their father to come so he can eat dinner), only to have it changed by the following information (in fact, the son is hungry and wants to eat his father). Wordplay, aesthetic and poetic devices, and the introduction of further information all serve to change how humans automatically process information, interrupting or delaying cognitive functions. Tsur examines these tools in written literature; however, if such aesthetics can affect a reader of a written play, then there could be devices that produce a similar effect in performance.

Gestalt Theory

One of the tools Tsur's cognitive poetics makes use of is gestalt theory. Tsur links it to his cognitive poetics in terms of the principle that, according to gestalt theory, "a perceptual unit tends to 'preserve its integrity by resisting interruptions' and strive to reassert itself in perception" ("'To Be or not to Be' – That is the Rhythm" 129). This is an example of one of the four main principles of gestalt theory, reification. The other principles are: invariance, multistability, and emergence, all of which can serve as

examples of how a reader or audience member's brain processes information as it is modified by typographical or performance effects.

Reification is the notion that a person will perceive more explicit spatial information than what the actual sensory stimulus provides. For example, in Figure 1, the shape of a triangle is created for the observer out of the blank spaces in the circles, as if a white triangle is overlaid on top of three black circles. In fact, there is no triangle, and the dark shapes are not actually circles. The sense of a triangle is created through reification.

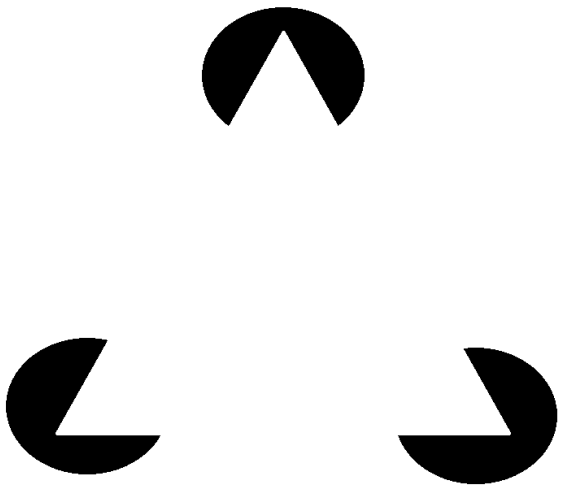

Fig. 1: Demonstrating the effect of reification.

It is this ability for the mind to connect things that are not technically connected, or to see things through absence, that Tsur refers to when he says the perceptual unit resists interruption. Through this, a sentence can be understood, regardless of breaks or pauses in it. However, the further the component parts of a whole are separated, the harder it becomes for the brain to connect them. In other words, through reification, a syntactical line (linguistic unit) may be broken by verse line, caesura, interruption, or pause and still

be understood by the audience. If the separation or pause becomes too great (i.e. too much time between spoken words, too much white space between typed words), then a reader or audience member cannot connect the syntactical line or linguistic unit. Reification is important in the presence of pauses. Certain typographical pauses (i.e. ellipses) link two pieces of information together more clearly than others (i.e. line breaks); in performance, the pauses generated by these different markers should, somehow, be equally diverse. Because many of the typographical markers that can be found in script are used to denote pause or create separation (period, comma, dash, line break, etc.), reification is the most commonly used gestalt principle in cognitive drama analysis.

Invariance is the notion that a simple geometrical object may be recognized independent of changes such as rotation, translation, scale, elastic deformations, different lighting, etc. The best way to understand this is to imagine a simple cube. No matter what direction you look at the cube from, you can recognize it as a cube; similarly, whether it is red or green, large or small, to your left or to your right, it is always identifiable as a cube. In Tsur's cognitive poetics, invariance is linked to basic units such as sounds and words. Tsur addresses invariance in terms of speech:

> Without highly sophisticated cognitive mechanisms for perceptual constancy, we could never perceive the same speech sounds in different phonetic environments, as those particular sounds; nor could we perceive the same utterance spoken by different speakers as the same utterance; nor even a single sustained vowel uttered by a male and a female speaker as the same vowel. (17)

It is invariance, then, that allows a listener to recognize words regardless of the situation in which they hear them. This is particularly important in theatre, as it is what allows the same play to be recognized if performed by different actors, at different times, or in different locations. This is not to say that a given situation, speaker, or phonetic environment may not change our interpretation of an utterance – a small change to any one of those three, or countless other minor situational details, can change how an audience takes meaning from an utterance. Invariance does, however, provide listeners with a basic starting point of recognition that allows them to interpret meaning of utterances. Invariance has some very specific uses; it is invariance, for instance, that allows recognition of a word even if it is held for a long time, either in writing or speech. For example, in *Krapp's Last Tape*, Krapp is said to have "revelled in the word spool" (62), before repeating it as "Spooool!" It is invariance that allows a human to recognize the word spool when it is held for a long time in speech (or written with an additional two O's). More generally, invariance becomes an essential ability in any analysis of literature (either written or staged) because, without it, every time someone reads or hears a passage, they would be unable to relate it to the same passage read or head at a different time or location. In other words, every production of a play, every edition of a script, even every time someone re-reads the same page, the human brain would consider it an entirely new and unique experience, preventing any comparison. In order to recognize Beckett's plays as Beckett's plays, regardless of what production or publication is being examined, the human brain uses invariance.

Multistability is the tendency of ambiguous perceptual experience to switch back and forth freely between two or more alternative interpretations. Tsur suggests this is

easiest seen in a Necker Cube, a two-dimensional representation of a three dimensional object (see Figure 2).

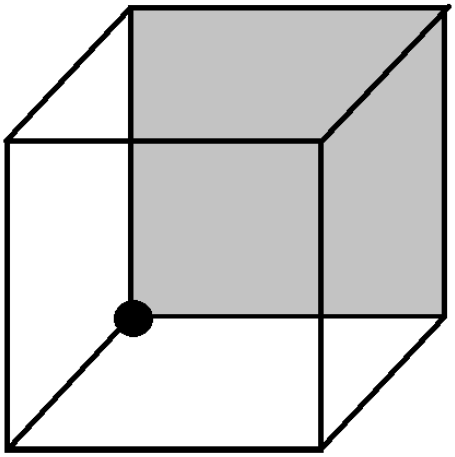

Fig. 2: A Necker Cube, demonstrating the effect of multistability.

In this image, the observer will alternate back and forth between from what angle one perceives the cube; is the dot in the foreground (with the shaded panel the front of the cube, moving up and to the right) or in the background (the shaded panel is the back of the cube). Linguistically, this effect can be evoked through the use of homonyms and homophones. In Beckett's work, for example, multistability can be examined in the title of the play *Not I*. In writing, the title looks like a denial of person; 'it is not I of whom I speak.' Saying the title aloud, however, brings up the homophonic nature of 'I' and 'eye,' possibly allowing for other interpretations (performer versus watcher, emphasis on the character of Mouth, etc.). Without the tendency towards varying interpretations of ambiguous perceptual experiences, poetic devices such as the homophonic title of *Not I* would serve little purpose in literature.

Emergence is the process in which someone can identify complex patterns without first having to identify the component parts. In other words, one can recognize a picture of an elephant without having to identify the trunk separately from the body and the tail. Not expressly mentioned by Tsur, this is arguably the second most important principle of gestalt theory in relation to cognitive-poetics, because it is what allows a linguistic unit such as a sentence to be understood without having to examine each part independently. The phrase "I like bananas", for example, makes sense without having to individually process its elements; "I" = subject, first person, singular; "like" = verb, opinion, positive, and so forth. It is important to note that, while seeing an image and hearing a sentence is, cognitively-speaking, a different activity (they use different sections of the brain), the effect of emergence, producing one large meaning out of smaller, individual parts, works the same for both senses; an understanding of sentences – whether spoken in performance or printed in script – is formed out of component words and an understanding of dialogue is formed out of component sentences.

Affect, Emotion, and Mood

The aesthetic effects triggered by interruption of cognitive function and use of gestalt theory of which Tsur speaks are not limited, however, to simply providing meaning and information. They may also trigger a feeling response to poetry. Theorist Erin Hurley differentiates three elements of feeling, all of which can be triggered through performance: affect, emotion, and mood. Affect, she explains, is the physiological, autonomic reaction that a person has given certain sensory input (Hurley 13). Examples of this include dilating pupils when one sees something one likes or brow sweats when

something makes one nervous. These are uncontrollable responses. Emotion is the social context that you give these reactions; it "moves us out of ourselves by taking subjective experiences [affects] and inserting them into a social context of meaning and relation" (Hurley 21). When someone shivers in fright it is an affect; when they tell someone they are afraid, it is an emotion. Finally, mood is a class of feeling that prepares someone for and facilitates specific emotional or affective responses (Hurley 21). When it is dark, people are more likely to be afraid; turning out the lights, then, is creating a specific mood, which makes people more likely to feel an affect (shivering, sweating, having goose bumps), that they may classify as an emotion (fear).

The differences between affect, emotion, and mood are important because they specify the reaction to the interruption of cognitive function that Tsur establishes. Tsur refers to poetic devices as causing a disorientation or de-automization of cognitive functions, possibly triggering an emotional response. Hurley qualifies these as affects, rather than emotions. While Hurley focuses on how visual and performance elements create affect in theatre, cognitive poetics is similar in that it examines how affect is created in poetry through literary devices (though Tsur never phrases it as such). The notion that theatre is meant to elicit affect from an audience is not a recent critical focus in theater studies. Erin Hurley and Sara Warner suggest that critics have been promoting an affective theatre for millennia, citing Aristotle in ancient Greece, Bharata Muni in ancient India, and Zeami Motokiyo in Japan among the first theorists of affects. They write:

> The *Poetics* [by Aristotle], the Nãtyaśãstra [Bharata Muni], and the Fūshikaden (also known as the Kadensho) [Zeami] dictate, in specific terms, which

> sentiments are to be encouraged among audiences, which displays of emotion are acceptable (in a given situation), and which feelings are irrelevant and dangerous. These critics understood that the physical sensations an audience experiences are absolutely essential in determining the success and efficacy of a production, and they created fairly rigid dictates on how meaning should be generated and disseminated through the vehicle of performance, how playmakers should guide spectators in what and how to feel during a theatrical event, and what to do with those feelings once the show is over. (100-101)

The "physical sensations" are biological, physical reaction to emotion – that is to say, affect. Tsur suggests that these sorts of biological reactions may be generalized across humans because they were an evolutionary development, which allowed for simple orientation and recall of whether information was good or bad for an individual (19). The work by ancient theatre practitioners exemplify how that instinctual, general type of reaction could be turned to artistic and aesthetic ends. Much like Tsur does centuries later, these practitioners suggest there are tools that can generate specific affective responses across the majority of an audience.

More recently, these physical sensations are linked in theory to cognition and both voluntary and involuntary mental reaction. Beginning with American psychologist Silvan S. Tomkins (who challenged Freudian tenets with his forwarding of the affective turn) in the 1940s, and picked up by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank in the 1990s, "affect is an innate, fleeting, and instinctive biological response to a stimulus that becomes a feeling through cognition and becomes an emotion through the process of recalling similar experience from memory" (Hurley and Warner 104). Affect can be

labelled as emotion only through a cognitive process – by thinking about the involuntary physical reaction and deciding what it represents (fear, disgust, etc.). This cognitive process is automatic; one does not have to think that cold sweat and goose bumps mean fear; the brain makes the connection without the need of a conscious decision. Of interest here is the notion that if the transfer from affect to emotion is a cognitive one, then it can be de-automized like any other cognitive function (for example, recognition of signifier to understanding of signified in reading). If, as proposed here, theatre is meant to be understandable both through reading and through watching performance, then it should be possible to find not only some representation of the same information in reading and watching plays, but also the same feeling responses. To borrow Hurley's terminology, if there is a distinct mood created in reading or in performance, it should be found equally in both formats.

Cognitive Reading and Cognitive Watching

Perhaps the largest difference in cognitive functions between reading the script of a play and watching a performance has to do with the amount of information that can be presented and perceived at one time. When reading a script, all of the information comes through a reader's eyes; dialogue, action, and set appearance are all read. In a performance, though, an audience member gains information from multiple senses; dialogue is heard, actions are seen, etc. This difference in how information is absorbed by a reader or audience member can affect how that reader or audience member views the play for two major reasons: limited channel capacity and constraints of memory. The Limited Channel Capacity Theory, according to Tsur, involves "a rigid upper limit to the

amount of information that an organism can process at any given time" (36). In other words, if too much information is presented to an organism all at once, some of it is inevitably lost. This limited capacity to process information is true for both reading and watching a performance of a play; however, because in reading a script information is only processed as fast as a reader can read, it rarely overloads his or her capacity. In performance, however, information is sent to an audience member in multiple forms at the same time, whether that audience member is prepared for it or not. This can lead to the necessity to focus only on some information at a time, while relegating the rest to be ignored, like a background behind a well-differentiated figure (Tsur 37). The fact that information comes faster and from more sensory inputs from a performance makes it harder for an audience member's mind to keep up, and may result in an audience member losing information that a reader can more easily retain.

In an examination of the effect of the Limited Channel Capacity Theory, it should be noted that it this overload of an audience member's channel capacity may most commonly occur due to non-spoken elements of a play. It is possible to surpass an audience member's channel capacity with only spoken dialogue (for example, when multiple characters speak at the same time). It is more common, however, to have multiple pieces of information broadcasted simultaneously when those pieces of information are not all dependent on hearing. In Beckett's work – and in theatre in general – it is more common for a stage direction to call for an action during dialogue than it is for two speakers to speak at the same time. Visual elements such as lighting and scenery are a constant presence in performance. An audience member in a public venue is even more likely to experience changing information to other senses, such as touch or

smell, than one reading in private. When more than one sense is being pressured for information, it becomes more likely that some information has to be relegated to the background status that Tsur mentions.

The difficulty that an audience member may have in retaining all information presented to him or her is compounded by the very nature of a performance. In her *Lectures in America* series, Gertrude Stein addressed the different natures of information in reading and performance, examining how the act of reading can involve rereading, returning to previous pages, searching for specific information, but the temporality of live theatre prevents all of this. It begins and ends at its own pace, regardless of how prepared an audience member is, and is typically out of sync with an audience member's emotional state (93-94). A reader of a play can return to whatever information they require as often as they require; in performance, however, information is delivered once, and only once, and an audience member is always playing a game of catch-up. Tsur links this notion with the constraints of human memory. When there is freedom to re-examine elements of a piece of information (such as a play), there is no limit to the size of the information that a person can take in. When, however, the information is limited by someone's ability of remember it, size becomes constrained (Tsur 2). When a performance is too long, an audience member will forget parts of it, and as such will lose the ability to examine it as a whole. This in itself, can be done purposefully. Straining the limits of a perceiver's memory forces them to select (subconsciously) which information to retain and which to abandon, which can serve a function in performance (i.e. allowing in audience member to experience what it is like to suffer 'real time' in Artaud's *Theatre of Cruelty*). Limited channel capacity and constraints of human memory forcing a viewer

to lose some information that a reader can freely re-examine is one way that the manner of examining a play (reading a script or watching a performance) may affect meaning.

Cognitive Drama

Taking elements from these theories, cognitive drama is presented here as a tool to analyze possible ways to generate equivalent meaning, or affective or cognitive responses, in both a script and a performance when the tool used to generate that meaning seems isolated to a single medium (i.e. typographical symbols in a script, performed actions in a performance). The actual meaning or responses generated in the play is not the focus here. Rather, cognitive drama offers a means to focus on the devices (literary, performative, grammatical, etc.) used to create those meanings or responses. Cognitive drama is a mode to examine possible cognitive or affective responses that typographical or performed tools may generate in either a script or a performance, and a tool to suggest possible ways those same responses may be generated in the other medium. Note that, as reading a script and watching a play are cognitively distinct experiences, different cognitive processes may be triggered to achieve the same cognitive effect. Through such an examination, a cognitive drama analysis serves to demonstrate how desired cognitive or affective responses can be triggered equally in both script and performance, regardless of whether or not the trigger for those responses seems isolated to a single medium. While this project focuses on understanding formed by a generic reader of a text and generic theatre spectator, cognitive drama can also be used to serve a theatre practitioner (i.e. an actor attempting to embody a performance of typographical symbols).

CHAPTER 3

BECKETT'S PLAYS AS CASE STUDY

Samuel Beckett wrote novels, radio plays, scripts specifically for television, and theatre work. The focus of this case study will be on his dramatic texts, addressing the following: multiple act, multiple character plays (*Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame*); plays without dialogue *(Act Without Words I, Act Without Words II*); plays exclusively with dialogue and very little action (*Krapp's Last Tape, Not I*); and plays with non-standard format for written text (*Footfalls, Rockaby, Ohio Impromptu*). The primary source I use to examine the performance of these plays is the 2001 collection *Beckett on Film*. This four-disc project provides recorded versions of nineteen of his plays (opting not to use his earliest, *Eleutheria*, which Beckett himself had suppressed during his life, and which had gone un-performed until 2005, four years after the release of *Beckett on Film*). While this film was produced after Beckett's death, it is the most comprehensive, recorded undertaking of Beckett's work available. As a secondary source for certain plays (*Waiting for Godot*, *Krapp's Last Tape,* and *Endgame*), I also use the 1989 film series *Beckett Directs Beckett*. These versions of the play, though directed by Walter Asmus and Alan Mandell for the film, are all based directly on the 1985 performances by the San Quentin Players, which were directed by Beckett himself.

Televised recordings are, of course, not the ideal medium to examine theatre plays. Beckett himself has said as much; regarding a televised adaptation of *Waiting for Godot*, James Knowlsen relates "'My play,' [Beckett] said, 'wasn't written for this box. My play was written for small men locked in a big space. Here you're all too big for the place.'" (488). His theatrical plays may be better suited for the stage than television;

however, for the sake of analysis, the unchanging, repeatable recording proves essential. It is important to note that while there are some textual changes to the plays in the *Beckett Directs Beckett* series, they are fairly minor; more importantly, however, is that these changes were all completed under the direction and with the permission of Beckett himself. In their official explanation of the series, The Maryland Institute of Technology (who produced the films), which I quote at length, states:

> The producers have a contractual obligation to Mr. Beckett that no changes be made in the original Beckett productions [which were directed by Beckett]. […] We sought, and believe we have succeeded, in establishing not only the last version of the texts which Beckett revised prior to his death, but also provided bench-marks, points of departure from which present and future theater and television and film artists can explore other interpretations." (http://mith.umd.edu//beckett/)

While these plays may differ in small ways from the original script, they remain true to the vision of the playwright, and do not trouble the analysis with competing directorial vision or interpretation.

In the texts examined in my case study, I focus on three distinct tools Beckett incorporates to interrupt or change the standard, automatic cognitive processes that go on when reading and watching theatre: 1) pause, 2) paragraph and sentence structure, and 3) non-dialogue text. The first tool, pause, affects our cognitive functions, according to Tsur, by separating information. Sentences are distinct information (even if they are related), so there is a pause (cued by a period, for example) between them. Cognitive poetics suggests there may be an interruption of or challenge to the information-

parcelling function of pause created by changing how that pause is cued or used. For example, when reading, there is no clear way to relate information that is grammatically connected (i.e. one sentence), but separated visually on the page (half justified right and half justified left, or broken by a line break, or visually by a symbol such as a slash). Or, performatively, if a speaker pauses in the middle of a sentence, there may be a limit to how long that pause can last before, upon continuing, audience brains fail to connect the two halves. These examples of pause and separation force a reader or an audience member to adopt a specific cognitive process (typically, for pause, using the principle of reification) to understand information which is would not be needed were the information presented without the pause or separation.

The second tool, paragraph and sentence structure, can be challenging to examine in play scripts, primarily because the common format for play scripts already have unique structure. That is to say, most often in western drama, plays are written in sentences of dialogue, with the speaker's name to the left, and a line break between speakers. If any of Beckett's work is written like this, then a few basic effects can be assumed. First, that the speaker identified by the left-justified name in the play is easily identified as the speaker on stage (there is no confusion as to who is saying what). Second, that the speakers speak in turn, following the order listed in the script (with some exception, if there is direction that more than one speaker speaks simultaneously). Third, that the written dialogue is spoken aloud, but the left-justified names and the italicized and/or bracketed stage directions are not. A great deal of Beckett's work, however, is not written in this 'standard' format. For instance, there are plays without any dialogue (i.e. *Act Without Word I*) or consisting entirely of one speaker (i.e. *Not I*). Sentence structure often remains

constant in Beckett's work, and is usually grammatically correct, though there are exceptions to that as well. Moments when sentence or paragraph structure deviate from grammatical norms, both in the "standard format" plays and in the more unique ones, prove most intriguing to this study.

Non-dialogue text, the third tool, evokes the largest difference between reading a script and watching a performance, both in terms of cognitive processing of information and a reader or audience member's understanding of meaning in the play. For the most part, the non-dialogue text in Beckett's plays is stage directions, calling for specific actions. Set description is another non-dialogue text that affects meaning in Beckett's work, though it appears less frequently. The information present in non-dialogue text is perhaps the most difficult to represent equally both in script and in performance due to the nature of reading. When reading a script, all of the information is presented linearly and through one sense (sight). Non-dialogue text represents information that, in performance, is often delivered through a different sense than dialogue (hearing dialogue versus seeing action, i.e.) and can be enacted simultaneously with other information (dialogue and action occurring at the same time). The question of how the cognitive functions created or challenged by non-dialogue text as found in a script compared to the same information presented in performance is integral to the suggestion that all information should be accessible equally across the two mediums, because non-dialogue text presents the area in which this transfer may be the most difficult.

Pause

In his play scripts, Beckett writes numerous different types of pauses. He uses stage directions such as [*Pause*] and [*He hesitates*], ellipses, and line breaks among others. Sometimes he uses one type of signifier for pause exclusively in a play, and sometimes he changes between three or four different types. These different kinds of pause can be roughly generalized into two categories: those found within a syntactical unit (for instance, a character speaking and then hesitating when considering what word to choose), and those separating syntactical units (for example, a pause before a character changes the subject of dialogue or before a different character speaks). As these two purposes for a pause are distinct, the pause itself must be distinct enough to trigger the necessary cognitive function in the reader and the audience member.

The main cognitive function created by pause involves separating complete perceptual patterns. In aural perception, reification allows one to recognize a word spoken slowly with pauses between syllables; even though the word is broken up, it is recognizable as a whole (Tsur 115). This drive for a complete perceptual pattern enables connection between elements that are found on either side of a pause. However, in some cases, the perceptual pattern is broken, making it more difficult for one to connect the two separated elements into one whole. Different lengths of break in our perceptual pattern, different tools used to break it, and differences found within the break of the perceptual pattern (in writing, typographical symbols; on stage, other voices) all give the break in perceptual pattern different aesthetic effects. As each different signifier for pause is distinct on the page, pauses in performance should, according to cognitive drama, be equally distinct from one another.

Tsur suggests various ways aural pauses can distinguish themselves from one another for this purpose, including length of the pause itself ("To Be or Not To Be", 142), articulation, cadence, and pitch of the words surrounding the pause (149). In writing, these pauses appear distinct through different typographical tools that represent them. In Beckett's work, for example, stage directions such as [*Pause*], [*Silence*], and [*Hesitation*], ellipses (usually three dot, but sometimes only two, as in *Not I*), and line breaks and blank spaces all represent pauses. Examination of these different typographical representations of pause and the aural pause they create in the filmed versions of Beckett's plays reveal how pauses represented by different typographical tools are performed differently. The most common difference is the duration of the pause. While the specific typographical tool may change, in every given play a specific typographical tool is used to represent a recognizably distinct pause. What differentiates them is impetus (what causes the pause) or cognitive function (does the pause break a syntactical unit or separate syntactical units).

The trouble with analysing pause in Beckett's work, however, comes with the differing nature of speed in the plays. Xerxes Mehta, essayist, critic, and director, links the style of all of Beckett's work to stage directions in *Play*: "Voices toneless… Rapid tempo throughout." (147) Mehta writes:

> This direction, for *Play*, also sets the pattern for the works that follow it. Beckett's wishes are not always made clear on the page; sometimes they have to be discovered from the production history. In every case, however, it becomes apparent that the voice the audience hears, whether live or taped, is to *speak faster than normal or slower than normal*. (Oppenheim 173, my emphasis)

Beckett's dialogue is often delivered at a speed greater or lesser than standard speaking tempo, and speed differs from play to play. Some plays (*Waiting for Godot, Not I*) are quite rapid while others (*Krapp's Last Tape, Ohio Impromptu*) are slow. If *Play* is supposed to be delivered rapidly, but *Endgame* is slower, then pauses, even pauses identified in the same way in the text, such as with the stage direction [*Pause*], should not be the same duration. Analysis of pause, then, yields quite different results for each play. Moreover, speed of delivery is something that cannot always be accomplished identically from performance to performance (in the way, for example, that an actor can be sure to always use the same words). Nor, arguably, should a pause be the same in each performance. Roger Blin touches on this in his interview conducted by Joan Stevens. He asserts:

> You can't just determine the length of a pause. One silence has to be relative to others. The pauses, the silences, relate to each other. You can't just say in advance how long they should be – that one is half a second, that one eight seconds, seven and a half seconds. The director has to determine the pace of the play from the rhythm and, from this pace, incorporate the silence to make them as meaningful as possible or sometimes ignore them or sometimes move them a bit. (305)

The issue is not whether all of the pauses represented by a given symbol in text will be of the exact same length (as this would be nearly impossible for an actor to sustain from performance to performance), but whether they are all similar proportionally to the pace of the play or scene in which they are found.

There are two main types of pause. The first, and most common, represents a small break in the actions or dialogue of a single character. The second represent a break

in the action between characters, such as a pause that falls between the dialogue of two different characters. Exactly how these pauses are represented in a script changes from play to play, but in each case they remain distinct from one another. Similarly, while the ever-changing nature of performance and unusual tempo of many of Beckett's work prevents a single pause from being performed identically every time (the duration of a given pause is fluid), the relationship between the lengths of the pauses compared to one another and to the action remains relatively unchanged. The number of beats of a specific pause remains constant.

The first type of pause, those present within the actions or dialogue of a single character, are written into the characters' lines in the script. Though they are most commonly, in Beckett's work, represented by ellipses, he also occasionally uses specific stage directions (i.e. *Pause*) or simple grammatical symbols (periods). Exactly what is used depends on how much of a call there is for a clear, distinct pause to be separated from anything else. In a play where there is almost no pause (i.e. *Act Without Words II*), a period is enough to distinguish a character (the goad) that pauses from one (A or B) that does not. In a play such as *Waiting for Godot*, however, the more common nature of pauses requires more than one representation (ellipses and stage direction *Pause*) each representing a different reason for the pause (ellipses for a suspension of one's dialogue before continuing the same idea, the direction *Pause* before switching to a new idea, or while expecting a response from a second character). The second type of pause, representing a break in the action or dialogue between characters, is easily distinguished in a written script from the former type of pause. This type of pause appears less frequently in Beckett's work. When present (such as in *Waiting for Godot* or *Krapp's*

Last Tape), it takes the form of a stage direction set physically between the dialogue of characters, written on its own line in the script. In performance, this type of pause lasts longer than pauses in a single character's dialogue.

Both the different typographical representations for these two types of pause and the length they take in performance are used to the same cognitive ends. That is to say, the pauses that fall between the dialogue or actions of two characters create a greater perceptual distance than the pauses within the action or dialogue of a single character. In a written script, this is done through the physical separation of the information on either side of the pause. A single set of ellipses does not separate information on either side of it as much as a line break, a stage direction, and a second line break. In performance, the greater perceptual distance is created through the length of pause, as a pause of ten seconds creates greater perceptual separation than a pause of two seconds (Tsur, "To Be or Not to Be" 141). Ultimately, pause is used in Beckett's plays to mark a separation – whether it be a change of idea or a change (or anticipated change) of speaker or actor. As such, pause generates a perceptual distance between the two ideas or syntactical units being separated. In some cases, greater perceptual distance is required. To this end, different typographical signifiers for pause are used in written scripts and longer or more emphasized pauses are used in performance. In each case, duration of pause in performance and signifier of pause in script, serve the same cognitive function.

It is important to acknowledge that stage directions such as [*Pause*] and [*Silence*] could be labelled as and examined alongside non-dialogue text; however, they are directions that directly influence the delivery of dialogue and create effects similar to other typographical tools (ellipses, line breaks). For this reason, stage directions such as

[*Pause*] will be examined alongside other signifiers of pause such as ellipses, rather than with other non-dialogue text.

Pause in Not I

Considering that *Not I* is a play sustained almost entirely by a long monologue performed by a single mouth on stage, the written text is surprisingly sparse. While the vast majority of the text is dialogue (there are only four instances of non-dialogue text, stage direction calling for a pre-established motion), a good amount of that dialogue is ellipses. Over the course of the eight page play (in the 1984 Grove Press compilation of Beckett's short works), there are 739 instances of ellipses, most of which are three dots, but approximately a tenth of which are two dots proceeded by a question or exclamation mark.

In the filmed version of *Not I*, the dialogue is performed quite rapidly. This is similar to how Beckett had it performed; Knowlson relates how Beckett had Billie Whitelaw, the actress playing Mouth in the inaugural 1973 stage production of the play, speak so quickly "there [was] no time to breathe," eventually working fast enough to have said she was "saying words at a tenth of a second… No one can possibly follow the text at that speed but Beckett insists that I [Whitelaw] speak it precisely" (598). Considering the speed at which the filmed Mouth (Julianne Moore) speaks, it is no surprise that the ellipses do not provide much of a pause. The pauses are, in fact, barely audible. The follow graph (Figure 3) represents the first ten seconds of dialogue in the *Beckett on Film* version of *Not I*. In script, the dialogue appears as "out… into this

world… this world… tiny little thing… before its time… in a godfor-… what?.. girl?.. yes… tiny little girl… into this… out into this" (216).

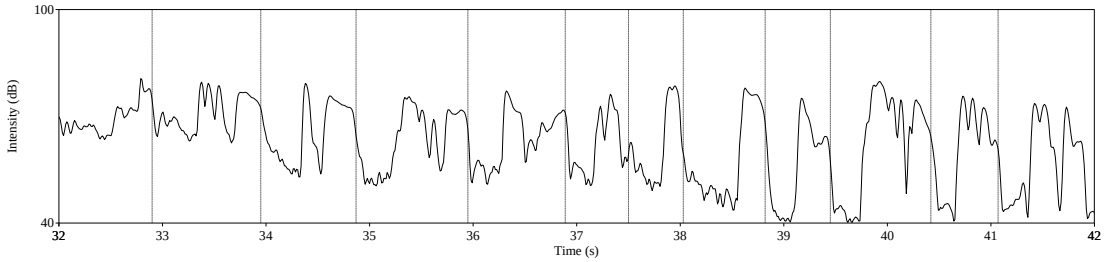

Fig. 3: Graph of intensity at 0:32 – 0:42 of *Not I.*

This graph – and the following graphs discussing *Not I* – charts the intensity (the volume) of sound, measured is decibels, over a ten second period, in this case the first ten seconds of dialogue. This graph also marks the beginning of the eleven elliptical pauses in the ten seconds of dialogue with vertical lines. Each pause ends at the next rise in intensity (the actress speaking the next word). The chart demonstrates that no single pause lasts even half of a second. The pauses continue to come and go rapidly, taking an average of approximately 0.36 seconds each. This intense speed supports the notion that the ellipses in *Not I* may reflect something other than a simple call for pause or hesitation, since any pause or hesitation is barely audible at this speed.

In the script, the three dot ellipses come between fragmented sentences: when Mouth jumps from one sentence to another, the changing sentences are announced by ellipses. They serve the same function, grammatically, as a period. These ellipses differ from periods, however, because periods are used within the play to end a sentence that is followed by a related idea, where these ellipses are used when one idea jumps to another in the fragmented dialogue of the play. Rather than serve as a pause, then, the ellipses

may serve to unsettle or disorient a reader, not providing the solid conclusion to a perceptual unit that a period does. The ideas are clearly *not* complete, and as such do not receive periods, but they do not continue either, and so require some form of typographical distancing from one another. Hence the use of ellipses. Moreover, there is an obvious visual difference in the written script between the two-dot ellipses and three-dot ellipses. Yet that difference cannot be represented in performance solely by changing the length of the pause the ellipses generate. This is partially due to the mechanical nature of the two-dot ellipses; though they are called here two-dot ellipses, that is a slight misnomer; it is not that they have one less dot than the three-dot ellipses, but one of the dots is replaced by a different symbol, such as an exclamation or question mark. Whatever difference in the resulting pause, it is not a simple matter of shortening said pause by one third. Furthermore, considering the speed at which the speech in this play is said, and the nearly non-existent nature of the pauses in the first place, it would be impossible to differentiate length between the two-dot ellipses and three-dot ellipses aurally. While both represent pauses, the pauses go by so quickly that, if there is a difference in average length between the two-dot and three-dot ellipses, it is imperceptible to a listener.

As the pauses are not perceptively different in duration and the difference between two-dot and three-dot ellipses is generated mechanically through the substitution of a period for a different sign, rather than the removal of a period, these typographical differences represent something other than the duration of the pause. Rather than length of pause, they represent the impetus or meaning of the pause. This is revealed in the content of the dialogue that surrounds the two-dot ellipses. Sporadically throughout the

play, Mouth will stop what she is saying to ask "What?" and then either clarify what she has said ("what?.. the buzzing?.. Yes… all silent but for the buzzing" p. 218) or argue about a point ("what?.. who?.. no!.. she!.." p. 219). Antoni Libera, a director of *Not I*, suggests that these passages are responses to unheard interruptions or corrections to what Mouth has said (Oppenheim 112). Where the three-dot ellipses are signals that Mouth has changed sentences, a sort of replacement for periods in the fragmented grammar that *Not I* is written in, the two-dot ellipses replace the inclusion of another character's dialogue (whether it is truly another character or even an imagined voice in her own head). Alternatively, they may represent a pause in which Mouth hears another speaker.

Aside from the meaning of the words that surround the ellipses (repetitions, corrections, and arguments), a listener can also hear the difference in the meaning of the two-dot ellipses through the volume of the dialogue in the film version of *Not I*. There is a distinct rise in volume during the dialogue surrounding the two-dot ellipses, as demonstrated in Figures 4 and 5. Both graphs describe the intensity of dialogue in the ten seconds surrounding one of Mouth's exclamations of "She!" In both cases, there is a clear rise in intensity towards the "she" (at the 323 second mark in Figure 4, and twice at the 766 mark in Figure 5), followed by a pause and immediate decrease in intensity.

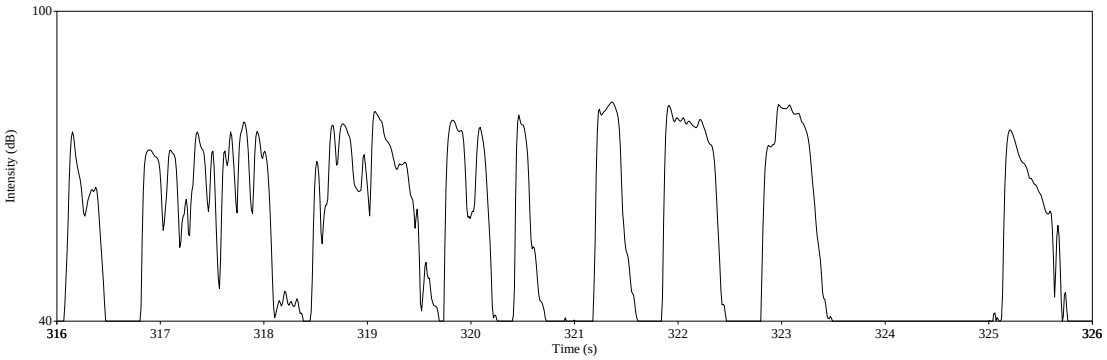

Fig. 4: Graph of intensity at 5:16-5:26 of *Not I*.

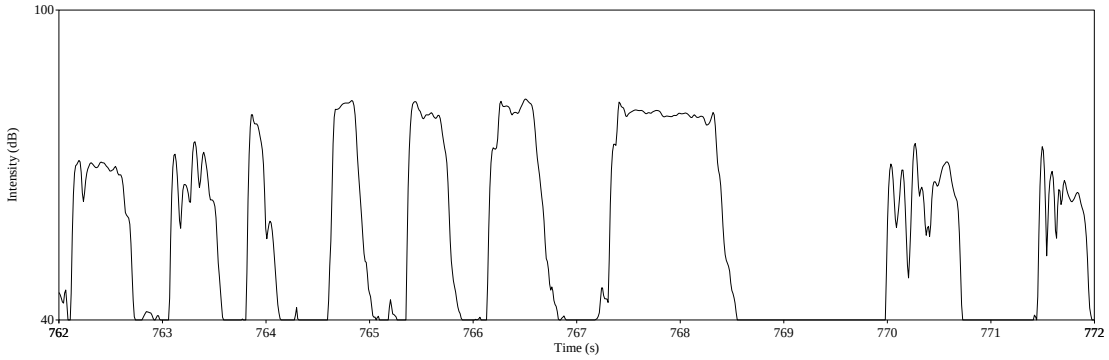

Fig. 5: Graph of intensity at 12:42-12:52 of *Not I.*

While this might suggest that Mouth is growing angry, it also implies a different target for her dialogue. She has to speak at a given volume to the audience, growing louder when she changes who she is trying to reach (the unheard corrector of what she says). This is the theory of director Antoni Libera, who actually interrupted the actress playing Mouth in the rehearsals to his production of *Not I*. His aim:

> To make her feel that everything she said was controlled by somebody, that an invisible someone interrupted the flow of her monologue, and that with some inner ear she heard these corrections and included them all except for one: that she speak in her own name, that she begin to use the pronoun *I*. (Oppenheim 113)

If this is indeed a possible meaning of these one-sided exchanges in the play, then it makes sense that they are louder than the rest of the dialogue. Mouth may be growing more insistent as the play progresses and she is continually interrupted and corrected.

Pause in Waiting for Godot

The difficulty of pause in a rapid tempo play can also be seen in the San Quentin Player's performance of *Waiting for Godot*. A majority of the dialogue in this play –

particularly in conversations between Vladimir and Estragon – is quite quick. Due to this rapid-fire tempo, ellipses in dialogue are often barely marked with a pause. Even specific [*Pause*] stage directions are rushed. For example, when discussing the gospel story of the two thieves crucified with Christ, Vladimir says "And yet… (*pause*) … how is it – this is not boring you I hope – how is it that of the four Evangelists only one speaks of a thief being saved." (12). Marked with both ellipses and a stage direction, this pause is virtually non-existent in the *Beckett Directs Beckett* film, lasting less than one second. During his discussion of the two thieves, Vladimir is given a stage direction to pause six times; however, no single pause lasts more than two seconds. As such, the meaning of a typographical symbol representing a pause, whether it is an ellipse or a stage direction, cannot be measured in duration alone, because depending on the pace of the dialogue, the duration may be small enough to not be distinguishably different to a listener. Rather, it should be measured as a relation to other typographical symbols. For example, the [*Pause*] stage direction may not command a particularly long pause, but it is longer than a simple period, which is also a typographical symbol for a pause.

Ellipses and stage directions prove to be distinct in this play. While there are variations within a single signifier of pause, the variations between the different signifiers are much more present. The average pause generated by an ellipsis is roughly 1.3 seconds. The stage direction [*Pause*] proves longer on average, with a general time of roughly 2 seconds. While a difference of less than one second may seem minute, it is enough time for a perceptible difference to be noticeable by a listener. The written symbol that generates the longest periods of pause is, however, the stage direction [*Silence*]. Leading to an average length of eight seconds between words (and up to forty

seconds in extreme cases), the stage direction [*Silence*] is notably longer than either ellipses or [*Pause*]. In this extra duration, one can see the difference between a stage direction calling for something, and one calling for an absence or suspension of something. Both ellipses and pauses imply the suspension of a current activity; if nothing is happening, then there can be no pause. Because of their reliance on a pre-existing activity or action (in the case of *Waiting for Godot*, both ellipses and [*Pause*] are dependent on dialogue being spoken), these directions are susceptible to Blin's above mentioned rhythm; because the pace of *Waiting for Godot* is so quick, the pauses are also quick. However, the pace of the dialogue does not remain constant throughout the acts. As such, the length of a given pause does not remain constant either. This can be seen in the passage from the beginning of Act I:

ESTRAGON: Let's go.

VLADIMIR: We can't.

ESTRAGON: Why not?

VLADIMIR: We're waiting for Godot.

ESTRAGON: (*despairingly*). Ah! (*Pause.*) You're sure it was here? (14)

This also can be seen in the passage at the end of Act I:

ESTRAGON: Let's go.

VLADIMIR: We can't.

ESTRAGON: Why not?

VLADIMIR: We're waiting for Godot.

ESTRAGON: (*despairingly*). Ah!

Pause.

VLADIMIR: How they've changed! (48).

Though identical until the line following Estragon's cry of despair, these passages engage a different amount of time. From the point where Estragon says "Let's go" to when he says "Ah" takes approximately 12.5 seconds the first time, and just over 10 seconds the second time. A difference of slightly more that 2 seconds is a noticeable, if small, difference considering the passages include identical dialogue. What is notable here is that the pace is slowed through both lengthening the duration of words and the pauses at the end. In the first case, the dialogue takes roughly 7.5 seconds and the pause the remaining 5; this means that the dialogue is roughly 1.50 times longer than the pause. A similar ratio applies to the second instance, with the 6.2 seconds of dialogue in 10.2 second clip, meaning the dialogue takes approximately 1.55 times longer. These two examples of slightly differently timed, identical dialogue demonstrate that regardless of the pace of dialogue, the proportional length of the stage direction [*Pause*] remains fairly constant when created under the same impetus, primarily because it is entirely dependent on the dialogue surrounding it; quick pauses accompany quick dialogue.

If ellipses and pauses both change in length depending on the dialogue surrounding them, and are often rapid enough to be virtually indistinguishable to an audience member's ear, then why have the two different typographical symbols for rapid, tempo-dictated pause at all? In *Waiting for Godot* the difference between an ellipsis and a pause is due to a difference in the impetus of the pause, rather than the pause itself. The location of pauses in the dialogue of the play (both in script and performance) reveals the mechanical difference, which determines whether ellipses or the stage direction [*Pause*] is used. Ellipses are used when a sentence is not complete, either in terms of the grammar

or the ideas. This is seen in lines such as Estragons's "Pozzo… no… I'm I afraid I… no… I don't seem to…" (22), or Vladimir's "Wait… we embraced… we were happy… happy… what do we do now that we're happy… go on waiting… waiting… let me think... it's coming… go on waiting… now that we're happy… let me see… ah! The tree!" (65) In the first example there seems to be a complete idea (i.e. Estragon does not know who Pozzo is), but the sentences are not grammatically complete. In the second example, while there are some complete sentences (technically, "we embraced" is a grammatically complete sentence), ellipses are used until Vladimir reaches the conclusion that he was working towards (the tree is proof of them being in the same location). Pauses, in contrast, come following the completion of an idea, and when expecting a reply. For instance, at the beginning of Act II, Vladimir says "Do you want me to go away? (*Pause.*) Gogo! (*Pause. Vladimir observes him attentively.*) Did they beat you? (*Pause.*) Gogo!" (58). There are three pauses in this bit of dialogue, each coming when Vladimir awaits a response to whatever he just said.

A third typographical tool used to signal a pause can be found in *Waiting for Godot*. Unlike ellipses and pauses, however, the stage direction [*Silence*] is not dependent on an action. The stage direction is not, for example, [*Vladimir grows silent*] or [*Estragon creates silence*] or even [*Silence falls on the conversation*]; it simply calls for the presence of silence. There is a difference in typographical layout of the calls for silence. Ellipses are integrated with the dialogue, as is the call for pauses, with the latter italicized and bracketed. Though it does, occasionally, find itself written in the same manner of [*Pause*], the direction for silence is often removed from the dialogue. This is the case, for instance, in the following passage:

ESTRAGON: It's the normal thing.

VLADIMIR: Is it not?

ESTRAGON: I think it is.

VLADIMIR: I think so too.

Silence. (1965, 19)

And further on:

VLADIMIR: You'd make me laugh, if it wasn't prohibited.

ESTRAGON: We've lost our rights?

VLADIMIR: (*distinctly*). We got rid of them.

Silence. They remain motionless, arms dangling, heads sunk, sagging at the knees. (1965, 19)

Rather than have the silence placed in the dialogue, a line break separates it from the character's dialogue. A similar format – italicized text with its own paragraph – occurs for stage directions that are lengthy, complicated, or involving more than one person. The call for silence is formatted as if it were a distinct action, not merely a pause in the dialogue. These silences prove aurally distinct from the ellipses and the pauses; they are not strictly held by the rapid tempo of the dialogue, and they remain clearly present, regardless of previous or following character speech. In *Waiting for Godot*, silence is a specific action separate from any other action or dialogue; it is formatted typographically in the manner of a new action (or even as a new character, there are always line breaks between the dialogue of different characters) and it has its own tempo, not dependent on the tempo of the dialogue or actions surrounding it (much like, for example, how Pozzo

often speaks to Lucky in a different, slower tempo than Vladimir and Estragon do to each other).

Pause in Krapp's Last Tape

Much like the difference between [*Pause*] written between sentences and [*Silence*] written between paragraphs in *Waiting for Godot*, an analysis of *Krapp's Last Tape* reveals a difference between the meaning and effect of pauses based on their physical placement on a page in a script. There are numerous different types of pause in the play; ellipses, stage directions [*he hesitates*], stage directions for [*Pause*] written between sentences, and stage directions for [*Pause*] written between paragraphs. As in *Waiting for Godot*, these signifiers for pause seem to represent grammatical differences rather than any inherent difference in the pause itself. All of the different types of pause can be seen in one section of dialogue from *Krapp's Last Tape*:

> The new light above my table is a great improvement. With all this darkness round me I feel less alone. [*Pause*.] In a way. [*Pause*.] I love to get up and move about in it, then back here to… [*hesitates*]… me. [*Pause.*] Krapp.
>
> [*Pause.*]
>
> The grain, not what I wonder do I mean by that, I mean … [*hesitates*]… I suppose I mean those things worth having when all the dust has- when all *my* dust has settled. (57)

This excerpt demonstrates the grammatical use of the different signifiers through pause throughout all of *Krapp's Last Tape*. Both ellipses and the term [*hesitates*] occur before the completion of a grammatical sentence. They are a pause that suspends the completion

of a perceptual unit or idea. The stage direction [*Pause*], however, only appears after a sentence is complete. It is not a suspension of a perceptual unit, but rather a suspension *between* perceptual units.

Though the difference between a suspension of and a suspension between perceptual units is fairly minor, it does change how the information being presented is understood. The ellipses not allowing for the completion of a perceptual unit mean the information is only processed once. For instance, when reading or hearing the line "I love to get up and move about in it, then back here to… [*hesitates*]… me" (57), one does not need to form an opinion or conclusion about meaning at the word "to," because one recognizes that there must be more information coming. The ellipsis signals this for a reader. For an audience member, though, this is signalled by some sign that the thought is not complete (i.e. the word trailing off, a verbal cue such as "um"). However, even without any signal like the ellipses or verbal cue, both a reader and an audience member are prevented from completing the perceptual unit because the sentence is not grammatically complete. Even when there is a pause after the word "to," the perceptual unit is not taken as complete until the sentence is finished, and it is only then that a reader or audience member may form a conclusion about the meaning of the sentence.

In contrast, because the stage directions [*Pause*] come after the completion of a grammatical sentence, both a reader and an audience member may form a conclusion about a given piece of information during the pause, only to have it affected by the next sentence. For example, the recorded Krapp says the following: "Shall I sing when I am her age, if I ever am? No. [*Pause.*] Did I sing as a boy? No. [*Pause.*] Did I ever sing? No" (58). In this example, there are three separate ideas: Will Krapp sing? Did he sing as a

boy? Did he ever sing? Each piece of information is presented and examined individually, and the meaning is clear at the end of each one. However, later pieces of information could affect previous ones. For instance, the knowledge that Krapp has never sung could change a reader or audience member's understanding of the question "Did I sing as a boy," as they now know not only that the answer is no, but Krapp also never sang as an infant or an adult, either. After formulating a complete understanding of one piece of information (Krapp never sang as a boy), a reader or audience member may go back to re-evaluate that information once further information is given (he also never sang at any other time in his life). This does not mean that such a re-evaluation of information occurs every time the stage direction [*Pause*] is given; however, because this stage direction is only given after the completion of a grammatical sentence and perceptual unit, any time there is a case where re-evaluation of information is needed, it accompanies [*Pause*] rather than ellipses. Furthermore, because this effect is created by the grammatical completion of the unit before the pause, rather than the pause itself, it affects a reader of the script and a viewer of performance equally. In this case, ellipses and pause are distinct because of the different effects they create; they do not create different effects simply by their being distinct.

Considering that, in the case of *Krapp's Last Tape*, the signifiers for pause seem chosen based on the effect and grammatical placement (as opposed to the signifiers themselves representing a different type of effect), the notion that there are two distinct, yet similar, types of [*Pause*] is interesting. If the stage direction [*Pause*] differs from ellipses because it occurs after the conclusion of a grammatical unit rather than within one, how does the examples of [*Pause*] that come within paragraphs differ from [*Pause*]

between paragraphs? There are two possible conclusions to be drawn from this difference: one rooted firmly in grammar and the other rooted in implication of meaning. The first possible way [*Pause*] within paragraphs differs from [*Pause*] between paragraphs is a simple writing convention. Whenever there is a paragraph break within the dialogue of the Tape, there is a stage direction [*Pause*] between the paragraphs. Moreover, whenever there is a paragraph break, the new paragraph seems to focus on a different topic than its predecessor. This is fairly standard practice in writing; a new topic warrants a new paragraph. It could be suggested then that the [*Pause*] between paragraphs is a way to make them as distinct from one another for a listener as they are visually separate for a reader. These aural pauses become the equivalent, for an audience member, of the line break that separates a paragraphs from one another for a reader.

There is a second possible way that these similar stage directions between and within paragraphs may differ, and it is based on the implied causes of the pause within the play, rather than on extra-textual rules of grammar. With one exception, [*Pause*] between paragraphs is only found in the Tape's dialogue, not in Krapp's (the exception, on page 59, occurs between Krapp talking to himself when looking up the meaning of a word in the dictionary and the recommencement of the Tape, where it is also lumped with other stage directions). While Krapp does have one large chunk of dialogue, which is punctuated with directions of [*Pause*] and seems to cover more than one topic, this dialogue is presented in one large paragraph. However, in this piece of dialogue, there may be a hint as to the meaning of the direction [*Pause*] between paragraphs in the Tape's sections. Beckett writes Krapp's monologue:

> Just been listening to that stupid bastard I took myself for thirty years ago, hard to believe I was ever as bad as that. Thank God that's all done with anyways. [*Pause*.] The eyes she had! [*Broods, realizes he is recording silence, switches off, broods. Finally.*] Everything there, everything, all the- [*Realizes this is not being recorded, switches on*.] Everything there, everything on this old muckball, all the light and dark and famine and feasting of… [*hesitates*]… the ages! (62).

Envisioning this recording being replayed in the hypothetical years to come of Krapp's life, one can see examples of the stage direction [*Pause*] after sentences and ellipses within sentences, but no [*Pause*] between paragraphs. However, this paragraph does show that Krapp turns off the recorder. It is possible that the reason that the stage direction [*Pause*] only ever appears between paragraphs in the Tape's lines is because it represents the recording having been stopped and recommenced. In other words [*Pause*] written between sentences represents the speaker pausing, whereas [*Pause*] between paragraphs represents the recording having been paused.

While the above quote may be textual evidence for this interpretation of the stage directions given between paragraphs, there is little other proof for this interpretation. Aside from an assumption one can make given the above textual evidence, there is no clear indication in either script or performance that suggests these inter-paragraph pauses represent the suspension of the recording. Looking at performance does lend some credence to the notion that [*Pause*] written between paragraphs may serve as an aural indication of paragraph break. The pauses that come between paragraphs are significantly longer than those between sentences in the *Beckett Directs Beckett* version of the play. Written between sentences, [*Pause*] generates an average silence of approximately two

seconds in that performance, whereas [*Pause*] between paragraphs create silences that range between five and twenty-two seconds. The longer duration of silence between paragraphs supports the notion that it serves as an aural signifier for a change of topic the way a paragraph break serves as a visual signifier; as there is more space on the page between the end of one paragraph and the beginning of another than there is between two sentences, there is a longer silence in performance between two topics than there is between two sentences.

The different signifiers for pauses in *Krapp's Last Tape* are unique in that they seem to be selected not for specific, distinct cognitive effects, but rather as a result of grammatical conventions. Ellipses and the stage direction [*hesitates*] are used to represent a pause within a sentence, while the stage direction [*Pause*] is used between sentences or paragraphs. In some cases, different cognitive effects may be created (i.e. the suspension of a perceptual unit, or the need to re-examine information), but those effects seem based on the grammar that surrounds the pauses, rather than the pauses themselves. As such, since a reader and an audience member can recognize grammatical convention, the difference between most of the pauses do not provide a reader with any more information than an audience member can receive by listening to the dialogue. The one exception to this may be the [*Pauses*] located between paragraphs, which may be representative of additional meaning (the suspension of the recording) or may simply be an aural signifier of the paragraph break between topics. The former case remains uncertain for either reader or audience member, and the effect of the latter can be reproduced, as done in *Beckett Directs Beckett*¸ by making the pauses longer in performance. In either case, any

meaning created by pauses in *Krapp's Last Tape* seems equally accessible whether one is reading the script or watching a performance.

Pause in Act Without Words II

An analysis of pause, either implicit or directed, is not limited to pause in dialogue. Action can also be affected by different types or pause as well. A prime example of this is in *Act Without Words II*. This short mime has only two humans, called simply A and B; but the play arguably boasts a third character: a goad that thrice comes onto stage to prod A and B into action. Though the goad's actions are written in the same style as A and B's action (in *Act Without Words II*, each character, including the goad, has its action segregated into its own paragraph), the goad's paragraphs are grammatically different from either A's or B's, mostly due to the inclusion of periods. Where A and B's paragraphs are long sentences describing different actions connected by commas, the goad's paragraphs are a series of short sentences. While the goad's actions do include very specific cases of pausing (the phrase "Pause." is used 13 times in the goad's three paragraphs, and an additional twice between A and B's actions and the goad's entrance), it is important to note where those pauses occur in relation to the periods. The first paragraph directing the goad's action reads:

> Enter goad right, strictly horizontal. The point stops a foot short of sack A. Pause. The point draws back, pauses, darts forward into sack, withdraws, recoils to a foot short of sack. Pause. The sack does not move. The point draws back again, a little further than before, pauses, darts forward again into sack, withdraws, recoils to a foot short of sack. Pause. The sack moves. Exit goad. (49)

The periods in this case are serving two cognitive functions. Some of them (for example, the ones prior to the phrases "the sack does not move" and "the sack moves") are serving to separate two syntactical units; the actions of the goad and the actions of the sack are different, and as such a reader is given a period to show that they are not connected (though one may cause or affect the other). These periods are cues that are necessary in reading, but not on stage. An audience member can see that the goad and the sack are two different things; they are distinct presences on stage. However, a reader cannot automatically distinguish a change in topic before the end of the hypothetical phrase which runs from the subject of the goad to the subject of the sack without a typographical marker showing the change in topic.

The first type of period in the goad's paragraphs, then, comes when separating the action of two different subjects; as such, they are not necessary in the paragraphs directing the action of A and B (both of which only have one subject of action). The second type of period comes between two sentences with the same subject; for example, those in the sentences "The point stops a foot short of sack A. Pause. The point draws back[…]." These periods are similar to those found in the writing of dialogue. In dialogue, periods represent small pauses; in standard speech, they offer a chance for the speaker to rest. They serve the same purpose here, but for action. Every time the goad's actions end in a period, they are followed by a minor pause. Beckett's script emphasises the pauses that these periods create by including the direction "Pause" in every case of a period separating two sentences about the same subject (the goad) with the exception of the first phrase in these paragraphs (in the above case, "Enter goad right, strictly horizontal"). The direction is absent from those establishing sentences because the action

does not change between the first and second sentence; rather, the second sentence is merely a continuation and conclusion of the action of the first sentence.

The effect of the periods on pause can also be seen by comparing the "pause" directions following periods with the "pause" directions found between commas. In the *Beckett on Film* presentation of this play, the goad's actions are slightly abridged. It only prods sack A once, rather than twice as the script commands. However, the film is still useful for examining the temporal difference between the stage direction "pause" between periods and "pause" between commas. The pauses between periods are long enough for an audience to notice – approximately 2.5 seconds each. The pauses between commas, however, are so short that they are almost imperceptible – less than 0.25 seconds each. One can surmise that the punctuation of pause is affecting action in the same way it affects speech; a comma produces a noticeably shorter pause than a period. Even though both commas and periods are given the same stage direction, the punctuation affects that stage direction, as it would affect dialogue.

The clearest way to establish that periods function as minor pauses in *Act Without Words II* is not, however, to look at the goad alone; rather, it is to compare the goad's directions to the directions given to A and B. Unlike the goad's paragraphs, the paragraphs describing A and B's actions have no periods. Instead, they only have commas. The sentences are all connected, flowing together with no break, and the actions reflect this. Actors Pat Kinevane (A) and Marcello Magni (B) follow the directions of the script with no break between one action and the next; their actions are as run-on as the sentences used to describe them in the script. The closest thing to a pause in action comes when the script calls for a very specific, internal direction – such as A brooding, which is

called for twelve times in A's two paragraphs of action. Even these very still actions are, however, still actions; A's brooding has a very specific physical pose which is not detailed in the script; his right hand placed on his cheeks and fingers resting near his right eye, head tilted slightly to rest on the palm of the hand. With this specific action, even if A does not otherwise move while brooding, he is still engaged in doing something as called for by the script – when he stands in this position, it is not a pause, even if he is still. Through comparison of the performed actions of A and B to those of the goad, *Act Without Words II* can be seen to use periods as markers of pause in action, in the same way that they are in speech.

Pause in Act Without Words I

A similar use of periods (or, more specifically, lack of periods) to affect pause in actions can be seen in the predecessor to *Act Without Words II*. Written in the same year as *Act Without Words II*, *Act Without Words I* is a one man mime. Typographically, a number of similarities can be seen between the scripts of the two plays. Both are written in blocks of paragraphs expressing actions taken by the characters (in the case of *Act Without Words I*, there is The Man, who is trapped in a desert, and then a number of objects which, like the goad in *Act Without Words II*, influence him towards various actions). The paragraphs describing the movement of both Man and the various items he interacts with are, for the most part, devoid of periods. This lack of periods is seen through lack of pause in the action. Either The Man or the various objects that descend from the flies is always in the process of performing some sort of action. Even when seemingly still, The Man has action; for instance, some variation of the command "He

reflects" is used thirty-two times throughout the play. Reflecting seems like a fairly internally directed command; when reflecting, the man is not said to be physically doing anything, much like A's "brooding" in *Act Without Words II*. It is not, however, a pause in either direction ("he reflects" is, after all, a specific direction) nor is it a pause in physical movement.

In the *Beckett on Film* version of the play, actor Sean Foley remains in motion while "reflecting," even if only a minor amount. For instance, when reflecting at the beginning of the play, he pulls his shirt over his head to shade himself from the sun. Later in the play, when reflecting on the scissors, he strokes the blade, opens his shirt, and rubs his neck as if to highlight the notion that he is considering killing himself. If nothing else, he follows the object about which he is reflecting with his eyes, moving his head as the object does (such as when the carafe of water descends). Though the direction is specifying an internal action, The Man is not still or paused while "reflecting." The stage direction requires an action, even if that action takes place mainly in stillness.

The movement found in "reflecting" in *Act Without Words I* is particularly notable when compared to a different stage direction from the play. At the end of the play, the direction "he does not move" is used several times (46). In the case of this direction, The Man is much more still. While not entirely immobile (one can see the actor breathe, shift slightly, etc.) there is significantly less movement than is present during the stage direction "he reflects." So while The Man does not literally cease moving entirely, he seems to perform a purposeful lack of as much motion as possible. The stage direction "he does not move" is, in this case, a pause – an absence of action – whereas "he reflects," and all the movement involved in it, is the presence of a very specific type of

action. Like the case of "brooding" in *Act Without Words II*, this action is as distinct on stage from remaining still as the text "*He reflects*" is from "*Pause*." Though they are actions based mainly in stillness, they are not pauses.

Paragraph and Sentence Structure

The structure of paragraphs and sentences is an area in which there is great opportunity for the de-automatizing of cognitive functions. There are simply some general rules or assumptions that speakers of a given language understand as the norm in terms of sentence and paragraph structure. It is these norms to which Tsur refers when he suggests that Cognitive Poetics assumes that certain poetry "offers the reader aesthetically significant structures of aesthetically neutral materials" (26); the "aesthetically significant structures" involve an embracing of or deterring from the norms. In the case of cognitive drama, however, the notion that a change in structure can create meaning through cognitive function is problematic due to the dual-mode nature of theatre. As any shift in the normative structure of a written sentence may be noticeable to a reader, it may also, in a play, be recognizable in performance. Since written sentence structure is a visual aspect of written text, there needs to be some manner of performative cue for the same information when it is spoken. What follows is an examination of two of Beckett's plays that are unique in their written form. *Rockaby* is written in verse, while *Ohio Impromptu* is written more like a story or novel than a play. The major aspect of these unique natures involves line breaks; blank text surrounds lines without any obvious verbal cues as explanation. This is unusual in Beckett's plays because, in the majority of them, a break in a characters' line is followed by either a stage direction or another

character's dialogue. Without one of these two possibilities, how can a line break be recognized by an audience member as it is by a reader?

In the script, line breaks are marked by blank space. The blank space of line breaks creates perceptual distance in a text, and separates the versification units from one another. There must be a way to create perceptual distance between the lines in performance. There are two main techniques used to mark line breaks: pitch and silence. In *Rockaby*, the lack of punctuation means there is no need to distinguish syntactic units; as such, a simple lowering of pitch towards the end of the line and brief silence following the line were enough. In *Ohio Impromptu*, as there are also syntactic units created through punctuation, the silence generated by a paragraph line break needs to be distinct from that generated by a period (the end of a syntactic unit). For this reason, paragraph breaks in *Ohio Impromptu* are marked by a significantly longer silence than those generated by period, commas, or even the stage direction [*Pause*] set within a paragraph. In both *Rockaby* and *Ohio Impromptu*, the unique structure of sentences are made clear in script by blank space. This blank space translates to the stage as a period of silence – often accompanied by a change of tone. The silence creates the same effect of perceptual distancing as the blank space, which makes the line structure apparent for both reader and audience.

Paragraph and Sentence Structure in Rockaby

While a number of Beckett's plays are somewhat unusual grammatically, *Rockaby* is perhaps the most notable in terms of format. It is written in verse, and the recorded dialogue of the play is to be delivered together with the motion of the single

character's rocking chair (275). Perhaps drawing from his musical background – Beckett learned piano before he began writing plays (Knowlson 7) – Beckett's use of verse line seems to emphasize the sense of rhythm, pace, and tone which were all important to him (Knowlson 502). As in metred poetry or music, the verse line serves to give direction for breaks or pauses in order to create a sense of rhythm. However, while the verse line is evident in writing – a line break is made clear by the blank space around the text – it may not always be so clear in spoken dialogue, particularly when there is not a set number of syllables per line or an end rhyme.

In "'To Be or not to Be' – That is the Rhythm: A Cognitive-Empirical Study of Poetry in the Theatre," Tsur examines how the end of verse lines can be marked in a rhythmical performance. He defines rhythmical performance as "a performance in which both the versification units and the syntactic units are simultaneously accessible to the perceiving consciousness" (95). Herein lies one difference between the Shakespearian soliloquies which Tsur analyzes in his essay and Beckett's *Rockaby*. *Rockaby* has no apparent syntactic markers; the main voice in the play (the recording) is free from all punctuation and the fragmented dialogue does not lend itself to any clear, concretely concluded ideas. The absence of normative syntactic units makes marking the end of verse lines in performance easier in *Rockaby* than in the soliloquies that Tsur examines; it removes any possible confusion between the performance of the end of versification units and the end of syntactic units (i.e. the difference between a pause for a line break and a pause for a period). Tsur suggests that a verse line can function as a perceptual unit – that is, analyzed for cognitive effect as a whole regardless of the syntactic completion of a sentence: "When it is properly isolated: in visual perception by the blank space around

the text, in aural perception by certain vocal devices" (119). Two of the main vocal devices Tsur propounds for this isolation are pitch and pause (104), both of which serve in a performance of *Rockaby* to make line breaks as distinguishable for an audience member as they are for a reader of the script.

In order to be as easily marked for an audience member as it is for a reader, line breaks must be identifiable in a clear and repeatable manner. In the *Beckett on Film* presentation of *Rockaby*, this is done through a pattern of falling pitch followed by silence. Figure 6 graphs the pitch (in hertz) of the recorded voice over the first four lines in the play.

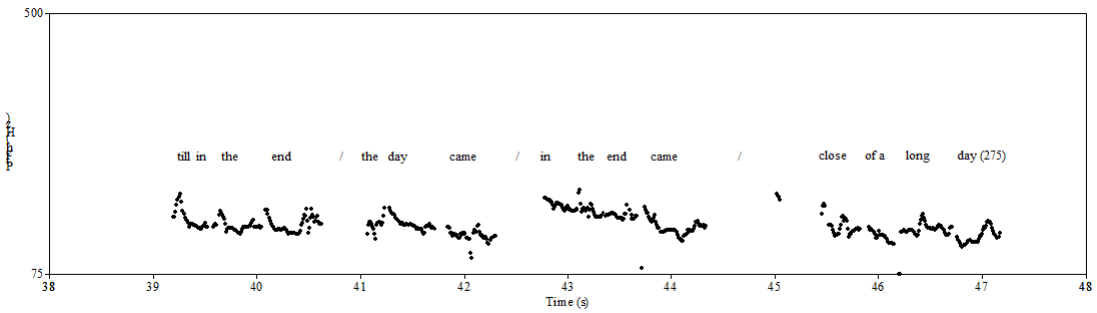

Fig. 6: Graph of pitch at 0:38-0:48 of *Rockaby*.

Made most obvious by the graph are the pauses that come between each line. These pauses are not very long – the longest, between the third and fourth line, is only slightly longer than a second. Considering that there are no pauses between words other than those present at the end of verse lines, however, the pauses are long enough to be apparent to a listener. A pattern can also be seen in the treatment of pitch in every line on the graph. Pitch peaks early in the line, and then follows a general downward trend towards the end of the line. While the last word of the line is not necessarily the lowest in

pitch, it is constantly lower than the word at the beginning. In the first line, for instance, "till in the end" (275), the pitch peaks during the word "till," rising to over 205 Hz. By the word "end," the pitch falls to as low as 140 Hz, the lowest point in the line. A similar pattern is apparent in the second line, "the day came" (275), with the pitch peaking on the start of the word "day" at more than 182 Hz, and dropping to as low as 102 Hz in the word "came." This pattern, established in the initial lines of the play, remains constant through almost all of *Rockaby*; pitch is highest early in the verse line, and steadily drops towards the end of the verse line. Interestingly, this mimics the pattern present in standard speech. Typically, in speech, voice will lower in pitch at the end of a sentence (unless it is a question or exclamation). In other words, lowering of pitch could be indicative of a period. However, as there are no periods in the recording's dialogue, this lowering of pitch can only be indicative of the end of a versification unit. In a way, marked by a lowering of pitch and followed by a pause, these line breaks function in performance in the same way a period would (though they do not mark complete syntactic units, as a period would).

There are some exceptions to the fact that words lower in pitch towards the end of the versification unit in *Rockaby*. Figures 7 and 8 chart the pitch of two sections of dialogue from the play; "when she said / to herself / whom else / time she stopped / *time she stopped*" (275, fig. 7) and "a little like / another living soul / one other living soul / [*Together: echo of 'living soul', coming to rest of rock, faint fade of light*]" (278, fig. 8). In the dialogue taken for figure 7, the italicized dialogue is to be, according to Beckett's note at the start of the play, spoken both by the recording and the rocker (274). In the

dialogue for figure 8, there is no italicized dialogue, but there is a stage direction calling for “living soul” to be echoed by the rocker.

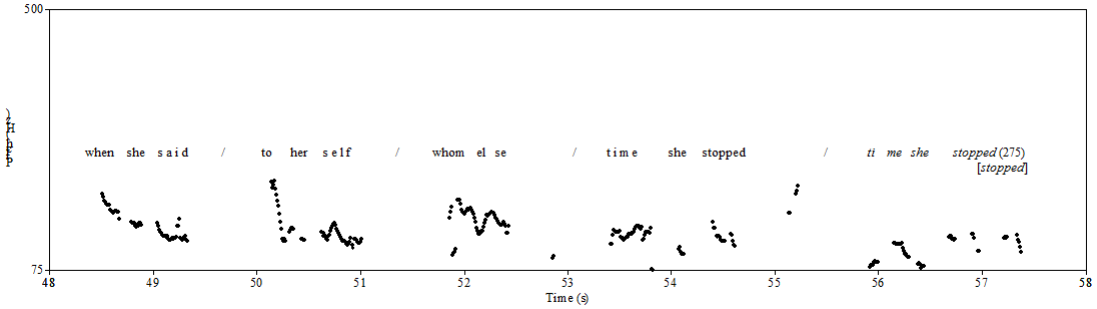

Fig. 7: Graph of pitch at 0:48-0:58 of *Rockaby*.

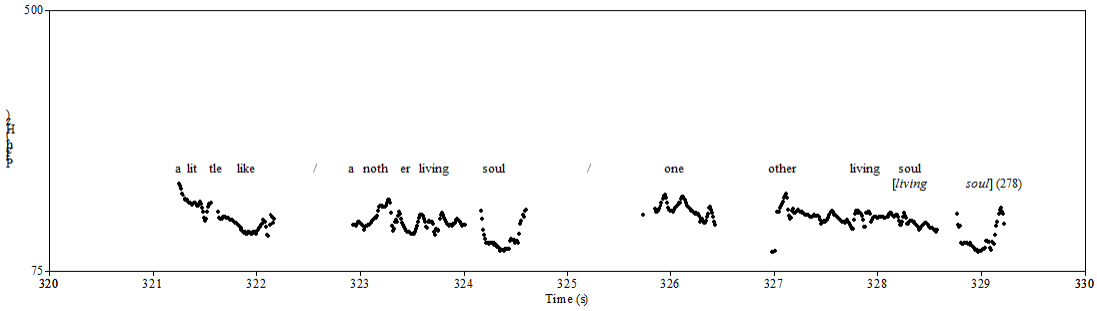

Fig. 8: Graph of pitch at 5:20-5:30 of *Rockaby*.

The initial lines of both of these graphs follow the established pattern, with pitch peaking early and then falling towards the end of the line. This final lines of these two excerpts, however, show a different trend. In Figure 9, the italicized line “*time she stopped*” maintains a fairly low pitch throughout, but it is lowest near the beginning, at the end of the word “time” at less than 80 Hz. Though this line never reaches a pitch as high as some of its precedents, it does grow to above 134 Hz during the word “stopped” (spoken almost at the same time, with the live speaker coming just slightly after the recording). In

other words, the last word of this line is delivered at a higher pitch than earlier words, an inversion of the pattern of the other lines in the play. This holds true for the other occasions of italicized dialogue in the play. In the final line charted in figure 8, there is indication of the general trend of lowering towards the end of the versification unit; the peak pitch in this line comes on the second word, "other," at 200 Hz and the final word, "soul," has the lowest pitch (107 Hz). However, figure 8 shows a significant rise at the end of the word "soul," up to as high as 178 Hz. While it is not unusual for certain words to rise in pitch towards their conclusion, the move from 107 to 178 Hz is significant, particularly when it is considered along with the fact that the highest pitch in the entire sentence is only 200 Hz. There is more distance between the low range and high range in the word "soul" alone than there is between the high range of "soul" and the high range of the entire sentence. Therefore, while this line does follow the trend of non-italicized dialogue, it does so to a significantly lesser degree. Rather than clearly dropping in pitch, the line remains fairly even throughout. The stage direction "[*Together: echo of 'living soul'*]" (278) associates this line with the italicized "time she stopped" (both are spoken by both recording and rocker), and this line seems to be moving towards a similar inversion of the norm that the italicized lines present. In both these cases, the lines are visually distinct from other lines on stage. In performance, even in the case of "time she stopped," where two lines use the same words, the italicized lines inverse the normal progression of pitch, while the non-italicized lines do not. In performance, the italicized lines sound distinct from the non-italicized lines, as they appear distinct on the page.

By eliminating punctuation, Beckett also eliminates the need to make a syntactic unit clear in performance. As a result, the *Beckett on Film* production of *Rockaby* easily

made the versification units clear and accessible to a perceiving consciousness. To do so, the performance marked the verse lines with the techniques typically used to mark syntactic units: a drop in pitch and a pause. Moreover, by inversing the standard pitch-drop in the italicized lines, the performance also differentiated italics in speech from non-italics. In *Rockaby*, the blank verse structure is as clear and accessible in a performance as it is on the page.

Paragraph and Sentence Structure in Ohio Impromptu

Ohio Impromptu is somewhat unique among Beckett's plays because, while it has only one speaker, the dialogue is still divided into paragraphs. Many of his other work that only has one speaker (i.e. *Not I* or *A Piece of Monologue*) present text in a large single block, and his plays with multiple speakers (*Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame*, etc.) have their dialogue broken into sections not mainly by grammatical need for paragraphs but by other character's lines. *Krapp's Last Tape* does divide certain passages into paragraphs (as discussed in the section on Pause), but it has more than one speaking character (Krapp and the recording). In *Ohio Impromptu*, however, there is only one speaker, but his dialogue is divided into clear paragraphs, even when not prompted by interruption.

Due to the presence of paragraphs in a single speaker's dialogue, *Ohio Impromptu* creates a fairly unique cognitive dilemma in Beckett's work. Typically in writing, a new paragraph focuses on a new idea or topic. The physical separation between the paragraphs (the line break), creates a perceptual distance between the topic of one paragraph and the next greater than the perceptual distance between two sentences in the

same paragraph. In writing, however, the cue for this separation is visual; namely, the blank space around the words created by the line break. If there is to be a similar perceptual distancing between the ideas present in two paragraphs in performance, a different technique must be used.

The script for *Ohio Impromptu* provides an indication of what that technique may be. In almost every instance of a line break, the stage direction [*Pause*] is given between paragraphs. Using an extended pause to separate paragraphs in performance is logical, as silence may create perceptual distance in speaking in the same way blank space creates perceptual distance in reading (Tsur, "To Be or Not to Be" 141). The only exceptions to the presence of [*pause*] between paragraphs are the four instances when the Listener character interrupts the Reader by knocking on the table, forcing the Reader to re-read a portion of his previous paragraph. While the stage direction is not present, there is still a paragraph break, and so a visual cause of perceptual distance. As such, there should be an aural distancing as well; in other words, a longer pause than those found between sentences, even without the explicit stage direction.

In the *Beckett on Film* performance of *Ohio Impromptu*, the pauses between paragraphs are significantly longer than those between periods. For instance, the first multi-sentence paragraph of the play reads:

> In a last attempt to obtain relief he moves from where they had been so long together to a single room on the far bank. From its single window he could see the downstream extremity of the Isle of Swans.
>
> [*Pause*] (285)

In the performance, actor Jeremy Irons pauses for approximately 1.7 seconds after the period at the end of the word "bank." However, he pauses for more than twice that, 3.7 seconds, at the paragraph break with the stage direction [*Pause*.]. Similarly, in the following paragraph, the longest he pauses for a period is approximately 1.6 seconds, but the paragraph's break and [*Pause*] direction elicits a pause of nearly 4 full seconds. This pattern remains true throughout the performance of *Ohio Impromptu*. The pauses between sentences remain short, never getting longer than approximately 2.5 seconds. The pauses between paragraphs, whether those paragraphs are generated by the stage direction [*Pause*] or the stage direction [*Knock*] are never shorter than 3 seconds, and occasionally grow longer than 10 seconds. These pauses serve to create a perceptual distance between paragraphs for an audience member.

In this analysis of perceptual distance being generated between paragraphs, it is important to note that the actual stage directions [*pause*] here are not the only script element generating silence; the physical paragraph break seems to be generating silence, as well. This is shown in the line "After so long a lapse that as if never been. [*Pause. Looks closer*]" (286). There is a stage direction for pause which is not located between paragraphs, which supports the notion that these silences are cued by the paragraph beak rather than simply the stage directions; while there is a very audible pause generated by that stage direction (just under 6 seconds), it is punctuated by movement (generated by the stage direction [*looks closer*]) and, in the *Beckett on Film* performance, a shift in camera angles (from the Reader, to a close up on the book, back to the reader). In other words, though it is a pause in dialogue, it is not a pause in action or subject. Moreover, the pause is longer than those generated by a period, but not as long as the pauses that

come before and after the paragraph in which this line is found (6.5 and 12.7 seconds, respectively). Since the stage directions for silence are the same in both the case of this line and between paragraphs, but the silence between paragraphs grows significantly longer and more still, there must be a difference in the [*Pause*]. That difference is the presence of the line breaks.

Ohio Impromptu is fairly unique amongst Beckett's plays because of the presence of paragraph breaks in a single character's dialogue. In most of Beckett's other plays, a single character's dialogue is presented as one long chunk without paragraph breaks, while multi-character plays often are broken into paragraphs by speaker, rather than by grammatical requirement. In *Ohio Impromptu*, paragraphs seem created by subject matter. The perceptual distance caused for a reader by the blank space between paragraphs in a script is reproduced for an audience member of the play by periods of silence, longer than those caused by periods or even by other [*Pause*] stage directions. Both a reader and audience member of *Ohio Impromptu* have clear perceptual signifiers for paragraph breaks.

Non-Dialogue Text

In non-dialogue text there is a large cognitive difference in a reader's understanding of meaning compared to that of an audience member for two main reasons: limited channel capacity and linear presentation of information. Most non-dialogue text appears on stage in some medium other than sound, most commonly through sight, with stage directions, for example (one exception to this generalization is when non-dialogue text calls for a sound effect, such as the whistle that makes frequent appearances in *Act*

Without Words I). In reading a script, however, all of this non-dialogue text is absorbed through the same sense (sight) as all the other information in the play. One effect of this is that in reading this information it is not processed simultaneously. In performance, for example, one can watch an actor wave his hand and listen to him speak at the same time; one cannot read the phrases "Hello" and [*waves his hand*] at the same time. Because there is only one sense involved in reading, and because the information is processed linearly, not simultaneously, the information of the non-dialogue text is less likely to be lost by surpassing the reader's channel capacity. In performance, the information is more likely to surpass the channel capacity of an audience member because it is presented to multiple senses simultaneously.

Furthermore, information presented in non-dialogue text in a script is processed linearly, while in performance that same information is given simultaneously with other information (such as dialogue). This difference in information processing can affect a reader's interpretation of the information. For example, in a performance, if a character apologizes while rolling their eyes, the gesture may be interpreted as insincere. When the exchange is written in the script as "I'm sorry [*rolls eyes*]", the reader is not given the information required to assume the apology is insincere until he or she reads past the apology itself. The reader's brain interprets the "I'm sorry," automatically, only to have to go back to re-interpret it when the new information [*rolls eyes*] is processed. In this case, then, reading provides more information – or, rather, more interpretations of the same information – than watching. However, this does not mean all interpretations are equally valid. In these cases, information gained while reading is based on interpretation and then re-interpretation when more information is found, whereas only one

interpretation is necessary when the pertinent information is presented simultaneously, as in performance. While this particular problem may be possible with dialogue text (multiple speakers speaking at the same time), it is far more common in Beckett's texts with a combination of dialogue and non-dialogue text.

If the typed non-dialogue text is to achieve the same cognitive function as watching several events happen at once on stage, then scripts must prevent one piece of information (i.e. dialogue) from being processed fully prior to the presentation of a second piece of information (i.e. stage direction). Though this is not exactly the same as being presented with multiple pieces of information simultaneously, it does create a similar cognitive effect in how the information is processed. In Beckett's work, this cognitive effect, preventing the full assimilation of information in a linear manner, is created mainly through the typed interruptions of words with either other words (stage directions coming in the middle of dialogue, literally splitting the dialogue in two) or symbols (the most common example being the dash that follows the last word of an interrupted piece of dialogue).

Though not as frequently used as stage directions, descriptions of setting are another form of non-dialogue text that appears in Beckett's scripts. Though these descriptions may, in other plays, often be lost to an overload of channel capacity, Beckett's work usually avoids this. Beckett achieves this through the highlighting of important stage elements in not only non-dialogue text describing the set, but also actions (stage directions) or dialogue referencing those stage elements. Fischer-Seidel suggests that, in this, Beckett's textuality and visuality are interrelated (80). This link between the non-dialogue text of stage descriptions and what are perhaps more prominent information

sources in performance (dialogue and actions) aids in the prevention of the non-dialogue from being relegated to cognitive "background noise."

There are also specific absences of non-dialogue text where it might be expected in Beckett's work. In "How to Do Nothing with Words," Richard Begam examines the areas in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot,* which seem to suggest action, but no action is given. Using J.L. Austin's terminology and theories (presented in his book *How to Do Things With Words*), Begam examines speech acts – that is to say, spoken utterances that perform an action (Austin 6) or somehow create a desired effect in either the speaker or the listener (Austin 162) – in *Waiting for Godot,* which somehow have the action they are meant to perform prevented. The most common example, for instance, is the statement "Let's go" followed by stillness. Instances where the dialogue includes such an utterance which is typically associated with a specific action (i.e. "Let's go," followed by leaving) are important to the meaning of Beckett's play because of the accompanying non-dialogue text or lack thereof. While in many cases the reader of the speech act may assume the presence of an accompanying action, even if one is not specified, this does not hold true for Beckett's plays. In Beckett's work, the presence of cases where a speech act is accompanied by specific stage directions, sometimes completing the act and sometimes subverting it, suggests that cases in which there are no specific non-dialogue text accompanying the speech acts are purposefully absent of action. In performance, the absence of specific non-dialogue text results in a lack of action, even if the dialogue implies action.

Non-dialogue text is one area in which there is a large cognitive difference between reading a script and watching a performance. While these differences remain

present in Beckett's work, his writing minimizes many of them. He uses typographical symbols to force suspension of certain perceptual units to prevent the need to re-evaluate information, the physical location of non-dialogue text to foreground or background information in text as it might be in an audience-member's mind, and brings attention to information present in non-dialogue text in both script and performance through emphasis being put on them in dialogue. While there is no denying the fact that the very nature of reading means that the information presented in a script through non-dialogue text is processed differently that the same information as presented in performance, Beckett minimizes some of these differences through various techniques and tools. The cognitive process may still be different, but the cognitive effect of the information is rendered fairly similar.

Non-Dialogue Text in Ohio Impromptu

In *Ohio Impromptu*, one of the two characters, Listener, communicates only through non-dialogue text; he has no dialogue, only stage directions. This is not, in itself, unique; *Act Without Words I* and *Act Without Words II* also have characters with no dialogue. Unlike the two *Act Without Words* plays, though, *Ohio Impromptu* does have some dialogue – it just does not originate from Listener. Listener's actions (the most common being knocking on the table with one hand) often interrupt the dialogue of the speaking character, Reader. In performance, the knock that interrupts Reader's dialogue occurs at the same time as the final word in the written dialogue is spoken. For instance, the play opens:

R: [*Reading.*] Little is left to tell. In a last-

[L *knocks with left hand on table.*]

Little is left to tell.

[*Pause. Knock.*] (285)

In this case, the first knock comes as Reader says the word "last." For an audience member, this information is presented simultaneously. The same holds true for the other four instances of a knock interrupting dialogue in the play. Cognitively, an audience member is presented with the information generated by the knock while simultaneously reaching the end of the information generated by the dialogue. In reading, the information is separated by a line break. However, the interrupted sentences do not end in periods, but dashes. A period is an end-stop; it suggests the completion of the information that has been presented prior to it. A dash, however, does not provide the same cognitive closure as a period. Commonly used to represent interruptions (as they are here), dashes may imply a suspension of the information. A sentence that ends in a dash is not complete, it is distinctly un-finished. Following the dash with a stage direction interrupts one piece of information (the dialogue) in order to insert a second piece of information (the knock).

More importantly, the information generated by the dialogue is interrupted at the word punctuated with the dash; in the case of the opening example, the word "last." This is the same place that the second piece of information (the knock) is included in performance. The knock and the dialogue do not come simultaneously in reading as they do in performance. However, Beckett's use of dashes to end the interrupted word suspends the information being presented in the dialogue, and does not complete that information until after the reader reads the stage direction. While this is not the same as presenting both pieces of information simultaneously, as they are on stage, it does create

a similar cognitive function – that is, the prevention of the completion of a syntactical unit (a complete line) without also gaining the information found in the physical action or stage direction. This eliminates the reader's need to re-examine information; the perceptual unit is not completed for the reader until the stage direction is also read, so there is no opportunity for an erroneous concept to form that is not also present in performance.

The interruption of dialogue by non-dialogue text is done even more directly later in the play. Reader's dialogue is presented as "White nights now again his portion. As when his heart was young. No sleep no braving sleep till- [*Turns page*] –dawn of day" (286). In performance, the action of turning the page occurs simultaneously to the dialogue "sleep till dawn" (286). The dialogue does not stop, in the way it does with the knocks. Reader continues to speak as he turns the page. A reader is presented with a dash at the end of the word "till," which interrupts the meaning being generated by the syntactical unit of the sentence. However, immediately following the short stage direction a reader is presented with a second dash, this one preceding, rather than following, a word. The two dashes, one following a word and one preceding a word, create a connection between the two parts of the divided sentence. Between the visual connection cued by the two dashes and the briefness of the stage direction interruption (which creates only a minimal amount of perceptual distance between the two parts of the sentence), the cognitive process of reification allows a reader to easily connect the two parts of the sentence. Cognitively, this is not the same as having no interruption at all (as in performance, when the sentence is not paused by the action of turning the page). However, Beckett does minimize the amount of perceptual interruption caused by the

stage direction while still placing it physically in the text in such a way that implies the action occurs simultaneously with the dialogue. In other words, this technique creates a similar cognitive experience reading the play as the dialogue and action occurring simultaneously creates while watching it.

Through the use of dashes to signal interruptions, Beckett prevents the completion of certain perceptual units when a stage direction is meant to be performed simultaneously with the dialogue in *Ohio Impromptu*. Dashes are also used to minimize the perceptual distance between two connected pieces of dialogue that are physically separated on the page by non-dialogue text. Reading passages that are formatted in this way is not the same experience as watching a play and gaining information simultaneously; however, as they prevent the conclusion of a perceptual unit, and the need to re-examine the unit when more information is given, these dashes do create a similar cognitive experience between reader and audience member.

Non-Dialogue Text in Krapp's Last Tape

A similar case of action interrupting dialogue appears in *Krapp's Last Tape*. When Krapp first turns on the recording of his voice, the script reads "Thirty-nine today, sound as a- (*Settling himself more comfortably he knocks one of the boxes off the table, curses, switches off, sweeps boxes and ledger violently to the ground, winds tape back to the beginning, switches on, resume posture.*)" (57). Like in *Ohio Impromptu*, a dash is used to interrupt the spoken sentence, preventing the completion of meaning in the sentence, as it would be interrupted if it was cut off mid-way in performance. However, the example in *Krapp's Last Tape* differs from that in *Ohio Impromptu* because, in

reading, the information given directly after the interruption is not the source of the interruption itself.

In *Ohio Impromptu*, the stage direction that comes immediately after the dash of an interruption explains the source of the interruption, most commonly, a knock. The proximity between the stage direction and dash is useful for representing the simultaneous nature of the occurrence during performance. An audience member would hear the interrupted word and the knock at the same time. Using a dash to pause the cognitive completion of the perceptual unit (the sentence being spoken), and present the source of the interruption immediately, comes as close as possible to representing that simultaneous nature in a printed form, short of literally superimposing one word on top of the other in the script. The simultaneous dialogue and action in *Krapp's Last Tape* is not presented so clearly. In the example from the beginning of the play, the phrase "sound as a bell" is interrupted when Krapp turns off the recording, cutting it off in the script after the word "a". However, a reader is not given the information of the cause of the interruption immediately. Instead, a reader is told several actions before he or she gets to the fact that Krapp turns off the recording: Krapp settles himself more comfortably, he knocks one of the boxes off of the table, and he curses.

The presentation of other pieces of information prior to the cause of the interruption affects a reader's understanding of the passage. Once all of the information is given, the meaning becomes clear: while the dialogue is being spoken, Krapp is performing all of the actions leading up to the turning off of the radio, which he does at the word "a," which prompts the dash. That is not clear until after a reader processes the entire sentence of stage directions. This means that a reader would have to go back to re-

examine meaning when all of the information is given that an audience member would only have to examine once, since the information is given simultaneously. While this is also technically the case in any example of a stage direction interrupting dialogue, the amount of information presented in the *Krapp's Last Tape* example greatly amplifies the effect. The literal and perceptual distance between the interruption and the cause of the interruption make it more difficult for a reader to connect the two. Because of the difficulty this distance between interruption and stage direction causes a reader, this is one case when reading the script creates a very cognitively different experience than watching the play.

The *Beckett on Film* production of *Krapp's Last Tape* avoids some of this difficulty by making one small modification to this part of the play which minimizes the difference between a reader's experience and an audience member's experience. In this performance, the recorded Krapp completes his sentence "sound as a bell" before Krapp knocks the boxes from the table. This action, and the following curse and turning off of the recording, all take place while the recorded Krapp is silent, in the pause generated by the end of his sentence. Essentially, if the script were written out in this way, then it would look as follows: "Thirty-nine today, sound as a bell. (*Settling himself more comfortably he knocks one of the boxes off the table, curses, switches off […].*)" The difference appears minor; the addition of one word and the change of punctuation from a dash to a period. However, it could greatly change the cognitive processes of a reader. The addition of the period completes the perceptual unit "sound as a bell." Since the perceptual unit is complete, the information is not affected by the stage directions that come after it. Unlike the actual script version, for which a reader must suspend analysis

of the phrase "sound as a-" until reaching the information of what interrupted it, "*switches off*," the completion of the perceptual unit allows the dialogue and the non-dialogue text to be considered independently, linearly rather than simultaneously. First there is the dialogue, and then there is the action. This is closer to how a reader gains information, as reading must be done linearly. In other words, the completion of the perceptual unit "sound as a bell" would allow for a more similar understanding of meaning between a reader and an audience member in *Krapp's Last Tape*. The linear nature of first having the dialogue and then the actions would also minimize the cognitive load of an audience member, reducing the amount of information they would have to process simultaneously.

The particular nature of the interruption in this example from *Krapp's Last Tape* makes it problematic for creating similar cognitive effects in reading and performance. The passage in the script requires simultaneous action and dialogue; however, because reading is done linearly, and not simultaneously, this results in a perceptual unit being suspended for a significant amount of time, as the interruption caused by the dash is not explained until after several other stage directions are read. In the *Beckett Directs Beckett* version of *Krapp's Last Tape*, an audience member sees how this passage would be enacted if done to maintain the interruption as it is placed in the script; the action begins sooner than it would appear in the script (the boxes are knocked off of the table at the word "today"). While this can be understood retroactively during reading, it is not shown simultaneously, and as such requires a step of re-evaluation of information that is not needed in watching the performance. The *Beckett on Film* performance offers a solution: by completing the phrase "sound as a bell," there is no interruption, and as such no need

to suspend the perceptual unit. In turn, this renders the perceptual distance between the word "a" and the stage direction to turn off the radio less important. While this does not remedy the linear-versus-simultaneous nature of reading and performance of the events as written in the script, it is one hypothetical possibility for a way to present the same information while not creating a major cognitive difference in the processing of that information between reading and watching.

Non-Dialogue Text in Waiting for Godot

While a difference in reading a play and watching a script can be created through non-dialogue text that dictates action, it can also be created through lack of action when action is expected. In *Waiting for Godot*, there are examples of dialogue that suggests the presence of an accompanying action; for example, near the beginning of the play, Estragon tells Vladimir that he spent the night in a ditch "over there" (9). In conversation, a statement such as "over there" seems to require an accompanying action, such as pointing a finger, for instance. However, Estragon gives this response "(*without gesture*)" (9). This is the first instance of a trend that can be found throughout *Waiting for Godot* of actions that typically call for an action or somehow do something being negated, either through a lack of non-dialogue text or the presence of non-dialogue text which directs an absence of action.

In J. L. Austin's *How to Do Things With Words* – based on a series of lectures he gave at Oxford and Harvard – Austin proposes a definition for a "performative utterance" as a speech act which, through the speech itself, does something (6), for instance, saying "I do" at a wedding performs the act of marriage. Later in his work, Austin breaks his

analysis of the speech act into three parts. First, there is the *locutionary act*, which is the actual words being spoken; second, the *illocutionary act*, which is the act that is performed in the speech (i.e. warning, commanding, informing); finally, there is the *perlocutionary act*, which is the effect that the speech has, either on the listener or the speaker (i.e. persuading, deterring, misleading) (108). Towards the conclusion of his work, he begins to move away from a clear division between a performative utterance and a constative utterance (an utterance which states something, rather than does something) and begins to focus on the speech act as a whole, aligning constative utterances with the locutionary act and performative utterances with the illocutionary and perlocutionary act. He also expands his theory of a performative utterance into five categories: verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives, and expositives. Defining them, Austin states:

> To sum up, we may say that the verdictive is an exercise of judgment, the exercitive is an assertion of influence or exercising of power, the commissive is an assuming of an obligation or declaring of an intention, the behabitive is the adopting of an attitude, and the expositive is the clarifying of reason, arguments, and communications. (162)

With these categories as a starting point, Richard Begam connects Austin's work to a number of examples of dialogue in *Waiting for Godot* which should be performatives, but are somehow not completed, including, amongst many others, the acts of repenting, begging, inviting, comforting, and insulting (146).

When Estragon tells Vladimir he slept in a ditch "over there" (9), he is performing an expositive, communicating a response to Vladimir's question "where." However, the

phrase “over there” is not, in its own, enough to answer the question; there needs to be some sort of reference to where “over there” is. This reference might take the form of a gesture, such as pointing a finger. However, Estragon says this without gesture. Austin claims that, unlike a statement of fact, a performative utterance is not “true” or “false,” but rather “happy” or “unhappy” based on whether or not it is successful in the act that it performs (14). Without gesture, Estragon saying “over there” does not answer the question of “where,” and as such is an unhappy utterance. It is the first in a long line of unhappy utterances, which are proven to be unhappy through the presence or absence of specific non-dialogue text.

One of the most common examples of these sort of utterances in *Waiting for Godot* is “let’s go” or “shall we go.” A variation of this statement is used 24 times in the play. While the “shall we go” is technically a question, it serves as a variation of “let’s go,” which is a form of exercitive (an order or urging). In all of the 24 incarnations of the command, however, no one ever goes; the performance of urging is constantly unhappy because it does not have the desired perlocutionary effect. Often the reason for not going is explained. In the first instance, for example, when Estragon says “let’s go,” Vladimir says they can’t because they are waiting for Godot (14). Later, Vladimir twice says “let’s go” to Estragon, only to have Estragon ignore him in the hopes of getting free food from Pozzo (28). In these cases, the dialogue makes it clear that the urging of “let’s go” fails; one of the characters explains why they do not go. In some cases, however, there is no such explanation. In fact, sometimes the very opposite holds true; the dialogue makes it seem like the illocutionary act should be happy, but we see no results. Notable examples are found at the end of both acts of the play. The first act concludes:

ESTRAGON: Well, shall we go?

VLADIMIR: Yes, let's go.

They do not move. (54)

The second act finishes with the exact same lines and stage directions. In both cases, Vladimir agrees to depart with Estragon, which seems to suggest a happy outcome to the exercitive utterance; however, the fact that they do not move shows that the utterance is unhappy in the end, though that result is never explained in the text.

Richard Begam uses the final nine lines of *Waiting for Godot* to examine how performatives are often unhappy in the play. He writes:

> Vladimir responds [to Estragon's desire to leave] not with action but with words, in this case an imperative, a performative of command ("Pull on your trousers"). Although Vladimir's utterance is as direct and straightforward as it can be, it must be repeated three times before Estragon understands and acts upon it, which is to say, before it achieves perlocutionary effect. But notice, when Estragon finally grasps what has been said, how he replies: "True." It should be remembered that performatives can be happy or unhappy, but they cannot be "true" or "false," making his responses inappropriate, if not infelicitous. (144)

Aside from highlighting further examples of unhappy utterances (Estragon does not pull on his trousers until the third command), this passage also suggests one possible reason for the constant presence of unhappy utterances in *Waiting for Godot*. Here, Estragon seems to be reading a performative command as a constative statement; his response "true" suggests that he read "pull on your trousers" more like "your trousers are down." A very similar exchange takes place early in the play:

ESTRAGON: (*pointing*). You might button it all the same.

VLADIMIR: (*stooping*). True. (*He buttons his fly.*) (10)

Vladimir does button his fly after Estragon's suggestion, which may align this passage with the rare happy utterances in the play. However, since Vladimir responds "true," this section also suggests that Vladimir understands Estragon's suggestion as a constative statement. While he buttons his fly, he does so as a decision to correct a problem highlighted for him by a true statement, not as a response to a request or command. In the rare cases when an utterance achieves its desired perlocutionary effect, Vladimir and Estragon take the performative utterances as constative statements, and the happy result of the utterance is secondary to their own decision to remedy a situation that those constative statements highlighted.

Many of the events that take place – or fail to take place – in *Waiting for Godot* are a result of unhappy utterances. Because of this, the mere presence of utterances may not be evidence of action (the characters may say they are going without actually moving). Avoiding any ambiguity, the play often gives a reader either dialogue or stage direction which demonstrates the unhappy result of an utterance. For example, the stage direction "*they do not move*" or Vladimir's explanation of why they can't leave. There are some cases, however, where no stage direction or indicative dialogue is given. For instance, while in Act 1 Estragon is given the stage direction "*He does not move*" after saying that he is going (12); in Act 2, however, given the same line ("I'm going"), Estragon has no stage direction specifying if he moves or not (71). Reading further on, since Estragon continues to speak, a reader can assume that he does not exit. This is not clear until further passages are read, however, whereas it is immediately apparent when

the stage direction "*he does not move*" is given. A lack of movement would be equally apparent to an audience member watching the play.

Typically, it is easy for an audience member to assume that a lack of stage directions indicates a lack of important physical action. This easy assumption can be challenged by performative utterances, which often suggest the presence of a perlocutionary effect which may be a physical action. In *Waiting for Godot,* no such assumption can be made. In the play, a lack of stage direction means a lack of movement on stage, regardless of what the dialogue may suggest as a possible action. Yet some discrepancy can be found in this stance of "no stage direction reflecting stillness" when one watches the *Beckett Directs Beckett* performance of *Waiting for Godot*. For instance, in the performance of Estragon's direction-less "I'm going" from page 71, actor Lawrence Held does begin to walk off stage after delivering the line, though he stops before leaving the stage, and delivers his next two lines ("you'll never see me again" and "farewell") from the edge of the stage without moving. Perhaps more surprising is the fact that when he delivers Estragon's early line "over there," which the script says is delivered "*without gesture*" (9), Held nods his head in a specific direction, a clear gesture.

There are two possible conclusions to be made of this. First, since this rendition of *Waiting for Godot* was based on a stage play directed by Beckett and the production was approved by Beckett, the inclusion of this gesture could be a purposeful change made by Beckett, intended to add further clarity or meaning to the passage (note that other productions, such as the *Beckett on Film* version of the play, do not include these movements). Alternatively, one may highlight the fact that, while these actions do

technically occur, they do not render the utterances happy. Estragon makes a gesture about where he slept, but it is vague, and does not point to a specific ditch in which he slept; he begins to walk when he claims to be going, but he never actually leaves. In both cases, an audience member may see movement that is not included in stage directions for the reader, but that movement does not change the outcome of the dialogue. Since the utterances remain unhappy, the meaning of the play is not affected by these minor movements, and the understanding of the play remains the same for an audience member who sees the play (complete with these small movements) and a reader who has no indications of these movements.

Stage directions (or lack thereof) are not the only type of non-dialogue text present in *Waiting for Godot*. The set description occupies a unique place in the script. In the Faber and Faber production of the script, the set description is placed on the same page as the Act numbers, separated from the dialogue of the script by an entire blank page. This marks the set descriptions as different from any other dialogue or non-dialogue text in the play, perhaps to suggest its constant presence (this scene description remains unchanged within the acts). The placement of set description being physically separated from any dialogue or action may best reflect an average performance's emphasis of set, and how it is processed in the minds of an average audience member. The set is there, but it is background information (quite literally, in some cases), and a typical audience member will not continue to concentrate on it.

Reuven Tsur explains this effect through an experiment performed by Alvin Liberman, Ignatius Mattingly, and Michael Turvey. Though the experiment mainly focused on speech, its results speak to any relationship between signifier and signified. It

takes a great deal of space in a human mind to receive a signifier and process it (70.000 bits per second, for spoken words). However, by translating the signifiers into meaning, the words into an idea, the cost to record and remember the message is only 40 bits per second, 1000 times less (Tsur 6). A signifier is translated into signified as quickly as possible in the human mind to lower the mental cost of remembering it, lessening the chance of cognitive overload causing information to be lost. Since the signifier is no longer needed, it can be freely discarded or, in the case of the set of a play, ignored when the meaning is understood. Since the set on *Waiting for Godot* remains mainly unchanged, it does not require focus – once established (through the raising of a curtain, for instance) and its meaning is understood, it does not need to be concentrated on again. The placement of set description in the script does the same thing; it is introduced (written on the page of the Act numbers) but then rarely changes (no new information is presented), and so only rarely requires focus. In general, the only times that the set, in both script and performance, requires renewed focus are if it does change, or if it somehow affects the other information in the play (i.e. if the characters react to it, or somehow engage with it). There are examples of both of these reasons in *Waiting for Godot*.

The set description at the start of Act I of *Waiting for Godot* is brief: "*A country road. A tree. Evening*" (7). The only distinguishing aspect of the set is a solitary tree. In performance, it would be difficult for an audience member to miss seeing the tree (particularly if it is the only set piece on the stage). In reading, however, the presence of the tree on an otherwise empty set may be lost, particularly because of the great distance between the set description and the rest of the act. The presence of the tree is reinforced

in the mind of a reader, however, and foregrounded in the mind of both reader and audience member through dialogue. The tree is mentioned fairly early in the play; discussing where they are supposed to meet Godot, Vladimir says "He said by the tree. (*They look at the tree.*) Do you see any others?" (14). In the dialogue, a reader and audience member is reminded not only of the presence of the tree, but also the absence of any other. Soon thereafter, the tree is brought up again, when Estragon suggests hanging themselves from it (17). The attention of both reader and audience member is brought back to the tree before this happens when, during Vladimir's lines immediately prior to Estragon's suggestion, the following stage direction occurs: "(*Estragon looks attentively at the tree.*)" (17). This is perhaps particularly useful for a reader, as he or she will have read more than thirty lines since the last mention of the tree, which is a constant (background) presence for an audience member. The stage direction explaining that Estragon is looking at the tree brings, for a reader, the existence of the tree to the foreground. This provides the information necessary to fully understand Estragon's suggestion "What about hanging ourselves?" (17). Dialogue and stage directions make the tree as present for a reader as it would be for an audience member.

The setting of *Waiting for Godot* does not change between the two acts. The set description for Act II simply reads "*Next Day. Same Time. Same Place*" (55). There is one small difference between both acts, though: the "four or five leaves" that the previously barren tree has now sprouted (57). This is a minor physical difference – though it can be quite obvious for an audience member on the otherwise bare stage – and it is often viewed as a metaphor for specific meaning in the play. For example, Diane Dubois suggests that the growth of leaves represents not only the passage of time

(reinforcing the notion of the eternally-repetitive lives of Vladimir and Estragon), but also links the second act more closely with comedy than the first (121); Jon Erickson, in contrast, suggests the leaves represent a hope for possible change (265). If this information (that is, the leaves that are now present on the tree) is important to meaning, then it may require renewed cognitive focus – a reader and an audience member must recognize the change in order to analyze the possible meanings.

For a reader of the script, the change is highlighted through the placement of the new information. It is not placed with the set description on the act number page; rather, it is placed in the stage directions at the start of the act itself, immediately prior to the directions detailing Vladimir's entrance. The "four or five leaves" are not located as background, unchanging information (as the set is, separated from the rest of the play by an entire blank page), but as part of the action occurring on stage. The change in the tree is also highlighted in dialogue for both a reader and an audience member. Vladimir draws attention to the change, saying "things have changed here since yesterday," and twice telling Estragon to "look at the tree" (60). If an audience member fails to notice the physical difference on stage or a reader fails to read the stage direction detailing the change, Vladimir's dialogue highlights the notion that the tree is different. If there is meaning to be ascribed to the newly grown leaves on the tree, then it is important for a reader or audience member to notice the change; Beckett makes sure that it is nearly impossible not to recognize that change in either reading or watching the play.

In the *Beckett Directs Beckett* performance, focus is drawn to the tree almost immediately through the actions of Vladimir. When the second act starts, he first looks at Estragon's still form, and then moves to the tree to examine it. While the stage direction

only calls for Vladimir to halt and "*[look] long at the tree*" (57), the filmed play has Vladimir approach the tree, allowing the camera to tighten on a shot of Vladimir reaching out to touch one of the leaves. The tightening of the camera shot is an effective way to direct audience attention, as it removes almost every other possible source of information from the audience (the only thing that remains is Vladimir himself and the tree). However, such a technique would not be possible in a staged performance. Without the possibility of a tightened camera angle, Vladimir's approach to and interaction with the tree is even more important for directing audience attention. These actions are not expressly stated in any stage directions, though. Still, they serve to highlight an important source of information in performance that is highlighted in a different way – through placement of non-dialogue text – in a written script. Only present in the performance, these actions are used in the same way as information (the placement of the stage direction describing the tree's new growth) that is only present in a written form.

While the way in which the set is highlighted is slightly different for reader and audience member, similar tools are used. As it is visibly distinct on stage (the tree being the only set on a fairly bare stage), so too is it visibly distinct on the page (isolated on a blank page). When the set changes, it is highlighted in dialogue for both reader and audience member. Even the effect of the placement of the new information in the script (set at the start of the second act, along with stage directions) is somewhat reproduced in the *Beckett Directs Beckett* version of the play through a change in camera angle. The exact cognitive effects of reading about the set in a script and seeing the set in performance will never be identical; however, through both his script writing and his

directing, Beckett seems to have minimized those differences a great deal in *Waiting for Godot*.

Non-Dialogue Text in Footfalls

Non-dialogue text is used to present aspects of *Footfalls* that seem entirely linked to performance in much the same way it is used in *Waiting for Godot*. At the beginning of *Footfalls*, a section of non-dialogue text describes visual elements of the play: the characters' appearances, the set appearances, the characters' movement, the set lighting, and the characters' voices. This allows a reader to access information that would otherwise not be given; for instance, while an audience member of a performance immediately learns the tone of a speaker's voice whenever there is dialogue, that tone is not automatically expressed to a reader. Since this direction is given before the speech, a reader can read the speech with that pattern in their head. However, this also creates a different understanding of the information than learning it as an audience member would. This comes back to the linear nature of reading for multiple pieces of information. A reader learns almost immediately, for instance, that the voices are "both low and slow throughout" (239). This information is processed, understood, and stored. As discussed in the Liberman experiment, most people would translate the signifiers (the words) into their concept to lessen the cognitive load for storage (Tsur 6). The concept, then, becomes fixed, or passive. The meaning has been understood, and as such the information that the voices are low and slow no longer need be retained. This does not mean that the meaning is completely abandoned; it is still stored, it can still affect a reader's understanding of the dialogue for the play. It does, however, become more

secondary, background information; previously gained knowledge which colours a reader's interpretation of new sources of information.

This is different than it would be for an audience member who hears the dialogue and must recognize that the speaker's voice is "low and slow" as they speak. For an audience member, that information is constantly being portrayed in the dialogue, rather than being presented prior to the dialogue and stored. On the one hand, this means it is less likely to be forgotten due to large perceptual distance between the early information and the latter dialogue. However, as the information is constantly being transmitted as new information, rather than only being transmitted once and then stored, it increases the chance of cognitive overload preventing this information from being properly processed. That is to say, an audience member will likely focus on understanding and storing the information in the words, rather than in the volume or tone of them. While the mode of transmitting this information to a reader does create the possibility for different cognitive effects than it would for an audience member, it is still providing information that would not otherwise be available. While it does not eliminate all of the differences between written text and performance, non-dialogue text is serving here to somewhat bridge the gap between them.

A similar technique of using non-dialogue text to present information is used twice in the play when dialogue is directed to be synchronous with the steps of M's pacing (239, 241). In both cases, the synchronous speech is counting the number of steps, and in both cases the direction for synchronicity comes before the dialogue. The direction coming before the dialogue rather than after it prevents the need to re-evaluate the dialogue when further meaning is given; in this case, a reader only has to read the

dialogue once, already knowing that it is synchronous with steps, rather than read the numbers, *then* learning they were synchronous with steps. This is one case in which the information may be clearer for a reader than for an audience member. With the pre-knowledge that the numbers are synchronous with the steps, the reader knows about the timing from the first number. An audience member, in contrast, may require multiple points of reference (more than one word, more than one step) before the synchronicity becomes clear, or they may miss the synchronicity entirely by focusing on the dialogue, rather than on multiple pieces of information (the dialogue and the steps).

The *Beckett on Film* production of *Footfalls* diminishes some of the chance of an audience member missing the fact that the dialogue is synchronous with the steps. Both times that the stage directions call for the counting to occur synchronously with the dialogue, the film uses a close-up on the pacing feet, removing as much all sources of possible information aside from the dialogue and the movement of the feet. By limiting the sources of information, the film reduces the chance of an integral piece of the information being ignored by an audience member in favor of something else. This particular technique is, of course, only an option for film, and not for a staged production. In a stage performance, the directions given by Beckett at the start of the play also serve to minimize the chance of missing information involving the steps. According to the directions, the lighting is to be "*dim, strongest at floor level, less on body, least on head*" (239). The light will be directing attention to the feet, helping to focus the audience on the steps as a source of information. The rest of the stage, however dim, will still be more visible than it is in a close-up shot for a filmed production. This does not mean that in a staged performance, all audience members will miss the synchronicity of the dialogue

counting the steps and the steps themselves, or that any are even likely to. However, considering multiple sources of information available to an audience member across an entire stage, it is more possible for an audience member to miss the synchronous nature of the dialogue and the steps than it is for a reader who is given the information about them being synchronous immediately prior to reading the dialogue in question.

The non-dialogue text in *Footfalls* serves to give a reader of the script some information that would typically not be available to them through the written medium; information, for instance, about aural elements that may be clear to an audience member but are typically not recorded in a written script. The linear nature and singular source of information of the written mode mean that this information is received and processed differently for a reader of the script than an audience member of a performance. There is a greater perceptual distance between some of the information and what it affects in script than in performance, for example, which means there is more of a chance that the information may not be connected. On the other hand, since the only way to transmit information through the script is in writing, everything written can be recognized equally, whereas in performance the multiple, simultaneous sources of information may result in some of the information being disregarded due to limited channel capacity. While these differences do exist, they are fairly minor, and can be minimized through certain directorial choices. As such, non-dialogue text is perhaps the best or only way to properly transmit the desired information in the script mode as it is in performance of *Footfalls*.

CODA

BECKETT AND BEYOND

At its core, most theatre exists in a dual-medium state. While there are examples of genres primarily performed and not read, or read and not performed, most theatre is accessible both in performance and in text. However, this dual-medium nature can trouble certain theories that apply meaning to elements in plays, either read or watched.

Affect theory and cognitive poetics look at theatre and poetry, respectively, examining similar aspects of the two types of literature. Both suggest that an affective response can – or even should – be triggered by what an audience member witnesses or a reader reads. Both theories, however, become more problematic when considered with the dual-medium nature of theatre. If affective theory suggests that a play's lighting can create an affective response, for instance, that response, and the emotional information contained within it, is seemingly inaccessible to a reader who cannot see the lighting when reading the script of a play. Conversely, if cognitive poetics propounds that typographical symbols interrupt standard cognitive response to elicit an emotional response from a reader, that response is likewise lost to an audience member who has no way of seeing the typographical symbol in the performance of a play. Though similar, each theory is thoroughly and respectively rooted in one mode, affective theory in performance and cognitive poetics in writing.

Cognitive drama attempts to bridge the gap between these theories, to suggest a way that information can be delivered to both an audience member of a performance and a reader of a script. The script, after all, is as much the play as the performance, and the information – whether delivered in words, cognitive effects, or affective responses –

should be available in both modes. Using nine of Samuel Beckett's plays and focusing on three of the seemingly most problematic techniques in his work, this case study aims to demonstrate that any tool or technique used to generate meaning, cognitive effect, or affective response in script can have an equally effective counterpart in performance, and vice versa. Samuel Beckett's rather unique writing style makes him an ideal case study for a theory of cognitive drama; however, while Beckett's work is ideal, the analysis here could also be applied to any piece of theatre that has both written and performed aspects.

In addition to focusing on one author, this case study assumed a few other generalities in its examination of cognitive drama; however, it should be noted that, while these generalities were useful, they are not necessary. For instance, this case study worked to examine how meaning can be delivered to both a general reader and a general audience member of a play. As a tool, however, cognitive drama could also be utilized by theatre practitioners such as actors (how to embody specific typographical elements in acting) or authors (how to record a desired performative device), for instance. Further examination of cognitive drama could also serve to demonstrate its usefulness, as an analytic tool, to modes of literature or performance other than theatre: for instance, film or aural readings of poetry. Finally, it should be noted that while this case study focused on a small group of techniques and devices used in theatre, these devices are by no means the only areas for which a cognitive drama analysis may be beneficial. Further study of this theory could focus on any device (poetic, performative, etc.) to suggest how the meaning or effect generated by that device may be equally generated in a different medium. It is possible that not all devices translate as easily as the ones examined here. However, I believe that there will always be a degree to which that translation is possible.

The three techniques addressed in this case study – pause, paragraph structure, and non-dialogue text – each create a source of information that, at first, seem isolated to one medium. Examination of the cognitive effects that this information is meant to cause, however, reveals techniques that can be used in both writing and performance, to the same end. Typically, distinct types of pause are determined mechanically; the difference between a stage direction and an ellipsis, for instance, may be as simple as whether the pause comes within or between syntactic units. In either case, however, pause serves to disrupt the perceptual unit, and the length of separation in that perceptual unit is created mainly through typed signifiers for pause in script and duration in performance. Paragraph structure can be used to similar ends. In some cases, line breaks may serve as replacements for syntactic units; in others, they may serve to separate large perceptual units, or ideas, from one another. In either case, as they create visual separation on the page, techniques such as silence can be used in performance to create aural separation for the same result: a distancing of either the versification or paragraph units. The effects generated by non-dialogue text may be the most difficult to accurately reproduce in both script and performance due to the cognitive differences in reading a script and watching a performance. However, there are techniques that can be used to minimize these differences, such as preventing the completion of a cognitive unit prior to providing information that would be simultaneous in performance. While reading and watching remain very distinct, similar cognitive effects can be created in both. This analysis may seem to privilege the script over the performance; that is to say, I work to demonstrate how the performance can match the script, rather than the other way around. This is done, in this case study, mainly because Beckett wrote his work before it was performed.

However, a cognitive drama analysis can be used in examining how a script can record performance accurately, as well. In other words, while this thesis tended towards suggesting that different lengths of silence are used to reflect different typographical markers for pause, for instance, it is just as accurate to claim that different markers for pause are used to capture different lengths of silence. It is not a matter of making the performance work to match the script, or the script work to match the performance; rather, it is a demonstration of ways the same information can be represented equally in both mediums.

In addition to these specific discoveries, this case study provides a number of more general facts about cognitive drama. First, the tool or technique used in one medium is not always reproduced exactly in the other, but the effect of the technique is. For instance, due to the linear nature of reading, it is impossible to present two pieces of written information simultaneously to a reader, though multiple pieces of information can be presented to an audience member at the same time. Reading *Ohio Impromptu's* "Could he not- [*Knock*]" (286) will never be the same as hearing the word "not" and the knocking sound simultaneously. However, the cognitive response to having multiple pieces of information simultaneously presented (the immediate knowledge that the knock is the impetus for the dialogue stopping) can be reproduced. Second, for every distinct tool or technique in one medium there is an equal number of equally distinct representations in the other medium. For example, in *Waiting for Godot*, pause is represented in the script in multiple ways (ellipses, stage directions for pause, stage directions for silence) and for multiple reasons (i.e. hesitation in a sentence versus the end of a conversation). Though they are all typographical representations of pause, the pauses

that each creates in the performance has a distinct length. Furthermore, while the techniques used to represent a specific piece of information may change between plays, they remain constant within a single play. The stage direction [*Pause*] creates a different cognitive effect in *Waiting for Godot* than it does in *Ohio Impromptu*; however, it remains constant in what it does within *Waiting for Godot* and within *Ohio Impromptu*. Third, this case study demonstrates that, like any theory, the ideas presented herein may not always be applied. Plays are constantly being written and edited, performed and reimagined, published and republished. At any given time, some aspects of a certain performance may not be properly captured and represented in a script, and some elements of a script may not be fully realized and represented in performance.

What is important, then, is not whether every performance fully recreates the cognitive effects present in its script or every script fully recreates the affective responses created by the performance. This study of cognitive drama does not aim to suggest a single "proper" or "correct" way to translate meaning or effect from one medium to another. Further study of cognitive drama may reveal that there are some general techniques used across multiple plays or by multiple playwrights; however, the changing nature of literature and performance makes such a generalization unlikely and potentially fallible. Instead of arguing for "correct" translations, then, what can be taken from the case study of cognitive drama in Samuel Beckett's work is that these translations are possible. What is performed *can* be recorded, and what is written *can* be enacted. Not only does theatre exist partly in writing and partly in performance, but also, it can be represented and understood fully in both the page and the stage.

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