Nothing matters but the writing. There has been nothing else worthwhile... a stain upon the silence.

Samuel Beckett
CHAPTER - V
ABSURDISM IN MURPHY

5.1 Introduction

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5.1 Introduction:

The novel Murphy is the first novel of Beckett. It was written in 1935 and published in 1938. Before publishing this novel, Beckett was known as an author of short stories. More Pricks than Kicks (1934) is the collection of his short stories.

Murphy was considered Beckett’s most traditional novel. In the novel Murphy the protagonist attempts to retreat from life, finds employment, unknowingly becomes the object of a manhunt, and finally meets his end in terms of a classical case of misadventure.

Samuel Beckett started writing this novel in August 1935 and finished it in next June. Forty-one publishers rejected the manuscript of the novel; then literary agent George Reavey (1938) bargained and then the novel was published in 1938.

5.2 Themes / Features:

All the novels written by Samuel Beckett have absurd themes. Absurdity borderlines and underlines all his novels and Murphy is no exception.

1.2.1 Alienation:

The novel is about the character Murphy who is an alienated character. Murphy yearns for nothing except most completely himself. Murphy is alone in the room, strapped naked to a rocking chair. He thinks Nirvana garden, which is beautiful place in the world. Murphy has loved Celia. Celia is a prostitute. After practising this profession, she now wants to change her profession and employment. Murphy and Celia live together but most of the time Celia is out of house, at that time, Murphy becomes alienated in the house and reminds of nirvana days:

“He sat naked in his rocking-chair of
undressed teak, guaranteed not to crack,
warp, shrink, corrode, or creak at night.
It was his own, it never left him.” (1)

Murphy believes that physical restraint is the only path to gain his wish for freedom from the outside world. Murphy’s physical restraint may be an unconscious form of self-punishment. Murphy goes out into public. He searches for a mock job. Murphy is unable to simply walk away from society. Patients recognized their mentality or madness and take responsibility for their absurd actions. This mental institution was able to convince patients to restrain
themselves from disturbing morality and outside world. It is a society to control the behavior of mental patients, but Murphy reverts back to physical restraint to control his desires.

Samuel Beckett’s characters restrain themselves from personal satisfaction and a sense of power. In this novel, the protagonist has self-restraint through the unspoken demands for power. The characters’ madness controls themselves out of fear of punishment and ridicule. Murphy was sitting in the chair, at that time his sense of control over his mind and body is thus stated:

“He sat naked in his rocking chair of undressed teak.” (3)

“Quid pro quo.” (3,6)

In *Murphy* the protagonist has his room, which is a symbol of cell, and in this cell Murphy lives in a small room but he thinks it is a sufficient and large space for him. He has created his own asylum, and thought about barriers to use, but has no idea how to make use of them. Murphy’s apartment and garret are arranged to his needs. Murphy was not captured against his wishes. He creates his own asylum which becomes a positive barrier between himself and the outside world. Murphy was not only the powerful ruler but also helpless patient. Malone and Macmann follow the orders given to them by the nurse like Murphy. Murphy seeks an absolute power and because of it revolves around his. But he cannot find his identity.

The novel *Murphy* is identified with allusions, different sources and direct quotations and ideas which are represented by the existence of Murphy. In this novel Murphy struggles for existence:

“Murphy, all life is figure and ground.
But a wandering to find home” (5)

The novel reminds us of the problem of existence. Samuel Beckett is considered less suggestive, arguing forcefully neither for the adequacy of his remedy nor even for the existence of the problem,

1.2.2 **Life in Asylum: Life of Imprisonment:**

Samuel Beckett has depicted the theme of life in an asylum. He describes an asylum as a prison. Beckett was attracted to the institution like an asylum. He thinks, prison was a world that he did not know at all about prison. He feared about prison, because he thought that prison was a symbol of violence and
degradation. He also fears to live in jail as an absurd living in hatred world. There
are differences between prisons and mental asylums; they are representative for
their enclosure and claustrophobia.

In this novel Samuel Beckett used the theme of imprisonment examined
from a historical point of view. Here Beckett explains isolation beyond the
socially created institutions like prisons and mental hospitals. This presents
Murphy as always imprisoned against his wishes. Murphy ties himself to his chair,
and he seeks ways to confine himself. But the society is made up of individuals
who create the strict rules. Samuel Beckett shows in this novel, that Murphy limits
himself and allows being limited. Samuel Beckett’s theatrical characters confuse
time as a means of escaping the pain of reality. In all the narrated works of
Samuel Beckett, characters seek forms of self-imposed asylums from a world they
cannot cope with. This has been presented in two forms of self-imposed asylums
and personal asylums. A self-inflicted asylum is a physical cell that the character
has created in the hopes of shutting out the world. This self-inflicted asylum finds
vent in the present work, when Murphy has arranged various pieces of furniture to
create cell-like atmosphere:

“The head male nurse, Mr. Thomas
(“Bim”) Clinch, a huge red, bald,
whiskered man of overweening ability.”

(95)

This is a type of asylum presented in this novel. The other type of asylum, the
personal asylum is a form of institutionalization. In this type, character has no
physical fortifications around him. The character remains mentally shut-off from
the outside world.

In the society, all kinds of human beings live. These mental hospitals were
opened in a very large number after Second World War in England and Ireland.
Various types of insane people have taken admission in such mental asylums. The
mental persons who were dangerous had to be brought to asylum. The accused
has also been taken to the nearest asylum and has been admitted:

“For the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat
was a sanatorium, not a madhouse nor a
home for defectives, and as such
admitted only those cases whose 
prognoses were not hopeless.” (97).

However, instead of getting suffered in the asylum, Murphy enjoys life there playing games with other persons:

“Here the patients were encouraged to play billiards, darts, ping-pong, the piano and other less strenuous games, or simply to hang about doing nothing. The great majority preferred simply to hang about doing nothing.” (101).

Samuel Beckett shifts depictions in above two novels. In *Malone Dies* it seems to be the result of various perceptions of the characters viewing the mental patients. But in the present novel, Murphy enjoys in M. M. M. which is the name of the mental hospital and in which he is detached from other patients:

“Thus it was necessary that every hour in the wards should increase, together with his esteem for the patients, his loathing of the text-book attitude towards them, the complacent scientific conceptualism that made contact with outer reality the index of mental wellbeing.” (106).

Malone had lived in an asylum for quite some time, but Murphy as a nurse places himself in a position of authority while Malone and Macmann are depicted as helpless patients.

1.2.3 Problem of Existence and Search for Identity:

The novels of Samuel Beckett in general and the present novel in particular deal with the basic question of identity. Initially they have an attitude and approach towards life, but in the course of time, absurdity overcomes them, overpowers them and they are found nowhere. They are either in an asylum or alienated in society: alienated in and out of society. This alienation-sometimes forced, sometimes fateful-causes suffering and in the course of action the self is sacrificed. They become nothing and this nothingness becomes absurdity. In the beginning the characters are not mental patients. But as soon as they are admitted in M. M. M.: mental hospital, they are treated as mental cases. Example can be
cited of Ticklepenny who falls in gutter due to drunkenness but incidentally is lifted and admitted straightway in the asylum. In other words, though he was not truly mental, he was forced to think himself to be mental. This, in turn, causes the identity crisis.

Celia is a prostitute. After her marriage with Murphy, she changes her profession and becomes a housewife serving her husband truly. She entertains him, her husband all the time and even the guests often. This in turn makes Murphy alienated from her. In the meantime Murphy is appointed as nurse in an asylum. However, the atmosphere of asylum and the behaviour of Celia put a very bad impact on his mind and he starts behaving in an awkward manner. The similar experience is narrated by Beckett in his short story-First Love (1945). Samuel Beckett mentions the hallway in which the protagonist changes and the park bench are guarded on three sides. The story begins with the hero discussing the joys of walking through a graveyard. He thinks that, the atmosphere is calm and quiet; on the other side the living area is very noisy:

“The living wash in vain, in vain
   perfume themselves, they sink.”

The protagonist seeks the company of dead one. His family forces him to leave the father’s house and he is banished from society. The female character Anina (Lulu) seeks to accompany the protagonist. She is a prostitute. The protagonist sets out to the countryside. He is not a mental patient. After that he likes the company of alienated people. This short-story finds this character’s need for self-inflicted asylum. He loves Anna and she offers him a room in her house. The protagonist lives with her. Her house is a place of different classes meant to be entertained. But Anna entertains only one man at a time. She spends her days with the needs of protagonist. The house of Anna is physically and socially in the middle. Here the protagonist begins his life; he wishes to be free of society. He says at last in the story:

“For years I thought they would cease.
   Now I don’t think so any more.
   (Beckett, First Love: 245).
In her house, there are different types of men who come and she entertains only one at a time. But Anna, the protagonist, is insecure among them. So he continues his search for identity.

In the short story First Love Samuel Beckett creates a personal asylum. Similarly, Murphy too struggles for personal freedom through an asylum. Murphy’s apartment is called ‘cage’, a symbol of his separation from the outside world. These two works create personal asylum creating barriers between himself and the outside world. Murphy’s created asylum appears in the first page of the novel:

“He sat in his chair in this way because it gave him pleasure!” (4)

Murphy is introduced in the small room in which he has lived, to eat, to drink, to put on his and off clothes:

“Eaten, drunk, slept, and put his clothes on and off.” (3).

He has lived for the last six months in the room. He has lived like a hermit where Murphy has locked himself in a room that cannot be opened. This is the indication of ‘Cage’:

“It was a strange room, the door hanging off its hinge.” (6).

When Murphy is staying at the M. M. M. he insists upon living in a garret. The narrator describes Murphy’s delight at staying in the garret. He lived in one previously in Hanover:

“Murphy had occupied a garret in Hanover, not for long, but for long enough to experience all its advantages.” (98)

“Twice as good as the one in Hanover”, (98)

“Half as large” (98).

The physical body of the room is so tiny that its size is debated between Murphy and Ticklepenny. It is large enough to support fire without becoming a hazard:

It is a small living place but it is too large for Murphy. His longing for an even more confining space is shown. He notes the position of his bed. He has been saved the trouble of moving it:

“The bed, so low and gone in the springs that even unfreighted the middle grazed the ground, was wedged length ways into the cleft of floor and ceiling, so that Murphy was saved the trouble of moving it into that position.” (98).

The theme of struggle for existence is presented in this novel. Samuel Beckett’s protagonists are unable to attain the asylum from society. The novels represent the asylums as a fear of losing control over one’s life and sanity.

1.2.4 The Question of Sanity:

Samuel Beckett was feeling fear of imprisonment in describing the historical mental institutions. He has used a mixture of historical fact and humorous exaggeration in his novels. These works are complicated enough to understand the historical and social mental hospital. Samuel Beckett has presented his ideas through nurses and patients, and these are not insane people. Samuel Beckett satirizes this sanity-through the novel *Murphy*. In this work *Murphy*, Samuel Beckett describes humorously Magdalen Mental Mercyseat and also presents the feeling of fear of asylums.

In *Murphy*, the nurses of the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat try to pry society. When Murphy visits the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat first time, the narrator presents it as:

“The Compartment was windowless, like a monad, except for the shuttered judas in the door, at which a sane eye appeared, or was exploited to appear, at frequent and regular intervals throughout the twenty four hours.” (109).

The ‘Shuttered Judas’ is a one way window through which the nurses and patients view the other persons ward. The ward ‘Judas’ means a feeling of betrayal. This suggests the ‘sane eye’ betray the patients too. It is a shame on
them. Mr. Endon seems to observe Murphy’s existence through Judas. When Murphy goes to night round at Magdalen Mental Mercyseat, it is thus said:

“Murphy resumed his round; gratified in no small measure. Mr. Endon had recognized the feel of his friend’s eye upon him and made his preparations accordingly.” (144).

Murphy knows about Mr. Endon, but he believes that this is not the sane view but friend’s view. But the narrator depicts that Mr. Endon’s is not a friend’s view and that he is not capable of having a friend:

“Whereas the sad truth was that while Mr. Endon for Murphy was no less than bliss, Murphy for Mr. Endon was no more than Chess.” (144).

Through Judas’ most of the patients attack Murphy as:

“The hypomanic it is true, in pad since morning with a big attack blowing up, had tried to come at his tormentor through the Judas.” (144).

In this case, ‘Sane eye’ is a metaphor for a nurse or society. It is attempted to shame personal with social norms. It is not possible to shame an individual and cannot acknowledge the outer world. Samuel Beckett was taking objection about his ‘Sane eye’. The patients and nurses of the mental hospital of Magdalen Mental Mercyseat are described drunken persons and Ticklepenny as homosexual:

“I was snout drunk, said Ticklepenny.
You were dead drunk.” (54).

These patients are hopeless for not only financial position but socially also:

“There was nothing old-fashioned or half-hearted about the nepotism of Bim Clinch.” (101).

Also Murphy’s sanity raises the question after he gives permission to the schizophrenic Mr. Endon to come to his room.
1.2.5 Public versus Private Institution:

Samuel Beckett in this work *Murphy* criticizes the private and public institution. These institutions are depicted in a humorous manner in various scenes. The first appearance of love sick Neary goes into the General post office:

“Neary minus his whiskers was recognized by a farmer pupil called Wylie, in the General Post Office contemplating from behind the statue of Cuchulain.” (29).

Neary attacks a statue and is arrested by the guard. At that time Wylie thinks to plan to save his friend. Wylie begs the guard to release his friend:

“Tapped his forehead and said, as one sane man to another: John O’ God’s. Hundred percent harmless.” (29)

But guard refuses to release Neary, at that time Wyle gives assurance that Neary is from Stillogram:

“Stillorgan”, said Wylie. “Not Dundram”.


Neary is from Stillorgan. Neary is not from Dundrum. Actually Dandrm asylum was opened in 1850 for the criminally insane. On the other side, St. John of God’s was opened in Stillorgan, Dublin. It was a private insane asylum. The theme of public versus private asylum was brought up in the novel. In this novel, there is one scene, Murphy is hired at the mental hospital M. M. M. and shown the facility of the mental hospital. There is a big difference between private and public hospital:

“Now degraded to the position of male nurse in a hospital for the better-class mentally deranged.” (54)

When Murphy joins as a nurse, he enquires for the number of patients. But the officer hides the real condition of mental patients as:

“Murphy learned later that about 15 percent of the patients were certified.”

(97).
Actual numbers of patients who are mentally ill are only 15 percent and other 85 percent patients are not ill. But these 85 percent patients are also treated as mentally-ill patients:

“Treated with exactly the same sanguine punctilio as the 85 percent that were not certified.” (97).

The Magdalen Mental Mercyseat hospital or asylum may be a private asylum, which accounts for the high number of self-committed persons. The narrator explains that, this is not fully madhouse nor for defectives. Here admitted patients are not fully mad but hopeless patients:

“For the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat was a sanatorium, not a madhouse nor a home for defectives, and as such admitted only those cases whose prognoses were not hopeless.” (97).

In this novel, Clarke or Mr. Endon is not fully mad, but hopeless persons. In the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat they fully cure and return to society but it seems ridiculous. The narrator justifies this discrepancy by noting that most patients who are deemed incurable are sent to another asylum. The narrator describes that, patients are a really charming chaps:

“A really charming chap, quiet, clean, biddable and solvent, he might be allowed to settle down in the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat for the rest of his natural.” (97-98).

In the private asylum the genuinely mental patients were admitted. But in the public asylum, even the sane persons were admitted. The reason of this was unemployment. The asylum provided everything free of coast. Hence, the public asylums were overcrowded. Hence, the ratio of truly mental patients was only fifteen percent against the eighty-five percent of the fake mental patients. Samuel Beckett satirizes the common view about the mental asylum that caters to the wealthy by becoming a retreat. But Mr. Endon is portrayed as rich in wearing dress with fineness:
“A fine dressing gown of scarlet byssus faced with black braid, black silk Pajamas and neo-Merovingian poulaines of deepest purple.” (112).

In the novel, Samuel Beckett describes different patients in the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat. But Mr. Endon is the only patient who is a rich person. He is there neither for food or shelter nor for being mental but because he wants to see himself in the public eye. He wants to assess his personality in the general public view and finds the public asylum the worth place for this. He enjoys his stay at Magdalen Mental Mercyseat A very few patients are happy to stay in the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat, and Mr. Endon is one of them:

“There were a few such fortunate cases, certified and uncertified, enjoying all the amenities of a mental hospital, from paraldehyde to slosh, without any of its therapeutic vexations.” (98)

The other patients are not rich like Mr. Endon. The other patients are happy and take advantage of the carefree lifestyle. In this way, Samuel Beckett is doing more than just accusing the rich of using asylums as retreats. He blames many patients for escaping the burdens of society by becoming or claiming to be insane. The fact is that many patients are not benefited from the treatment due to the fear that they will have to leave the asylum and join the society, if they are cured. These patients have no need for the treatment in the asylum. On the other hand, the fake patients also need no treatment as they are genuinely mental or mad or insane. Hence, Becket criticizes the hypocrisy of the public asylums in the present novel.

Samuel Beckett was parodying those persons who fake a mental illness. The Mental Treatment Act of 1930 is that patients could now admit themselves without the permission of family members or doctors. In the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat patients of 85 percent are not certified. The self-admitted patients do not come close to the 85 percent mentioned in the novel Murphy. Samuel Beckett is implying a societal illness which pushes individuals to check themselves into asylums whether or not they are in need of medical treatment.
1.3 Characters:

In this novel *Murphy*, there are eight characters, one is female and seven are males. Murphy is the central character in the novel, but he is an actionless character in the novel. He is a passive character in the novel. The whole novel revolves around this character. Samuel Beckett is supporting like Dickensian gallery of characters in the novel. This work is equal to the works of Joyce or Kafka. Samuel Beckett uses inventions in this work.

5.3.1 Murphy:

Murphy is the main character in the novel. He is the ‘hero’ without heroic qualities. At the opening of the novel, Murphy is sitting naked in his old-rocking chair to wait for his death. He rarely speaks, and he ignores his beloved or girlfriend. He cannot believe in married life and accepts the mental hospital job. He thinks about only himself, that represents his selfishness:

“He sat naked in his rocking-chair of undressed teak, guaranteed not to crack, warp, shrink, corrode, or creak at night.

It was his own, it never left him.” (1)

Murphy is a comic creation of Samuel Beckett. This novel is his first work, and Beckett creates his masterpiece. When Murphy plays chess game against Mr. Endon in the mental hospital, Beckett shows the game in full length. At this time, Beckett introduces his heroine and compares a table of her characteristics. Samuel Beckett presents black humor in the novel and shows a philosophical touch to the work. Samuel Beckett represents philosophical touch to the work, but he abandons linguistic invention of the novel.

Murphy and Mr. Endon both play the game of chess. But Mr. Endon plays a chess game because he recognizes the feel of his friend’s eye-Murphy. But on the side of Murphy, Murphy is more than Murphy; he cannot have a feel to his friend. Mr. Endon judges the feeling of friend but Murphy does not. Murphy does not concentrate on the game of chess, but just has completed his round. Mr. Endon also judges his feeling through Judas. Murphy is not like the hypomania person-Mr. Endon. They are playing the chess game in night, because Murphy is doing duty in night shift. Every ten minutes, he leaves the room and takes a round in the hospital, and after completing the round, he continues the chess game. He takes
pauses and has a round to the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat. Then he moves his side of the chess game:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>White (MURPHY)</th>
<th>Black (Mr. Endon)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Kt-KR3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>R-KR1</td>
<td>Kt-QB3</td>
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Murphy represents personal asylum. Murphy creates his little world; in this little world nothing exists, but it is the creation of his mind.

“This was not an impoverishment, for it excluded nothing that it did not itself contain”. (67).

Murphy is not connected with others; it is his personal decision. That indicates a self-imposed form of madness. Murphy believes that he can attain freedom from society. He detaches himself from the outside world. He thinks that, one who is outside the world cannot be restricted from it. Murphy fails to acknowledge society; he needs society in order to survive. Murphy thinks that society provides shelter and food to him to be alive. Murphy gazes at Mr. Endon’s eyes; his dream of living is impossible—one who cannot shut off the outside world around him without acknowledging its existence at the same time. In other words, if one cannot acknowledge the outer world, there is no way to appreciate the separation. Murphy’s mind is confused about both asylums that are: a self-inflicted asylum and a personal asylum:

“Murphy’s mind pictured itself as a large hollow sphere, hermetically closed to the universe without”. (67).

Murphy is a torn figure. There is neither communication nor coordination between his mind and body. They work differently. Murphy builds his personal asylum, not by mind. In the world every human is born with a mind and brain, so
one must choose to shut out the world by living solely within it. Murphy has pictured his personal asylum through his mind and has created his circles. His main aim is to live within the central circle. Murphy seeks both a mental and physical restraint. Murphy is not only confining his world to the physical location of his head, but seeks more confined space within it:

“That of which he had both mental and physical experience and that of which he had mental experience only”. (67).

Samuel Beckett’s protagonists realize their dependence upon society. The heroes build their own asylums and they are confused mentally and physically. Murphy binds his freedom. His endeavors are futile, and he creates his own cage and is unable to complete social duties. He needs a brotherhood and a feeling of kindred. He becomes desperate for a sense of belonging that he distorts all that hates to his fantasies:

“He would not have admitted that he needed a brotherhood”.

(106)

Murphy returns to Celia just before his death. His stories end in quests for companionship. His feeling of brotherhood of mental patients is like distant due to the patients’ inability to connect with those around them. He conveys the futility of detaching oneself from the outer world. Mr. Endon thinks that he is a part of big world and his actions are around the big world. In this world, each protagonist makes to live in idealized alienation, but each and every character does not escape from big world. There is a connection between the self and the other:

“Nothing never had been, was or would be in the universe outside it but was already present as virtual, or actual, or virtual rising into actual or actual falling into virtual, in the universe inside it”.

(67)

Samuel Beckett also depicts the nurses who are helpless, and Murphy is one of them. Samuel Beckett gives the reason that during World War I and II, there was shortage of nurses. That’s why unqualified nurses were admitted:
“For Ticklepenny had vowed to Bim that if Murphy were not taken on his stead, to release him from the torments of the words”.

(95).

The work *Murphy* also depicts the fear of being unable to control insanity. The mental institution M. M. M. depicts the self-admitted patients. Beckett has criticized Ireland’s fear of man’s institutionalization and tries to capture the era of insanity and war. Ireland and England are countries that have experienced the madness of people closely; also have seen the rich persons as self-admitted patients in M. M. M. In those days, as people could not take the burden of society, they took shelter in asylum. For admission, people used different means and tricks which were mostly unlawful and unfair. The genuine patients were very few and the hypocrites who pretended to be the mental patients were larger in number:

“There were no facts in the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat except those sanctioned by the doctor”. (97).

*Murphy* represents powerless persons in asylum. They are like statues: doing nothing; nothing happens; nobody speaks; nobody hears. They are occupied with and are engaged in doing wayward and hopeless things which can be termed absurd in true sense. Moreover, Murphy has no experience as a nurse and has also no medical background. Each and every patient wants attendants; hospitals like in the novel the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat hire anyone willing to do the job of nurse in the hospital.

Murphy as a nurse is having the power over the wards in M. M. M.( Magdalen Mental Mercyseat) around him. But he is unable to interpret the patients’ suffering. He also wrongly views his inmates in Magdalen Mental Mercyseat and tells the readers having a glorious time in the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat:

“The little world where Murphy presupposed them, one and all, to be having a glorious time”. (108).

Through self-inflicted asylum, Samuel Beckett’s fears of incarceration and their implications are explored. The self-imposed asylums are the symbol of an oppressive society. Murphy controls over the wards but he does not control over
his mind and body. Because of this, Murphy banishes himself. At the end, his return to the society suggests a deep-rooted need for connection with the outside world as well as society’s powerful influence:

“He was as fond of his chair in his own way as Murphy had been of his”. (165).

Samuel Beckett depiction of asylum in Murphy represents the realization that there will always be a struggle for power between the self and the other. He also forgets the society. This work conveys the power of society and inability to escape from the outside world.

5.3.2 Cooper:

Samuel Beckett depicts insane paupers in his novels; Murphy is one of them. Murphy, this work creates connection between the countryside, pauperism and insanity. In the novel Murphy, Cooper wanders to the countryside, to beg and to sing a song. Hence he is sent to asylum to get his madness and insanity cured.

Cooper is a good person but he sings a song in the street. That is why he is admitted to asylum. Then he gets completely cured, returns to society. Cooper represents modern chronic patient. Cooper is an idiot. This problem extends to paupers. It was illegal for anyone but licensed beggar to beg. Sane paupers begin pretending insanity to avoid punishment. The beggars show that there are insane to avoid punishment. But in Murphy, Cooper is imprisoned for begging without singing:

“Some days later he was taken up for begging without singing and given ten days.” (75)

Cooper does not follow the society’s rule that the insane constantly sing to them, loudly and out of tune. Whenever he begs and sings, his song is loud and lacks melody in tune. So he fails to receive the money and also breaks a societal code of conduct.

Samuel Beckett’s wandering protagonists are viewed as threats to society, whether or not they actually cause any harm. Samuel Beckett’s characters are breaking the rules of society around them. Cooper is a drunken person and in drinking sings a song. This is the reason for his being admitted to an asylum. These paupers represent England and Ireland with the rise in poverty and insanity.
Samuel Beckett’s characters act as reminders that such problems will never be completely destroyed.

### 5.3.3 Mr. Thomas (Bim), Mr. Timothy (Bom) and Ticklepenny - Nurses in *Murphy*:

Samuel Beckett’s portrayals of nurses like Ticklepenny and others have some historical weight. Samuel Beckett’s biographers Bair and Knowlson (1998: 236-275) have also noted Beckett’s intimate relationship with the nurses. Samuel Beckett is very well aware of how asylums are run and how the asylums function. Samuel Beckett’s best friend Geoffrey Thompson, a physician, takes Beckett to one institution. At that time Samuel Beckett not only observes patients in asylum with different illnesses, but also closely sees the duties of nurses. There is a shortage of nurses and lack of experience. Preexisting mental disorders push lots of employees to the brink of insanity.

In this work, there is a head male nurse Mr. Thomas (Bim) Clinch. He is a huge, red, bald, man of overweening ability and authority in his own department:

> “The head male nurse, Mr. Thomas
> (“Bim”) Clinch, a huge red, bald, whiskered man of overweening ability.”
> (95).

There is another male nurse Mr. Timothy (Bom) Clinch. He is a younger twin and dead spit of Bim. He serves under Bim. But he has a better experience than Bim:

> “The male sister, Mr. Timothy (“Bom”) Clinch, younger twin and dead spit of Bim.” (100).

There are major problems in hospital and a long work hour is one of them. In British and Irish hospitals the staff members work for long hours in a hospital. In the same way Murphy also works for ten hours in one shift:

> “He was assigned to Skinner’s House, male side, first floor. His hours would be 8 to 12 and 2 to 8.” (97).

Murphy thinks in different way in these ten hours, and expects to work. His work included the work of asylum as well as the personal works of the patients. This increases the working hours and become burdensome to Murphy and other nurses.
They get fatigued and disturbed which consequently affects their performance and in turn the behaviour also. This is the real cause of the madness and absurdity in the novel.

“To make beds, carry trays, clean up regular messes, clean up casual messes, read thermometers, write charts, wash the bedridden, give medicine, hound down its effects, warm bedpans, cool fevers, boil gags, sterilize when in doubt, honour and obey the male sister, wait hand, foot and mouth on the doctor when he came, look pleasant.” (96).

Ticklepenny is an ordinary poet, and writes poems on real situation. But that time, he needs money for living and eating foods. But he cannot publish a single poem that is why for food and shelter, he accepts the job of a nurse. He is not in the field of medical or hospital. He is also not experienced as a nurse. So because of the necessity, he is appointed as a nurse:

“Austin Ticklepenny
Pot poet
From the Country of Bublin.” (53).

It can be concluded about the nurses that the inexpertise and overload of work hampers their performance. They are incapable but are forced to do the job due to the financial constraints. The mental and physical exertion due to long working hours and inability generates incompetence in the outputs and once they fail, they have added fear and tension. This leads them to absurd behaviour. Hence, Beckett has realistically portrayed the picture of the hospitals and nurses prevalent during the World Wars.

5.3.4 Celia:

Celia is the wife of Murphy. Before she lived with Murphy, she was a prostitute. She has settled now with Murphy; and has left all her profession and often entertains Murphy. When both live in West Brampton, Murphy sits in his rocking chair doing nothing. Hence, they have to depend upon Celia for livelihood. She is able to do all things which are needed for home. Murphy expects Celia do all the works and give him pleasure and comfort. When Celia
marries Murphy, Celia is grateful to him. She is with him not only during happy moments but in sad moments too. When Murphy is appointed as a nurse in the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat, she lives in Pantoville. She is away from her husband but takes his care. She is jubilant after giving up her profession and beginning a new life as a wife:

“She walked to a point about halfway between the Battersea and Albert Bridges and sat down on a bench between a Chelsea pensioner and an Eldorado hokey-pokey man, who had dismounted from his cruel machine and was enjoying a short interlude in paradise.” (12).

Celia represents the profession of prostitute rampant in the twentieth century. However Beckett does not fail to show that if the profession was adopted out of necessity and when the alternative was available, prostitution was left. This is shown through the character of Celia who leaves the profession of prostitution and starts a new life with Murphy as his wife. She tries her best to forget her past and sets out to start a new innings marrying Murphy.

In the novel, Celia’s role is a minor one, but her act of giving sympathy to Murphy, is a characteristic feature of her role. In the works of Samuel Beckett, females have minor roles and are only supporting characters.

5.3.5 Mr. Endon:

Mr. Endon is a friend of Murphy. Mr. Endon lives in the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat, where Murphy is appointed as a male nurse. Mr. Endon is a character with some psychological defect. When Murphy and Mr. Endon play an unusual chess game, Mr. Endon thinks about Murphy. Instead of thinking about the moves, he thinks about what Murphy thinks of him. In other words, his body plays chess, his mind does not. Most of the times, he is unaware of the happenings around him. Hence, his guesses are wrong. There is a lack of unity of mind and body in his character.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>White (MURPHY)</th>
<th>Black (Mr. Endon)</th>
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<td>38</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>K-Qkt5</td>
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Murphy also does not concentrate upon the game. After every ten minutes he gets up and has a round around the hospital as part of his duty as a nurse. This discontinuity tends to a poor chess game; a game without any interest and without finality or conclusion.

Endon has a bad habit of listening through the Judas to the whispers of the patients. He always thinks that others talk ill of him. Hence, he is curious and anxious to know other’s opinions of him. It is a bad thing to see private things and it does Mr. Endon. Mr. Endon sees and hears of other patients secrets through Judas. It is suspicious thing about Mr. Endon. But he judges wrongly to every patient of the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat even Murphy also

5.3.6 Mr. Kelley:

Mr. Kelley is the grandfather of Celia. His role is introduced in the first part of the novel. Mr. Kelley’s role is also a minor one. He comes in the novel, when the novel opens and Celia and Murphy live in West Brampton. He helps Celia when Celia and Murphy are changing their house. He helps Celia to settle down in the house. He also guides her as a new neighbor. But originally, he is a pessimistic person in the novel. His life is described as a person with despair. He uses those things which indicate him to be a frustrated and melancholic personality. He is so hopeless that he makes others hopeless whoever comes in his contact.

The character’s physical and mental barriers provide great insight into Becket’s thoughts on asylum. These characters have to struggle for shelter from society and control the outside world. The novels represent asylum and the asylum represents a fear of losing life and sanity. These works depict the glimpse of asylum life to the readers and also describe mental patients, which are real or not. In this asylum, the characters convey the terrors of losing life and loss of mental and physical health. These characters’ mind is full of confusion. They are unable to communicate with the world around them. Murphy and Malone are one of such
characters. Samuel Beckett depicts the reality of asylum life and acknowledges the readers to know about the horrors of mental patients in asylum. Through this Beckett wants his readers to give sympathy to such characters.

### 5.4 Setting:

The first novel of Beckett - *Murphy* is set in London. There are thirteen chapters of the novel out of which two are taking place in Dublin, seven in London, three in the asylum and one in Murphy’s mind. The novel describes the specific and the abstract space of urban London. However, everything is abstract:

“When Murphy had found what he sought on the sheet he dispatched his head on its upward journey.” (11).

In this novel, the particular geographical locations are centered on the two places in which Murphy and Celia lived. These places are West Brampton and their new home near Pantoville prison and Metropolitan Cattle Market. As the work progresses, it moves away from the particular and toward a more general descriptive work, placing the central location of the novel: The novel also places Magdalena Mercyseat Hospital outside of London, which Samuel Beckett locates ambiguously:

“This is a faculty that no young man or woman, stepping down into the sexpit, should be without.” (153).

The novel *Murphy* reveals not only a devoted attention to specific place, but also marks the curious patterns of routes not taken of diversions and wanderings. Samuel Beckett concerns about details of directions and the places in which these characters fall and wandering on these places. Samuel Beckett describes specific places where the protagonist and others are going and wandering. At the opening of the novel, Celia enters near the Thames in West Brampton. Celia depicts specific streets of West Brampton, and also takes specific way to reach Murphy:

“She walked to a point about halfway between the Battersea and Albert Bridges and sat down on a bench between a Chelsea pensioner and an Eldorado hokey-pokey man, who had dismounted from his cruel machine and
was enjoying a short interlude in paradise.” (12).

Samuel Beckett describes the terrain of London and also his characters’ movements depicted near London. Only the M. M. M. is near London. He also describes those non-movement locations and places depicted in the novel. He also depicts pastoral life that is Hyde Park, which Celia and Murphy seek out in their attempts to escape the industrial bustle of London. In the park, Murphy eats, lies idle and sleeps, the place is Cockpit. Celia meets her grandfather Mr. Kelley, the place is Round pond in the park. Mr. Kelley flies his kite handed over to him by Celia on the place:

“Before you go, said Mr. Kelley, you might hand me the tail of my kite some tassels have come adrift. Celia went to the Cupboard where he kept his kite, took out the tail and loose tassels and brought them over to the bed.” (18).

The novel is shaped by movements between various tensions and oscillations, between exteriors vs. interiors. It is the best description of Murphy’s mind: the depiction of form and formlessness; chaos and chance vs. determination, and the body vs. the mind. The terrain of the text is between the specific and the uncertain, movement and stasis, intentions and actions. But the tension is not clear at the end of the novel. Murphy’s mind is a picture of hollow sphere and it is deposited in the toilet of the Abbey Theatre in London:

“Murphy’s mind pictured itself as a large hollow sphere, hermetically closed to the universe without.” (67).

Murphy drops on an anonymous pub floor in London, kicks around and finally mingle with the sand, the beer, the butts, the glass, the matches, the spit and the vomit:

“Sand, the beer, the butts, the glass, the matches, the spit, the vomit.” (70).

The moving of the novel and details of places describe the centrality of the tensions in the work. Samuel Beckett draws attention of the readers to the specific places matched by the sense of uncertainly, the unknowable and the abstract.
The novel shows the close relationship and intimate contacts of Joyce and Beckett. In other words, Joyce’s impact on the setting of the novel is visible in the realm of the specific-locations and also in comic tone and prose style. The reader notes the use of specific place descriptions and geographical coordinates.

5.5 **Descartes’ Impact on Murphy’s world of Body and Mind:**

Samuel Beckett’s creatures are torn apart as they struggle to free themselves of the bodily cells of this world. These characters are attempting to withdraw from their physicality. The grounding of these characters is in their Cartesian beliefs. They necessarily believe in their non-sensory awareness of the nature of the body itself. It is superior to the knowledge gained by sensory apprehension. Murphy is Cartesian-minded person, all his perceptions of the body, he seeks through his mind:

“A large hollow sphere hermetically closed to the universe without”. (67).

Murphy thinks of himself to be composed of the opposite elements of mind and body. He thinks that his only freedom is in the mind, the area he controls. Murphy’s story retreats from the physical realm into the inner recesses of the mind. This represents Beckett’s quarrel with Cartesian philosophy. Samuel Beckett’s *Murphy* portrays the image of mind not as an instrument but as a place described from the outside world. This is narrated by a third person voice, which depicts the effects of pleasure zones of Murphy.

Murphy is eager to escape the bodily ‘cage’ or the ‘big world’ to which he believes he does not belong. He had been a student of theology, and he tries to impose explanations on the world. In *Murphy*, the narrator makes a significant distinction between ‘the world’ and Murphy’s conceptualization of it:

“Happily we need not concern ourselves with this apparatus as it really was-that would be an extravagance and impertinence-but solely with what it felt and pictured itself to be”. (67).

The philosopher Descartes theorizes that the connection between mind and body is at the site of the pineal gland. Murphy exhibits an anxiety only to escape one for the other, from the confusion of the macrocosm without to the sacrosanct microcosm of his mind. Murphy envisions life in the phenomenal world. His thoughts
are only clothed, and his pineal gland has been reduced to nothing. Murphy struggles against the physical fact of his body. According to Murphy, the body is the mind’s curse. Murphy struggles to get freedom in order to achieve the impossible ecstasy in the mind. This ecstasy offers such a pleasure. Murphy feels that his body cannot express the sad:

“He found it hard to think, impossible to expand the sad”. (72).

Murphy thinks, a true sense of freedom can exist when the body is still, and mind can move freely through its various zones:

“Slowly he felt better, a stir in his mind, in the freedom of that light and dark that did not clash”. (7,8).

Murphy believes that his freedom is in the mind and he focuses on the mental sphere. But he ignores the external world and that body and is impossible to control. Murphy’s mind is a hollow sphere. It closes hermetically. Murphy believes that his mind is a closed system; there is no change in his mind:

“That his mind was a closed system, subject to no principle of change but its own, self-sufficient and impermeable to the vicissitudes of the body”. (68).

Murphy’s mind is hermetically closed like his clothing is the non-porous suit. Murphy trains himself. He lacks the absence of will, colorlessness world. He believes himself to be aware of the actual structure of his mind. He likes to call his mind. He transfers his mind into symbols. He hopes to connect the negative of his inner self, with the outside world. He has a virtue of silence, and this he is able to abandon the entrapment of the intellect within the words. The readers think of Murphy as a prisoner of his body and lying face down in his rocking chair in crucified position:

“Part by part he subsided, as the bonds that held him fell away, until he lay fully prostrate in the crucified position”. (20).

Murphy thinks that, there is no dark like his own dark. He strives to sever all connections with the world of sense and outside meaning. He seeks external aids to reach his goal and to release himself from his body. His rocking chair is a mechanical
device, he ties himself to chair. This chair rocks his mind spinning away from his body:

“The freedom of that light and dark that
did not clash, nor alternate, nor fade nor
lighten except to their communion”. (8).

On the other occasion, Murphy lies on the grass of Hyde Park for hours. He looks for alternate methods of dulling his senses:

“Round and round Pentonville Prison”,
or “round and round cathedrals that it
was too late to enter”. (54).

Murphy’s friends engage in verbal or physical gestures. Cooper takes alcohol; Celia walks clockwise about Round Pond in London. Neary, the former instructor of Murphy, teaches Murphy how to stop his irrational heart in situations irksome beyond endurance, but like Petrouchka in his box. Murphy’s heart fails and achieves what Neary Calls “Apmonia” or “Isonomy”. Celia learns to distinguish Murphy from a merely indolent man. He seeks the frenzied justification of life as an end. Belacqua can possess his beloved truly and totally only when she fidgets in the catacombs of his spirit. Murphy reckons with his mind not as an instrument but as a place:

“Four penny lunch was ritual vitiated be
no base thoughts of nutrition”. (50)

Murphy is a dualist. He seems ‘ashamed of being in a body’. According to Murphy, he never works in tandem with his mind. He attempts the habitual world of phenomena:

“A well with two buckets, one going
down to be filled, the other coming up to
be emptied”. (38).

Murphy echoes from Arnold Geulincx (1650: 110), a seventeenth-century Belgian Cartesian. Geulincx believed that every human being’s bodily act is ‘occasioned’ by God’s intervention between body and mind. We are free to imagine, but we cannot possess the ability to initiate bodily action. The philosophy of Geulincx and the philosophy of Descartes are separate. There philosophies are separate but thoughts are closer and same. Murphy places the physical hierarchically below the mental condition. Murphy thinks that his inner self and reality are revealed. Murphy’s
external world is in the direct tradition of Geulincx thoughts. There is indifference of Geulincx’s external impotence and Murphy’s mind of autonomy.

Murphy knows about ‘the big world’ and ‘the little world’. Through these Murphy enjoys the freedom. In the end of the novel, Murphy does not escape his mental condition to the physical condition. Murphy experiments his physical condition through his habits of immobility. He leaves his beloved. But Murphy cannot leave his outside world and he comes back into:

“His deplorable susceptibility to Celia, ginger, and so on”. (149).

Murphy feels himself, catches in a body and a mind. Celia sees Murphy. He struggles for his body existence. Murphy does not reconcile with his need for self-immersed world:

“Self-immersed indifference to the contingencies of the contingent world”(138)

Celia thinks that Murphy is alone because of his dualism between the mind and body:

“The crass and unharmonious unison, the mind at the cart-tail of the body, the body at the chariot-wheels of the mind”.

(167)

Celia is a symbol of external world that is why Murphy wants to escape from her. Murphy loves Celia but he does not like her mental aspect. On the contrary she loves his physical aspect not mental. Murphy’s mind functions differently and independently:

“Could not be disposed according to a principle of worth”. (47).

Each and every time Murphy falls in the world of senses. Here in the novel, Samuel Beckett gives best example - when telephone rings, Murphy gives telephone to Celia. Murphy gives emphasis on senses not the mind. He lives life virtually not actually:

“Nothing ever had been, was or would be in the universe outside it but was already present as virtual, or actual, or virtual
Murphy’s mind is described in chapter six. The narrator describes the Cartesian construct. Murphy’s mind is a hollow sphere. This hollow sphere is described in three zones—light, half light and dark:

“There are three zones, light, half light, dark, each with its specialty”. (69)

Murphy sticks up to his chair, this makes his body quiescent. Murphy loves himself and it is intellectual love. Murphy sustains himself unshackled in his mind. Murphy is a comic character and symbol of cocooning himself in his stove. The truth of his existence navigates his mind.

In the sixth chapter, there are three zones in Murphy’s mind. In the first zone, the zone of light is paralleled with physical experience. In this zone, Murphy describes physical experience, the abstract of dog’s life:

“A radiant abstract of the dog’s life, the elements of physical experience available for a new arrangement. Here the whole physical fiasco became a howling success”. (69).

Murphy enjoys complete sovereignty in reconstituting his world. He wishes his imaginative world with physical experience:

“The world of the body broken up into the pieces of a toy”. (70).

This world contains of revenge. The pleasure is experienced in reprisal. The pleasure of reversing is experienced when the kick of physical Murphy receives the mental Murphy and mental Murphy returns in mental world. Murphy revenges for the blows of this cruel world with smugness. Murphy exposes when Ticklepenny raped Miss Carridge:

“Miss Carridge for rape by Ticklepenny, and so on”. (69).

In the second zone, there are forms without parallel. In this zone, the pleasure is that of contemplation:

“Here was the Belacqua bliss”. (69).
The sense of contemplation is presented in Samuel Beckett’s novels. Murphy spoils his ‘Belacqua fantasy’ of believing himself in Ante purgatory. The protagonists of Samuel Beckett experience the infinite peace discovered at seashore.

The third zone is about dark. The above two zones are not content with the mind of Murphy. But this zone, Murphy aspires in a perfectly beatific sense. Murphy believes that he will become passing away of line:

“A point in the ceaseless unconditioned generation and passing away of line”.

(70).

In this zone, Murphy loses all his sense of identity and even ceases to be Murphy. Here Murphy’s mind transforms virtual will into actual and actual falls into virtual:

“A perpetual coming together and falling asunder of forms”. (70).

The dark zone is characterized by ‘a flux of forms’. Murphy believes that he will be able to get absolute freedom:

“A mote in the dark of absolute freedom”. (70)

Murphy wishes to enter the landscape where he would be improved out of knowledge and where his will would be dust in the dust of its object. This dark zone is will-less zone. Murphy thinks of becoming a part of nothingness. This dark zone for Murphy grows more and more attractive. He spends less time in revengeful day dreams in the light or in blissful contemplation in the half light. In this dark zone, Murphy hopes to achieve an ‘immunity’ that goes beyond all forms of experiential that Belacqua in *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (1992) conceptualizes as the apex of ecstasy. In other works, Samuel Beckett’s characters are - Molloy, Malone and the Unnamable occupying themselves in reaching this non-personal self which is simultaneously nothingness and infinite. The first zone of light contains the figure of the world of the body broken up into pieces, and the second zone of half-light contains states of peace, the dark zone contains neither subject nor object, only the absolute freedom attained. There is no freedom at all and no subjective being. The third-zone is akin to the sensation of being:
“The sensation of being a missile without provenance or target, caught up in a tumult of non-Newtonian motion”. (70).

The third zone is also called complete will-lessness and desirelessness. This zone has many variants. This is perceived by Samuel Beckett. It corresponds to the ‘Nirvana’ stage in Buddhist philosophy. This philosophy has been popularized by Schopenhauer in the West. This philosophy describes conflict between self and other. In first two zones, Murphy feels:

“Sovereign and free, in the one to requite himself, in the other to move as he pleased from one unparalleled beatitude to another”. (70).

In the third zone, Murphy is motionless. On the other side, his expectations are not free. He is caught up in the actual and virtual flux. The first two zones occur on the surface of the mind. The light becomes increasingly dim as he submerges into third zone:

“Thus as his body set him free more and more in his mind, he took to spending less and less time in the light, spitting at the breakers of the world; and less in the half light, where the choice of bliss introduced an element of effort; and more and more and more in the dark, in the will-lessness, a mote in its absolute freedom”. (70).

Murphy is sure that the dark zone offers the greatest possible autonomy from all desire, the greatest possible release from phenomenal reality. Murphy believes that he has gained his opportunity to enter the dark zone permanently, when Murphy finds employment at the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat. Murphy starts his work as a nurse in the mental asylum in chapter nine. Samuel Beckett places an epigraph:

“It is difficult for one who lives outside of the world not to the seek his own kind”. (95).
In the mental asylum the patients and Murphy are having one and all to be a glorious time in the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat and Murphy perceives them with their and confined to their bliss:

“Self-immersed indifference to the contingencies of the contingent world”(102).

When Murphy is among the patients in mental asylum—the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat, Murphy pronounces the words of Geulincx:

“Ubi nihil vales, ibi nihil veils”. (107).

In mental asylum, Murphy is nothing; Murphy wants nothing. It is an order to achieve a state of nothingness beyond physical desire. Murphy seeks to enter the world of these inmates of the mental asylum. Murphy must bridge the ‘unintelligible gulf’ that he feels and exists between him and them. Murphy needs a key to gain access to the dark zone:

“It was as though the micro-cosmopolitans had locked him out”.

(114).

In the mental asylum, Murphy resists the scientific reason according to which he contacts with outer reality. This reality is a symptom of mental well-being. Murphy is making bridge between the inner and the outer world; the patients are unable to synchronize:

“His experience as a physical and rational being obliged him to call sanctuary what the psychiatrists called exile and to think of the patients not as banished from a system of benefits but as escaped from a colossal fiasco”. (107)

In the essay Proust (1931: 2), Samuel Beckett had written sympathetically of mental illness. Samuel Beckett shared Murphy’s admiration for the mental patients of M. M. M. He gives an ironic treatment of Murphy’s enthusiastic association with the patients:

“It was rather due to the vicarious autology”. (113).
Murphy himself acknowledges that the patients of the asylum are as much prone to ‘outbursts’ as those outside it:

“The frequent expressions apparently of pain, rage, despair and in fact all the usual”. (108).

Murphy does not determine whether they have been able to attain their mental paradise. They offer automated responses to their condition. Murphy brings about his illusion of the happiness of the insane in order:

“Stimulated by all those lives immured in mind, as he insisted on supposing, at his own little dungeon in Spain”. (108).

The mental peace cannot admit Murphy. All the patients do manage to differentiate Murphy as belonging to their tribe. All the patients suffer at the hands of the tormenting medical staff of the M. M. M. All the mental patients have the perception to see Murphy as a sympathizer but not as an insider:

“A fly somewhere in the ointment of Microcosmos”. (108).

In the mental asylum Murphy’s responsibilities are to be the custodian of the asylum. Murphy meets Mr. Endon, his name implies ‘within’. Mr. Endon the name indicates a man with a tiny body:

“Skull, large for anybody, immense for this” (112).

Mr. Endon dresses in a scarlet colour, with rings on his fingers. In the dark zone Mr. Endon appears to Murphy. Murphy is described to Mr. Endon as schizophrenic personality:

“Narcissus to his mountain” with this “a schizophrenic of the most amiable variety”. (112),

Murphy plays a chess game with Mr. Endon. Murphy tries to engage Mr. Endon’s attention. Mr. Endon is a self-absorbed person, who takes no notice of the positions of his opponent. They both start game in the moving:

“Till evening found it almost as level as when begun”. (112).
Murphy and Mr. Endon engage their pieces in conflict. Their game is never an endgame and they are not decided. When Murphy dreamed, he removes the game to the nearly timeless realm:

“Time did not cease, that would be asking too much, but the wheel of rounds and pauses did”. (148).

The chess game is over without victory. Murphy looks deep into the eyes of his presumed double. Murphy sees Mr. Endon and he gazed at Mr. Endon through the eyes:

“In the cornea, horribly reduced, obscured and distorted, his own image”.

(149)

Murphy sees Murphy but Mr. Endon does not see. He tries to establish contact, but he is forced to the recognition. He realizes that no contact can be made, nor can he ever will himself to be Mr. Endon:

“The last Mr. Murphy saw of Mr. Endon was Mr. Murphy unseen by Mr. Endon. This was also the last Murphy saw of Murphy”. (150).

Murphy is unable to gaze Mr. Endon. He is unable to recognize Mr. Endon’s state. Mr. Endon destroys Murphy’s illusion through the experience. Mr. Endon finds the pure ground without figure, objectivity without subject. This becomes an extra-ordinarily shattering experience for him. This experience comes alive in his mind. It is not possible to break off completely from the body. Mr. Endon’s desire is making contact with the mental. Murphy’s physical needs are a sign of Mr. Endon. Murphy realizes that those are immured in the mind. Mr. Endon’s eyes are like spawn-like. His eyes are having three parts-dark, light and neither:

“So like a ballrace between the black and white that these could have started to rotate in opposite directions, or better still the same direction, without causing Murphy the least surprise”. (149)

Murphy arrives at the experience of nothingness. Murphy makes himself appear and disappear in Mr. Endon’s eyes. Murphy sees his own distorted reflection
in the cornea, but he is unperceived by Endon, who could only see himself. Murphy collapses and alerts himself to the truth of his own ‘yellow spot’. Mr. Endon has free play with light’s switch. Murphy looks into Mr. Endon’s eyes and withers of air:

“Across a narrow gulf of air”. (149).

Murphy looks into Mr. Endon’s schizophrenic eyes at that time he is unheld by Mr. Endon who can see only himself. In the third zone, Murphy has imagined himself, but replicated in the mirror image of Mr. Endon, who fills with despair. In the moment of recognition, he realizes that he wishes himself into a state of mental alienation. It closes the gap, he sees between his mind and body. Murphy assumes to lead to oneness with Mr. Endon. He is another kind of immoderation from which he has all along been fleeing:

“Seeing himself stigmatized in those eyes that did not see him”. (149).

Murphy’s mind is the experience of nothingness. Murphy achieves the power of nothingness. Murphy realizes that seeing with his mind’s eye cannot complete sense of freedom. It is not really any kind of Cartesian celebration of the mind. Murphy’s imagination is not absolutely within his control, this indicates Murphy is sensitive to the fact. Murphy is aware that he is in the third zone of his mind. Murphy has not been able to attain any true freedom. After the loss of his illusion, he begins to accommodate himself. Murphy’s effort is to shed his clothes, to lie on the hospital grounds after leaving Mr. Endon, evidences his belief in the spurious freedom his search for an inner self has helped him attain:

“His other senses also found themselves at peace, an unexpected pleasure. Not the numb peace of their own suspension, but the positive peace that comes when the something’s give way, or perhaps simply add up, to Nothing”. (147,148).

Murphy discovers that he could not get a picture in his mind of any creature he had met, animal or human just before his death. Murphy is closer now to the ground of things where there is neither self nor world, only genuine figurelessness. Detachment from the outer world of things, Murphy tries to immure himself within his own mind, but he discovers in this closing moment, a powerful nostalgia for that outside world. Samuel Beckett’s *Murphy* is a periodic version of the soul’s escape.
Murphy’s mind has collapsed, just as the kite snaps its strings and flies out of sight at the end. Murphy’s experiment in self-isolation, his retreat into the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat ends in a gruesome death by explosion when he pulls the wrong lavatory chain, resulting in the release of gas instead of water. Murphy blows up in an explosion of dust, gas, charcoal.

5.6 Beckett Style Imitated by O’Brien (from Murphy to At-Swim-Two-Birds):

Samuel Beckett wrote his first novel Murphy, that was published in 1938. At that time, he had not yet gained fame as a dramatist. In this work, Murphy is the central character. Murphy is an enigmatic figure. Murphy’s main aim in life is to avoid participation in normal human society and specific employment. Murphy works in a mental hospital where he observes the behavior of the patients and workers. Murphy is a silent character in the novel. Murphy is a shadowy figure. But other characters are irresistibly drawn in the novel:

“The sun shone, having no alternative, on the nothing new. Murphy sat out of it, as though he were free, in a mew in west Brampton” (1)

There is a similarity of the style of the great Irish writer Flann O’Brien. His first novel At Swim-Two-Birds (1939), was published in 1939. O’Brien read this work Murphy and was inspired to mimic it. He follows style of Samuel Beckett perfectly. The effect of James Joyce is noted in Murphy, in the same manner O’Brien has noted the effect of Beckett in At-Swim-Two-Birds:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Unimportant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head</td>
<td>Small and round.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyes</td>
<td>Green.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexion</td>
<td>White.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair</td>
<td>Yellow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Features</td>
<td>Mobile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neck</td>
<td>13 3/4”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper arm</td>
<td>11”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forearm</td>
<td>9 1/2”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrist</td>
<td>6”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bust - 34”
Waist - 27”
Hips, etc. - 35”
Thigh - 21 3/4”
Knee - 13 3/4”
Calf - 13”
Ankle - 8 1/4”
Instep - Unimportant
Height - 5’4”
Weight - 123lbs.

The novel *Murphy* is a comedy, but it is a dark comedy. Samuel Beckett engages readers to read the work, and it suggests Beckett reputation as a novelist. There are two points such as anti-socialness and solipsism which are disturbing and intriguing to the readers. *Murphy* and *At-Swim-Two-Birds* are contemporary works, O’Brien has followed Beckett’s style as an imitator.

### 5.7 Summing Up:

In this way, Samuel Beckett presents Cartesian dilemma in *Murphy*. In this work, Samuel Beckett presents parodies and caricatures through exercises of sanity. Through the facetious style Samuel Beckett presents hollowness of pretense characters and he offers the reader a field of impossibilities in which alternatives are equally available.

All the protagonists of Samuel Beckett are back to home with empty hands. Through the body, Samuel Beckett’s protagonist tries to escape the hollowness of his selfhood and this hollowness, escapes into the mind. The protagonist discovers the collapsing of the physical self of the body. This leads to a sharpened awareness of it. Through the novels, Samuel Beckett puts anti-Cartesian philosophy. He depicts his conviction that the experiential field cannot be divided in terms of the subjective and objective sides of consciousness. Through the trilogy Samuel Beckett presents not only the dynamics of body and mind but also becomes a bodily concern of dramatic writings. The protagonists of Samuel Beckett realize that the identity within and the identity without is entangled the concept of human identity. This identity cannot be predicted in terms of the body. The framework of novels presents this situation in
terms of outer and inner, mind and matter. Samuel Beckett moves away from exclusive realms of thought. Samuel Beckett presents schism between the cognitive and corporeal aspects of human identity. This human identity presents through Cartesian philosophy. Samuel Beckett's works present the gap between philosophical discourse and the individual experience. Samuel Beckett calculates the response of the mind-body opposition. This mind-body experience Descartes frowned on the deceptive nature of sensory experience. All the protagonists of Samuel Beckett move away from the impermeability of the phenomenal world to subjective mental world. We see in these works, all protagonists discovered that retreating into the inner world can be equally frustrating. The protagonists find the mental world confusing and perilous, the optimism disappears. The narrators of Samuel Beckett experience the close interdependence of the two levels of reality, mental and physical. The protagonist and other characters escape their difficulty from physical into the mental. It comprehends how closely conjoined the two are.

The novel *Murphy* depicts historically accurate portrayals of asylums. The novel is a mixture of history and horror; not only questions what it means to be sane, but also what it means to be insane. There is a common role of dutiful nurses; but patients are violent, insane and cruel. Samuel Beckett’s narrative works illuminate the changing social and historical outlooks on insanity and differences between public and private mental hospitals. Through the mental and mad patients Samuel Beckett is able to both acknowledge and undermine Ireland’s fear of mass institutionalization. Samuel Beckett satirizes the mental hospital through the description; he mocks at the asylum.
5.8 Works Cited:

22. Wikipedia.