CHAPTER-II

ENDGAME

*Endgame* (1958), is a profound variation on the theme of the Absurd, earlier dramatized in *Waiting for Godot*, as an overwhelming, generations old Waiting for an absent-presence, who fails ever to arrive. Added to the Wait is now an intensely cruel harshness that is indeed contagious and pervasive. The Non-ent, in this play is at a cataclysmic End. However, collapse is slow and torturous. Its advance was imperceptible and appeared to take a course to a final finish, which never seemed to arrive---

Clov: Why this farce, day after day?

Hamm: Routine. One never knows. (Pause.) (p.26)

Again,

Hamm: ... Clov!

Clov: Yes.

Hamm: Do you not think this has gone on long enough?

Clov: Yes! (Pause.) What?

Hamm: This... this... thing.

Clov: I've always thought so. (Pause.) You not?

Hamm: (Gloomily.) Then it's a day like any other day.

Clove: As long as it lasts. (Pause.) All life long the same inanities. (Pause.) (p.33)

The earlier abstract notion of a Waiting was contextualized through deft corporeal stage-presentations and, the creative exploitation of a language collapse, based primarily on the dramaturgy of banal, work-a-day, cross talk.
The Pozzo and Vladimir epiphanies, the Vladimir dog-song, and Lucky’s extended profoundly creative schizophrenic word-salad were the only exceptions. The rest of the play was either corporeal grotesquerie, Pauses and Silences, or, almost single-word rhythmic repartees, described variously as circus-clown talk, vaudeville, or, music-hall, or, even commedia dell’arte examples. But these theatrical conventions could never have been Beckett’s single interests, for, the basic nature of his problematic was different. His theme was the bleak vision of an empty Non-ent, which his specific dramaturgy positioned on stage, as a meaningless presence ‘there’, aborted, and purposeless. Now, in *Endgame* also, a language dynamic inherent and innate to the language phenomenon is once again at play, but this time it is a different variety of de-construction. Not that cross-talk is totally absent. However, *Endgame* tends to have a penchant for the extended speech-delivery, and exploits the rhythms of these long speeches through a generous sprinkling of Pauses, and, a break into ‘normal’ and ‘narrative’ categorisations. A single voice is de-constructed strategically, and those tone-categories often alternate. Or, the same voice is once of a ‘normal’, and, once a ‘rational being’s’. Or, once it is a raconteur’s, and, then a tailor’s, and after that the tailor’s customer’s, and next Nagg’s own. Or, once it is Hamm’s, and subsequently the Hamm-narrator-demigod’s, and following that the snivelling, serville, Man-ling’s. This kind of language drama was totally new to *Endgame*, vis-a-vis the Godot-play. Again, the play has no Silences, much less Long Silences. Pauses, of shorter duration, are more, and serve to make points, at strategic places. In *Endgame*, the necessity to keep up a conversation, to put away an eerie Silence, is not the first effect sought, as is the phenomenon that a ‘something’ appeared to be taking its course. Earlier, it was the Non-ent dramatized as an overpowering illusionless Waiting. Now, it is the same Non-ent presented
on stage as an overwhelming, harsh and illusionless Ending. It was about to end, and yet had not ended. It was a crushing universal condition, which, having suffered an apocalyptic disintegration, was torturously inching very slowly on, to its finish. Once again, language drama and, human corporeality as a meaningless and cruel 'there' are the prime movers; however, it is a language drama and a human corporeality of their own kind and variety. Some points about the former have been made, and many illustrations are to follow. Of human corporeality, as a stage-presence, it would suffice for the moment to describe it as a keener cutting condition than either Vladimir's or Estragon's. For, the stiff-walking-unable-to-sit Clav, or, the blind, bandaged and bleeding Hamm-on-castors, who is unable to stand, or, the decrepits Nagg and Nell, constricted in dust-bins, could only have Lucky, or the later Pozzo as companions. Providing platitudes as strategy for attack is also not exploited. Pungent interrogatives, like the questioning 'What?' and 'Why?' are very few too. The situation being harsher, the conversation is often violent, and even abusive. There are two tableaux one to begin and the other to end with. There are extended stage-directions also for a long pantomime, the tableaux and the pantomime being two new variations in the dramaturgic technique.

The play is again appropriately begun with almost an empty stage, and a Non-ent is supplied to it using very little stage-property. What is opted out of is the open country-road with a bare tree alongside, and a mound near by. This time, it is a spare grey-lit interior, with high walls and two small curtained windows, also high, and way up near the ceiling. The Non-ent supplied, helps create the context of a brutal, harsh, and aborted 'something', at its Endgame. It is its tether too, that is now giving way to a finish. The stage interior, appears some kind of a temporary shelter,
that somehow survived the apocalyptic destruction, which struck outside. Four very human semblances, in as many versions of physical deformity, hurt and decrepitude, appear the only survivors. They are Hamm and Clov, Nagg and Nell. Of the four, Hamm occupies centre-stage. He is blind, bleeding and bandaged, with a gaff, dark glasses, a whistle, and, a handkerchief. The handkerchief often covers his face. Hamm is an invalid on a wheel chair. Clov is either Hamm’s adopted son, or, servant, and shares with him a love-hate relationship. Also, if Hamm cannot stand, Clov cannot sit. Two huge dustbins contain Nagg and Nell, Hamm’s legless parents, his father and mother. A picture with its face towards the wall hangs near the door to a kitchen. Outside the shelter, all is a ruin, having catastrophied to a zero. At close of play, Nagg and Nell are presumed dead, and Clov is about to leave, though he stands fixedly looking at Hamm, who has spoken his last speech. Hamm throws away his gaff, whistle and toy-dog and compliments the audience. He folds and unfolds his handkerchief, and then covers his blood-spattered head-bandage and red face, with his favourite ‘stancher’ and prepares to die. A brief tableau follows and the curtain falls. The play, in between, is logocentric all through, but first the abstract notion of an Ending is concretized, on-stage, in deathly stage-images, that help create a powerful impact of an End, which is just about to reach its finish. The human-sized dust-bins, and arm-chair-on-castors, that are covered with large white sheets, convey a morbid impression. The picture has its face towards the wall. A red-faced human form stands motionless, eyes fixated on the sheet-covered arm-chair-on-castors. Infact, all this is part of a brief tableau to the audience, some of whom may have brought into the hall, vague notions of an endgame, picked up from the bill-boards. The pantomime that follows with Clov’s stiff entries and exits, and his ladder-and-window stage-business, help supply more accretions to the
notion of a trapped existential impasse, temporarily sheltered though it is, particularly when Clov climbs up the ladder to draw the window-curtains and looks outside. The ritual repetitions of these performances, the climb up, the climb down, the look out, and the ladder settings, as also the brief laughs at the calamitous convulsion outside, make this a remarkably effective beginning. This sufficiently situates, on stage, the interiority of a holed-up situation. And, after that, the ritual removal of the white sheets from over the dust-bins, and the rite each time of folding them, the lid-raising, the stooping and looking into the dust-bins, and the brief laughs after closing the lids, accumulate and pile up a grotesque 'irrational' context, that helps accrue the Non-ent to the sparsely inhabited stage. Again the removal of the sheet from the wheel-chair to reveal Hamm centre-stage, must be the most startling of the initial theatre experiences. For, Hamm's red face, black glasses, bandaged head, the rug over his knees and thick socks, with Clov's fixed gaze at him, as also, Clov's brief laughs, add bit by bit to the stage situation.

This brings us again to the importance of stage-directions in a Beckett play, for the simple reason that they specifically concern themselves with action on stage. In fact, the beginnings of *Endgame* and *Krapp's Last Tape* have far more stage directions than dialogue. This is because, as Iser concludes, in a Beckett play, external action is not 'developed through relationship between characters'. Further, the play does not progress beyond the initial framework that the stage-directions prescribe, and therefore, help establish a certain measure of coherence. Iser considers Beckett's stage-directions to be more than ordinary for they are linked to the irrational existential condition, or, what Iser calls the 'situation' of the characters. At the beginning of *Endgame* they direct a pantomine, and a tableau,
which together suggest the dissolution of all co-ordination between intentions and action. Therefore experience ceases to be a guide, and each situation is always the first one, and an act has no precedent. Also, if a dissolution of co-ordination be the theme, only extensive stage-directions can be of help, because, this lack of co-ordination is to be independent of the characters themselves. Further, as Kenner would suggest, Descarte's pineal glands being absent, the Body and Mind become pronounced dichotomies, and Man becomes what he elsewhere calls a Centaur. To add to this, Jonathan Kalb considers Beckettian plays, more presentational, than representational pieces. Moreover, according to Kalb, Beckett as director, is reputed to have insisted on 'physical themes', where each gesture was thought to be significant and therefore had to be graceful and polished. Thus, Beckettian stage-directions acquire tremendous importance. What accentuates their necessity is the presentation, on stage, of a visual corporeal presence 'there', as a concrete stage-image of an irrational human predicament. This is the reason why the stage-directions in *Endgame* for its first tableau, and only pantomine, form part of a dramaturgy to situate a Non-ent on its stage.

Now, the Godot-play cuts down on all illusions to intensify the on-stage futile Waiting phenomenon. Truth, Faith, Grace, Reason, and Belief; the Logic of Redemption, the Evangelists and the Bible; Thought, Language, Dream, Story and Vision; and even Time, Place, and Object are each demolished at the dramaturgical anvil. This helped create that intense metaphysical anguish on stage which is supposed to be at the root of all Absurd Theatre experience. Thus, to repeat, an exchange or two activates the meaning-content of a concept, leaving the rest to the language drama itself, to bereft the concept of its very spirit and tenor. This is a dramaturgic compulsion in the play, which Beckett cannot
easily resist. It has been worked out in detail in the previous chapter. However, an example or two would not be out of order. Thus, the following is a case of sheer language drama deprecating the complacent comfort of a Dream, in *Waiting for Godot* ---

Estragon: (Despairingly). Why will you never let me sleep?

Vladimir: I felt lonely.

Estragon: I had a dream.

Vladimir: Don’t tell me.

Estragon: I dreamt that---

Vladimir: DON’T TELL ME!

Estragon: (gestures towards the universe). This one is enough for you? (Silence) (Act I, pp.15-16)

Or, here is an illustration of the destruction of the content of a Vision by a similar technique---

Vladimir: You must have had a vision.

Estragon: (turning his head) What?

Vladimir: (Louder) You must have had a vision.

Estragon: No need to shout. (Silence.) (Waiting for Godot, Act II, p.75)

Or, to repeat yet again, the example of the meaning-value of the word ‘happy’ being demolished, ritual fashion, through its repetition. This is also from *Waiting for Godot*:

Vladimir: You must be happy, too, deep down, if you only knew it?

Estragon: Happy about what?

Vladimir: To be back with me again.
Estragon: Would you say so?
Vladimir: Say you're even if it's not true.
Estragon: What am I to say?
Vladimir: Say, I am happy
Estragon: I am happy.
Vladimir: So am I.
Estragon: So am I.
Vladimir: We are happy.
Estragon: We are happy. (Silence.) (Act II, p.60)

And, as if to suggest, that because the playwright is aware that a language rhythm, once generated, could take an extra beat or two, he can not resist the compulsion of permitting the rhythm its propulsion, and Estragon is made to continue even after the Silence--

What do we do now, now that we are happy?
Vladimir: Wait for Godot. (Silence). (Act II, p.60)

Such an erasure of illusions was absolutely necessary to support the excruciating phenomenon of just being 'there', an irrational presence, doing nothing but Waiting, perpetually and purposelessly, for a never-to-arrive absent-presence. However, the Ending game had to be different and is staged as a fresh dramaturgical experience of the Non-ent, which now is at its End, and the existential quandary in it more keen, unfeeling and brutal. In this play, the nomenclature of a Godot -presence is also given up, and yet there is a dramaturgical build-up that makes the abstract phenomenon of the ending of a beastly existence, dramaturgically live and pulsating. Not that Beckett spares
himself the exercise of an operation—debunk of comfortable illusions in *Endgame*, but, a drama with a similar technique and thrust is not repeated in the later play, because having done it once, and devastatingly too, the ruin is, as it were, subconsciously taken for granted. Again, in the Godot-play, the aim is to create pervasive uncertainty and confusion, whereas in the Ending-game, it is the brutal, hard and harsh that takes precedence, so that quite often the exchanges are violent, and there is hate, abuse, servility and fear, and a catastrophe engulfs the temporary shelter of hollow bricks. There is no uncertainty or ambiguity about that. It is the End to a brutality that is now concretized as an intense on-stage experience. That brutality afflicted Being itself, making it aborted and irrational and shorn of all illusions, including those of health and youth, sight and normal body-movement; heredity and age get restricted to dustbins. Therefore, *Endgame* does not demolish illusions as much as has them literally shouted and screamed at, abused and made grotesqueries of. Thus, a parent was either an 'accursed progenitor' or an 'accursed fornicator'.

Similarly the idea of divinity is insulted and abused, and is best left unquoted. It is on p. 38, after Hamm and Clov, Nagg and Nell decide to pray, and get sceptical about the prayer. Hamm in a violent outburst abuses God. Curses also seem to abound, as when the world outside the shelter is found corpsed (p. 25), or, again at p.33, when the Universe is discovered to stink, or, when it is sent to hell. Or, still later, when Clov brings the toy-dog to the sadist Hamm, and Hamm postures as 'the Actor-Man-God-King-the Blind'—

Hamm: (His hand on the dog's head). Is he gazing at me?
Clov: Yes.
Hamm: (Proudly). As if he were asking me to take him for a walk?
Clov: If you like.

Hamm: (As before.) Or as if he were begging me for a bone. (He withdraws his hand) leave him like that, standing there imploring me. (p.31)

Or, yet again, when Hamm, with an imprecation hurled at the day he was born, and with heredity already confined in dustbins, he readily rebukes Nell, his mother, as a 'damn busy body', and wants her 'bottled up' with the lids screwed down. Or, again, when in his story, as demi-god-narrator, Hamm enjoys the grovelling of a Man-ling at his feet, who had journeyed three days to beg of Hamm some bread for his small boy. Or, finally when Hamm and Clov are found to wallow in a love-hate relationship.

It was all as if an indifferent irrational existence had had its callous irrationality, permeate the human psyche also. But, could it be, just a Beckettian version of the Jarry-Artaud world-view? Be that as it may, it is a shocking state of affairs in which laughter too was forced and had very much to be 'launched', and that also 'after some reflection'! What was worse was that laughter had to be graded first as 'heartily', then as 'less heartily', and finally as 'still less heartily'. At one stage, Clov is pretty sure he 'couldn't guffaw again today'. In the Godot-play also, the hearty laugh had been stifled to a contorted face, and, the grotesquerie that followed as an ear-to-ear smile, was one of the striking stage-concretizations in the play. However, if the futility of an empty Non-ent was the theme in Waiting for Godot, in Endgame it is also a shocking harshness that startles and surprises. To Hamm and his company then, 'a rational being' would indeed be a 'visitor' (p.27), and, even the lovely green fields as appalling as 'ashes' to a mad man (p. 32); and, crying would need a trying; and a laugh become a matter of serious reflection
(p.16 and p.25); and, as for 'unhappiness', there was 'nothing funnier'.

Clov's is the first utterance of the play. It adds the language dimension to the tableau-pantomime sequence. It rounds off the tableau-cum-pantomime effect by its tonelessness, delivered with a fixed gaze at the audience, and adds to the Non-ent experience on-stage. And therefore, a harsh, holed-up, cruel predicament was at the end of its tether, or, was it the outside only, it is yet not sure, for Clov is at the moment speaking of the situation outside, at which he peers from a window---

Clov: (Fixed gaze, tonelessly.) Finished, it’s finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished. (Pause.) (p.12).

This opening utterance of the play has four repetitions of 'Finished', first as a participle, then as a complement, then as modified by an adverb, and finally, the last use, made different, by the addition of an emphatic 'it must be' to the participle form. This iteration, helped by its language dramaturgy, adds to the tableau-pantomime stage sequence the experience that something was at its tether. Could it be trapped humanity, caught up in a brutal quandary? After the Pause, Clov continues---

Grain upon grain, one by one, and one day, suddenly, there’s a heap, a little heap, the impossible heap. (Pause.) (p.12).

The imperceptibly slow advance towards the End is taken up in the variations of the participle 'Finished', and is continued after the Pause; each comma is the next advance in the torturous finish and brings it so many steps closer, the
technique becoming more pronounced, if the steps are written one after the other in a descending order—

Grain upon grain,
one by one,
and one day,
suddenly,
there's a heap,
a little heap,
The impossible heap. (Pause.) (p.12)

The next movement in his utterance sounds a rebellion against his predicament. A Pause ensues. He decides to go to the kitchen but the dimensions of his kitchen, and his resolve to wait there for Hamm's whistle, and till then, to stare at the wall, adds cumulations of a trapped condition and of futility, boredom and waste, to 'the finish' that was taking its course, and to the cruel on-stage condition—

I'll go now to the kitchen, ten feet by ten feet by ten feet, and wait for him to whistle me. (Pause.) Nice dimensions, nice proportions. I'll lean on the table, and look at the wall, and wait for him to whistle me. (p.12).

The last sentence draws attention to Hamm centre-stage, and, links him to the tableau, the pantomime, and the graduations of the 'Finish' in Clov's speech. It also links Hamm to the accumulation of the 'impossible heap', that Clov visualized as piling up, grain by grain, day after day. It even has Hamm constricted in the grey lit interior, and interiorizes the devastated apocalypse outside. Hamm's first speech comes immediately after the tableau, pantomime, and Clov's opening utterance. Hamm speaks after his hurt,
invalid condition has been sufficiently positioned on stage. It is an oppressive condition at its terminal end. Also, Hamm is begun as a substantial on-stage torso-presence. He is literally 'there', bruised, bleeding and bandaged, in a characteristic Non-ent existential condition. Beginning with the first tableau itself, the white sheet covered arm-chair on-castors, is startling and mysterious. The red-faced Clov is motionless by the door, his eyes fixed on the arm-chair on-castors. An old white sheet also covers the two large-sized dustbins, but they are not centre-stage. Then the pantomime starts, and accretions accumulate to situate on-stage, a harsh and constricted condition at its torturous tether. The disaster outside has Clov laugh at it repeatedly, from the perch of high curtained windows of the grey lit temporary shelter. The peer and brief laughs are at an apocalypse that would slowly, though imperceptibly strike the ramshackle protection also. All the while the wheel-chair is centre-stage and sheet-covered. The uncovering of Hamm is the sixth movement of Clov's pantomime. The sheet that covers Hamm is removed and folded almost as a ritual, as were the sheets that covered the dust-bins that housed Nagg and Nell. However, the 'stancher' still spreads over Hamm's face, and under this stancher Hamm stirs and yawns. He removes the handkerchief to reveal a very red face, a blood be-spattered, bandaged head, and, dark glasses. Clov's pantomime had not missed Hamm. Last to be uncovered by Clov, he is looked over, and briefly laughed at. Hamm is in dressing gown, with a rug over his knees, and thick socks on his feet, and, he is blind. Hamm was the person, whose whistle Clov had waited for, while he had stood staring at the kitchen-wall. As Hamm began he yawned---

Me---(he yawns)--to play. (p.12)
The yawn is a new device that adds more boredom and futility to Clov’s stare at the kitchen-wall. *Endgame* has no Silences. It has Pauses and Yawns as its accentuators. 'Me' and 'to play' sound like Pozzo, with the first person emphasis, as also the posturing as Man, Actor, King, and the demi-god-Narrator. Now, Hamm could have woken up to his turn in some game he was playing. He could also be the self-conscious, Pozzo play-actor, launching on a new performance. He may also be announcing a choice and he chooses, as it later turns out to be the role of a cruel-demigod-actor-king, the role too of Man-in-God’s image, who, being unable to escape the brutal existential bind is himself infected by its oppressive, irrational brutality. This brings us to the rest of his extended speech, almost a 20 line exercise in language drama, punctuated with Pauses and Yawns, and de-constructed to situate on stage its own kind of an intensely profound, Being-strait. Such an exercise stands in no need of metaphor or other figures of speech. For, its author, Beckett, is aware that language, the phenomenon, written or spoken is inherently dramatic. When spoken it is a voiced sound when written a scribble; when not spoken it is a silence. Its written or uttered forms cannot be written or uttered all at once. They are part of a process, a movement, a sequence, that can be de-constructed at will to create a sense of a profundity, or, even a sense of a lack of it. The slightest contextualization causes meaning to accrue, or, even cancel meaning out all together, so much so that the drama of a language of everyday conversation, can be creatively manipulated. It can contextualize and position a perpetual Waiting in an eerie Silence, or, an End at its last gasps, grinding imperceptibly to a halt. What more if a tableau, pantomime, and an empty and a grey lit sparsely propertied stage, have already supplied a sufficient Non-ent situation. Thereafter, sheer language dynamic, constructed, de-constructed, or re-constructed can itself be a tremendous
experience of an actually bestial existential bind. The Godot-play, primarily manipulates creatively, the language drama of a cross-talk. *Endgame* of course does not forswear this, but its primary interest to repeat, is in extended, speech-deliveries. These repeatedly deconstruct the beat and deep drama of an irrationally cruel situation which, bereft of all joy and all illusion, is at its apocalyptic End. This is what Beckett repeatedly does with the long Hamm speeches, the longest of which is two and half pages, with 6 directions for 'normal', and 7 for 'narrated' tone articulation. It also has as many as 39 Pauses.

But to get back to Hamm’s opening speech, which in effect, has eight parts. It also has five Yawns, eleven Pauses, one sniff, a clearing of the throat, a joining of the finger-tips, and a whistle to summon Clov, all part of the dramatic technique. Added to this is the fact that Hamm is blind, hurt, bandaged, holed-up and an invalid in a wheelchair, for, he cannot stand. We shall presently see how his banal bodily actions, and, ordinary every day utterances take on dramatic colour as the speech unfolds. Thus, for Hamm to play, a ritual has to take effective shape. The old stancher is to be removed, dark-glasses taken off, the glasses, eyes, and, the face are then to be wiped; the glasses are again to be put on, the stancher folded and put away. That was a sequence constituted of sheer physical movement. From this Being-trap there was no escape, wish as Hamm might, for the game had to be played to the End, be it as actor, chess-pawn, story-teller, tyrant or a demi-god. That it was ending was also of no relief, for, the Ending itself was torturously slow, and maddeningly imperceptible. The parody of the tragic hero’s lofty misery could just be dramatized by a yawn and a few language jabs—

Can there be misery— (he yawns)— Loftier than mine? No doubt. Formerly. But now? (Pause.) (p.12)
Deprived of illusions, the days of a tragic hero's lofty misery were over. And the idea could now be yawned away, even that of any loftiness for that matter. A few language jabs therefore dismiss whatever there was left of loftiness. This can be seen literally done. For, as in the just quoted lines, 'No doubt', recalls, while 'Formerly' confirms, and 'But now?' questions as also wrecks loftiness altogether. Only the misery stays, and the yawns make it the more burdensome. A straddling yawn stays one, and, demolishes the other state of mind. The adverb-noun phrase, 'No doubt', the adverb 'Formerly', and the conjunction-adverb 'But now?' are all cliches. However, put in sequence and after the yawn-interrupted interrogative, the tragic comic effect of the entire piece is plainly apparent. Such an effect, is because of the inherent efficacy of language drama, once its rhythm is even minimally generated. After the Pause, and the carry forward of the idea of misery and suffering Hamm says—

My father? (Pause.) My mother? (Pause.) My...dog? (Pause.). (p.12)

The first two interrogatives are innocuous, but the third is not. It acquires a dramaturgic sting. The sequence of the interrogatives and the slight delay after the third 'My', imprecates not only heredity, but also humanity. Of course Pauses control and regulate the entire theatric exercise.

Hamm is prepared to make allowance, but postures to show that he suffers more. What had parents and a pet-dog to do with what one really suffers existentially? Misery and suffering have become obsessions—

Oh I am willing to believe they suffer as much as such creatures can suffer. But does that mean their sufferings equal mine? No doubt. (Pause.) (p.12).
Beckett's 'No doubt' operates both ways. Such is the ambiguity in language, that the doubt can question and absolve either protagonist.

The next de-constructed sequence is even more far-reaching. A mere yawn deprecates all thought of an absolute because it is positioned between absolute's 'a' and 'bsolute'. In the Godot-play, such imprecation were inherent in the drama of controlled cross-talk. In *Endgame*, the same effect is present in speech sequences, because, often drama is activated to destroy a traditionally held meaning-content---

No, all is a -- (he yawns) -bsolute, (proudly) the bigger a man is the fuller he is. (Pause.). And the emptier. (He sniffs). (p.12).

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The wrench of the 'a' from the word 'absolute' by the strategically positioned Yawn disintegrates all illusion of an absolute. There are no absolutes. The pride of being a bigger and fuller man is also destroyed, because the theme and the language rhythm generated demolish the first two comparatives by the third; 'bigger' and 'fuller' are cancelled out by 'And the emptier'. That rhythm can come as a reflex too; a reflex innate to the drama inherent in language is also apparent. Beckett is hardly ever able to resist this dramaturgic reflex of a generated language rhythm, more particularly because the theme gets appropriate dramatic shape once the rhythm generated is allowed to run its course. The traces that linger are 'sniffed' away also. However, Hamm is nostalgic---

What dreams! Those forests! (Pause.) (p.12)
The next Hamm utterance echoes the earlier words of Clov, which to quote were---

Finish, its finished. nearly finished, it must be nearly finished. (Pause.).

While Hamm puts his trauma in the following words---

Enough, its time it ended, in the refuge too. (Pause.). (p.12)

Such permutations and combinations of an Ending are many in Endgame, and this has been noted earlier also by a critic. The present thesis would, as this analysis goes along, try to observe these permutations and combinations as they occur at their appropriate places. The master of language that Beckett is, he just does not care to lift himself higher than the drama inherent in banal speech, and with the context that he situates on stage, with each dramaturgic move, be it of torso-ritual, or, spoken-utterance, he is able to raze entire edifices of comfortable illusions, if need be, and, very casually permute the slow advance of the End of 'a something' that is at its terminal tether. The Ending was already underway as a gradual, on-stage, intense experience, and Hamm reacts to it---

And yet I hesitate, I hesitate to..to end. yes, there it is, it's time it ended and yet I hesitate to --(he yawns)-to end (yawns). (p.12)

Earlier he had protested---

Enough it's time it ended in the refuge too. (Pause.) (p.12).
Immediately after the Pause, Hamm hesitates. Despite talk of a language collapse, the play of the Hamm hesitation is itself fascinating. Its drama and its shape if written down in descending order will take the following form:

- And yet I hesitate,
- I hesitate to...
- ...to end.
- Yes, there it is,
- it's time
- it ended
- and yet I hesitate to...
  (he yawns)
- to end (Yawns) (p.12)

There is, a rhythm in that movement, that is innate to, and inherent in, the way language could exist as a phenomenon and process. It adds accretions to the contextualized, on-stage experience of an Ending, already made situate there because of the tableau and pantomime. Waiting and Ending are abstractions, even as Time, Happiness, and After-death concepts are. And fond as Beckett is of positioning potent abstractions on stage, he has drama shape each of these abstractions, in relation to his theme of an existential Non-ent. Each is a fresh experience, and a different dramaturgic formulation. The Non-ent gets shaped in five separate successful plays; viz., Waiting for Godot, Endgame, Krapp's Last Tape, Happy Days and Play.

To take stock then: so far dramaturgic compulsions had made the playwright decide on (i) a tableau, (ii) a pantomime (iii) human corporeality as a presence 'there' on stage, and (iv) on language-dynamic, to supply the Ending of a Non-ent as
an on-stage concrete experience. That having been sufficiently done, the next thrust of the play is to add thematic cummulations to the Ending experience, which deepens in intensity with each addition. Once again the exchange, or, the single extended speech, out of deliberate choice limits itself to sheer banality, be it in actions or in utterances. Also, that metaphor was not only taboo, but that it was not at all required will need just one example. After a Hamm and Clov exchange on 'time' and 'eyes', the apocalyptic outside is interiorized as a reminder that it was an End that was imperceptibly on its slow maddening course. Once again, a trite exchange acquires potency and pressure, because the presentational drama of an on-stage Ending has taken on intensity through its ritual accruals—

Hamm: (Gesture towards window right). Have you looked?
Clov: Yes.
Hamm: Well?
Clov: Zero.
Hamm: It'd need to rain.
Clov: It wont rain. (Pause.) (p.13).

The language is simple, even ordinary, but in its present context it is very ominously tragic also. An apocalypse had devastated the world outside this holed-in temporary refuge. What could be more profound and intense, than a simple question about it, with just a gesture towards the window. Each word is thereafter full of a poignant intensity—

Have you looked?
And what could be more profound than a simple affirmative---

Yes.

Next, the resignation, uncertain flicker and anticipation in---

Well?

After that the assessed pronouncement of---

Zero.

Finally, the maddening finale--

Hamm: It'd need to rain.

Clov: It won't rain (Pause.) (p.13)

In such a situation, metaphors and so-called figures of speech, or, tropes, or, deviation, call them what we will, are not only absolutely unnecessary, but also, perfectly out of order. Down-right simplicity is the only language of such a pathetically tragic situation. A catastrophe has struck. All is at an end. Would not a trope be an imposition and would it not be at some remove from the simple intensity of the occasion? In any case, metaphors are grounded in metaphysical systems, ideologies, philosophies, and illusions, when the situation in a Beckett play is entirely empty of illusion. This is brutal existence at its raw and most torso, the irrationality too, of a just being physically 'there', an ineffectual, idle presence without any purpose or justification. There is no possibility of a 'here after' solace, or, even a re-incarnation. The End is excruciatingly slow, and is itself therefore a trauma.

In fact, devoid as the existential quandary is of illusions, and also, as in this case of the chance even of
survival, it has to be drama at its profoundest simple. For, nothing is left of existence in *Endgame*, but this overwhelming simplicity. Or, is Being just drama and no more? Is it a meaningless irrationality that exists only as drama? All life long is it the same drama, of the same questions, and their same answers? Some with Hamm would have had enough of---

this....this.... thing (p.13).

But they may not be sure about others---

Not You ? (p.13).

Therefore, common-place actions and trite articulations pile implication upon implication, as just one more permutation, to a prolonged Ending, because there was 'a something' that appeared to be taking its course. But, why then did the two-some, Hamm and Clov, want to separate from each other? Two answers, rounded off by a Pause, help shape the situation as effective drama---

Hamm : There's no one else.

Clov : There's no where else. (Pause.) (p.14).

Just one exchange, given the sufficiently positioned stage context, helps the drama of the Non-ent surface compulsively. This is followed by another banal exchange, which too accumulates accruals, language-dynamic after language-dynamic. The technique is to set up a link, and the on-stage context being already there, the drama of an irrational existential condition, crass, cruel, and
corporeal, takes its own course through the next association. Thus---

Hamm: You’re leaving me all the same.
Clov: I’m trying.
Hamm: You don’t love me?
Clov: No.
Hamm: You loved me once.
Clov: Once!
Hamm: I’ve made you suffer too much. (Pause.) Haven’t I?
Clov: It’s not that.
Hamm: (shocked) I haven’t made you suffer too much?
Clov: Yes!
Hamm: (Relieved). Ah you gave me a fright! (Pause. Coldly) forgive me. (Pause. Louder) I said forgive me.
Clove: I heard you. (Pause.) (p.14)___

It is a love-hate relationship, tender and pathetic, and often, harsh, cold and indifferent. It is set apace as sheer language-dramatic, and therefore, as a context-related conversation, ordinary but at its simplest profound, the language rhythm being allowed to run its course. Infact, as drama, it is often only language-dynamic which the drama of plain corporeal actions compliment and reciprocate. And, even as the harrowing End is on its hapless course, a hurt and diseased physical predicament becomes the next subject of the tragically pathetic conversation---

Hamm: How are your eyes?
Clove: Bad.
Hamm: How are your legs?

Clov: Bad.

Hamm: But you can move.

Clov: Yes.

Hamm: (Violently) Then move! (Clov goes to back wall, leans against it with his forehead and hands.)

(p.14)

This was one more violent end to a significant language rhythm. Clov had bad eyes and his legs were bad too for he could not sit. But Hamm's condition was worse. His eyes could not even see, and his legs could not even move. Clov's reaction to Hamm's violence travelled ambivalently, creating a striking on-stage context of helplessness, which was not only Clov's, but Hamm's also. The human body was a contraption, like a bicycle, operated by a complex set of levers, a corporeality 'there', on-stage, as the existential constriction itself. It was now part of some kind of an Ending, and the unobtrusive reference to it, is just one permutation more, to the End's relentless grind to a slow finish.

Furthermore, the aborted irrationality literally positioned on-stage, was a cruel phenomenon, and its brutality was infectious, and, Hamm and Clov in their own ways donot escape the infection. Heredity takes the first drubbing, so that while Job is supposed to have cursed only the day that he was born, Hamm is harsher, because for him, Nagg, his father was---

the accursed progenitor

and

the accursed fornicator
Hamm wants Nagg bottled, and with that the dustbins, on-stage, are brought into focus. Incidentally, this dramaturgic juncture, was led to, by successive previous exchanges about having had enough; about there always being the same questions, and, the same answers; about eyes that could not see, and legs that could not move. Being was aborted, harsh, and cruel and Hamm is infected. He asks Clov to bottle parent Nagg---

Hamm: Sit on him.
Clov: I can’t sit.
Hamm: True. And I can’t stand.
Clov: So it is.

Hamm: Everyman his own speciality. (Pause.) (p.16)

Even as the excruciatingly slow Ending gets repeated re-iteration, each time, by just one permutation more, so also, does the torso-irrationality of a just being ‘there’ in various states of physical decrepitude, get a dramaturgic pile-up, each time by just one variation more. The given quotation is abundant illustration. Such exchanges cannot be accounted for sufficiently under either ‘banal’, or, ‘crass’, or, ‘ordinary’ cross-talk. It is a pathetically tragic situation and the intense simplicity of its tragic grotesquerie cannot go unnoticed. Once again it is a language-dynamic at its profoundest simple. That there are ‘No phone calls’ reinforces the isolation of the trap-situation. The outside is already in the throes of a cataclysmic catastrophe, while inside, the situation is no less discomfiting, for, Hamm and Clov donot even want to laugh---

Hamm: ... (Pause.) Don’t we laugh?
Clov: (after reflection) I don’t feel like it.
Hamm: (after reflection) Nor I. (Pause.) (p.16)
Nature had also forgotten them, or at least, all of it had, that was in their vicinity. The only four left to breathe, change, lose hair and teeth were in this shelter. But was that not nature? So nature had not forgotten them after all! However, what was left of nature itself was, as Clov says, ‘A smithreen’. After a Pause there is one more reminder that the End was on its course, and, at its last tether. ‘This is slow work’, says Hamm, and a Pause ensues. Clov goes to the kitchen because he has work to do, which turns out to be a ‘a look at the wall to see his light die’ or, was it to see the writing on it as a foreboding! The situation was grim. Even Hamm’s apology is harsh for he shouts at Clov to be forgiven. The request to be forgiven is almost graded in expression. First, there is a coldness, then a loudness sets in, and after that the call for forgiveness is literally shouted out. Where was the need for apology, the existential irrationality being so pervasive? And why then should seeds sprout? Enquiries about sprouting seeds generate a rhythm that ends in yet another violent finale—-

Hamm: Did your seeds come up?
Clov: No.

Hamm: Did you scratch round them to see if they had sprouted?
Clov: They haven’t sprouted.
Hamm: Perhaps it’s still too early.
Clov: If they were going to sprout they would have sprouted. (Violently) They’ll never sprout. (p.17).

It was Clov’s turn to become violent. His violence helped the language rhythm generated, to specifically destroy, all hope about sprouting seeds.
The day was at an end, 'like any other day'. A Pause ensues and an anguished Hamm enquires---

What's happening, what's happening? (p.17)

Clov ominously answers---

Something is taking its course (p.17)

Yet another Pause ensues, after which is another reminder that an End to a brutal existential impasse was on its way to a torturous close. It was an endless Ending, from which there was no getting away. Clov was tired of the slow approach of the relentless grind. That an Ending is in progress, is never allowed to go out of the audience's mind. However, the playwright's strategy is such, that each reminder comes as an unobtrusive mention, appropriately couched, and innocuous---

We're getting on (p.18).

By now, ancestry and progeny are each mere cogs in the tread-mill of the condition 'there'. Ancestry is bottled up on-stage, in dustbins, and the slow trundle of the ruthless existential grind, even at its tether, takes three more generations of human beings as its parting prize. Hamm's parents situate on-stage, the trauma of physical ageing, and more severe corporeal decrepitude, mortifying still further, the agony of a harsh existential bind not quick enough even at its termination. Old age is as accursed as heredity, because if death is not early, age takes its toll on the already aborted contraption of the corporeality that the purposeless human impasse is, in its accursed irrational strait. As age and senility come on, constriction to dustbins becomes the most natural, on-stage condition. It suits the Beckettian theme also. Creepit and senile, old
Nagg and Nell nostalgically, and even, non-challantly talk of love; of sight and hearing; of their yesterdays; and, of laughter. The failed effort of either parent to re-enact youth is tragically pathetic, and a powerful accumulation to the terrifying on-stage existential context. Nagg knocks hard on the lid of Nell’s dustbin. The lid lifts. Nell’s hands appear gripping the lid; then her head emerges. She has a lace-cap and a very white face—-

Nell: What is it, my pet? (Pause.) Time for love?
Nagg: Were you asleep?
Nell: Oh no!
Nagg: Kiss me.
Nell: We can’t.
Nagg: Try.

(Their heads strain towards each other, fail to meet, fall apart again)

Nell: Why this farce day after day? Pause (p.18)

Nagg and Nell had lost teeth, as well as yesterdays. One deft dramaturgic manoeuvre makes the two losses pathetically poignant---

Nagg: I’ve lost me tooth.
Nell: When?
Nagg: I had it yesterday.
Nell: (Elegiac.) Ah yesterday. (They turn painfully to each other). (p.18).

This can hardly be dismissed as either a language-game or ordinary cross-talk. It is profound tragedy where the drama of the simple spoken words is enough to intensify the
on-stage existential predicament. Similarly, 'eyes' and 'sight' are the theme of exchanges on different occasions in the play. These repetitions accumulate intensity, and, the on-stage, 'there' experience of a decrepit, corporeal presence becomes all the more over-whelming for that reason. On p.20, is a concrete accretion to the old-age predicament---

Nell: I am going to leave you.
Nagg: Could you give me a scratch before you go?
Nell: No. (Pause.). Where?
Nagg: In the back.
Nell: No (Pause.) Rub yourself against the rim.
Nagg: It's lower down. In the hollow.
Nell: What hollow?
Nagg: The hollow! (Pause.) Could you not? (Pause.) Yesterday you scratched me there.
Nell: (Elegiac) Ah yesterday!
Nagg: Could you not? (Pause.) Would you like me to scratch you? (Pause.) Are you crying again?
Nell: I was trying. (Pause.) (p.20).

The language-dynamic picks up from 'I am going to leave you', and, what is thought a customary conversation, takes on the colour of a constricted irrational condition already in context on-stage. There was no easy escape from the trap-situation. Even a friendly scratch was unthinkable. The Pauses accentuate the pathos of the simple tragedy. 'Where'?/In the back./No. (Pause.)' is a profoundly simple statement of a tragic fact. As always in Beckett, Pauses become part of the dramaturgic rhythm, which picks up again from 'Rub yourself against the rim', and the grotesquerie is
quite discomfiting with the ritual repeat of 'In the hollow/What hollow?/ The hollow!', which also terminates in yet another Pause. The 'yesterday' rhythm then picks up, terminates elegiacally, and resounds when a Pause ensues. Under the circumstances, the piece 'Are you crying again/ I am trying,' after which is another Pause, is the climactic conclusion to a language rhythm that dramatizes a hapless existential imbroglio. It is a presentational, on-stage exercise, the form and the content shaping each other, because Beckettian drama is not about something, but that something itself. In such a context the old could not remain the only victims, because even the young did not escape affliction, as a later exchange between Hamm and Clov varies 'the yesterday' theme---

Hamm: Go and get the oil can.
Clov: What for?
Hamm: To oil the castors.
Clov: I oiled them yesterday.
Hamm: Yesterday! What does that mean? Yesterday!
Clov: (Violently). That means that bloody awful day, long ago, before this bloody awful day. I use the words you taught me. If they don't mean anything any more, teach me be others. Or let me be silent. (Pause.) (p.32)

This was yet another violent end to an Endgame conversation. It is also one more rhythm that bestows on a small two-some exchange the shape, on-stage, of the cruel existential intensity of a time-situation. It is a harrowing 'existential present' in the context of a nostalgically labelled existential 'yesterday'. The rhythm trails off, questioning articulation itself, and advocating silence, and is appropriately punctuated at its conclusion by a well positioned Pause.
To revert again to Nagg and Nell, two language rhythms underscore the old-age tragedy of deficient sight and hearing---

Nagg: Can you see me?
Nell: Hardly. And you?
Nagg: What?
Nell: Can you see me?
Nagg: Hardly.
Nell: So much the better, so much the better.
Nagg: Don’t say that? (Pause.) Our sight has failed.
Nell: Yes. (Pause.) (p.18).

The force of this rhythm is such, that though ‘hearing’ is as yet not a casualty, it loses importance because of the sheer beat generated---

Nagg: Can you hear me?
Nell: Yes. And you?
Nagg: Yes. (Pause.) Our hearing hasn’t failed.
Nell: Our what?
Nagg: Our hearing.
Nell: No. (Pause.) (p.18).

Beckett appears unable to resist the rhythm of ‘Our what?/ Our hearing/ No! (Pause.)’. Nagg and Nell could hear each other but the fresh rhythm initiated by ‘Our hearing hasn’t failed’ made that hearing matter little. The cumulative concretions that these so-called ‘banal’ exchanges
pile up, bit by dramaturgic bit, add depth and intensity to the on-stage experience and are each calculated pieces, be they ever so small as the following--

Nell: (Pause.) Have you anything else to say to me?

Nagg: Do you remember—

Nell: No. (p.18)

But who could dare laugh at this grotesquerie, though comic and often hilarious, for, it is also a very discomfitting and unsettling experience, devastating in its proximity to an existential condition, at its overwhelming simple. Three generations are positioned on-stage. It is a harsh, purposelessly 'there' pathetic human quandary. Three generations are at view, and, there is not one saving grace to retrieve the cruel situation, which is now itself, at the end of its own close. Therefore, a laugh is rare, and laughter has to be graded, as first heartily, then less heartily, and finally, still less heartily. In the Godot-play, laughter was also stifled into a grotesque smile, and this too had to disappear as quickly as it had appeared. Nagg and Nell talk about unhappiness--

Nell: Nothing is funnier than unhappiness, I grant you that. But--

Nagg: (Shocked.) Oh!

Nell: Yes, yes, it's the most comical thing in the world. And we laugh, we laugh, with a will, in the beginning. But it's always the same thing. Yes it's like the funny story we have heard too often, we still find it funny, but we don't laugh any more. (Pause.) (p.20)
Under the circumstances, a banal sentence or two, or, even a mere interrogative could take on, and, add, colour to the intense stage experience—

Nell: Have you anything else to say to me?
Nagg: No.
Nell: Are you quite sure? (Pause.) (p.20).

What need could such a dramaturgy have of metaphors, when the ordinary work-a-day exchange can be shown to have potent pressure, and, concrete on-stage contextualization lends to this simple exchange bewildering overtones. Word-articulations themselves, pile intensity upon dramaturgic intensity to the on-stage experience of a something taking its course to an extremely painful End. A practically empty stage, a tableau, a pantomime, language dramaturgy and human corporeality, the last two at their tritest banal, help position on-stage, a harsh existential condition harrowingly close to its End, and as yet not finished, the grind of its terminal close itself a nerve-racking existential phenomenon.

The human-dustbins contribute remarkably to the play's technique which is particularly conscious that it must keep theme and technique in tow, for the shape of the thought was of primary interest to Beckett. Variations on the same theme, and, to suit these variations, the corresponding change in dramaturgy, makes the on-stage Non-ent presentation appear original and fresh. Thus, if once, drama grades laughter as 'heartily, less heartily and still less heartily', It also has unhappiness non-challantly spoken of as funny. As in the Godot-play so in Endgame, repetitions of the word 'happy', decant the word of all its meaning. It is when Nagg mistakes that a story he had told Nell had made her
happy. Nell disagrees, and at the conclusion adds her requiem--

Nell: It was because I felt happy.

Nagg: (Indignant.) It was not, it was not, it was my story and nothing else. Happy! Don't you laugh at it still? Everytime I tell it. Happy!

Nell: It was deep, deep. And you could see down to the bottom. So white. So clean. (p.21)

___

The 'bottom' it was, that had knocked off, and, the waters had muddied. The meaning-content of the word 'happy' had got itself besmirched and had now taken on an exclamation mark! And therefore, Nell sounds the requiem. The Godot-play also had its share of stifled laughter, that ended in grimaces. However, the strategy in the previous play was different. Now, the three-generation, dustbin-wheelchair-stiff-walk hierarchy, in an insecure temporary shelter, holed-up against a cataclysmic outside, is itself, a variation on the theme of the Non-ent, vis-a-vis the Godot-play. It gives fresh dramaturgic shape and even variety to the on-stage Nothing-is, which now is grinding to its painful final halt. Add to the grotesque pathos of this, the many strategies for situating on-stage the purposeless corporeal presence, and the drama of the Absurd takes a novel dramaturgic shape. Thus, in Endgame, the language-dynamic also has different manifestations and comes as a refreshing encounter with articulation. Language in Endgame is worked under different compulsions quite distinct from its Godot variety. In Endgame, cross-talk is limited, though its contribution to the accumulating intensity of the Ending of a brutally irrational Non-ent remains quite significant. However, sheer language has now a different charge assigned to it. This potential in language-articulation was always there, yet it had each time to find its appropriate theme.
The theme found in this case is that of a Non-ent, and the specific potential inherent in the language dynamic is creatively exploited to give to the particular variation of the Beckettian theme its proper theatric shape. The way Nagg is made to tell the tailor’s story is one example, though only the third till p.21. Hamm’s own opening speech is its second on-stage demonstration, having even Pauses, Yawns, and a posturing, as well as a clearing of the throat, a joining of finger-tips, and, a whistle to help in the speech deconstruction. These are new ways of exploring utterance, so far, in Beckettian theatre. Much of it has been analysed extensively, earlier in this chapter. Clov’s opening utterance was an early manifestation of the fact that language use in *Endgame*, would be different from its Godot-play variation. Also, visions, dreams, and stories which are taboo in the earlier play, get repeated mention. *Waiting for Godot* does have the shouted-out, Lucky language-fantasy, and Pozzo, and Vladimir, are also allowed an epiphany each. However, story-telling used as a dramatic device is an entirely new experiment in *Endgame*, and Hamm is permitted to indulge in it to the full. Drama does have its repertoire of psychic and emotional states, still sheer voice modulation, directed seven times as narrative, and six times as normal, with thirty-nine Pauses in between, is original in Beckett. Infact such extended speeches, fractured and re-structured as they go along are many in *Endgame*. The tailor’s story told by Nagg to Nell is one such exercise. An Englishman wanted a pair of pants stitched and so went to a tailor. Nagg begins in his normal voice--

Let me tell it to you again  (p.21)

He then adopts the raconteur’s voice which takes the Englishman to the tailor. The next modulation makes Nagg speak in the tailor’s voice, telling the customer to come
after four days. The raconteur again announces the Englishman at the tailors', and Nagg once more modulates his voice to speak like the tailor. In this way the voices of the raconteur and the tailor alternate about four times each, the tailor putting the customer away each time, with some excuse or the other. He had either messed up the seat, or, had spoilt the crutch; or it was the fly! Of course the customer’s voice must be there as an added variation. Each time and all along, it is only the de-constructed speech of Nagg-in-the-dust-bin. After so many de-constructions of a single-voice, there is a Pause and we hear Nagg’s normal voice once again---

I never told it worse (Pause.).

Nagg is gloomy--

I tell this story worse and worse’ (Pause.) (p.21)

Nagg cuts the story short, and begins as the raconteur. The customer was loosing patience. He wanted the tailor damned to hell for having taken three months to stitch a pair of pants when God took just six days to create the World! This scandalized the tailor who was surprised at God’s great hurry, and protested---

But my dear Sir, my dear Sir, look -- (disdainful gesture, disgustedly) - at the WORLD -- (Pause.) - and look (loving gesture, proudly) at my TROUSERS! (Pause.) (p.22).

Now, what could be the singular purpose of modulating a single voice in this way? Was it to emphasize that words are just voiced sounds and no more? That, as a consequence,
reality actually eludes the grasp of words considered as consecrated repositories of meaning. A single voice could be modulated to demonstrate this harsh reality abundantly as a very discomfitting, on-stage, comic work-out! It would be banal to the core, but at the same time frighteningly close in its presentation of the irrational existential condition. The other thrust of Nagg’s was of course against divinity. It appeared in too great a hurry and cared less for its creation than did a tailor for the pair of trousers he was ordered to stitch. The existential bind, being an abortion was therefore, a tragic grotesquerie. What Nagg’s story also does is to allow Beckett to situate the joke on divinity at an appropriate juncture in the play. Beckett uses technique, again and again, to shape his theme about existence being hapless, hopeless, aborted and irrational. The Christian God and conventional thinking about him, and his so-called Creation, are hardly ever out of Beckett’s creative mind. However, at the slightest excuse Beckett gives divinity a severed drubbing. One may call his a nihilist, or, bend over backwards as some critics do, to show that the thought of God was forever in Beckett’s mind. But to belittle the God-Idea was almost an obsession with the playwright. The fact of the matter is, that both Waiting for Godot, and Endgame, treat the God-Idea, and, the Man-in-God’s-Image syndrome as ready material for theatric rebuke at all opportune moments. The tailor’s story was one such opportunity, confirming, however grotesquely, and, with whatever hilarity, that the existential imbroglio was always in a sorry aborted state, illusion-ridden pigeon-truths notwithstanding! On the contrary, the tailor’s delay, though propped up by lame excuses, was by far, a better act, care having gone into the production of the Englishman’s pair of trousers! Drama is always geared to direct and shape Beckett’s notion of the Absurd Non-ent which incidentally, he found all existence to be. Nagg’s five voice-modulations, put God-the-Creator
notion, through the dramaturgic sieve anvil of these voice changes. The story told in this particular way had the added advantage of helping counter the high-sounding 'WORLD' with 'TROUSERS' as just one other voiced sound. What need had the playwright of a metaphor, or, other figurative device, when voice-modulation had enough dramaturgic potential, if properly appropriated, to heap accretions on-stage of a Non-ent in the throes of a painful end. Add to Nagg's story old Nell's impassive response, eyes staring, followed by Nagg's forced laugh, and the tragi-comic grotesquerie will be still more profound in its discomfitting simplicity. The discomfiture persists when Nagg is cut short by an order of 'Silence' shouted by the hammy Hamm.

Nagg and Nell, the human dust-bins of heredity and age are overwhelming presentational realities on the Endgame stage. Recourse to a King Hamm's sudden exasperation, and furious frenzy helps link the heredity-and-age-predicament, to the Hamm-and-Clov-still-not-old situation, and the harsh existential impasse on-stage, becomes a general condition. Hamm's exasperation deserves full quotation---

Hamm: (Exasperated.) Have you not finished? Will you never finish? (With sudden fury.) Will this never finish? (Nagg disappears into his bin, closes the lid behind him. Nell does not move. Frenziedly.) My kingdom for a nightman! (He whistles. Enter Clov.) Clear away this muck! Chuck it in the sea! (Clov goes to bins, halts.)

Nell: So white.

Hamm: What? What's she blathering about? (Clov stoops, takes Nell's hand, feels her pulse)

Nell: (To Clov.) Desert! (Clov lets go her hand, pushes her back in the bin, closes the lid.)

Clov: (Returning to his place beside the chair.) She has no pulse.
Hamm: What was she drivelling about?

Clov: She told me to go away, into the desert.

Hamm: Damn busybody! Is that all?

Clov: No.

Hamm: What else?

Clov: I didn't understand.

Hamm: Have you bottled her?

Clov: Yes.

Hamm: Are they both bottled?

Clov: Yes.

Hamm: Screw down the lids. (Clov goes towards door.) Time enough. (Clov halts.) My anger subsides, I'd like to pee.

Clov: (With alacrity.) I'll go and get the catheter. (He goes towards the door.)

Hamm: Time enough. (Clov halts.) Give me my pain-killer.

Clov: It's too soon. (Pause.) It's too soon on the top of your tonic, it wouldn't act.

Hamm: In the morning they brace you up and in the evening they calm you down. Unless it's the other way round. (Pause.) (pp.22-23)

That needed to be quoted entire, because once again it is a rhythm generated to shape the theme which the Beckettian ouevre is committed to. Of course, it is one of a piece and accrues its share to the already profound concretion, on-stage, of a bestial and meaningless existence, taking a slow course, to its cataclysmic End. The start of the rhythm restores Hamm to centre-stage as Man, the Actor-King, in God's Image. However it is an angry and furious Actor-King Hamm, exasperated with heredity and weary of existence. From-
'have you not finished?' it is an easy language transition to---

Will this never finish?

And what a King to want to wish away his kingdom? The overtone of 'nightmare' in 'nightman' lurks leeringly. Beckett could not resist the fact, that 'nightmare' and 'nightman' are just one sound different. There is gain in this slight change. For, Hamm's kingdom was indeed a nightmare. What with old age, and an invalid, irrational, corporeal presence, all part of a harsh existential constriction, Hamm calls heredity, 'muck'. He wants it thrown away into the sea; the 'busybodies' that parents were in procreating such aborted phenomenon as human beings! He orders them bottled and screwed. That was an aborted progeny's revulsion of heredity. But, was not Man, a King, in God's Image? However, the theme being of an empty Non-ent, Beckettian drama does not spare even that. He makes it an exhausted Man, infected to the core with existential cruelty! But then, the progeny's violent reaction to heredity is impotent to say the least, because King Hamm is weary and powerless, and can only keep repeating 'Time enough'. Also, the Actor-King's posture, 'My anger subsides--' is god-like, but the part of the sentence left unquoted, demolishes the tragic hero, the Actor-King-Deity, because the whole piece reads---

My anger subsides, I'd like to pee (p.23)

The tragic-hero was in a pathetic strait indeed, for he needed a pain-killer, and even a catheter. He was time-weary too. Drama deprecates the concept of a Man-King-Tragic-Hero, as well as the Deity-in-Man illusions. The generated rhythm
culminates when Hamm is heard to express the disgust at a repetitious brace-up, and, calm down---

In the morning they brace you up and in the evening they calm you down. Unless it's the other way round. (Pause.) (p.23).

The idea that Man was at the centre of creation, and also, the travesty of this idea, were never far from Hamm's mind because the playwright himself appeared extra-ordinarily obsessed with both the idea and its travesty. Infact, an entire quotation is given below as a characteristic example of Beckettian drama shaping an empty Non-ent through sheer erasure. The quotation also accentuates though its drama, a trapped interior, and, a cataclysmic outside. It once again dramatizes a torturous End at its tether, and, destroys the notion of Man's centrality in the universe---

Hamm: Take me for a little turn. (Clov goes behind the chair and pushes it forward). Not too fast! (Clov pushes chair). Right round the world. (Clov pushes chair). Hug the walls, then back to the centre again. (Clov pushes chair). I was right in the centre, wasn't I?

Clov: (Pushing.) Yes.

Hamm: We'd need a proper wheel-chair. With big wheels. Bicycle wheels! (Pause.) Are you hugging?

Clov: (Pushing.) Yes.

Hamm: (Groping for wall.) It's a lie! Why do you lie to me?

Clov: (Bearing closer to wall.) There! There!

Hamm: Stop. (Clov stops chair close to back wall. Hamm lays his hand against wall). Old wall! (Pause.) Beyond is the --- other hell. (Pause.Violently.) Closer! Closer! Up against!

Clov: Take away your hand. (Hamm withdraws his hand. Clov rams chair against wall.) There! (Hamm leans towards wall, applies his ear to it.)
Hamm: Do you hear? (He strikes the wall with his knuckles.) Do you hear? Hollow bricks! (He strikes again). All that’s Hollow! (Pause. He straightens up. Violently.) That’s enough. Back!

Clov: We haven’t done the round.

Hamm: Back to my place! (Clov pushes chair back to centre.) Is that my place?

Clov: Yes, that’s your place.

Hamm: Am I right in the centre?

Clov: I’ll measure it.

Hamm: More or less! More or less!

Clov: (Moving chair slightly.) There!

Hamm: I’m more or less in the centre?

Clov: I’d say so.

Hamm: You’d say so! Put me right in the centre!

Clov: I’ll go and get the tape.

Hamm: Roughly! Roughly! (Clov moves chair slightly.) Bang in the centre!

Clov: There! (Pause.)

Hamm: I feel a little too far to the left. (Clov moves chair slightly.) Now I feel a little too far to the right. (Clov moves chair slightly.) I feel a little too far forward. (Clov moves chair slightly.) Now I feel a little too far back. (Clov moves chair slightly.) Don’t stay there (i.e. behind the chair), you give me the shivers. (Clov returns to his place beside the chair)

Clov: If I could kill him I’d die happy. (Pause.) (pp.23-24).

Drama, is in fact, always, an opportunity for the playwright to further his theme and shape either theme or dramaturgy according to each other’s needs, even as the play proceeds. We have just had one example of how Beckett
exploits these dramaturgic and thematic opportunities. With Nagg and Nell, the earlier generation, ageing, legless and constricted inside dustbins, the next generation, also of invalids decides to do a round of 'the world'. The on-stage situation is already dense with heaped up accumulations of the gradual grind of a halt to a harsh, irrational condition. Of course, all that Hamm can do is to order Clov to take him around the shelter moving along its walls. But, with the outside completely devastated, was not the ram-shackle shelter all that was left of the 'WORLD'. In any case, the catastrophe needed Hamm's inspection, and with Hamm and Clov on a 'round', a pathetic drama is set a going. The movement is from centre-stage to the periphery and back. This helps literally act out on-stage, the notion of Man's centrality in the Universe. Remaining transfixed to the centre, and then, going away from it; talking of a return, and then actually returning to it; and, adjusting and re-adjusting, now to the left, now to the right, in order to achieve and acquire centrality, all put the entire notion of centrality up for profound comic exploitation. The move, away from the centre, and after this, the attempt to recover that central position, is made to look ridiculous. The notion of a universal human centrality is rendered a comic grotesquerie, to be uncomfortably laughed at. It situates on-stage, a never-at-the-centre image of Man. This is one more discomforting reality. For, try as one may, the holed-up interiority, even in a shelter made of hollow bricks, cannot be escaped from. And where would the escape be to in any case, the outside being in complete ruins.

Here is the ridicule of the entire effort to regain the centre in dramaturgic detail---

Hamm: Am I right in the centre?.

Clov: I'll measure it, I'll get the tape.
Hamm: I feel a little too far to the left, Now, feel a little too far forward, Bang in the centre.

Clov: There! (pp.23-24)

This is one of the several instances of drama in which the dramatist appears to revel at an operation-demolish. A notion is activated into a little drama, and before, it is time out, the anvil, or, sieve of the playwright's technique leaves little of the notion that could be held sacred, or, dear. Indeed, the five Beckett plays textually-analysed in this thesis are full of such teasing dramaturgic experiments. They help shape the playwright's theme of the Absurd, even as each play proceeds in its own way to shape the Non-ent that the universal predicament according to Beckett is.

Endgame next directs audience attention to the catastrophe outside the hollow-brick-walled shelter. The excruciating painful End was indeed close, though it was too slow in coming, and this, like Hamlet's delay is what allows Endgame to last its full length. The End, as it comes to its slow grind, is kept alive as a traumatic trundle till the very close, and is contextualized on-stage as a torture. Audience attention is made to rivet to the outside, in whatever manner their imaginations complied. Clov is again asked by Hamm to report on the weather around the shelter, and once more it is the simplicity of the exchange that is terrifying---

Hamm: What's the weather like?

Clov: The same as usual.

Hamm: Look at the earth.

Clov: I've looked.
Hamm: With the glass?
Clov: No need of the glass.
Hamm: Look at it with the glass.
Clov: I'll go and get the glass.
     (Exit Clov)
Hamm: No need of the glass!
     (Enter Clov with telescope.)
Clov: I'm back again with the glass. (He goes to window
     right, looks up at it.) I need the steps.

The outside is completely devastated, and therefore, the simplicity of the language rhythm is as close as can be to the simple though intense experience of it. And the surprise of it is that it is a report merely, but still profoundly overwhelming in its apparent artless detail. It is ordinary every day expression which in the context on-stage, ceases to be banal, and acquires the colour of terrifying implication. Hamm's order that Clov look at the devastation outside and Clov's answer 'I've looked', followed by Hamm's insistence that Clov should look at it with the telescope, and Clov's reiteration that there was no need of that, are such simple statements, that the alignment of their rhythm with the ruin all around is immediate, and therefore, the rapport with it deep and intense.

After this follows the telescope and ladder stage-business, and the devastated outside is looked at a second-time from the high-walled windows. However, as Clov is about it, he turns the telescope from the catastrophe beyond to the auditorium inside. Earlier in Waiting for Godot, Estragon had on one occasion spoken to Vladimir, on-stage, first with his back to the audience, and had described
the place where they were waiting without any success for an absent presence, Godot, as a---

Charming spot (Act I, p.13)

Then he had turned to the audience and with non-chalance had concluded--

Inspiring prospects (Act I, p.14)

Beckett had made Estragon take the audience into the experience of the Absurd in one dramaturgic move. In similar fashion Clov is made to use his telescope, first to look at the ruin outside, and, then at the audience in the hall, inside--

Clov: Things are livening up. (He gets up on ladder, raises the telescope, lets it fall.) I did it on purpose. (He gets down picks up the telescope, turns it on auditorium.) I see --- a multitude --- in transports --- of Joy. (Pause.) That's what I call a magnifier. (p.25)

An exchange on ‘laugh’ follows; there are four such exchanges, being on pp.16, 19, 25 and 41, even as there are four exchanges on ‘eyes’, and, three on ‘yesterday’. The exchange on p.25, repeats the exchange on p.16, but the order of the speaker is reversed. In the first, Hamm initiates as well as concludes, and, in the second, Clov concludes the theatric exercise, after having begun with a question himself---

: Well? ... Don’t we laugh?

Hamm: (After reflection.) I don’t.

Clov: (After reflection.) Nor I. (p.25)
The last such exchange on laugh or 'guffaw' is on p. 41--

Clov: (After reflection). I couldn’t guffaw again today.

Hamm: (After reflection). Nor I. (Pause.)

Earlier, 'laughter' was also graded as hearty, less hearty, and still less hearty. Thus, the End of a cruelly harsh existential condition is also such a halting grind, that any kind of joy or its expression is unthinkable. Clov next looks out of the window, at the catastrophe that surrounds the ramshackle shelter and reports to Hamm below, who was on his 'round' of 'the world' in his wheel-chair--

Clov: Let's see. (He looks, moving the telescope.) Zero --- (he looks) --- Zero --- (he looks) --- and Zero.

Hamm: Nothing stirs, All is --

Clov: Zer --

Hamm: (Violently). Wait till you're spoken to! (Normal voice.) All is --- all is --- all is what? (Violently.) All is what?

Clov: What all is? In a word? Is that what you want to know? Just a moment. (He turns the telescope on the without, looks, lowers the telescope, turns towards Hamm.) Corpsed. (Pause.) Well? Content? (p. 25).

The moment Clov looks outside and says 'Let's see', a rhythm sets in, travelling through Clov's 'Zero --- zero --- and zero'. When it is Hamm's turn to speak, the movement is still on, 'Nothing stirs. All is ---', which Clov takes up in his half uttered 'zer---'. It becomes violent at Hamm's 'Wait till you're spoken to!', and normal when Hamm is haltingly at 'All is --- all is --- all is what?' then once again it becomes violent at the repeat of the impatient
query, 'All is what?', Clov is made to dally with the rhythm a bit. The aim of the exercise all along is to make Clov culminate the rhythmic beat at its 'finale' on the outside--

--- Corpsed. (Pause.) Well? Content? (p.25)

Could not have Clov spoken this 'finale' at the beginning! But then, this is what drama is all about. For, to make the drama of 'the finale' very effective, it had to be led to, as a strategy almost. The drama in 'Corpsed' is carried over into the beats of 'Well? Content', and by its close is well-nigh tapered. In a similar exercise, Clov's 'GREY' is led to, as a 'finale' to an initiated rhythm. Of course, a whole quotation will be needed to make this clear, the telescope and ladder stage - business being part of the entire exercise--

Hamm: Look at the sea.

Clov: It's the same.

Hamm: Look at the ocean!
   (Clov gets down, takes a few steps toward window left, goes back for ladder, carries it over and sets it down under window left, gets up on it, turns the telescope on the without, looks at length. He starts, lowers the telescope, examines it, turns it again on the without.)

Clov: Never seen anything like that!

Hamm: (Anxious.) What? A sail? A fin? Smoke?

Clov: (Looking.) The light is sunk.
Hamm: (Relieved.) Pah! We all knew that.

Clov: (Looking.) There was a bit left.

Hamm: The base.

Clov: (Looking.) Yes.

Hamm: And now?

Clov: (Looking). All gone.

Hamm: No gulls?

Clov: (Looking.) Gulls!

Hamm: And the horizon? Nothing on the horizon?

Clov: (lowering the telescope, turning towards Hamm, exasperated.) What in God’s name could there be on the horizon? (Pause.)

Hamm: The waves, how are the waves?

Clov: The waves? (He turns the telescope on the waves.) Lead.

Hamm: And the sun?

Clov: (Looking.) Zero.

Hamm: But it should be sinking. Look again.

Clov: (Looking.) Damn the sun.

Hamm: Is it night already then?
Clov: (Looking.) No.

Hamm: Then what is it?

Clov: (Looking.) Grey. (Lowering the telescope, turning towards Hamm, louder.) Grey! (Pause. Still Louder) GRREY! (Pause. He gets down, approaches Hamm from behind, whispers in his ear.)

Hamm: (Starting.) Grey! Did I hear you say grey?

Clov: Light black. From pole to pole.

Hamm: You exaggerate. (Pause.) Don’t stay there, you give me the shivers. (pp.25-26).

This is language-dynamic literally holding the pathos of tragedy at its profoundest simple. Whoever could treat this as a ‘banal’ conversation only? The rhythm of the piece has inner propulsion, almost inviting each time the next dramatic utterance. It has beat and rhythm, and even the feel of the tragedy of an existential predicament, minus the conventional trappings of the drama, trumpeted for centuries as ‘tragedy’. There was a catastrophe outside, and the maddening grind to a close, of a something, that appeared taking its course felt inside. The End of the harsh existential irrationality was itself a disquieting farce and appeared routine. It was pathetic, awesome, and grotesque---

Hamm: Last night I saw inside my breast, there was a big sore.

Clov: Pah! You saw your heart.

Hamm: No, it was living. (Pause. Anguished.) Clov!
Clov: Yes.
Hamm: What’s happening?
Clov: Something is taking its course. (Pause.) (p.26)

Beckett can be overwhelming, because next is yet another exercise in language rhythm which sets on-stage ‘there’, the predicament of a Beckettian hero’s desperate desire to mean something, and, the frustration of a choke off that dismisses the effort as a good joke---

Hamm: Clov!

Clov: (Impatiently.) What is it?

Hamm: We’re not beginning to --- to --- mean something?

Clov: Mean something! You and I, mean something! (Brief laugh.) Ah that’s a good one! (pp.26-27).

This gives Beckett the opportunity to bring the voice of a ‘rational being’ into play, further concretizing the on-stage existential bind as irrational. It is done by deconstructing Hamm’s voice into two: his own, and the voice of ‘the rational being’. One small little sentence, interjected in between two normal articulations, is enough for the drama of the occasion, because with the already abundant context on-stage, the normal was not ‘the rational’, nor was ‘the rational’ normal either---

(voice of rational being.) Ah, good, now I see what it is, yes, now I understand what they’re at! (p.27).
At this Clov starts, drops the telescope and scratches his belly with both hands, whereafter Hamm resumes in his normal voice--

And without going so far as that, we ourselves... (with emotion)... We ourselves... at certain moments... (Vehemently.) To think perhaps it won’t all have been for nothing! (p.27)  

This is the grotesque tragedy of the human effort ‘to mean something’, worked out live at the anvil of a sure and deft dramaturgy, committed to shape even the End of a harsh irrational existential condition, as itself, an on stage traumatic experience. But, what if under the circumstances, a probable source of re-production and procreation were discovered! That startling experience too, is given a drama with its anvil and sieve ready to shape the experience into a shocking trauma. This is because, what with a cataclysmic catastrophe outside, and, the harsh, constricted, existential condition of the four survivors inside, the remotest possibility of pro creation would be anathema! And therefore, Clov is horrified when he has to scratch himself, and drama makes him agonizingly discover that it is after all a flea! The tragedy is that the existential impasse is a profound grotesquie also--

Clov: (Anguished, scratching himself.) I have a flea!  
Hamm: A flea! Are there still fleas?  
Clov: On me there’s one. (Scratching.) Unless it’s a crablouse.  
Hamm: (Very perturbed.) But humanity might start from there all over again! Catch him, for the love of God!  
Clov: I’ll go and get the powder.  
(Exit Clov.)
Hamm: A flea! This is awful! What a day! (Enter Clov with a sprinkling-tin.)

Clov: I'm back again, with the insecticide.

Hamm: Let him have it! (p.27).

The stage-business of sprinkling insecticide inside his trousers to kill the potential pro creator intruder is the next obvious step. Clov stops, looks, waits, starts, frenziedly shakes more powder into his trousers, stoops, looks, and waits. then ensues the exchange on the startling possibility of the flea having laid life---

Clov: The bastard!

Hamm: Did you get him?

Clov: Looks like it. (He drops the tin and adjusts his trousers.) Unless he's laying doggo.

Hamm: Laying! Lying you mean? unless he's lying doggo.

Clov: Ah? One says lying? One doesn't say laying?

Hamm: Use your head, can't you. If he was laying we'd be bitched.

Clov: Ah-(Pause.) (p.27).

The same predicament, worked out in prose would be a different exercise altogether. The shock of a potential pro-creator starting another aborted existence all over again comes on stage as a live trauma. That it is grotesque also, adds to the profoundness of the tragedy, because what with a Mind-Body mismatch, Being itself is a tragic grotesquie. Some would call a human being a Cartesean Centaur. Others would dismiss him as plain abortion! Escape there was none, rafts or no rafts. The time for the pain killer was also not
ripe. It is a sad impasse indeed. However the blind invalid questions Clov---

Hamm: Wait! (Clov halts.) How are your eyes?
Clov: Bad.
Hamm: But you can see.
Clov: All I want.
Hamm: How are your legs?
Clov: Bad.
Hamm: But you can walk.
Clov: I come... and go. (p.28).

Now it is time in the play for the second extended Hamm speech delivery. It has almost 20 odd lines and about 240 words, a feature repeated only thrice in Waiting for Godot, in which Lucky’s Speech is the longest delivery, and Pozzo and Vladmimir are permitted an epiphany each. Otherwise, the Godot-play with its theme of Waiting is mostly shaped by the drama of cross-talk and human corporeality both at its subtlest simple. Endgame has a penchant for long extended deliveries, a new variety of which is successfully put into play-length experiment in Happy Days. In Endgame, such extended speeches are also many. In fact, Clov begins with an 8-line delivery of about 100 words, to be followed immediately by Hamm’s first 20-line speech of about 240 words, de-structured with the help of Yawns and Pauses. Later, Nagg also speaks almost 25 lines at a stretch, while he tells the tailor’s story. Of course Nagg’s story is told as a different dramaturgic exercise altogether. It is broken up into five modulations of the same voice. The speech has already been analysed earlier. The break-up of a small Hamm delivery into a normal and a ‘rational’ being’s voice has also already been considered. It was achieved by
interpolating a few words supposed to be the rational being’s but spoken by Hamm in the midst of his normal speech delivery. The 20-line, second Hamm exercise, prophecies with relish, loss of sight, and, infinite emptiness for Clov. However, it is more the trauma of a blind Hamm that comes through, both as a personal, as well as, a general existential condition. Hamm was blind, while Clov, Nagg and Nell had at least eyes to see, though even ‘normal vision’ distorted reality, and therefore, was insufficient to get at the truth of anything, if that is, there were any such ‘universals’, or, ‘ultimates’ at all! The speech of Hamm has its ‘One-day---’ rhythms, that culminate in Pauses. The rhythmic beat in ‘One day---’/‘One-day---’/‘Yes, one day---’ has in it the ritual of a prophecy of an unpleasant future that will certainly befall Clov, and, from which, he never would escape, because that was in the nature of the Absurd itself. The dramaturgic variety, to which language-use can be put, is once again at display in this Hamm delivery. Language nuances in Waiting for Godot are far different from the language nuances in Endgame. For, Beckett, the playwright, is a master language-performer, at his creative best. It will be worth the effort to break up the prophetic Hamm speech on pp. 28 and 29, Pause-wise, and feel the pathos of human existence, reduced more and more, to a mere harsh corporeality. It is a tragic rhythm, with each rhythmic chunk, deepening the utterance about an unassailable state of affairs, from which, there is no escape---

One day you’ll be blind, like me, you’ll be sitting there, a speck in the void, in the dark, forever, like me. (Pause.)

One day you’ll say to yourself, I’m tired, I’ll sit down, and you’ll go and sit down. Then you’ll say, I’m hungry, I’ll get up and get something to eat. But you won’t get up. You’ll say, I shouldn’t have sat down,
but since I have I’ll sit on a little longer, then I’ll get up and get something to eat. But you won’t get up and you won’t get anything to eat. (Pause.)

You’ll look at the wall a while, then you’ll say, I’ll close my eyes, perhaps have a little sleep, after that I’ll feel better, and you’ll close them. And when you open them again there’ll be no wall any more. (Pause.) (p.28).

The following part of this Hamm-delivery prophecies infinite emptiness for Clov, though it does not begin with a ritual ‘One Day---’,---

Infinite emptiness will be all around you, all the resurrected dead of all the ages wouldn’t fill it, and there you’ll be like a little bit of grit in the middle of the steppe. (Pause.) (pp.28-29).

In its last movement, the speech has a slight change of beat, ‘Yes, one day--’

Yes, one day you’ll know what it is, you’ll be like me, except that you won’t have anyone with you, because you won’t have had pity on anyone and because there won’t be anyone left to have pity on. (Pause.) (p.29)

A prophecy for Clov, it is a dreadful experience for the audience. The blind Hamm’s centre-stage, wheel-chair presence, at each utterance, reciprocates the blind invalid’s tragic drone. There is nostalgia for the old questions and old answers---

Ah, the old questions, the old answers, there’s nothing like them. (p.29).
And for the green hill’s---

--- here we’re down in a hole. (Pause.) But beyond the hills? Eh? Perhaps it is still green Eh? (Pause.) Flora! Pomona! (Ecstatically.) Ceres! (Pause.) Perhaps you won’t need to go very far. (p.30).

However, Hamm’s madman would not have been impressed, dragging him as Hamm may to the window of the asylum-cell, to show him, the rising corn, or, the herring fleet, or, whatever it was, that Hamm at that time, had thought beautiful and lovely. The madman would snatch away his hand and go back into his corner, appalled; because for the madman all was just ash! Of course, the End that is forever approaching is never out of the playwright’s mind, and, in sundry ways, he keeps it in the play’s rhythm. Be it as a casual ‘We’re getting on’, or, in the covert reminder that the toy-dog was yet ‘unfinished’, or, as an exchange between Hamm and Clov---

Hamm: Clov!

Clov: Yes.

Hamm: Do you not think this has gone on long enough?

Clov: Yes! (Pause.) What?

Hamm: This... this... thing.

Clov: I’ve always thought so. (Pause.) You not?

Hamm: (Gloomily.) Then it’s a day like any other day.

Clov: As long as it lasts. (Pause.) All life long the same inanities. (Pause.) (p.33).

The tragedy is that each day it is the same, for each day has remained the same; the same inanities had persisted all life long, so that if earlier, the Universe is found corpsed, it now is at a stink---
Hamm: Yes, but how would I know, if you were merely dead in your kitchen?

Clov: Well... sooner or later I'd start to stink.

Hamm: You stink already. The whole place stinks of corpses.

Clov: The whole universe.

Hamm: (Angrily.) To hell with the universe! (Pause.) (p.33).

As repeatedly asserted, the fact of the matter is that ideas, words and actions are all worked dramaturgically at their simplest most common-place, and concretized as intense on-stage experience, being of the very stuff of the existential human condition. The entire dramaturgic exercise is geared to present the collapse of conventional, habit-ridden meaning, and, reinforce each time, the meaninglessness of existential irrationality. Be it the effort at having an idea (p.34), or, of the life to come (p.35), or, a question of honour (p.35), or, the attitude to God when at prayer (p.38), or, the problematic of a 'yesterday' (p.32), or, laughter (p.25), or, of Man being at the centre of creation (p.24), the existential condition is Absurd and Irrational.

The play, by now, is more than half-way through, and therefore a long speech spread over two and quarter pages was thought in order. As earlier pointed out, in Waiting for Godot, the extended Lucky delivery is re-constructed as a shouted rhythm of cliches, which are pronouncedly made defunct of meaning through sheer repetition, and yet, by that very ritualistic beat, are restored into a meaning-carrying potential. In any case, such a language collapse, regenerated into some semblance of meaning, is not repeated ever in Endgame, because this play has its own language rhythms to explore and discover. Only an artist, who had full control over the subtle nuances of language drama itself,
even in its most commonplace manifestations, could make the
on-stage event such a profoundly intense experience. With
that, we come to Hamm's three long deliveries on pp.35-37,
44-45 and, pp.51-53; and also, to Clov's long speech on
pp.46-47 with its ritual repeat of 'Sometimes I wonder ---',
as well as to the slightly shorter piece on p.51, which has
the 'Then one day ---' rhythmic refrain.

Let us begin with the dramaturgy specific to the two
and a quarter page long, 80-line Hamm exercise, which is the
largest in the play, and, easily has 900 words in it. Its de-
construction is new, because it is a fresh and differently
creative language exercise. It has 39 Pauses, 6 directions
for 'normal' tone, and 7 for a 'narrative' speech delivery.
It tells a story, which has no Estragon caveats against it,
for indeed, quite a few stories are told in *Endgame*. In fact,
it would not be out of place to say that 'narration' as
dramaturgy is new to the Beckettian ouevre so far. Stories as
illusions were taboo in the Godot- play, because they propped
up deceitful illusions, and instituted metaphysical systems,
with which the factual reality of a futile existence did not
at all tally. Now, in *Endgame*, there are many stories, though
they are not told to support illusions. On the contrary, a
Hamm exercise is a typical Hamm performance. It begins with a
Pozzo - like utterance, for Hamm re-capitulates--

Where was I? (Pause.) (p.35).

This indeed is a posturing. Gloomily, Hamm speaks out
one more permutation of the Ending game, reminding the
audience of Clov's first utterance, after the opening tableau
and the pantomime--

(Gloomily) It's finished, we're finished (Pause.)
Nearly finished' (Pause.) There'll be no more speech
(Pause.) Something dripping in my head, ever since the
fontanelles. (Stiffled hilarity of Nagg) Splash, splash, always on the same spot. (Pause.) Perhaps it's a little vein. (Pause.) A little artery. (Pause.) (More animated.) Enough of that, it's story time, where was I? (Pause.) (p.35)

This piece is punctuated by Pauses and spoken in normal voice. It sets both the thematic and dramaturgic tone. Its recapitulating posture re-iterates the earlier permutations of Endgame's 'Ending' dramaturgy. All is finished. It re-asserts the debilitation Hamm's body suffers. Or, was it the pain of a Mind- that perpetual dripping in the head — unable to adjust itself to a sheer torso-condition, the Mind/Body disjunct being the prime affliction of Man, the Cartesean Centaur. This far, let it be called the first part of this Hamm utterance.

Next, the fact that it was story-time takes over, a situation the Godot-play could never visualize. Voice de-construction makes Hamm adopt a narrative tone, and, as narrator he begins--

The man came crawling towards me, on his belly. Pale, wonderfully pale and thin he seemed on the point of -- (Pause.) (p.35)

Here once again is the posturing of a Pozzo's Man-in-God's Image, and it can hardly be missed. Where cosmic range is the key-setter, the social relationship of Man with Man can hardly be the prime mover. Simply stated, it is the way God is supposed to behave with Man, and, a God being hard to come by, on-stage, the notional Man-in-God's Image, shapes the theme. Another Pause ensues. Hamm, the narrator, begins again, and in first person singular, goes on to deliver a full eight lines, punctuated by 4 Pauses. The re-constructed voice situates the God-image, on-stage, in typical Pozzo
style, for, Hamm calmly filled his pipe, puffed a bit, and began---

A ah (Pause.) 'Well, what is it you want? (Pause.) (p.36)

That day the cold was bitter. It was Christmas eve and the temperature zero, but that indeed was seasonable weather and nothing extraordinary. The posturing Hamm, Actor-King. Deity spoke to snivelling Man, after one more Pause in the narrator's voice---

Well, what ill wind blows you my way? He raised his face to me, black with mingled dirt and tears (Pause.) (p.36)

To comment on the theme and its drama, the normal voice of Hamm follows the earlier quoted narrative-piece---

That should do it (p.36)

Again, the narrator's tone resumes, reinforcing the theme of a snivelling Man confronting an omnipotent godhead---

No, no, don't look at me, don't look at me. He dropped his eyes and mumbled something, apologies, I presume (Pause.) (p.36)

The eight line narrator's tone continues---

I'm a busy man, you know, the final touches, before the festivities, you know what it is . (Pause.) (p.36).
The de-constructed Hamm voice fits easily into the narrator's tone posturing as the indifferent King-Diety---

Come on now what is the object of this invasion? (Pause.) (p.36)

This is sheer creative manipulation of a single voice, to institute an on-stage image of a careless Diety or King, in the garb of a narrator. Also, since the narrator is presumed omnipresent as well as omniscient, season-change was no obstacle to the Deity-figure Hamm. The snivelling figure of Man, also persisted and did not appear to care for season-changes either---

It was a glorious bright day, I remember, fifty by the heliometer, but already the sun was sinking down into the --- down among the dead . (p.36)

That ends the narrator's tone, and is followed by a three-word appreciation in Hamm's normal voice--

Nicely put, that.

But after the short intervention of the normal voice, the narrator's tone resumes again. The normal voice interjections are used as convenient foils to the narrator's tone, highlighting the de-structuring of Hamm's speech. It also help convert the articulations of Hamm now into the Actor's, now the King's, now the Deity's, and back to the narrator's. And therefore, the narrative resumes again---

Come on now, come on, present your petition and let me resume my labours . (Pause.) (p.36)

Artaud's impatient cruel deity cannot be missed here. It appeared too busy, infact, overbusy and indifferent to the
harsh, aborted, human predicament. Now, Hamm’s behaviour could have two possible explanations. First, that he too is infected by the pervasively irrational bestiality all around, and therefore, postures as a narrator, Pozzo-like, or, Caligula-fashion, to do the act one better on the grovelling creature in his story. Also, that social relationships were not as important in Beckett, as was Man’s brutal existential irrationality in relation to a Cosmic-situation, where the players were Man and the Universe; and Reason too, and Language; and Truth, Time, Place, and Object; and, an Absolute, the last available particularly, for perpetual Beckettian snicker, and rebuke. Posturing aborted Man was the theme. He was either an omnipotent god, in sorry on-stage manifestations, or, a narrator of naughty stories about such a freak creation, and its cruel and indifferent Creator-in-a-terrible-hurry. Drama could only shape the Beckettian Non-ent, or Nothing-is, if conventional truths were imprecated at the slightest hint or suggestion, be it the remote hint of a language rhythm, or, the least corporeal shift of the human frame or feature. And in this way the on-stage creator demi-god, or, the creature-deformity Man, kept taking various theatric shapes. It was either a demi-god cruelty, or, an aborted servility, Man. Be it in the debunking of the notions of a Saviour, the Logic of Redemption, the Bible, or the Evangelists, which Beckett achieves with effective drama in the Godot-play; or, the hurling of abuse at God, as in Endgame, and, actually situating the deity on-stage, embodied as the narrator in Hamm’s story, or, for that matter, as Hamm himself, it is very clear that some kind of a divinity-up-for-ridicule is never out of the playwright’s mind. Infact, Godot may be just anybody, but that Beckett takes advantage of the first three letters in that name can hardly be glossed over. And this Godot is made a lurking absent-presence, who fails to keep his promises. Beckett creates situations in which all illusions, particularly those
associated with an omnipotent deity, receive a sound lashing. Be it a Pozzo-posture, or, a Hamm play-acting, the slur on the notion of an absolute deity is forever present. Infact, when at it, the playwright just cannot resist the slightest theatric manoeuvre to do so, even as he cannot resist the creative use of a language sound, beat, or rhythm. Ofcourse the effort also shapes his theme. The condescending-deity-posture in Hamm becomes more prolonged each time; and, similarly, snivelling Man in the story, always does one better on his previous servility. Man is projected as an obdurate sniveller, before a cruel, indifferent god, an on stage manifestation, for all audience to see.

To return to the long Hamm speech, the next narrative tone extends over about 12 lines, and has just one Pause punctuate it, and that too after most of it has been spoken. Grovelling Man was at the feet of the cynical Hamm, the narrator-demigod. Cynical about the sex of the man’s child, their trap-hole existence, and, the distance the man had had to travel, and, cynical also, that the place was still inhabited, Hamm continues---

My little boy, he said, as if the sex mattered, Where did he come from? He named the hole A good half-day, on horse. What are you insinuating? That the place is still inhabited? (p.36).

To this the answer comes, part direct, part indirect, but still in the narrator’s tone, the language de-construction assisting the drama of the occasion---

No, no, not a soul, except him and the child-- assuming he existed (p.36).
The demigod made other inquiries and expressed satisfaction—

I inquired about the situation at Kov, beyond the gulf. Not a sinner. Good. (p.36).

The deity was indeed an all too hammy a Hamm. And Man had just been snivelling and grovelling, through history, before such a deity, which, to add to Man’s woe did not ever even trust him—

And you expect me to believe you have left your little one back there, all alone, and alive into the bargain? Come now! (Pause.) (p.36)

Beckett exploits the potential in the de-structuring of a single human voice, by repeatedly converting it into a narrator’s tone. This is made more effective, by contrasting large chunks of it with smaller normal voice pieces, and, by appropriately placed Pauses. These normal voice interjections come as chorus commentary also. They are quoted together for a better assessment of their theatric function—

(Pause, Normal voice). Nicely put, that,

or, (Pause, Normal voice). A bit feeble that

or, (Pause, Normal voice). That should do it.

or, (Pause, Normal voice). No, I have done that bit.

or, (Pause, Normal voice). There’s English for you, Ah well- (pp.35-36)
And so, as Beckett would have Hamm posture through the narration, the shape of the exercise itself takes the theme along as a profound and intense on-stage experience. Such Man-in-god, Man-god, or, god-man stage-contexts, in a grotesque, dark comedy, could only take Pozzo, Caligula, or Hamm-like stances. It is once again the compulsive Beckettian theme of a Non-ent, that determines the on-stage course and shape of this dramaturgic experience. It generates a traumatic metaphysical anguish,\textsuperscript{16} that is concretized, as a 'there', slow and prolonged Ending. It is to repeat, the dramatic shape of the last hiccups to a halt, of a cruel existential bind, at the very brink of its disastrous finish.

Now, the Man of this Hamm-story had also been to the narrator on a wild day, when the wind was hard and ferocious. However, the actor-demi-god was impatient and had said he had no time. The pleading and prayer was for bread, while the deity could only offer corn! Hamm, the demi-god narrator, was an active participant in the Man-and-god story. The prayer was for bread. The offer was of corn. The appeal was of a grovelling sniveller. The reply was that of complete hauteur and indifference. Man and god were two irreconcilables.

The condescension of the demi-god narrator continues, while the story's Man-figure stands imploring and pleading, like Hamm's three-legged toy-dog, begging for a bone. Man could have corn, for, the granaries were full! But then the demi-god was also sure that the Sniveller's boy could not be nourished for long, on a pound and a half of porridge! It is a knowledgeable deity indeed, fully aware of Man's helpless predicament. For, as Lucky would have shouted it, despite this nourishment, Man longs, dwindles and pines. Infact, there was no cure for being 'holed-up' on earth. The
drama makes it more effective. Suppose the boy did get his pound and a half of porridge, the demi-god narrator asks--

`And then? (Pause.) (p.37)

Hamm, the well-aware narrator-deity loses patience---

I lost patience. (Violently.) Use your head, can’t you, use your head, you’re, on earth, there is no cure for that! (Pause.) (p.37)

This is effective strategy, what with Hamm’s lost patience, violent expression and the ensuing Pause. For a moment, Hamm appeared more man than god. Infact, this is an occurrence in the de-structuring of this long speech which repeats several times. It was an existential posture made situate on stage, and no deux et machine of a Jupiter, descending from the heavens, was even thought necessary.

The Man of the story next came on a dry day, intruding on Hamm, the Actor-Narrator-Man-God’s lumbago, and the demi-god Hamm became violent---

Zero by the hygrometer. Ideal weather, for my Lumbago. (Pause. Violently.) But what in God’s name do you imagine? That the earth will awake in spring? That the rivers and seas will run with fish again? That there’s manna in heaven still for imbeciles like you? (Pause.) (p.37)

Piece by piece, nuance by nuance, all that could hold together any kind of faith in a Creator-deity is destroyed through a carefully orchestrated operation demolish. This had to be, for, Pozzo and Hamm may have been posturing, but Beckett was not. If anything that is characteristic about the playwright, it is his commitment to his theme and integrity as an artist. For, Beckett did not posture at all; that is
for sure. He was not posing an affliction just to appear bitten by a 'Jarry-Artaud--Heidegger' bug. He literally lived his theme and lay for days in bed, in a dark room, with a severe cold, and like Renard would have chosen to soil himself rather than move over to the toilet, preferring it as an example of a 'cold, hard, exacting look at himself'.

To repeat for recapitulation, in Beckett, the human being was a Cartesean Centaur, there being no Mind and Body coordination, pineal glands being non-existent. Also, the Body was just a complex operation of levers, and therefore movement itself was anathema. Further, there was no getting away from Consciousness and from the persistently nagging obligation to express. Therefore, there was nothing vicarious either about the Beckettian theme, or the Beckettian œuvre. Infact, it is indeed difficult to be either a Beckett thinker, or, a Beckett artist. Ordinarily, feelings of impotence, meaninglessness, futility, or, boredom come in fleeting flashes. Seldom are they fixated obsessions. Beckettian drama makes these fleeting moments permanent fixtures in art, to be read, witnessed on stage, referred to, taught, critically analysed, affirmed, and literally swooned over. Early hostility having rubbed off, and, the so-called obscurities explained and annotated, the danger is that Vladimir-like conversions may yet become a flood. Beckett's is a fringe experience no more. Quigley and then Duckworth are enough authority to counter that assertion. The playwright's dramaturgy is powerful and overwhelming, and succeeded tremendously in concretizing, on stage, a profound experience of the Absurd, as a cruel existential Non-ent, totally bereft of meaning and purpose, the end of which was itself a trauma.

But to return to the final phases of Hamm's extended speech on pp.35-37, the analysis of which is almost at its
end. It is time for Beckett to allow Hamm the Actor-Narrator-King-Deity, a calm down--

Gradually I cooled down, sufficiently at least to ask him how long he had taken on the way. (p.37).

The audience can hardly miss the covert suggestion that though the existential impasse, on-stage, is that of Man, the supposed Creator-deity is also a presence in the deconstructed articulations of Hamm, the Actor-Narrator. His granaries! His Lumbago! His pipe! His labours! His busy schedule! His final touches! His enquiries! His holly! His hauteur! His calm down! The change of weather, which too he appeared to somehow take in his stride and even transcend! As for Man, the less said the better, low-down, dirty, and in tears; imploring, snivelling, and almost extinct; and, an imbecile that he always has been! There was no cure for Man's residence on earth! There was no escape either! He cannot transcend Need. Beg he must for an extra bit of bread! The Godot-play and Endgame are no social constructs, or, deconstructs either.

To return once again to the Hamm-story, the actor-narrator, posturing as demi-god-king, is found pitying the servile visitor, Man, and deciding to keep him as a servant. But then, the prospective servant had wanted to bring along a boy-child also! A child perpetuates the potential of the aborted existential irrationality and helps it drag on! That was the moment the over-bearing Hamm was waiting for. As Hamm he could not reconcile to that possibility--

It was the moment I was waiting for. Would I consent to take in the child... (Pause.) I can see him still, down on his knees, his hands flat on the ground, glaring at me with his mad eyes, in defiance of my wishes. (Pause.) (p.37)
Hamm's story halts abruptly. Of course he was not left a demi-god. In fact, before the last quotation, he is heard talking of dying which he says could be peaceful on this earth also, only if one was careful, that is, is not too anti-conformist!

The next long Hamm solo-performance is on pp. 44-45. This time the normal voice is not de-constructed to bring in a narrator's voice to tell a story. For, no story is to be told now. The speech dramaturgy instead works with Pauses, and alternate expressions of calm and violence, vehemence and relief. Hamm also attempts to get off the wheel-chair but falls back. He even hesitates, and is full of recrimination. Head bowed, he speaks absently and to himself. The speech has pathos; the pathos, that is, of an irrational human condition, trapped as well as bruised, and also inside an insecure shelter. The provisional shelter itself was slowly being taken over by a cataclysmic catastrophe outside. Hamm absently repeats--

That's right. (p.44)

The ritual with the stancher follows, because there was little else the hapless invalid could do. He unfolds the stancher, and spreads it out before him. Then he folds it and puts it back in his pocket. The movement is repeated for want of any better occupation. Hamm is nostalgic---

That's right. (Pause.) Me to play -- We're getting on. (Pause.) You weep, and weep, for nothing, so as not to laugh, and little by little --- you begin to grieve . (p.44)

That restates the theme: a futile perpetually pathetic condition, and the repetitious cycle of a playing, a grieving and an Ending, that just went on. Each time, there
was the tragic reminder -- 'That’s right' and each time again the handkerchief was taken out, unfolded and spread, and then folded and put back. Hamm reminiscences---

All those I might have helped. (Pause.) Helped! (Pause.) Saved. (Pause.) Saved! (Pause.) The place was crawling with them. (Pause.) (p.44)

Beckett uses Pauses, and even exclamation marks, as when the first 'Helped' has a fullstop and a Pause after it, and, the second 'Helped', an exclamation mark, and a Pause after it. The same is repeated with the word 'Saved'.

The absently reminescening Hamm becomes violent---

Use your head, can’t you, use your head, you’re on earth, there’s no cure for that! (Pause.) (p.44)

This was delivered in normal voice though in the speech on pp.35-37, it was part of a narrator’s delivery, spoken by the Actor-Narrator-Demi-God-Man-King Hamm. He continues and Beckett cannot resist a gibe at the Bible---

Get out of here and love one another! Lick your neighbour as yourself! (Pause.) (p.44)

Hamm is calmer for the next utterance, but becomes violent again at---

Out of my sight and back to your petting parties! (Pause.) All that, all that! (Pause.) Not even a real dog! (pp.44,45)

That was the pathetic tragic hero! Or, was it an ensnared victim? Life began aborted and yet went on! Hamm pauses and wants to resume narrating his story, but instead, decides to throw himself on to the floor, and crawl! He pushes himself to do so, but falls back. There is no escape,
straddled as the human being is, with futile thought and a
disjunct burdensome corporeality, which do not co-ordinate
ever! Like a blind invalid staring blankly at the wall, one
remains a hapless tragic victim, longing for death—

It will be the end and there I’ll be, wondering what
can have brought it on and wondering what can have... (he hesitates)... why it was so long coming. (Pause.) (p.45)

This was one more tragic permutation of the Ending
torture that Hamm was frantically aware off, as a something
that appeared to be taking its course. The play is now three
quarters through, and this maddening awareness of the Ending
trauma, like the Waiting refrain, must again be repeated as a
ritual exercise—

There I’ll be, in the old refuge, alone against the
silence and... (he hesitates)... the stillness. If I
can hold my peace, and sit quiet, it will be all over
with sound, and motion, all over and done with. (Pause.) (p.45)

Fantasies there were, and Hamm is aware of them—

And then? (Pause.) And then? (Pause.) (p.45)

Hamm, like Winnie later, has a peculiar feeling of
being watched, or was it Bishop Berkeley dubbed at on the
dramaturgic anvil—

All kind of fantasies! That I’m being watched! A rat!
Steps! Breath held and then... (he breathes out.) Then
babble, babble words--- (Pause.) (p.45)

But that was a writer’s existential trauma also,
because the harrowing consciousness and the obligation to
express were perpetual, and, heap moments as one may, pile
them upon pile all life long, neither heap, nor pile, nor
moment, nor time, can be given the name and nomenclature of a
life-constituted---

Moment upon moment, pattering down, like the millet
grains of --- and --- all life long you wait for that
to mount up to a life . (Pause.) (p.45)

The experience of the existential irrationality, minus
all essences, is one thing, and, the drama to embody that
intense experience into a shape is another. There is a Pause.
Hamm has had enough---

Ah let's get it over! (p.45)

That brings us to the third and last of Hamm's extended
speech deliveries which is on pp.51-53. These extended
speeches take up a major portion of Endgame's second half.
The strategies in two of these on pp.35-37, and pp.44-45 have
just been noticed, one after the other. Needless to say, in
each case the technique was found different and even
original; and now it will be seen how the work-out in the
last of Hamm's extended utterances, is also an entirely new
exercise in dramaturgy. It is almost a 50-line delivery, in
which, Hamm's single voice is once again de-constructed into
'normal' and 'narrative' tones, but for the first time in the
play, however, we have a Long Pause. There are 2 such Long
Pauses, and about 32 other Pauses, which altogether, are far
too many, in a 50-line exercise. Almost half way through, the
de-structuring into 'narrative' tone takes place; it lasts
for about 8 lines, and the remainder of the speech is
delivered in 'normal' tone. Clov is leaving Hamm, and is
dressed-up to leave. He halts by the door and stands
impassive and motionless, eyes fixed on Hamm. Hamm himself is
weary. The End that had all along approached appeared still
on its way. And, Hamm braces himself to die. Nagg and Nell
are presumably dead. As a last favour Clov had covered Hamm with a sheet. There is a Long Pause, and Hamm begins--

Me to play (p.51)

Hamm Pauses again, and then says---

Old endgame lost of old, play and lose and have done with losing. (Pause.) (p.51)

Critics may interpret the play as a chess-game lost, with the king about to be check-mated, and, carry the interpretation over to call it the drama of a human life braved and lost, and from there, go on to dubb it a play of destiny, with handicaps galore, and therefore lost also. Be that as it may, Hamm's existential condition is that of Man, a tragic victim, blind and hurt, and constricted to a wheelchair. Such is the hapless impasse of all humanity bound to a harsh, futile, irrational existence. Tired and weary Hamm braces himself for an End that is no less Absurd in its harrowing, slow grind. The call is for a 'Discard', which sums up the profound longing to wrench himself away from Being. Unfortunately, all this touching pathos ends at the grotesque raise of a hat as the inevitable first step to initiate the ritual of a parting. But that also fails to coordinate, because, as the stage-directions show, what is raised instead is the toque---

Good (Pause.) Discard. (He throws away the gaff, makes to throw away the dog, thinks better of it). Take it easy. (Pause.) Raise hat. (He raises his toque) (p.52)

This is a tragic victim's End, and not the End of a tragic hero, and therefore, the grotesquesquerie of a prayer to peace to 'our arses' need not surprise. The existential quandary is pathetic. Hamm
calls for a 'Deuce'. A Pause ensues. The blind invalid next removes his glasses, wipes them with his handkerchief, puts them on and appears to speak to somebody---

We're coming. A few more squirms like that and I'll call. (Pause.) (p.52)

A chess-game indeed, but what of the few squirms more as a pathetically tragic End, and what of the life that had been nothing but an old assortment of disjuncts and fragmentations, and a set of Pauses and Yawns.

The already on-stage, intense experience, gathers more intensity because after the 'normal' voice delivery, Hamm appears to act out a delirium---

A little poetry (Pause.) You prayed -- (Pause. He corrects himself) You CRIED for night; it comes -- (Pause. He corrects himself) It FALLS: now cry in darkness. (He repeats, chanting) You cried for night; it falls; now cry in darkness. (Pause.) (p.52)

Upon this Hamm himself comments---

Nicely put, that (Pause.) And Now? (p.52)

Hamm pauses, and then utters the famous *Endgame* words, which even in their disconnected state confirm the already profound context of a Non-ent, the play had made situate on-stage. The heaped up moments that are piled, pile after pile, to constitute a life, amount to nothing, because time itself as a basis of life, never existed. In any, case for Hamm, and the play *Endgame*, the reckoning was about to close and the play ended---

Moments for nothing, now as always, time was never and time is over, reckoning closed and story ended (Pause.) (p.52)
The next 8 lines are rendered once again in the 'narrative' tone, and Hamm appears at his last story again, the story of grovelling Man, begging the actor-narrator-king-deity, a piece of bread for his boy. Was Hamm dropping fast into a delirium indeed---

It was the moment I was waiting for. (Pause.) You don't want to abandon him? You want him to bloom while you're withering? Be there to solace your last million last moments? (Pause.) (p.52)

Hamm is delirious, but as hammy as ever, and Beckett makes it a theatric rendering of a thematic obsession: the fear that life may start all over again, and perpetuate an aborted existential irrationality. The obsession is made, an on-stage experience, by de-structuring the human voice, once more, into a narrator's, and, punctuating the resulting speech with appropriately spaced Pauses. The trauma that was no cure for being on earth, becomes more effective and Beckett is always aware that language as a phenomenon, is itself full of innate drama.

When Hamm resumes normal voice he is heard to say---

Well, there we are, there I am, that's enough (p.52)

Then he raises the whistle to his lips, hesitates and drops it. Clov may have left. One more Pause ensues after which he says---

Yes, truly! .
However, not sure about Clov, he whistles and a Pause ensues. He whistles louder and another Pause follows, whereafter, satisfied that Clov had left, Hamm says---

Good (Pause.) (p.52)

Then he calls for Nagg, but there is no answer also---

Father! (Pause. Louder) Father! (Pause.) Good. (Pause.) We’re coming. (Pause.) And to end up with? (Pause.) Discard. (He throws away the dog. He tears the whistle from his neck.) (p.52)

Nagg did not answer even the louder call, and appeared dead. The second ‘Discard’ sounded like a command to whatever it was that was ‘life’ in the body to leave forthwith. And, ‘We’re coming’ is no less a longing to somehow be away and done with, and get rid of a harsh, irrational condition. Language-dynamic is once more at its most simple, and, corporeality at its most banal and lends added pathos to the on-stage grotesquerie.

Hamm is shown throwing away the toy-dog and tearing away the whistle. The grotesque command ‘Discard’ is pathetic. The audience are roped in also because the whistle is actually thrown towards the auditorium and his compliments accompany it---

With my compliments .

A Pause ensues. Hamm sniffs and softly calls---

Clov !
There is a Long Pause. Getting no answer Hamm utters an ambivalent---

No? Good

Next comes the the handkerchief ritual once more, which was all through used as effective drama. Taking out the handkerchief, Hamm says---

Since that’s the way we’re playing it... (He unfolds handkerchief)... let’s play it that way... (he unfolds)... and speak no more about it... (He finishes unfolding) --- speak no more. (He holds the handkerchief spread out before him)... Old Stancher! (Pause.) You... remain. (Pause.)

Even tragic victims have pathetic endings. Hamm covers his face with the handkerchief, lowers his arms to armrests and becomes still. A brief tableau follows, with Hamm postured as just described, and Clov standing impassively at the door, eyes fixed on Hamm. The play was an Endgame, in which the End was a slow grind, and imperceptible. That was the way its torture was being played, and that was the way Hamm had played it to the last; as did even Clov, Nagg and Nell. The drama had begun with a tableau, and a pantomime, positioning on stage, 'there', the concrete context of a decrepit existential constriction inside an insecure refuge, against a cataclysmic devastation outside. The opening utterances of Clov and Hamm added language-dynamic to the opening tableau and pantomime contexts of a 'Finish' and a 'Play', the latter at its very 'End'. And, now at the close too is the tableau, just commented upon; it appears the play's last and very conclusive and intense condition of humanity, made situate on stage. Tragic; grotesque; pathetic; and poignant. But, now to return to the other extended speech deliveries because Clov and even Nagg have a substantial share in this dramaturgic device found quite a significant characteristic
in this play's dramatic technique. In one of Nagg's extended deliveries, as has already been noticed earlier, the human voice is de-constructed into as many as five modulations to tell the tailor's story. Clov also has three extended speeches almost at the play's end. One is at p.47, the next on p.50-51, and the third at p.51. These are profound tragic moments too, because the play ends at p.53. Each extended speech in Endgame provides occasion to the dramatist's ingenuity to play with language in different dramaturgic ways. This also contributes to the feeling that the drama is different and new, and is not primarily built upon banal cross-talk, as was the Godot-play.

In the two Clov speeches on pp.49 and 51, it will be noticed that the first of these is accompanied by the ladder and telescope stage-business and has two repetitions of 'Sometimes I wonder...'

Sometimes I wonder if I'm in my right mind. Then it passes over and I'm as lucid as before. (He gets up on ladder, looks out of window.) (p.47)

And again---

Sometimes, I wonder if I'm in my right senses. Then it passes off and I'm as intelligent as ever. (He sets down ladder under window right and gets upon it---) (p.47).

The repetitions of 'Sometimes I wonder...', stage the rattle that Clov's mind suffers in his thoroughly Absurd existential impasse. Also the ladder and telescope stage-business literally interiorizes the cataclysmic outside on-stage, when Clov is surprised to see the deluge the earth suffers all around---

Christ, she's under water! (p.47)
Then, turning away from the window Clov asks Hamm, which part of the devasted outside he wants reported---

Any particular sector you fancy? Or merely the whole thing? (p.47)

That was direct and even cruel, and nerve-shaking in its simplicity. It is also comic and grotesque. It has no trapping whatever to distance the immediacy of the experience. There is no trumped-up ideology either to push the direct experience into many removes, and make it less intense and remote. Every articulated utterance in it, is very much the catastrophe outside. Consequently, it will be quite unfortunate if the language-dynamic is dismissed only as banal, and ordinary. Infact, meaning had elsewhere in literature, and for that matter, even all over, and everywhere, got so confounded, either in embellishment, or, cliche that for a change, the intense and immediate experience is far more refreshing, its deep discomfitures notwithstanding. It is a direct and profound statement of fact; the experience itself in all its devastating intensity. 'Any particular sector', is as disquieting as the word 'merely', which on its own, destroys and debunks 'the whole thing'. As pointed out earlier, this is language-dynamic at quite a subtle.

Clov's next extended delivery is at p.51. It has two very significant language refrains, and by way of change, 5 Pauses. One of its refrains is, 'I say to myself sometimes---', and, the other has the rhythm, 'One day---', / 'One day---', / 'Then one day suddenly---'. Taken together these two refrains, by themselves produce the following rhythmic effect---

I say to myself -- sometimes -- one day--- I say to myself -- sometimes -- one day--- Then one day suddenly --- I say to myself-- .
This language rhythm is poignant in its tragedy, and as close to the pathos of an irrational existential quandary as was, 'Sometimes I wonder ---'.

The Clov speech on pp.50-51 also has a refrain repeated 4 times. However, it has no Pauses. The refrain appears a carry over from an utterance immediately preceding the one considered above. The language-dynamic is exploited to expose love, friendship, beauty, order, clarity, and, simplicity as well. The carried-over part from the immediately preceding Clov utterance is delivered tonelessly, with a fixed gaze towards the audience---

They said to me that’s love, yes, yes, not a doubt, now you see how --- (p.50)

And this continues in the speech, on pp.50-51---

How easy it is. They said to me, that’s friendship, yes, yes, no question, you have found it (pp.50-51)

And again in---

They said to me. Here’s the place, stop, raise your head look at all that beauty. That order!’ (p.51)

And yet again in---

They said to me, come now, you’re not a brute beast, think upon these things and you’ll see how all becomes clear. And simple!

And still again in---

They said to me; what skilled attention they get, all these dying of their wounds . (p.51)

This speech delivered with a ‘fixed gaze, tonelessly’, has a dream-like quality in its re-iterations. Also, the
speech has its 'they' syndrome effect on Clov, who literally speaks out banal words of advice---

Come now, yes, yes, you see how, yes, yes, no question you have found it, and Here's the place, stop, raise your head and look. (p.51)

In fact, each time Beckett is at work, a new language-dynamic is manipulated, showing the variety possible in various language strategies. This can often shock and startle, and at times, even be refreshing. A different language strategy is each time concretized on stage with the playwright irresistibly drawn into it. A shouted 'Enough' by Hamm, between the two extended deliveries of Clov could also be clever strategy. The Clov speech gets an appropriate close, which gets a rationale. Hamm's 'Enough' is also a convenience to help divide the otherwise long Clov cogitation, and facilitate that the next speech be different and even more extended. Each utterance, each corporeal manifestation, each stage direction in Beckett is strategically significant, and contributes subtly to position potent concretizations on stage.

Let us now consider in some detail the break-up of the Clov speech on p.51. It has one refrain and 5 Pauses, and, a new rhythm by way of change. These have been considered together earlier. Now, let us treat them separately. It's refrain is---

I say to myself -- sometimes -- one day,

which is deeply tragic in its pathos. It is Man at his uncomplicated simplest, confronting existence as an aborted trauma. Add to this the new rhythm 'One day--'/'One Day--' /'Then one day--', and the drama takes on the rhythm of
tragedy. If each segment of the speech is put separately this is what ensues---

I say to myself --- sometimes, Clov, you must learn to suffer better than that if you want them to weary of punishing you-- one day. (p.51)

And again---

I say to myself -- sometimes, Clov, you must be there better than that if you want them to let you go -- one day. (p.51)

But then, Clov says, he will never go and a Pause ensues, after which the last two words of each of the previous sentences is transferred to the head of the next utterance by Clov---

Then one day, suddenly, it ends, it changes, I don't understand, it dies or it's me, I don't understand that either. (p.51)

Endgame, as a play is considered more overwhelming than Waiting for Godot. The play does do credit to the playwright's thematic and artistic commitment alright. With variations on the same theme, Beckett gives it a different dramaturgic shape, so that it is the shift in strategy that brings to the effort a new freshness, and, even pathos and power. It makes Endgame a different on-stage experience of the Absurd, though the theme remains the same. It is a cruel meaningless existence. It is an empty void; a Non-ent; a Nothing is. It is one more overwhelming shape given to Beckett's vision of the Absurd, and still a very discomfiting tragic grotesquerie. The dialogue needs no embellishment for the predicament is itself as close as possible to the simple 'banality' of the utterance---

I ask the words that remain sleeping, waking, morning, evening. They have nothing to say. (Pause.) (p.51)
Clov opens the door in an effort to leave, his utterance once again the simple existential experience itself---

I say to myself that the earth is extinguished, though I never saw it lit (Pause.) It’s easy going (Pause.) When I fall I’ll weep for happiness (Pause.) (p.51)

But then, Clov does not leave!

He does not move. He is the last of the three, on-stage, generations, a decrepit himself, determined to leave but finds it excruciatingly difficult to do so. So he stands, gazing fixedly at Hamm, who as usual is centre-stage. Hamm, the middle generation is the invalid on a wheel-chair, bruised, hurt and blind. His last utterance, itself a dramaturgic exercise to mount pathos, based on a creative language break-up and torso-drama, holds the audience glued to the intense, on-stage, Being context---

Old stancher! (Pause.) You... remain!

There is a Pause. Earlier, Clov had covered Hamm with a white sheet; and Hamm had spread the ‘old stancher’, over his face. Then dangling his arms he becomes still. The dustbins of heredity with Nagg and Nell in them, also stand prominent. And, the decrepit young Clov, is at the door unable to leave. He stares fixedly at Hamm. There is this brief tableau, and the curtain falls.

To conclude, Endgame is begun with startling moribund stage-figures, a tableau and a pantomime. For this, extensive stage-directions become absolutely necessary which they indeed remain, throughout Beckettian drama. The stage is almost bare, being a ramshackle-shelter, for its four
debilitated refugees. Outside is a cataclysmic ruin. It is the slow End of a Something, moving imperceptibly to a grinding halt. The detailed stage-directions, the inanimated sheet-covered human forms, the tableau and the pantomime, position on the almost sparse stage, 'there', an unusually harsh and cruel, existential constriction. Unlike as in the Godot-play, the irrational existential quandary is interiorized in a provisional, though insecure shelter. It is as an asylum within a temporary refuge. For this, it first uses almost a vacant stage, with high-walled, curtained windows. It positions three very striking, sheet-covered, morbid-looking human forms on stage. One form is on a wheel-chair, centre-stage, and, the other two are in large, man-sized dust-bins. The drama uses a tableau, in which Clov stands motionless, staring fixedly at the deathly looking form of Hamm in the wheel-chair. It has a pantomime that follows immediately after, to interiorize the devastated outside, making the catastrophe that engulfs the distraught refugees, an equally intra-mural experience. The interior of the ramshackle refuge, and its surrounding convulsion outside, become thereby a single existential encounter. Therefore, the range and extension on-stage, as in Waiting for Godot, is Man and the Cosmos, each trapped in its own irrational impasse. It is positioned on-stage as a harshness, and futile bind. The Clov pantomime interiorizes the outside calamity through its window-and-ladder stage-business, and the repeated peers at the disaster beyond the high-curtained windows, as well as the ritual brief laughs, workout with rhythmic perfection. The context of a Cosmic Irrationality having been sufficiently concretized on the sparse stage, language dramaturgy takes over, with Clov's play on the variations of the word 'Finish', and, Hamm using a yawn for language de-construction. Infact, logo-centricity is a characteristic feature of the Beckettian ouevre, notwithstanding his awareness of Artaudian cynicisms about language, and,
because of the creative exploitation of what is termed a language collapse. But, in Endgame, it is the de-constructed extended speech delivery, which is the prominent linguistic, trait. Not that cross-talk ceases to be functional. However, the quick language-game, with a cross-talk base, often rounded off by a 'finale', and, many more times by a Silence is not in use at all. Instead, an entirely different language rhythm is in evidence. It is different from the rhythmic language banter that often becomes lyrical in Waiting for Godot. This is completely overshadowed in Endgame. A different language rhythm takes over, and as remarked earlier, it is that of the extended speech delivery, collapsed primarily through voice-modulation. Thus, there is a 2-1/2 page Hamm speech which has 7 directions for narrative tone, and 6 for normal speech delivery. It also has as many as 39 Pauses. Such a break-up of language rhythm is the staple feature of Endgame. This de-structuring is also not had through ritual repeats of cliches, creatively manipulated as earlier in Lucky's speech. It is neither a Pause--Silence-Longer Silence disintegration, though in Endgame, Pauses almost profierate, and far outnumber the 113 Silences of the Godot-play. Voice-modulation now becomes a dominant trait. One example of the 2-1/4 page speech has already been noted. Another speech, of half that spread, has five different voice-modulations, the earlier example having only two, the, normal and the narrative. The latter begins in the normal voice, but then, to tell its story changes to the narrator’s, the tailor’s, the raconteur’s, the customer’s, and finally becomes normal again. Even a small six or seven line ordinary delivery, is de-constructed by a slight, seven or eight-worded voice change, in between, into a rational being’s. Further more, language refrain as an exchange like the famous ‘Let’s go/We can’t./Why not?/We’re waiting for Godot./Ah.’ of the Godot-play does not recur. Instead, the refrain is built into the extended utterance itself, like the
Clov rhythmic refrains of 'I say to myself-sometimes-'or, 'They said to me'-or, 'One day-/one day-/Then one day-'.

Again, the awareness of a something, slowly 'taking its course', is kept in perpetual perspective, in a variety of subtle ways, which though apparently innocuous, are actually permutations of an Ending phenomenon. Also, the simple language beat, going into several repetitions to become operative as a ritual, inorder to debunk the meaning-content of words like 'happy', are not in evidence either. Ofcourse, a smaller exercise about 'laugh' is repeated with varied permutations to extract the joy out of the word. And, the offer of a Vladimir platitude so that Estragon could demolish it forthwith is also not a part of Endgame drama. Nor, are the 'pungent interrogatives' in the form of the question word-scepticisms of a 'What?' 'Why?', 'How?' in evidence, as they very abundantly are in the Godot-play. Further, stories are not at all taboo, as they were with Vladimir. Infact, the incorporation of the story-telling trait into Endgame required the voice-modulations already referred to. Ofcourse, to repeat, stage-directions retain dramaturgic significance. And, distorted human corporeality, as the first, immediate, visual evidence of a meaningless existential bind, 'there', on-stage, as well as language logocentricity, to reinforce the irrational torso-plight, always remain the ultimate forte of Beckettian drama. Endgame does not have a two-act structure either. For, it is linear, having shaped a something 'taking its course', grinding, as it were, to an imperceptible slow halt. The Godot-play had a two-act structure, because Waiting is an on-going, generations-old, history-long phenomenon. Infact, the two Acts in Waiting for Godot, the second almost similar in content to the first, create the effect of a repetitive circularity. Finally, there is the closing tableau in Endgame, with Clov near the door, dressed to leave but not leaving, standing motionless, staring fixedly at the white sheet-covered Hamm, the harsh
invalid on a wheel chair, with Nagg and Nell dead inside dustbins. Hamm's face is behind his favourite stancher, and his arms dangle helplessly. A tableau thus ended the play, even as a tableau, followed by a pantomime had opened it.

The Godot-play did not use either a tableau or pantomime. It did also begin on an almost empty stage. It is open country with a mound and a barren tree, along a lonely road. A tramp sits on the mound alone, struggling haplessly with his boots. This is Man in the context of a Cosmos. The prospect is bleak, and the human struggle grotesque and futile. It contextualizes the Irrational Non-ent, on-stage, with Estragon announcing 'Nothing to be done'. Later, there is the striking figure of a two-some, when the lone tramp is joined by another with a strange walk, who enters admitting that he too had come around to the same opinion after a hard personal struggle that life was a futility and there was indeed nothing to be done: There being no tableau or pantomime in the Godot-play, language dynamic takes over immediately. Banal cross-talk dominates conversation, in which, starting with the debunk of Truth generally, the specifics of Christianity are bereft of meaning. The Evangelists, Bible, The Logic of Redemption, and Saviour, fall one after the other in and out of the dramaturgic anvil. Then Vision, Dream, Story, Place, Object and Time are rinsed of their meaning. Platitudes are offered, so that they be demolished by the ready and forthcoming pungent interrogatives 'What?', 'Why?', and 'How?' The stage-business is of hats, trousers, shoes, carrots and turnips. There is a dog song also. Endgame has no songs, and the existential predicament is harsher and more cruel. Its stage-business is of telescope and ladder, a toy-dog, a toque, a stancher white-sheets, a whistle and a wheel chair. In Waiting for Godot, it is the boring futility of a Waiting for an absent-presence that dominates. And, existence having been debunked
of meaning through cross-talk, an eerie Silence remains. To ward-off the frightening Silence a banal conversation has to be kept up. The Wait goes on but no Godot arrives and bereft of meaning, the drama of the metaphysical anguish dominates. Human corporeality, as just a torso ‘there’, a futile meaningless presence has great dramaturgic significance. Now, existence having already been bereft of meaning in Waiting for Godot, is shown harsher and more irrationally cruel in Endgame. Enough had been erazed of its meaning in the Godot-play. Therefore, Endgame starts from where the Godot-play had left off. The Waiting was overwhelmingly futile. The End is a grind harsh, irrational and tortuously slow. It is of course the same existential quandary in both plays, therefore the themes remain just a shade different. Existence was a meaningless void, a Non-ent, a Nothing is. Man and the Universe were impotent failures, Absurd and Irrational. It was an existential impasse, a hapless futile condition, a confusion, a bind, an imbroglio, and a mess. However, the variations in the second play have demanded to be shaped with a different strategy. In fact each analysis of this thesis will be a study of the demands the thematic variations make, in each play on the technique, and the corresponding dramaturgic changes effected, in order to shape the drama to suit the particular thematic variation, because in a Beckettian play, form and content remain two very significant inseparable.
References:


4. Ibid., p.252.


8. Ibid., p.32.


