Chapter 5

Search for the Self: *Rockaby*
SEARCH FOR THE SELF: ROCKABY

The play Rockaby is a ‘minimalist piece’ of drama offering a new dimension to Beckett’s language. The play was written in English in 1980 and performed at Buffalo Theatre, New York in 1981 with Billie Whitelaw. It is one among those three series in which Beckett places ‘one woman’ in entirety as the core of the drama. The play bears resemblance to Not I and Footfalls in its depiction of the existential void and encompasses the agonies of the principal female voices. They are portrayals of women who are cribbed and confined within their existential plight. All three plays exemplify Beckett’s experimentation with language in the theatre. The treatment given to its language is varied. Not I is in the form of a continuous speech placed within ellipsis while Footfalls portrays its language drama within a frenetic space of activity by women. Rockaby is an illustration of drama which actively employs ‘a rocking chair’ as a motif. The movement of this prop coincides with the sound of the ‘voice’ and together they constitute the drama of the play. It has been rightly observed that:

Not I, a woman — reduced to a mere mouth, suspended in total darkness — seeks solace in a blisteringly paced stream of her broken speech. In Footfalls, a tattered sul, drained of life, paces relentlessly outside her dying mother’s bedroom. And in Rockaby, a woman slowly withdraws from the world, rocked to eternal sleep in her mother’s chair. (Brooklyn Academy of Music).

The language of Rockaby delineates loneliness and alienation as its theme amalgamating them into its form and content. The woman crafted here is in pursuit of assimilation with another human kind referring to it as “another creature like herself”. Beckett’s language is replete with meanings and serves as an auxiliary for the drama. David Pattie rightly observes of Rockaby as a play where,

a woman sits in her mother’s rocking chair, listening to a voice whose words are timed to the chair’s rock; the text delivered in the toneless, rhythmic style Beckett employed in his late drama, become a haunting and unsettling lullaby, lullying the woman toward death. (Pattie 91)
Before the play *Rockaby* begins it offers information under the title of ‘NOTES’. They clarify the details of the stage business by providing an introduction to its participants. The cast of Beckett’s plays is not necessarily animate, as in *Krapp’s Last Tape*, the ‘tape’ serves as an important promoter of dramaturgy. In *Rockaby* the ‘VOICE’ is endowed with the responsibility of framing the drama. Similar to *Krapp’s Last Tape* the language here examines the past of an elderly woman through the medium of the voice. This play is yet again a new experiment in the genre of drama. The ‘notes’ provided by Beckett give a word picture of the stage specially the reference to the ‘light’, an ‘old lady’, her ‘eyes’, her ‘costume’, her ‘attitude’, the ‘chair’ on which the old lady sits, her rocking movement and finally her ‘voice’. This suggests that the ‘old lady’ is the protagonist around whom the entire drama revolves. The ‘woman’ utters one word “more” four times as a prologue to begin the dialogue and later echoes “time she stopped” in unison with the voice. The uniqueness of stagecraft lies in the repetitive utterance of the word “more” the only word in the dialogue articulated by the only visible character. Each time “more” is articulated as a command for the play to proceed and the play progresses with the sound of “voice” registered as “v” in the text. Beckett believes in creating anonymity by identifying the old lady as woman and as “w” in the text.

The ‘Notes’ are aligned by Beckett in sequence. Very different from the other playwrights for Beckett theatre was not a platform to shackle art on stage. Instead it was where he releases art to generate new drama with various experiments in language dramaturgy. He liberates language giving it free play to grow and display its innate drama. ‘Notes’ provide a platform for readers and spectators to prepare themselves to witness a drama written in ‘post-modernist style’.

The first detailed account by Beckett is given under the title of ‘Light’. Stage lighting is an important craft in drama. The ‘light’ rendition is accurately described so that the readers can exactly understand where the focus of the drama lies. Light applications display the psyche and consciousness of the participants in the play. It also highlights the significant objects or inanimate constituents which are given importance during the course of the encounters. Light serves as one of the important ingredients for the playwright to revolve the drama according to need and relevance. Thus light-setting performs a very significant role in the execution of the play. It assists in ‘selective visibility’ and ‘revelation of form’. It helps readers to perceive the
form and mood and create an environment for them to comprehend the drama. The following excerpt illustrates it fully:

Light:

Subdued on chair. Rest of stage dark. Subdued spot on face constant throughout, unaffected by successive fades. Either wide enough to include narrow limits of successive fades. Either wide enough to include narrow limits of rock or concentrated on face when still or at mid-rock. Then throughout speech face slightly swaying in and out of light. Opening fade-up: first spot on face alone, long pause, then light on chair.

Final fade-out: first chair, long pause with spot on face alone, head slowly sinks, come to rest, fade out spot. (Beckett 333)

The strategy of the shifting light and its mention as the first item of the ‘notes’ are evidence of the absent playwright’s conscious tutoring of the audience into apprehending the drama correctly. Quite precisely the details follow in seven sentences and cover the essentials. To clearly define the intention of the playwright the ‘light’ is systematically focussed while the rest of the stage is dark. The spotlight dramatizes the tragic and grotesque perplexity of the character. The table below displays Beckett’s defined acumen for dramatic representation of stage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAIR</th>
<th>Subdued</th>
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<tr>
<td>STAGE</td>
<td>Dark</td>
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<tr>
<td>FACE</td>
<td>Subdued spot which is constant throughout.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROCK</td>
<td>Light fluctuates:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sometime light is wide enough to include narrow limits of rock.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sometime concentrated on face when the chair is still or at mid rock.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPEECH</td>
<td>During speech face is moving in and out of light</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPENING FADE-UP</td>
<td>Light on face followed by a pause then light is cast on the chair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINAL FADE-OUT</td>
<td>Light is on the chair followed by pause in which spotlight is on face and shows a sinking head and then fades out.</td>
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The second account in the ‘Notes’ is of a ‘Woman’. Though extensive commentary is not inscribed yet, the description is neatly framed in small sentences. The ‘woman’ re-examines her past in the play through an audition by the unnamed “Voice”. The account of the woman exists in binaries. The first two sentences depict the darker side of her appearance, and the remaining two sentences illustrate her in a framework of white. The woman is “prematurely old” with “unkempt grey hair”. The “prematurely old” suggestive of a darker side of the human psyche is followed by “grey colour” a variation of dark or black. Beckett has often represented the existential futility of life in shades of grey. Krapp from his play Krapp’s Last Tape has been visualised with “disordered grey hair” (Beckett 215) and in the Play “three identical grey urns” (Beckett 307) are placed on stage to communicate a similar message. The third and fourth sentence are about her eyes and hands- “Huge eyes in white expressionless face” and “White hands holding ends of armrests”. All four lines paint the ‘woman’ in either in white or black.

The third feature focussed is the “Eyes”. The movement of the eyes assists the language dramaturgy by giving a clean and well defined depiction. This movement is systematically placed in the four sections of the play.

Now closed, now open in unblinking gaze. About equal proportions section 1, increasingly closed 2 and 3, closed for good halfway through 4.(Beckett 333)

The fourth aspect is the “Costume” adds some semblance of colour to the text of the intriguing play. Though costume helps audience perception visually Rockaby’s audience is deprived because here the attire merges with the prevailing décor enhancing the darkness of the already dark stage. The account of costume is defined with adjectives in separate four sentences. The used adjectives are listed below to outline Beckett’s play with words to in order to create drama.

- Black lacy
- High necked
- Long sleeves
- Jet sequins to glitter
- Incongruous flimsy head dress
- Extravagant trimming
The fifth note is about “Attitude”. It is essential for the reader to understand the intense drama of the woman and the kind of attitude she carries throughout the play is foregrounded by this strategy. There is a grace and mystery in her attitude. It mirrors a woman who is “completely still till fade-out of chair”. This is followed by a slight change “head slowly inclined”. The “Chair”, which comes next is the only prop placed on stage. Used mechanically the chair acts as an important theatre device. The woman rests on it since the inception of the play. The chair is chronicled as

Pale wood highly polished to gleam when rocking. Footrest. Vertical back. Rounded inward carving arms to suggest embrace. (Beckett 333)

Again the note is brief and outlines the details in simple and spare style followed by a note on “Rock” in three sentences.

Slight. Slow. Controlled mechanically without assistance from w. (Beckett 333)

Beckett’s precise language sustains and carries the drama forward. He does not allow dramatic action to control the proscenium. Instead he commandeers his language to be the soul of his play. The language used in “Notes” is very neatly executed for preparing reader and spectator for the play which is “soft, monotonous, no colour, soothing, rhythmic, and strongest drive toward death”(Gussow 88) in the words of Billie Whitelaw.

The concluding note is on the propagator of drama that is the “Voice”. The identity of the recorded voice remains ambiguous. It is a record of thoughts, motivations and memories. Voice creates the performance on the stage and bifurcates the character from the actor. The note available for ‘Voice’ is—

Towards end of 4, say from ‘saying to herself’ on, gradually softer. Lines in italics spoken by w with v. A little softer each time. w’s ‘more’ a little softer each time.

The above details highlight the pitch of the voice which is soft throughout the entire utterance of the play. ‘Note’ mentions that when the woman speaks along with the voice the lines are in italics. The notes clear and clarify the ambiguities which may arise while the textual reading. The timbre is analysed and assessed as soft
towards the closure of fourth section, as well as during the overlapping sounds and commanding with the word ‘more’. The voice discloses the inner psyche and life experiences of the woman.

The ‘Notes’ come to an end with the account on ‘Voice’. Notes are well documented and carefully crafted to construct the stage settings. They provide a visual picture of *Rockaby* as “a performance poem in the shape of a play” (Gussow 165) as accurately assessed by Enoch Brater in *On Beckett: Essays and Criticism*. More than one page is allotted to notes hinting obliquely to strange and eerie happenings. Beckett has created visual imagery for the readers to feel close to a circumstance when he presents an entrapped version of grotesque irrationality on the proscenium.

*Rockaby* offers a dominant female discourse with a different texture of language. The play is divided into four sections. Each section commences with the command “More”. The word “More” though a compulsive order, is paradoxically soft pitched. The play opens with a sub-text of five lines.

w: Woman in chair.

v: Her recorded voice.

Fade up on w in rocking-chair facing front downstage slightly off centre audience left.

Long pause.(Beckett 435)

The brevity of the sub-text underscores the drama of the woman and her recorded voice. *Rockaby* differs from *Krapp’s Last Tape* in its treatment of recorded sound. This play tenders the sound without any involvement of the woman while in *Krapp’s Last Tape* the recorded sound is explored chosen and played by Krapp himself. The physical involvement of the character for generating action is visible and the delight of the character in articulating spool as “Spooool” is also defined and pronounced in the text as well as on the stage in *Krapp’s Last Tape*. Such an absorbing interaction between the character and sound is not apparent in *Rockaby*. The overlapping of action between the words of woman and sound occurs only with the articulation of “time she stopped” which is italicised in the printed text.
“time she stopped

time she stopped”

Beckett has italicised these three words for the repetition of a legitimate influence of one character over the other by pronouncing the same words together six times. The repetition occurs in a deadlock situation with ‘repetition with in repetition’ leading to three pronouncements of similar words at the same point of time. The reiterations of words govern the language and enable it to create action. Lack of physical action and movement is not inimical for drama as language performs the function by proxy. The echo of the phrase “time she stopped” aids the reader to understand the gravity of the play.

The woman is placed slightly off centre as if providing space for the voice to control and manipulate the stage invisibly. The drama is noticeably generated at two levels. At one level it is the drama of the woman who prompts the voice to continue its rendition. And at the other level is the drama that is generated with the impact of the prompt. Hence drama is engendered with the articulation of a single word “more” by an unseen voice serving as a character. The voice depicts the plight and predicament of the woman subdued on the chair. Beckett extends his language dramaturgy by concentrating and reducing the space of drama within a single word which chronicles the history “as a recorded poetic incantation charts the mortal decline of an old woman whose rocking chair swings, seemingly, without her aid” (Badham).

Craig Owens maintains that Rockaby is not a “split of subject but a split of performance”(Owens 74) by the recorded sound in production. The rocking chair serves as a dramaturgic tool by stipulating the action incessantly. The actor displaced from the slot of character is dramatized through the “the recorded voice” which sounds
tired and hoarse, worn down by the process of recording and re-recording the same ten minutes of text over and over again...and fooling the ear with a voice that seemed to represent the character’s exhaustion.(Owens 75)

The rocking chair and v’s monologue become analogous action which sustain and shape the new theatre of Samuel Beckett. The total number of dialogues in the
The utterance of ‘w’ is followed by the poetic incantation of ‘v’ which is rhythmic. The speeches of “voice” start with reference to some unspecific end. The analysis given below displays the initial lines of the speech by ‘voice’. These lines are clubbed between alternate command of ‘more’ by the woman. The sound of ‘more’ is coercive, persuasive and demanding. Consequently it generates drama leading to an answer (related or unrelated) to the voice. The words of ‘v’ are structured to resemble a lullaby and echo the idea of routine, distress and exhaustion in a rhythmical pattern.

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<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>till in the end</td>
<td>so in the end</td>
<td>till in the end</td>
<td>so in the end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>the day came</td>
<td>close of a long day</td>
<td>the day came</td>
<td>close of a long day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>in the end came</td>
<td>went back in</td>
<td>in the end came</td>
<td>went down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>close of a long day</td>
<td>in the end went</td>
<td>close of a long day</td>
<td>in the end went</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td></td>
<td>back in</td>
<td></td>
<td>down</td>
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The above encapsulated lines expose the existence of cadence in Beckett’s language. The recurrences of the same words in alternate columns correspond to the idea of monotony in the woman’s life as first and third voice sound open similarly. The recurrence of “till in the end” in the alternate columns is followed by identical lines “the day came”. The voice is referring to some specific day which occurs ended with “close of a long day” and hints at some sort of ‘arrival’ with the word “came”. The lines of second and fourth column are again identical and vary slightly with the first and third. The word “so” is replaced by “till” in the text and the next phrase remains the same with the recurrence of “in the end”. The other reference to some unspecific “went” apparently contours the idea of ‘come and went’ in the four sections. The language of the play creates mini-blocks within four dramatic sound patterns of “voice”. The language and vocabulary is simple but incorporates syntactic
pattern and linguistic structures in it. The enclosed lines portray a drama of simple words as rightly said by Andrew Kennedy that he views *Rockaby* as a “simple, mostly monosyllabic, rhythmic ‘cradling dirge’ ” with its “elegiac rocking movement.” (Gonzalez 147)

The symmetrical beginning of voice in the play corresponds to a symmetrical ending. All the four sections of “v” end on alternate rhythmic notes. The recurrence of voice notes is similar. First and second column are similar with a slight variation. The last two lines are identical because it intensifies the recurrence of “time she stopped” which is a combined articulatory action of the voice and the woman at the same point of time. The second and fourth stand as independent units and conclude their respective discourse. The ending of the second column corresponds to the idea of the woman’s search for the other self whereas the concluding lines are a direct reference to her mother.

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<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v:</td>
<td>going to and fro</td>
<td>a little like</td>
<td>high and low</td>
<td>stop her eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time she stopped</td>
<td>another living soul</td>
<td>time she stopped</td>
<td>rock her off</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time she stopped</td>
<td>one other living soul</td>
<td>time she stopped</td>
<td>rock her off</td>
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The four closures of the voice sound create poetic wavelength in the drama. All the four narrative voice sounds end at the subtext. The subtext of the concluding voice sound strengthens the drama by registering its echoes, commenting on the rocking movement, on the functioning of light which are followed by long pauses. The symmetrical patterns in the given blocks illustrate the inner coherence of the text.

**FIRST**

**Closure of voice sound**

- Time she stopped
  - *time she stopped*
  - [Together: echo of ‘time she stopped’, coming to rest of rock, faint fade of light.
  - *Long pause.*]
A close reading of the text exhibits that the play is structured like poetry shaping it as a dramatic piece executed poetically. This is because of the presence of polysyndetic sentences with independent clauses which are “the essential element of the structure and rhythmical pattern, unifying the morpho-syntactic, semantic, phonological and pragmatic components of the play’s universe”. (Gonzalez 147)

The play is categorised into four sections on the basis of voice’s discourse. Every section constitutes an individual unit and provides space for blocks to exist. A thorough study of every section leads to a different language experience though fragments of the ‘experience’ recur as echoes of the woman who longs desperately for “another self”. The first section discloses the woman’s decision to terminate her search for some other self with whom she can communicate. The section has three blocks which are independent but intermittently repeat the same words. These blocks are encapsulated within the reiteration of “time she stopped”. The first block begins
with “till in the end” which is followed by “the day came” and finally connects to the closure of the day with “close of a long day”. Now the focus shifts to the main idea of the section where the voice confesses her desire to communicate with the other. This search for some other is incessantly presented in the text. The drama begins with the sound of ‘voice’ after the command of “More”.

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till in the end
the day came
in the end came
close of a long day
when she said
to herself
whom else
then she stopped
then she stopped (Beckett 435)
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The text becomes harmonized with the swings of rocking chair and presents the play in poetical incantation. With the rocking movement of the chair she rocks herself into the memories and allows voice to take control of the drama disconnected and independent of the body. The above voice sound can be inferred easily by dividing the sentence according to sense or situations so that it can communicate the experience vividly. The fragments are formed as

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till in the end the day came/ in the end/ came close of a long day/ when/
she said to herself/ whom else/
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The above lines are encapsulated within the two diverse reiterated phrase “time she stopped” and “time she stopped”. The first four blocks state the day and its closure, culminating on the note of alienation which is the basic core of the play. The alienation is accompanied with irony when the voice says “she said to herself” followed by “whom else” which intensifies the estrangement and loneliness at one level. At another it also interrogates. This linguistic segment communicates the inner coherence of text.
The second block displays activity in language with the commencement of “going to and fro” an indication of movement in search for some other human being. The second block proceeds as

\textit{time she stopped}

go\textit{ing to and fro}

all eyes

all sides

high and low

for another

another like herself

another creature like herself

a little like

This block opens with a picture of extended activity backward or forward with eyes open in search for some anonymous “another”. Beckett incorporates sight, place, space and vision in the search for the other self. The aforesaid lines can be read and inferred if punctuated with breaks forming small blocks within blocks.

\textit{time she stopped going to and fro/ all eyes/ all sides high and low/ for another like herself/ another creature like herself/ a little like/}

The above sentences conclude on the note of her search for another. The search becomes focussed to an individual “like herself”. The intense desire for some companion is suggestive of some past or impending apocalypse. These fragments are congruent in essential absurdity and existential plight. This is extended with the sound of ‘v’ in a low pitch tone where she wants ‘another’ to be “a little like”. The sounds of ‘v’ demand very little and set qualifications for the other self to be slightly similar. The other requirements are knitted into the remaining fabric of ‘v’ sound. These prerequisites for ‘another’ self are encased inside the repetitive fragments. The list given below illustrates the word alignment practiced by the dramatist:

for another

for another like herself

for another creature like herself

a little like
for another
another living soul
all eyes like herself

These linguistic units justify the urge for finding self either alike or distinctive as a being or creature. Each time the ‘other’ is urged to halt the futility of life. The prerequisite for ‘another’ is extended gradually. Initially standing independent it is tempered by “like” to finally end with the intention of finding someone who is specifically an “another creature like herself”. Therefore, it can easily be assessed and analysed that Beckett’s language has an intense tone of finality which lies in its brevity. The language crafts unpretentiousness with the most perfect economy. This sense of ordinariness is achieved with the first voice sound. However this apparently pedestrian exercise exhibits inner experience of the woman whose voice is estranged from the body. The first voice speech incorporates the quest for another as its core yet Beckett filters it through multiple structural blocks of repetition. The function of these repetitive structures in *Rockaby* is stated by Antonio Ballesteros González as it

furthers the integration of meaning and form, for the image of the woman iteratively rocking constitutes a metaphor of human routine, emptiness, loneliness, fragmentation and despair. (Gonzalez 149)

The second voice narrative marks the beginning of a novel discourse through reference to the woman’s seat at the window. The search advances as the position plight and space change. The second narrative of voice is punctuated twice by the reiteration of “time she stopped”. It again provides space for units to operate as drama through mini-linguistic segments. The blocks with reference to the window are listed below:

- time she went and sat
- at her window
- quiet at her window
- facing other windows
- so in the end
- close of a long day. (Beckett 437)
These lines can also be read as mini-linguistic units, with perceived punctuations and pauses. The voice sounds can be read as

\textbf{time she went/ and sat at her window/ quiet at her window/ facing other windows/ so/ in the end close of a long day}

These six mini-linguistic units refer to some unspecific time when she went and sat near the window. The aim is not to sit at the window. Instead the intention is to face other windows and ‘so’ wait for the day to close. The incorporation of /so/ in the second voice exercise is the replacement of the note at which this narrative ends ‘another living soul/ one other living soul’. The word /so/ sums up Beckett’s acumen for plainest word economy as it connects the entire drama to one single experimental reality.

The recurring sounds of voice produce dramaturgic movement. This search near the window carried further distinctively in the same narrative voice. The quest continues indirectly providing a reference point. The aforementioned reference to the window recurs with greater specifications. The orientation towards the window is being picked randomly from the second voice narrative and arranged for better comprehension, though they do not occur in this manner in the text:

**FIRST BLOCK**

- at her window
- quiet at her window
- facing other windows

**SECOND BLOCK**

- at her window
- let up the blind and sat
- quiet at her window
- only window
- facing other windows
- other only windows
THIRD BLOCK

- at her window
- quiet at her window
- only window
- facing other windows
- other only windows

These blocks indicate the generated action in *Rockaby* though the woman perpetually sits on the rocking chair. This action is created by the rhythmic movement of the words. Though the rhetorical reiteration of window does not assist in the creation of any movement, the adjectives added to it serve as a potent source for the effect of something happening on stage. The underlined words are indicative of Beckett’s language employment for dramaturgic movement which concentrate specifically on the thematic implication of the absurd predicament. The voiced sound is associated with condensed drama within the repetitive blocks. The effort at converting dialogues of small independent blocks remains Beckett’s singular contribution to theatre.

The third voice narrative begins repeating the pronouncements of first voice narrative “till in the end/ the day came/ in the end came/ close of a long day.” This rhythmic incantation takes its itinerary for the search of another self (first voice narrative) to the search through window (second voice narrative) becoming more specific by pulling down on the blinds of the window (third voice narrative). Beckett’s drama performs its own experiment with language dramaturgy by developing rhythmic wavelength. Actions shifts to the blinds.

all blinds down
never one up
hers alone up(Beckett 438)

The aforementioned lines affirm that Beckett’s language exhibits the centrality of alienation through words. With the movement of the blind the loneliness and the woman’s pronounced search for some other’s existence is evident. This is
further intensified by another block of phrases employing the motif of blinds in the third voice narrative. The search for another self is followed after the reiterated phrase “all eyes/ all sides/ high and low” adding an element of insanity and grotesque.

The idea of isolation is aptly woven in this minimalist piece by Beckett.

famished eyes like hers/ to see/ be seen/ no/ a blind up like hers/ a little like/ one blind up/ no more/ another creature there/ behind the pane/ another living soul/ one other living soul/ till the day came/ in the end came/

In the concluding voice sound the woman tires of her dismal search and retires on her mother’s chair. The fourth voice sound opens in the same manner as the second voice sound. However the word ‘in’ is replaced by ‘down’ the rest being identical.

so in the end
close of a long day
went down
in the end went down. (Beckett 440)

The incorporation of word ‘down’ summarizes the desolation and helpless wait for death, seeking for answers to the irrational bind which is a quintessential absurd experience and realisation the woman submits herself to her inevitable plight. J. A. Hale in Perspectives of Rockaby, expresses that

the word ‘down’ is repeated six times in the first seven lines of this final section, while it is used only once in the preceding sections (‘all blinds down’) … coupled with the play’s first mention of the ‘steep stair’, gives verbal shape to the internal descent that is about to be recounted. The woman is descending into the depths of herself. (Hale 70).

The concluding voice sounds like a lullaby which lulls the woman into permanent silence. The language here also forms the same small blocks integrating with the theme. The voice becomes softer as a lullaby and connects with the preceding softer cadence of the text. The linguistic blocks are precisely designed and shaped relating each and every minute detail establishing all over again that language is communicating the incommunicable plight. The search for another self becomes a
character in Beckett’s *Rockaby*. All the four voice sounds in the play perform the drama at the command of “more”. The voice sounds stand as independent narrative blocks which consist of units within units. Beckett’s language treatment in this play is artistically unique as it operates through linguistic structures. The language blocks activate to the tune of the repetitive rock of the chair which becomes a metaphor for man’s futility on the world’s stage. Ruby Cohn rightly assesses that,

> Beckett’s theatre has always startled and impressed by its bareness, his ‘void’ effect, but the final impression the play leaves is not bare but rich; they spark off such a host of associations, images, echoes, it seems one would never come to end of them. (Conn 136)
Work cited


