Chapter 3

Samuel Beckett: Passive Resignation of the Pessimistic Absurdist

He who claims to know that God is his Creator while not being perplexed, this is the evidence of his ignorance.

Ibn 'Arabi, from the Futuhat al-Makkiya

Beckett is a classical absurdist. His works do not fit in any kind of pigeon holing. He escapes all definitions. Beckett's works are not about something but that very 'something' inevitably expressed in words. If he is mentally sick, then his works and characters are his sickness. A thorough look at Beckett's works reveals that he employs the 'poetics of fragmentation', and his characters live torn between the world of becoming and being, hell and heaven, mind and heart, faith and despair and God and Satan. Beckett through his characters affirms his negations by negating his affirmations. He deconstructs all constructions. In other words, his characters are the alternating circular signifiers and signifieds in search of the transcendental signified which they fail to arrival at. That is why there is no ultimate
salvation or deliverance possible for man in the Beckettian universe.

Becket once said:

Optimism is not my way. I shall always be depressed, but what comforts me is the realization that I can now accept this dark side as the commanding side of my personality. In accepting it, I will make it work for me.¹

Becket vomits this depression by exposing in naked form the dark immanent side of existence which, from the renaissance upto the twentieth century, was clothed in such promising colors as the enlightenment, humanism, scientism, positivism and other such ‘isms’. Becket despairs of man and his is a bleak and irredeemably pessimistic vision on the whole which is antithesis of traditional religious, mystical and metaphysical vision of the East. Richard N Coe rightly says about Beckett’s tragic sensibility:

The universe of Samuel Beckett is certainly as complex as that of any other living writer ...It is a metaphysical vision of ultimate ‘reality’ constructed out of innumerable threads of logic tightly interwoven out of fragmented arguments from Proust and Descartes, from Geulincx, Malebranche and Schopenhauer, from

Dostoevsky, Wittgenstein and Sartre each rushing towards an inescapable impossibility.²

All these fragments add up and give way to void or nothingness which is described only negatively. Ganders seconds the same point when he writes that "their [Rilke, Kafka or Beckett's] religious experience springs, paradoxically always from religious frustration, from the fact that they do not experience God and thus paradoxically from an experience they share with unbelief".³

Out of the four Cardinal truths that the Buddha discovered, Beckett preaches and experiences only the first one. The first noble truth of the Buddha is that the life is Dukkha (universal suffering). The fourth principle that Buddha found is the state of Nirvana i.e. deliverance from the wheel of life and death, a state of total desirelessness. Beckett is true to the presentation of the first truth. When one looks at Beckett characters they all show the hell, suffering and despair they are in. They are not only physically deformed but also mentally disintegrated. They know that they do not know why they do what they do (Waiting for Godot). They only know that they


suffer without any apparent fault of theirs. They see their life as a pilgrimage from nowhere to nowhere. They are a bundle of old dirty habits. They show, like all rationalists, that they cannot transcend their self-consciousness and that is what the Buddha and the mystics do. The Buddha not only transcended the plane of nama [Identity through language] but also of rupa [Physical, psychological or mental form of an individual]. Even the Buddhist mystics affirm the absence of the so called soul that Beckett grapples with in the Cogitio of his mind. Beckett’s characters are the hermits of peacelessness, hopelessness, fear, anxiety, suffocation, sex and at last the dirty animals damned to despair and play ‘mind games’ to pass the ‘cursing’ time. M Essilin observes in this connection:

The certain evidence of being [in Beckett’s world] is the individual’s experience of his own consciousness, which in turn is constantly in flux and ever changing... The empty space through which the fleeting images pass... When nothing can lay claim to final, definitive reality, we enter a world of games, of arbitrary actions structured to give the illusion of reality. So Vladimir and Estragon think up their ways to pass the time; Murphy finds illumination in a game of chess; Hamm and Clov are pieces in such a game; Molly painstakingly constructs a system of sucking stones; Watt works out his strings of permutations of the series of dogs, the series of men...his system of the Krak!, Krek!, and Krik! of frogs⁴.

Beckett is committed to rationalism for all his disbelief for Beckett’s people ask, however reasonably, those questions which reason cannot answer. Beckett discovers in himself a thinking thing and that thing becomes his self which thinks always about something as Husserl had asserted that consciousness must always be consciousness of something. So all knowing and knowledge is confined to something: finite domain of time and space and its laws of constant change. Beckett remains confined in this domain yet struggles hard to come out of it but he fails because he is convinced, like Husserl, that there is no knowing and knowledge possible out of this self-imprisoning consciousness – subject-object oriented consciousness of one’s own self. Having no experience of mystical intuition and thus having rejected revelation and *Nirvana*, Beckett and his characters burn and mutilate themselves in the burning *Samsara*. They fail to escape their own selves:

they allow themselves to be mutilated, becoming armless, legless, and featureless in an effort to approximate their quintessential ‘selves’; they stag to a stand still, now bedridden, now propped up against walls, no stuck in vases like sheaves of flowers, in order to escape from the tyranny of movement and its despotic corollaries; they try to die, and dying, strive to detach their “selves” from the unhappy accident of incarnation, hoping thereby
to redeem at last the catastrophe of spatial and temporal identity – only to discover that their “personality”, against all odds, survives.\textsuperscript{5}

In comparison Zen \textit{Koans} illustrate the quality of lightness inherent in the Spirit. The \textit{Koan} is some totally illogical problem which obviously has no reasonable answer. One of the classical examples of \textit{Koan} is that if a man puts a gosling into a bottle and feeds it until it is fully grown, then how can a man get the goose without killing it or breaking the bottle. Zen monks, like Bekett’s characters, try to solve the problem in all possible ways until the intellectual difficulties which it holds have destroyed themselves by their own weight. The monk struggling with his koan is said to be like a dog trying to bite the shadow of its own tail. He attempts upto the point of madness and at the very moment of defeat he forgets himself and the tail. After that nothing is left but to burst out into a loud laugh. In the calm that follows this battle, a new vision rises from the burnt ashes of the old. Gai Eaton observes in this connection:

\begin{quote}
The Koan is the image of life itself, which, in terms of reason, must always present a completely insoluble problem. But because we are always cheating and trying to solve human problems by some short cut... we need to be reminded that such problems are not given to us to solve, but to live through and live out, until the
\end{quote}

problem itself is shattered and falls away. C Jung has said that, in most cases, a neurosis cannot be cured; it can only be transcended. And the same applies to every problem of which the Koan is a representation in miniature. The mind, struggling to find a solution, rushes from one extreme to the other; it takes counsel from a confusion of voices; ‘Murder would solve it! Forgetting one side of the matter would simplify life! Escape! Escape!’ But the only real solution is to admit that there is none, within the term of the situation from which the problem arose...Between birth and death, human existence is a splitting of what is, in truth, whole and indivisible into fragments which the mind keeps asunder, but which experience re-unites...Self-consciousness is the book we are allowed to read only during the suspension of life; that is the tragedy of self-consciousness. We would catch ourselves, know ourselves in the moment of loving; but, so long as we watch, the moment does not come; and when it comes sight is eclipsed.  

This shows that Koans are employed by Zen masters, not to solve them, but to dissolve the very solving intellectual endeavour of the mind.

So Beckett does not/ can not transcend the burning Samsara (world) for he is at heart a rationalist. A rationalist, obviously, has no space for those experiences which transcend logic. However the picture of the world is presented by Beckett in its true colors. There is, however, nothing new in that. All the traditional religions insist and

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reveal the same uncertainty and cursed nature of this existence. The Buddha fire sermon is worth quote:

Everything is burning. How is everything burning? The eye is burning. The ear is burning. The nose is burning. The tongue is burning. The body is burning. Thought is burning. The mental impressions, made by what the senses perceive, are burning. And the sensations produced by these mental impressions, whether they are pleasant or painful, are burning.

With what fires are they burning? They are burning with the fire of desire, the fire of anger and the fire of ignorance. They are burning with the fire of anxiety about birth, decay and death. They are burning with the fires of suffering and despair.\(^7\)

Mystics, like Beckett, experience the existence as \textit{Maya} (Divine illusion) which it is so obviously. However, unlike Beckett, all the traditional mystical (esoteric) traditions not only accept the suffering and evil of the apparent world but also find ‘ways’ to transcend the plane of suffering, anguish, evil and useless monotonous repetition of the same old dead habits in which Beckett’s characters are usually engrossed. Man of east or of any mystical school (now onwards to be called mystic) does not accept, like Beckett, his state in this world. He too does not want to suffer uselessly that is why he seeks to attain ‘\textit{Moksha}’- freedom from the hell of existence. He does not like

'unknown death' that is why he dies before his death. The mystic dies to all systems, philosophies, thoughts, discourses, and illusions so as to know who and what he is in utter silence and loneliness. His mind dies to his heart, belief (theological) to faith (existential) and his being to non-being or beyond being. He becomes a child again. He is not in search of meaning or meaninglessness, good or evil and this or that. He is beyond binaries, beyond words and false consolations that characterize the finite world. He carries his cross himself – the cross of love so that he is born in the kingdom of God. He is what the Sufis call Mujahid – one who fights against ego, false self and inauthentic existence in the name of God to become one with God who symbolizes unity. Osho says in this connection:

Man is a quest – not a question but a quest. A question can be solved intellectually, but quest has to be solved existentially. It is not that we are seeking some answers to some questions; it is that we are seeking some answer to our being.

It is a quest because questions are about others. A quest is about one self. Man ... knows he is, [by different labels that society has put into his mind] but he also knows that he does not know who he is.8

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So man has to experience truth himself (if any). The scientific or philosophical truth can be learned from a school but religious truth is to be experienced. Religious truth is not a thing. It is significance, it is a meaning. Each one has to discover it, as Osho explains:

Truth can not be given to you ... it is a growth. Meaning is growths ... don’t ask why there is no meaning in life. There is none because you have not created it yet. There is for me, I have created it. But my meaning can not become your meaning ... there is no way of transferring.⁹

The same fact is supported by Aldous Huxley in the foreword to *The first and last freedom*:

The most profound philosophers, the most learned and acute theologians have constantly fallen into the error of identifying their purely verbal constructions with facts, or into the yet more enormous error of imagining that symbols are some how more real than what they stand for ... ‘only the spirit’, said St. Paul, gives life, ‘the letter’. ‘And why ’, asks Eckhart, ‘why do you prate of God? Whatsoever you say of God is untrue’ ... the Mahayana Sutras affirmed that ‘the truth was never preached by the Buddha, seeing that you have to realize it within yourself’.¹⁰

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It is clear that truth is not verbal juggling. It can not be because man is the projection of truth and not vice versa. Man can discover it, he cannot invent what already is. Siddharta’s search for Truth in Hermann Hesse’s novel of the same title takes him to tread the forest of the traditional knowledge and personal whims regarding truth which ultimately force him to shun all teachings and be the lover of beautiful Kamala and the business partner of Kamaswami; finally he finds truth in the flowing river, in the dead stones, in the expression of the very sense experiences that he was taught to subjugate. He expresses the wholeness of his experiences in the following beautiful words:

I am telling you what I have discovered. Knowledge can be expressed, but not wisdom. One can discover it, one can live it, one can be born along by it, one can do miracles with it, but one cannot express and teach it... A truth can be expressed and cloaked in words only if it is one-sided. Everything that can be thought in thoughts and expressed in words is one sided, only a half. All such thoughts lack wholeness, fullness, unity. When the venerable Gotama taught and spoke of the world, he had to divide it into samsara and nirvana, deception and truth, suffering and liberation. There is no other possibility, no other way for those who would teach. But the world itself, existence around us and within us, is
never one sided. Never is a person or an act wholly samsara or wholly nirvana; never is a person holy or sinful. That appears only to be the case because we are in the grips of the illusion that time is real... The sinner that I am and you are indeed is indeed a sinner, but in time he again be Brahma, in time he attain nirvana, be a Buddha. But see here, this 'in time' is an illusion only a metaphor... The world is not imperfect or confined at a point somewhere along gradual pathway toward perfection. No, it is perfect every at moment... In the depths of meditation lies the possibility of cutting through time, of seeing the simultaneity of all past, present, and future life, and within that, everything is good, all is perfect, all is Brahman... It all only requires my consent, my willingness, my loving acceptance and it will be good for me, can never harm me... I needed sensual pleasure, striving for possessions, vanity, and extreme debasement and despair in order to learn to give up resisting, in order to learn to love world, in order to cease comparing it to some imagined world that I wished for, some form of perfection I had thought up, and let it be as it is and love it and be glad to be part of it.11

Truth is not individualistic impulse of outward freedom (the myth of progress). It is not Foucauldian ‘discourse’ or Camusian world of ‘absurd’ or the Beckettian world of nothingness. It is not an

old metanarrative of religion that the theologians have been bragging about since centuries. There have been since 18th century, what E Voegelin states, a whole series of ‘misplacements’ of the ground [truth]. He writes:

The transcendent ground is misplaced somewhere in an immanent hierarchy of being ... human reason or animal urges, or economic or political urges or the ‘libido’ or sex relations or the color of the skin and so on... but every possible local where one could misplace the ground has been exhausted.12

The search for truth is the ‘most arduous’ thing, as Krishnamurti says and all the mystics experience the same. The word ‘truth’ or any philosophy about it is not truth. Had it been so, then the philosophers would have been the most content race on the face of the earth, if by truth one means contentment or deliverance from the wheel of life and death, from the fire of blind desire. If truth is universal, then it must be existential and subject to experience. However it has no map or diagram to follow. It is what Krishnamurti calls ‘pathless path’. It is selfless love compounded with iron faith that leads to the abode of the beloved through the path of thorns and trials. Khawaja Ghulam Farid, a Muslim Sufi, sings out the pangs of

separation from his beloved (God) as if he echoes Beckett’s prosaic, fragmentary and unintelligible shrieks:

But live I must, it seems, to suffer
The agony of love unrealized!
O how I wish I would drown myself in the river
Or just could return to dust as dust!
Alas! The friend has broken all ties of love!
Distress torments me ill
And roasts me on its grill,
To gnaw my bones and flesh, sir

This sightless track of love
Is track of fear,
Of nameless dread:

Each bone of mine and all my flesh
Are smitten by love’s steely edge.

What awaits me ahead
Is, alas! A river of blood and fire
And swim I can’t, I weep in vain.
Action and non-action both do fail me!
I suffer in flesh and I suffer in soul
And tears in no way express my agony.13

Having done away with all the readymade answers and saving metanarratives, the post modern absurd man in Beckett, unlike mystic,
vomits out 'nothingness' in response to his quest to the truth. Beckett says that nothing is more real than nothing. And his nothing comes out of nothing. He is committed to an ideology that rejects all ideologies. Beckett clings to the 'nothing' of his mind. His realization of nothing at the heart of existence is empty, devoid of any grace, love and compassion. His is empty nothingness. The 'nothing' of Beckett is the logical or illogical outcome of his 'something' because 'nothing' to him is the meaninglessness and despair that his characters find when they analyze the empty space of their minds – to find meaning – or when they confine their reasoning self to the domain of time and space. All that they find in both the spaces are the changing images, words and the finite space itself in which their searching minds project the data that they hold. Mahood in *The Unnamable* describes in this connection:

I hope this preamble will soon come to an end and the statement begin that will dispose of me. Unfortunately I am afraid, as always, of going on. For to go on means going from here, means finding me, losing me, vanishing me, losing me, vanishing and beginning again, a stranger first, then little by little the same as always, in another place, where I shall say I have always been…

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Winnie in *Happy Days* finds herself divided between her attempt to conquer the past and the words that describe it:

> Then... now... what difficulties here, for the mind...To have always been what I am – and so changed from what I was...I am the one, I say the one, then the other...There is so little one can say, one says all...And no truth in it anywhere.\(^{15}\)

Mrs Rooney penetrates further and seeks in vain to cease her consciousness into atoms “What is wrong with me...never tranquil, seething out of my dirty old pelt, out of my skull, oh to be in atoms, in atoms!...ATOMS!...Jesus...Jesus!”\(^{16}\). The concept or image of space and time – as human mind analyzes and understand them – are subject to various interpretations and theories: scientific, philosophical and theological. But the important point to note is that we can not conclude on the basis of our mind’s analysis that all knowledge is space and time determined because mind itself exists and functions only in the limited terrain of time and space and its working is logically influenced by some ‘unknown’ power. What/ who actually thinks thinking and feels feeling through various images that we perceive in our mind. What enables our nerves to differentiate sound from the colour. It is different genes that direct the synthesis of colour

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and sound receptor compounds. Then, is it these compounds and chemicals that see colours and hear sounds. Beckett sincere search is limited by the boundary of time and space because it springs from the fountain of his mind – a mixture of language, images, wordless concepts, logicless tendencies and the mental space that enables mind to project and feel the sense of being amidst the constant movement. It is this mental space that encages Beckett’s march towards truth. His every attempt (projection of streams of thoughts in the form of his characters) rebounds back against the walls of this space: “I seek like a caged beast”\(^\text{17}\). The irony of the situation is that this space, in turn, is subjected to questioning by the very thoughts and impulses that it projects. Malone says “I tell myself so many things, what truth is there in all this babble?”\(^\text{18}\) In this way Beckett the writer becomes a ground of endless battle of self-reflection and isolated consciousness. The following observations aptly substantiate our argument:

My sense of identity was wrapped in namelessness hard to penetrate...and so on for all the things...when all was fading, waves and particles, there could be no things but nameless things, no names but thingless names. What do I know now about them,


\(^{18}\) Ibid., p. 216.
now when the icy words hail down upon me, the icy meanings; and the world dies too, foully named.\textsuperscript{19}

Similarly we see “Murphy’s mind pictured itself as a large hollow sphere, hermetically closed to the universe without”\textsuperscript{20} which is further divided into three zones: the light, the half light and the dark. The third zone is a:

\ldots ‘flux of forms, a perpetual coming together and falling asunder of forms’...Here Murphy is more than free, ‘a mote in the dark of absolute freedom’, ‘a missile without provenance or target, caught up in a tumult of non-Newtonian motion’ It is in this last zone that Beckett has chosen to make Molly and Moran live...they live in world where dreams, imagination and reality mingle, and where no decisions are required of them...they are perhaps no more than shadows drifting across the mind which creates them and which hardly belongs to anyone...\textsuperscript{21}

This shows that Beckett’s searching self remains lost in the darkness visible in which the dead head floats without ever attaining beatific visions that mystics have.

\textsuperscript{19}Beckett, 1979, p. 31.
\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., p. 56.
Truth is not Beckett’s nothing or something rather it is. It is the very ‘isness’, the very nature of things; it is from nothing to ‘no-thing’ to ‘no-thingness’. Anything (mental or material) can be either nothing (that which also exists) or something therefore finite. Whereas the truth is no-thingness therefore infinite and formless, “the word less God head”\(^\text{22}\), “the nameless Nothing”\(^\text{23}\), as Eckhart terms it. The Buddha said that *Nirvana* does not exist because it is beyond the human realm of ‘binary opposition’ of what exists and what does not. This is why Stace calls it ‘negative divine’ and elaborates:

The negative divine means that God is incapable of being apprehended by concepts. Thus to the intellect He is blank, void, nothing. You can not attach any predicate to Him, even the predicate “existence”, because every predicate stands for a concept, so that to affirm the predicate of Him is to pretend that He is apprehensible by the conceptual intellect. It does not mean that He is not apprehensible at all. For He is apprehensible in intuition.\(^\text{24}\)

*The Upanishad* says that in the infinite only is bliss and in the finite there is no bliss. Beckett is caught between finite and infinite. Mahood confronts that situation when he says, “I can not be silent. About myself I need know nothing. Here all is clear. Now, all is not not


\(^{23}\) Stace, 1953, p. 10.

\(^{24}\) Stace, 1953, p. 42.
clear. But the discourse must go on. So one invents obscurities. Rhetoric.”

Charles R Lyons elaborates the point further when he says that:

Creating a discourse provides Beckett’s heroes with the illusion of self-analysis, but that analysis remains illusory because consciousness cannot verify the material it considers. These narrators recognize the epistemological problems – the uncertainty of their knowledge … they also recognize that sustaining the discourse keeps the silence at bay … that [discourse – silence] have no core of meaning apart from its utility in creating a sense of time. Mahood says that one must say words as long as there are any.

Beckett and his characters remain lost in the fragments of thought, language, despair and useless repetition of broken, meaningless and distorted and deshaped sentences and words. Pauses, silences and dotted lines abound in Beckett’s texts. The mystical and artistic genius of Beckett lies in exposing the insufficiency and incomprehensibility of language in so far as the realization and communication of Reality is concerned. Beckett’s use of language (especially in his dramatic works) subverts the very foundations of language. There is no traditional plot development or lengthwise

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26 Lyons, 1983, p. 27.
character portrayal in Beckett’s works. In the *Waiting for Godot* nothing happens twice as nobody comes nor goes and everything becomes awful. He reflects the disintegration of logos in the disintegration of human mind and human language:

...if you could finish it...sleep...not before...oh I know... the ones I have finished...thousands and one...all I ever did...in my life...with my life...saying to myself...finish this one...it is the right one...then rest...sleep...no more stories...no more words...and not the right one...couldn’t rest...to begin...to finish...saying to myself...finish this one...then rest...this time...it is the right time...27

What can one make out of the following sandwiches in which the structures of stylistics and semantics are reduced to naught:

...lights... of the land...the island...the sky...need only...lift his head...his eyes...he’d see them...shine on him...but no...he.28

...out... into this world...tiny little thing...before its time...in a godfor - ... what?..what?..yes...tiny little girl...before her time...godforsaken hole called...called...no matter...parents unknown...unheard of...he having vanished...thin air...29

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28 Ibid., p.140.
There is chaos unto man when he confronts the relationship between language, and the underlying consciousness that becomes the inevitable object of language’s questioning endeavour. It is this questioning endeavour of language that forces Beckett to confuse the eternal spark of love-consciousness in man with the human perception of it through language:

To wit this love what is this love that more than all the cursed deadly or any other of its great movers so moves the soul what is this soul that more than by any of its great movers is by love so moved...Love of woman, I mean, if that is what my Lord means.30

It is in this way that Beckett repeatedly displays – in his plays – that communication through language is ultimately impossible. Language, when it controls and dominates the thinking sensibility of the thinker, becomes a disintegrating force to the very psyche that holds it:

HAMM: Yesterday! What does that mean? Yesterday?
CLOV: [Violently]. That means that bloody awful day, long ago, before this bloody awful day. I use words you taught me. If they don’t mean anything any more, teach me others. Or let me be silent.31

This shows that Beckett’s search for truth is astrayed in the web of language and mind, in what B Russel calls “believing, doubting, wishing, willing; being pleased and pained”32. Beckett himself realized the fact: “This long sin [Language] against the silence that enfolds it”33; or “All lies, invented to explain I forgot what…Wouldn’t it not be better if I were simply to keep on saying babababa…”34 It is language and mind that dominate and subjugate silence in Beckett, whereas it is divine silence that contains and controls language and desires in a mystic, like the Buddha. The very nature of language is unending strutting, so it serves to communicate mis-communication, misunderstanding and lack of power to communicate. Language, thus, in itself becomes content [Art that expresses Beckett’s psyche], which is chaos and confusion. Beckett himself said that “Art has nothing to do with clarity”35. So the tragedy of Beckett lies in that he fails to rise completely beyond the web of language and mind. Krishnamurti transcends Beckett’s dilemma of language when he experiences that:

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34 Ibid., pp. 78-83.

Now a mind that seeks security surely can’t find the real, the true. To understand that which is beyond time, the fabrications of mind must come to an end. Thought can’t exist without words, symbols, images. And only when the mind is quiet, free of its own creations, is there a possibility of finding out what is real...To formulate opinions about God is really childish.

When the mind is empty, silent, when it is in a state of complete negation—which is not blankness, nor the opposite of being positive, but a totally different state in which all thought has ceased—only then is it possible for that which is unnamable to come into being.36

Rumi in *Masnawi* says that he thought of rhymed couplets for communication with God, but He said that he wants him to think of nothing but vision of Him, and that “I [God] will throw word, sound and speech into confusion, so that without these three, I may converse with you”.37 Betrand Russel echoes Rumi’s vision when he reveals the true nature of mystical ‘insight’ in the following words:

The mystic insight begins with the sense of a mystery unveiled...beyond the possibility of a doubt. The sense of certainty and revelation comes earlier than any definite belief. The definite beliefs at which mystics arrive are the result of reflection upon the inarticulate experience gained in the moment of insight. Often

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beliefs which have no real connection with this moment become subsequently attracted into the central nucleus...

So the organized religion of superficial beliefs “has no more depth than an old school tie” for Beckett as well as for mystic’s realization and insight as shown above. Despite this identical attitude the fact remains that Beckett does not come to the point where all ‘ties’ of all forms (internal as well as external) dissolve in the ocean of eternal silence. Beckett’s ultimate insight is fraught with doubt, despair and dread because he is convinced by mind that nothing exists beyond mind. There is other problem regarding language that disturbs the mental equilibrium of Beckett’s characters – the problem of sounds. The sounds of various words are interpreted in the mind as concepts or alternatively concepts become sounds when we clothe them in the sounds of speech. In normal discourse we take this ‘concept-sound’ relationship for granted. But when it comes to Beckett, the relationship breaks because when we, like Beckett, analyze and concentrate on the vibrations of various concept-sounds they –concept-sounds – lose the for granted normal meaning. To illustrate, the sound of the word ‘life’, when encountered repeatedly in our mind, appears as a strange vibration issuing forth from the


39 Ctd. in Bair, 1980, p.25.
articulators that produce it. A group of sounds (sentence), similarly, produces a longer vibration in the mind. Do these vibrations signify or mean anything. They are a constant buzzing in the minds of Beckett’s characters. The buzzing of the word ‘life’ loses all its secondary significations such as childhood life, youth, age and other social associations. It becomes a dull and dizzy stream flowing in the mind channels. The signifier-signified relationship transforms into senseless vibrations. The buzzing keeps them awake and releases an ample amount of scintillating hot energy (Due to repetitive friction of the vibrations against the nerves that perceive them) that keeps them ‘going on’ in meaningless soundful dialogues:

Vladimir: We have our reasons.
Estragon: All the dead voices
Vladimir: They make a noise like wings.
Estragon: Like leaves.
Vladimir: Like sand.
Estragon: Like leaves.

Vladimir: They all speak together.
Estragon: Each one to itself.
Vladimir: Rather they whisper.
Vladimir: They rustle.
Estragon: They rustle.
Vladimir: What do they say?
Estragon: They talk about their lives.
Vladimir: To have lived is not enough for them.
Paul Davies supports our argument, with textual details from Beckett, in the following quote:

...about the meaning of his work, Beckett’s reply...of fundamental sounds...agrees with the voice of The Unnamable: ‘I emit sounds. If that is not enough for them I can’t help it’...we find ourselves tempted to agree with Malone when he says to himself: ‘My notes have a curious tendency, I realize at last, to annihilate all they purport to record’.41

Beckett reflects the arbitrary nature of language and thereby its relative nature and the epistemological chaos that all language oriented knowledge carries with itself. He comes close to the ocean of what mystics call ‘celestial music’ or soundless song but he fails to dive in. In connection with the mystery of sounds Inayat Khan, a sufi, observes:

Abstract sound is called Sautul-Sarmadi by the Sufis. All space is filled with this, the knower of the mystery of sounds knows the mystery of the universe, and the sound of the abstract is always


going on within. As a rule one doesn't hear it because one’s consciousness is entirely centered in material existence, those who are able to hear the *Sautul-Sarmad* and meditate on it are relieved from all worries.\(^4\)

So, it becomes clear that the vision of God by Becket becomes the vision of his split desires (thoughts) expressed in fragmented words. Such a vision of God is Greek to the mystics of all traditions. Richard N Coe observes in this connection:

> The essential self is timeless and deathless; But the “I”, the “self” I know, is condemned to death, to unbelievable suffering, mutilation and absurdity, and this gratuitous futility and misery can only have been ordained by the cruel caprices of a “God” who is himself of the same element – words – and who understands what he is inflicting. The “True God” can only be a macrocosmic equivalent of the microcosmic Void of the “True Self”; The preacher’s “God” – a God who is conceivable, can be nothing but a malevolent and monstrous projection of the pseudo self, or, in Sartrian terms, either of the “In – Itself” or of the “Other”. If there is a total reality (all Becket’s people realize there must be), it is the eternal pour soi, the Absolute unnamable.\(^4\)

Becket’s search is merely reason oriented. Having denied all supra-rational reality in an attempt to discover personally and sentimentally that which is beyond human reason and sentiments,

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Becket loses himself in the abyss of absurd and irrationality. F Shoun writes in this connection:

The whole debate regarding the capacity or incapacity of the human mind to know God resolves itself thus: our intelligence can know God only “by God” and therefore it is God who knows himself in us. Reason can participate instrumentally and provisionally in this knowledge in so far as it remains united to God. It can participate in Revelation on the one hand, and in Intellection on the other, the first relating to God “above us” and the second to God “within us”. If by the “human mind” one understands reason divorced from Intellection or from Revelation – the latter being, in principal, necessary to actualize the former – it goes without saying that this mind is capable neither of illuminating us nor, a fortiori, of saving us.44

Beckett said, “I am interested in the shape/ form of ideas [content] even if I don not believe in them”45. But the tension still exists for Beckett for he “dislikes aesthetic form that imposes order on chaos [content] and there by denies the existence of that chaos … the form and the chaos remains separate”46. The ‘chaos’ of content or being gets developed into various other haunting themes in Beckett, as Martin Essilin points out, that of self-perception and the nature of the self, the inevitable split of personality into perceiver and perceived, an

ear that listens and a voice that issues forth from the depths. We can find this split in most of his narrative prose and in his dramatic works, where the pairs of indissolubly linked characters (Didi/ Gogo, Pozzo/ Lucky, Hamm/ Clov, Krapp Present/ Krapp Past, Opener/ Voice in Cascando) can be interpreted as aspects of the self in this fragmented complementary relationship. When one comes to the problem of self-perception, one asks to one's own self – the implicit self – who perceives the self?: A deeper self, which, when itself is perceived, becomes the object of yet another self’s perception, and so on *ad infinitum*. So, as many selves so many voices and vice versa. Such a case, from psycho analytical point of view, may be termed as ‘multiple schizophrenia’. Beckett tries hard to know the knower but the knower once known becomes the known of another knower, as Schopenhauer said. The strains of ‘I’ remain alongside a perpetual flux and movement in Beckett's works, says O’ Hara. Beckett always refuses to take, what Kierkegaard called ‘the leap of faith’ or what Osho calls ‘Quantum leap’ – leap beyond the mind, thought and beyond the division of the knower and the known into the pure realm of ‘knowing’, where there is no knower or known. J Krishnamurti calls such a state as ‘experiencing’ and the Sufis call it *fana*. Such a state is not even an experience because with experience the individuality remains. It is a state of pure knowledge or gnosis. It is
neither logical argumentation, nor logically illogical (Camus) nor illogically logical (Beckett) thesis of dread, despair and death. It is not Beckett’s forced silence. It is Buddha’s silence which lies at the heart of existence. And such a state dawns with the death of human ego (Nafs) and the birth of what Semitic mystics call Love or what Buddhist mystics call ‘passive awareness’ or ‘choiceless awareness’. With the death of false human ego, the birth of mystic’s perfect man takes place who is the very harbinger of Sat (Truth), Chit (Beauty) and Ananda (Bliss), while as with the birth of human ego of Nietzschean superman (whose motives are ‘eternal recurrence’, ‘will to power’ and ‘sadomasochism’) nihilism is born. Beckett shares the tendencies of ego in the form of general characteristics of his characters which are: sadomasochism, schizophrenia, neurosis and split personality:

I fell asleep. But I don’t want to sleep. There is no time for sleep in my time-table...Coma is for the living... Live and invent. I have tried...While within me the wild beast earnestness padded up and down, roaring, ravening, rending. I have done that. And all alone, well hidden, played the clown, all alone...motionless, often standing, spellbound, groaning. That is right, groan. I couldn’t play. I turned till I was dizzy, clapped my hands, ran, shouted, saw myself wining, saw myself losing, rejoicing, lamenting. Then suddenly I threw myself on the playthings...or on a child, to change his joy to howling...I was born grave as others symphilitic. And gravely I struggled to be grave no more, to live to invent...But at each fresh attempt I lost my head, fled to my shadows...to his...
lap who can neither live nor suffer the sight of others living. I say living without knowing what it is.47

Some characters of Beckett detest and loathe the very natural phenomenon of reproduction and birth. They resist the descent of soul into this phenomenal world which shows the abnormal psyche of their creator. Mystics, like Rumi’s school, would celebrate birth and death by singing and dancing in whirls (Whirling dervishes) on the occasions of birth and on the departure of human soul because the former event manifests God in the finite world whileas the latter event reflects absolute freedom that God is. Beckett tries to subjugate what is beyond human power. The very attempt is doomed to failure and despair. Paul Davies observes in this connection:

Beckett’s evocations of mud, slime, sexual love and birth are linked inexorably together; they symbolize human existence in matter...So Malone calls the womb of his mother ‘putrid mucus’...Molly feels ‘remorse at having begotten’ his son...The defiant narrator imagining non-existence says in The Unnamable ‘The slut has yet to menstruate capable of whelping me... a sperm, dying of cold in the sheets, some people are lucky, born of a wet dream and dead before morning. I must say I’m tempted...Macmann...wonders ‘if it was really necessary to be guilty inorder to be punished but for the memory, more and more galling, of his having consented to live in his mother, then to leave her...Mahood describes himself as having, by way of killing his

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parents and family, 'been delivered of a pack of blood relations, not to mention the two cunts into the bargain, the one forever accursed that ejected me into this world and the other, infundibuliform, in which, pumping my likes, I tried to take revenge...Beckett’s narrators often give way to this cruelty when the subject of birth comes up: ‘I am looking for my mother to kill her. I should have thought of that a bit earlier, before being born...His [Beckett’s] characters are explicitly horrified by the phenomenon known to the Neo-Platonist as the descent of the soul. The speaker of The Unnamable, diminished almost to annihilation, wishes ‘If only I were not obliged to manifest’

So, Beckett’s characters, like their creator, can not celebrate the presence of divine song in every particle of existence as a mystic, like K.Ghulam Farid, celebrates after crossing the ‘dark night of the soul’ (purgation) in the following verses:


Uncertainty,
Illusions, deceptions
Have all been burnt into ashes;
The mere name of the Other
Has been washed from my heart.
Eternal and eternal existence
Has made manifest itself to me.
Whether at home or whether on wayside
I can see Him now, see unchecked

48 Paul Davies, “Three novels and four nouvelles: giving up the ghost be born at last”, ed., John Pilling, 1994, pp. 48-49.
Now, Farid, every pain
Is a melody of soul to me.
The doctrine of “All is He”
Has opened new vistas
And given new life to me.49

In choiceless awareness, which great mystics follow, there is neither acceptance nor rejection because in both the cases there is ‘choice’, therefore ego. In other words, one accepts existence with an awareness that one is accepting and rejects with the same awareness without identifying oneself either with acceptance or with rejection (Judgments). The action remains without the doer/ chooser. It is pure ‘witnessing’. However, the important point to note is that awareness is not thinking or Derridean differance nor it is resistance against the principle that manifests life in matter with an obvious purpose to inflict pain and misery on the creatures. The process of differance (as Beckett reflects in his use of language) always involves a self defeating movement from a signifier to a signified to a referent circularly while as in awareness all movement (identification) seize and the mind transforms into no-mind or “emptiness in which the things of the mind can exist, but the things are not the mind ... that emptiness [obviously] has no center and so is capable of infinite

49 Ctd. in Qaiser, 1990, p. 182.
movement. Creation is born out of this emptiness"\textsuperscript{50}. In other words, 'choiceless awareness' is non-dualistic (\textit{Advaita-Vada}). In dualism the opposition between the two terms (e.g. matter and spirit) is absolute and irreconcilable. René Guenon explains further:

\begin{quote}
Non-dualism, while not admitting an absolute irreducibility anymore than monism differs profoundly from the later in that it does not for this reason claim that one of the two terms of the opposition is purely an simply reducible to the other; [i.e. why we have "spiritualistic monism" and "materialistic monism"] both terms are considered simultaneously within the unity of a common but more universal principle, in which both are equally contained, no longer as opposites in the ordinary sense of the word, but as compliments, by a kind of polarization which in no wise affects the essential unity of this common principle.\textsuperscript{51}
\end{quote}

Beckett's people are 'God obsessed'. They struggle fast to experience Him. They ask why they are what they are and why they are conscious and their search starts from the Void, the nothing which lies behind 'reality' yet they fail to attain \textit{Nirvana}. They are inconclusive as to whether God exists or not, and we find both kinds of statements scattered throughout his work. Hamm concludes to Clov's enquiring that "The bastard [God] doesn't exist"\textsuperscript{52}. Similarly


Bom asks Pim whether he believes in God daily, Pim answers first ‘yes’ and then ‘no’. Murphy says to Celia “God blast you”, Celia replies, “He is doing so”53. Ultimately their position is that God’s ways are mysterious, beyond their understanding: “God does not seem to need reasons for what he does, and for omitting to do what he omits to do, to the same degree as his creatures, does he?”54. They become angry of their own selves and reduce existence to shit and man to worm. This gulf between man’s essential self (God) and his pseudo-self or mind or Descartes’s ‘I’ – as Beckett reveals so clearly – lead Beckett to imprison the ever questioning mind in isolated holes:

Being shut up in a jar is the final physical expression of a state which begins merely as a thought, the thought of ‘the regime of systemic doubt prescribed by Descartes, in which... the philosopher is left with the flicker of doubt itself, the self-reflexive cogito which is the ground and guarantee of being’. The external world is ruled out; from there it is a short step to being shut out...the very moment the external world is shut out, the ‘cogitator’ is shut in. The enclosure is complete, the jar, its perfect symbol, is in place, with its victim inside. The jar prison is imaginally equivalent to the Cartesian cogito or mind, due to Beckett’s celebrated play on colour, sound and image which suggests by turns the prison is a room, the bone of the skull, the


Beckett's gamut of figurations of this state is endless...

_I woke up in a bed, in my skin..._

_A head, but solid, solid bone, and you imbedded in it, like a fossil in a rock..._

_I say to myself I am in a head..._  

If God exists they still suffer, if He does not exist, the same. However, the unending quest of Beckett's heroes keeps them moving in their search. Their quest is mystical. Their search makes them realize that the apparent existence is an illusion and their "real selves exist in another, non-material dimension. They live, like Belacqua, 'in the interstices of reality', and they can not conceive of an essentially non-material reality having its origins in the material laws of cause and effect, which laws it escapes at every point". They remain with 'why' in exile unanswered and all that they can see is sin: "All here is sin, you do not know why, you do not know whose, you do not know against whom, someone says to you..."

Whether God exists or not, it is man who has to justify his own ways to himself which he can not for man by nature, by birth is

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'limited' not only physically but also mentally and emotionally. Man is not an end in himself rather he has an end that he always tries to achieve and that is perfection or immortality. To achieve it man is to rise beyond man. He has to come out of skull and mind in which Beckett and Descartes have imprisoned him. He has to develop that terrible neutrality that can enable him, like the Buddha, to break the fetters of being and self and look beyond his being. There is no dearth of the great mystics who enable the seekers of truth how to leave and come back into their body and mind. Rumi says, "Man is a captive on earth. His body and his mind are his prison bars. And the soul is unconsciously craving to experience once again the freedom which originally belonged to it".58 Beckett lives in the world of mind and body in which he searches the taste of what mystics call exaltation—a state of mystic in which he and his source become one. Khusrau the mystic says "When I become Thou and Thou becomest me, neither canst Thou say that I am different, nor canst Thou say that Thou are different".59 In short there are various grades or stages of exaltation that the mystics of all traditions have experienced and thus paved way to rise beyond the strife of senses and mind. Man is to understand his


59 Khan, 2003, p.115.
fallen and imperfect state for which he needs to discover the wisdom within himself which can guide him, despite all odds, towards his goal. Kierkegaard observes in this connection:

The thing is to understand myself, to see what God really wishes me to do; the thing is to find a truth which is true for me, to find the idea for which I can live and die.\(^6\)

This wisdom must see things (personal as well as impersonal) as they are, not as the seer wants them. Beckett sees things as he wants them. He does not use wisdom, like the Buddha, to see the contingency of existence as a means to go beyond the contingency. He projects his sentiments and thwarted emotions and dyes in black all the aspects of reality. Beckett does not see ‘What is’, to use Krishnamurtis phrase. He fights against the contingency of existence and its pain with the strength of a rebel. He is not ready to submit to ‘divine will’ that wills our contingency:

Was I sleeping while the others suffered? Am I sleeping now? Tomorrow, when I wake or think I do, what shall I say of this day? That with Estragon, my friend at this place, until the fall of night, Iwaited for Godot?... But in all that what truth will be there...astride of a grave and a difficult birth. Down in the hole.

Lingeringly, the gravedigger puts on the forceps. We have time to grow old. The air is full of cries. But habit is a good deadener. At me, too, someone is looking, of me, too, someone is saying: he, is sleeping; he does not know that he is asleep. I cannot go on!\footnote{Samuel Beckett, \textit{Waiting for Godot}, London: Faber and Faber, 1965, P 31.}

The passage portrays the picture of the concerns of a humanist who is overcome by the pain of humanity. We cannot justify, like Beckett, our joy when others are suffering because we ourselves do not want to suffer. Given the existence, either we may reject the suffering with all the resentment or we may accept it with all our devotion and love. Beckett follows the former while as the mystic, the latter. Our goal is determined by our choice. Beckett ‘chooses’ despair and horror in suffering while as a mystic perceives heaven through suffering. Meister Eckhart is worth quote in this connection:

\[...sorrow comes of affection and love, for these are the beginning and the end of sorrow. Thus, if I am sad for passing things, not loving God with all my heart nor even giving him the love that he might justly expect to meet in me, what wonder if God ordained that I should still suffer loss and pain?\]

St. Augustine says: “Lord, I did not want to lose you, but I did not want to own some creatures besides you. It was because of my greed that I lost you – for it did not please you that anyone should own creatures that are false and at the same time own you who are the truth...He who is not satisfied with God alone is much
too greedy.” How could the creatures God gives satisfy a man who is not satisfied by God himself?

Things cannot comfort or satisfy a good man but, rather, anything other than God or alien to him will be painful. He will always say: Lord God, when you send me elsewhere than into your own presence, give me then another you; for you are my comfort and I want you only... ⁶²

F Schoun reveals further the nature of the selfless and non-emotive love relationship that unifies the spirit of man with God and enables him to look beyond the strife of the senses:

The fact that the term ‘love’ evokes above all the idea of sexual attraction and family affection indicates that it is not arbitrary to attribute to the way of love a character of emotiveness, even of sentimentalism, though this term is broadened, by the very force of things, once it becomes for an entire tradition the common denominator of all spirituality. It is precisely the idea of ‘union’ – comprised in the notion of love – which allows us to give the name ‘love’ to that something which attaches us to God in an effective way; what ever be our motives, we ‘love’ the place where we wish to be, the objective we want to possess, the state we wish to enjoy. In this sense, we can accept without hesitation the postulate of the preeminence of ‘love’ over a knowledge that is still mental and inoperative.

Love thus stripped of its emotive aspect – but not of its character of ‘union’, without which the word would lose all meaning – is no other, in short, than the will: the later obeys in fact intellectual as well as sentimental motives; it is neutral in itself, but

never operates alone, its motive always coming from outside: but from another angle, the will lets itself get absorbed by what determines it and thus becomes as it were an aspect of the driving intention.63

Sentimentalism and Syllogism are not the ways, therefore, of the seekers of truth. They do not project their conception of the truth. They desire and seek truth as it is because the very desire to seek the truth according to this or that conception is doomed to relativism and nihilism that so characterize the post-modern absurd mind. They desire desirelessness. In the words of Shabistari “whoever became empty of howness and whyness, in him ‘I [God] am the Truth’ became the sound and echo.”64 Ibnul-Farid also says in this connection that “when I died of His love, I lived by Him, through the wealth of my self-denial and the abundance of my poverty.”65 Loaded with bitter sentiments (which take the form of hollow humor, black comedy, paranoia, pastiche and irony etc), Beckett justifies his ways by plunging into ‘the myth of nothingness’. From his point of view the ultimate destiny of man is tragic as he has depicted in his works—which is the one side of Reality—existence is obscure and man is


64Ctd. in Khosla, 1987, p.227.

65Ibid., p. 254.
doomed to eternal suffering. To this view F Shoun offers the following critique:

Whereas language is man, and infinite knowledge can not pertain to that which in human nature is bound up language, thought and desire. In other words: There is always in evil an element of unintelligibility or of absurdity which is reducible intellectually, but not imaginatively or sentimentally, therefore humanly; which is not a reproach, but the taking note of a natural fact. The logic of the metaphysician can be satisfied without difficulty; but human sentiment, let us repeat, has no choice other than to submit, which amounts to saying, precisely, that human nature has its limits. Humanly no one escapes the obligation to ‘believe in order to be able to understand’.66

The mystic, unlike Beckett, lives God moment to moment. He sees, like Beckett, the illusory nature of existence (evil and good alike) and he transcends it with the slogan of his faith which is neither I nor you but He (Lā.ana Wa lā Anta: Hua or the Upanishads formulae Tat Tvam asi – That art thou). His ultimate refuge becomes the force that he terms by such names as God, Allah or Nirvana. To know God is to become God. And to become God is to accept all that He is the master of: both suffering and joy. The joy and suffering become inter-changeable, as Khalil Jibran says in The Prophet that joy is our ‘unmasked pain’. A mystic suffers more than others because he loves

more (Christ). The more he loves, the more he accepts and celebrates the commands of his master. God is just to mystic because everything is from Him. The important point to note is that the love of a mystic towards God is selfless and ‘unconditional’ and non-sentimental in all aspects. It is beyond personal loss and gain. It sees God’s will in everything, in pain and pleasure alike. It enables the lovers to live life – town of tears – as an adventure ordained on a chivalric knight from his lady. It is this love that enables a mystic to see ‘divine radiance’ in every ordinary phenomenon. It transforms pain into joy and the whole existence becomes blessedness to the eyes of the lover. Rumi demonstrates the beauty and power of mystical love in the following couplets:

Hail to thee, then, O LOVE, sweet madness!
Thou who healest all our infirmities!
Who are the physician of our pride and self-conceit!
Love exalts our earthly bodies to heaven,
And makes the very hills dance with joy!
O lover it was love that gave life to Mount Sinai.
When “it quaked, and Moses fell down in a swoon”
Did my Beloved only touch me with his lips,
I too, like the flute, would burst out in melody.
But he who is parted from them that speak his tongue,
Though he possesses a hundred voices, is perforce dumb.

The Beloved is all in all, the lover only veils Him;

The Beloved is all that lives, the lover a dead thing.  

Similarly when a muslim mystic follows the holy life of the prophet Muhammad he manifests God in every act, deed and attitude of mind. He takes ‘full responsibility’ on his shoulders of whatever existence decrees upon him. He does not renounce the world like the Buddhist or the Christian monks. He lives all the roles that life furnishes. He, in short, becomes what F Schoun calls ‘social monk’. Furthermore when one examines closely the teachings of the prophet one sees that they manifest and induce what mystics call ‘God consciousness’. In every act that a Muslim is supposed to perform, according to the teachings of the Quran and holy tradations of the prophet Muhammad, from morning to evening he is to ‘remember’ and ‘be thankful’ to Allah. Besides humbling down his head or ‘ego’ five times a day before the ‘unseen’ God, he is to invoke God even in such ‘common’ situations – such as eating meals, sleeping, bathing, etc.–which may seem trivial and unimportant to the philosophical eye. Even when a Sufi is to fight, he fights in the cause of Allah who

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symbolizes justice, righteousness, love and above all Truth. That is called Jihad. In short, like the prophet Muhammad, a mystic is a great ‘yes sayer’ to everything that God has created including suffering and pain. That is why the mystics, especially the Sufis, call Muhammad the ‘pole of existence’ and Islam ‘the complete code of conduct’. Human will is subsumed in the divine will resulting in that selflessness that perceives God in everything and everywhere:

To see God everywhere and in everything, is to see infinity in things, whereas human animality sees only their surface and their relativity; and it is to see at the same time the relativity of the categories in which man moves, believing them to be absolute. To see the infinite in the finite is to see that this flower before us is eternal, because an eternal spring is declared through its fragile smile; to see relativity is to grasp that this instant that we are living is not ‘now’, that it ‘is past’ even before it has arrived, and that, if time could be stopped, with all beings remaining fixed as in a river of ice, the human masquerade would appear in all its sinister unreality; all would seem absurd, save only the ‘remembrance of God’ which is situated in the immutable.

To see God everywhere is essentially this: to see that we are not, that He alone is. If, from a certain angle, humility can be called the greatest of the virtues this is because it implies in the last analysis the cessation of egoity, and for no other reason. With a small change of viewpoint one could say as mush of each fundamental virtue: perfect charity is to lose oneself for God, for one cannot be lost in God without giving oneself, in addition, to men. If love of one’s neighbor is capital, on the strictly human plane, it is not only because the ‘neighbor’ is in the final analysis
‘Self’ as are ‘we’ but also because this human charity — or this projection into the ‘other’ — is the sole means possible, for the majority of men, of being detached from the ‘I’; it is less difficult to project the ego into ‘the other’ than to lose it for God, although the two things are indissolubly linked.  

So mystic eats, drinks and remains merry because he has known what death is. He is beyond death and life, he lives in the world yet he is not of the world. He lives as a stranger, as a pilgrim and he has nothing to lose because nothing is his, not even his self, in the ultimate analysis of things. He flows with the flux without any resistance whatsoever. His journey is from nowhere to nowhere. He becomes a mirror and reflects everything as it is without distorting anything sentimentally. He is like James Joyce’s artist to whom the ‘significant’ in human experience is “Nothing, and everything. It all depends on how you look at it” because “the significant is also the insignificant, the trivial is the heroic, and the familiar the exotic, and vice versa: it is a matter of point of view, and the artist has all points of view because he has no point of view”  

He becomes God’s flute through whom the song of eternal celebration is sung. The theme of the song is selfless love or to create a heaven out of the hell’s despair, as W Blake writes.

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in his poem *The Clod and the Pebble*. The mystic experiences a purpose in the suffering and pain. He calls the pain 'kiss from God'. The experiences of sorrow, anxiety and pain are not un-necessary wounds rather these are the integral parts of full consciousness as Underhill explains that human Consciousness always has the mysterious capacity for pain as well as for happiness:

Pain, however we may look at it, indicates a profound disharmony between the sense-world and the human self. If it is to be vanquished, either the disharmony must be resolved by a deliberate and careful adjustment of the self to the world of sense, or, that self must turn from the sense world to some other with which it is in tune. Pessimist and optimist here join hands. But whilst the pessimist, resting in appearance, only sees "nature red in tooth and claw" offering him little hope of escape, the optimist thinks that pain and anguish – which may in their lower forms be life's harsh guides on the path of physical evolution – in their higher and apparently "useless" developments are her leaders and teachers in the upper school of Supra-sensible Reality. He believes that they press the self towards another world, still "natural" for him, though "supra-natural" for his antagonist, in which it will be more at home. Watching life, he sees in Pain the compliment of Love: and is inclined to call these the wings on which man’s sprit can best take flight towards the absolute.

The question is not whence come those conditions which provoke in the self the experiences called sorrow, anxiety, pain: but, why do these conditions heard the self? The pain is mental; a little chloroform, and though the conditions continue unabated the suffering is gone. Why does full consciousness always include the mysterious capacities for misery as well as for happiness – a
capacity which seems at first sight to invalidate any conception of the Absolute as Beautiful and Good?\textsuperscript{70}

So the mystic finds that pain and anguish become his teachers in his ‘progress’ towards the upper school of supra-sensible Reality. For the mystic the world is suffering with salvation possible. Nagarjuna (The Buddha’s disciple) says that there is no Nirvana (heaven) without Samsara (world) and vice versa. He is complete. Heaven is to be won in hell. A Coomraswami quotes Jacob Boehme in this connection:

‘...heaven and hell are everywhere, being universally extended ... thou art accordingly in heaven or hell ... the soul hath heaven or hell within itself’ and can not be said ‘to go’ either when the body dies.\textsuperscript{71}

To win heaven implies to know then thyself. Once one knows where from did he come and where he goes, one will find the kingdom of heaven within one’s own self, here and now. There is no where to go, neither to past nor to future. There is only Now. The journey of life is clearly from nowhere to nowhere because there is nowhere to go. We are already bathed in the divine ocean. There is no competition


in the ultimate analysis of things. Everything is as it is without man’s agreement or disagreement. Man has just to discover this fact that there is no death; there are rather deaths here and there. There can be no death of ‘being’ because it is the manifestation of ‘beyond being’. The death is not the end of being nor the birth its beginning. Rene Guenon rightly explains that Relativism is self-contradictory because in reducing everything to change one may logically arrive at a negation of the very existence of change. In other words, if only change is then what does change changes. Change can not change Change! It can manifest un-changing through change. It implies the presence of changeless absolute. So change is meaningless and impossible without the un-changing because change can ‘be’ and operate only in the domain of unchanging. How can suffering, pain and evil, then, be absolute or eternal. The spiritual evolution of man tends towards godliness – silence, peace and joy – because man by nature tends to evolve not only scientifically but also spiritually. That is why he is called the ‘crown of creation’. He is the only animal who asks ‘who am I’, because the ‘collective unconscious’ of human race springs forth from the same foundation of unchanging ‘Absolute conscious’. A Coomaraswamay writes in this connection:
I can't say cogito truly, but only cogitator. "I" neither think nor see, but there is Another who alone sees, hears, thinks in me and acts through me; an Essence, Fire, Spirit, or Life that is no more or less "mine" than "yours," but that never itself becomes anyone, a principle that informs and enlivens one body after another ... one that is never born and never dies, though present at every birth and death ... that can only be known im-mediately.\textsuperscript{72}

And there will be no erudition if we trace down that immanently transcendent non-being as envisaged by the whole human tradition:

Our whole tradition everywhere affirms that "there are two in us"; the platoic mortal and immortal "souls", Hebrew and Islamic Nefesh (Nafs) and ruah (ruh), Philo's "soul" and "Soul of the soul", Egyptian pharaoh and his ka, Chinese Outer and Inner sage, Christian Outer and Inner Man, Psyche and Pneuma, and Vedantic "self" (atman) and "self's Immortal Self" ... one the soul, self, or life that Christ requires of us to "hate" and "deny", if we would follow him, and that other soul or self that can be saved.\textsuperscript{73}

Neither Beckett nor his characters could ever realize the art of dying. The fear of death haunted them as it haunts all humanists and rationalists. Beckett said, "If the heart had not put the fear of death in me, I would be still be boozing and dreaming and longing around


\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 1977, p. 428.
feeling that I was too good for anything else." He tries to find the meaning of death from a non-religious perspective. Coe traces the theme of death — with textual evidence — in Beckett in the following words:

In Beckett’s earlier works, the central theme is the futile and purposeless death of the individual — of Murphy and Belacqua or of the “old boy”, the retired Butler who commits suicide in Miss Carridge’s lodgings. In the latter works this theme still present (especially in *Endgame*)... [But it is subsumed in]... an apocalyptic terrifying vision ...not of one man, but of Man: the senseless extinction... of all life, leaving a frozen or burning planet to wander for eternity in the absurd infinity of space. This... is the main theme of Lucky’s great monologue in *Waiting for Godot*, with the vision of “the earth in the great cold and the great dark air and the earth abode of stones in the great cold alas alas...”; but Molly likewise listens, “and the voice is of a world collapsing endlessly, a frozen world under a faint untroubled sky...” This vision of senseless, final universal extinction reaches its climax in *Endgame*... [Where]... Hamm and Clov represent the last of living things in a burnt-out landscape of stones and dust, but Hamm’s strange anecdote of the mad artist condenses ...the whole of Beckett’s vision of the end of life.\(^{75}\)

The fear of death forces Beckett’s people [especially the hero of *Nouvelles*, Molly, Moran, Malone, Macmann, Mahood, the Un-

\(^{74}\)Ctd. in Bair, 1980, p. 172.

namable or the ‘I’ of *Texts for Nothing*] to strive to know, “the void of their inner selves, and at the same time... they are seeking to establish some sort of correlation between this micro-cosmic size and the macro-cosm outside themselves – the Buddha’s ‘Plenum Void’ ”76. But the un-intangible and in-accessible reality of the Void is withheld from them by the barrier of language and by the Cartesian duality which they embody in their search towards truth. They draw their own conclusions about life and likewise about death without knowing sufficiently that both life and death are the names of higher principles of being. It is body and mind that are causally subject to death: dust to dust. The force that infuses movement and sense to dust can not die rather it can leave matter or re-enter in matter:

The ‘I’ feels that there is a true self somewhere behind it or within it, yet it [I] can never think about that self, because, in order to think, it must first clothe the negative in the positive disguise of language, and so transform it into something radically different from itself. The “self”, once again like all other aspects of reality can only be described in terms of what it is not, and even to name it is already to distort it ... the ultimate self, therefore, being a negative ... is simply not-life, and what is “not – life” logically can not die ...77


77Ibid., p. 105.
Having tried all possible methods (philosophical, psychological and artistic) in getting rid of the problem of being, Beckett forced himself to extreme subjectivity. He could not comment even on his own works. In comparison a mystic is natural. To him death is as life is. If life is breathing in and out then death is stopping of this business. Death and life are existential. We are life before we die and we must have died before our birth. Osho writes:

Death is not against life, it does not end life, and it only brings life to a beautiful peak. Life is continuous even after death. It was there before birth, it is going to continue after death. Life is not confined to the small space that exists between birth and death; on the contrary, births and deaths are small episodes in the eternity of life.\(^7\)

So, a religious man has neither past nor future to cling to. He lives in the moment which is just a station on the way. The moment is timelessness and the Buddha calls it meditation. For mystic the existence flows because it delights in flowing. He too flows and never dives twice in the same river. In this flow there is no utilitarian goal or absurdist meaninglessness. Movement simply is delight or what W Blake says that energy is delight. Despair, anguish, alienation and meaninglessness are the conditions of the absurd mind, not that of

existence or of God. When the mind's projected meaning onto the whole of things is frustrated then it rebels against the very nature of things. Mere absence of meaning and meaninglessness leaves mind as free as the wind. When there is not meaning there is not meaninglessness as well. Osho rightly observes:

Existence precedes thinking. So existence is not a state of mind, it is the state beyond. To be, not to think, is the cry to know the fundamental. Science means thinking. Philosophy means thinking, theology means thinking. Religiousness does not mean thinking. The religious approach is a non-thinking approach, it drops all that hinders.

So, there is no schizophrenic pull between cognition and conation. The becoming becomes 'innocent becoming'. All subjective and objective criteria of truth are naught. And such a state is bliss. There is nothing to solve; no where to go and all that one is left with is to help those in need, to bury the dead and to live life as it moves and try to reduce the suffering of masses. In short he prays to existence for all that if offers. The prayer of a mystic is not a commercial business. It is the surrender to the whole, because the object of the prayer is God Who himself is the whole, the One because only He is. That is what

exactly Islam means: Surrender to the will of God and thereby ensuing peace. Prayer is the song sung in deep gratitude to God. It is not the orthodox repetition of monotonous words or ritualistic services. It is a state of heart. It is poetic that is why almost all the Sufis have written, unlike the absurdists, the greatest poetry of separation and union with their beloved (Rumi, Iqbal, Omar Khayam, Al-Mansoor and especially Kashmiri Sufi Poets):

‘Give up this cult of separation’, I said to him.
‘The most hateful of things to God is divorce’.
He said, ‘The fire of separation is the stuff of life;
How sweet the intoxication of the day of separation!
The very name of union comes not to my lips;
If I seek union, neither He remains nor I’. 

Prayer is the celebration of the fact that we have nothing to lose whatsoever because nothing is ours. Everything comes and returns to God. What was our when we were not born, what is our when we are alive and what will be our when we are no more. So the question of concern for a mystic is not ‘why am I’ but ‘who am I’. The answer is ‘I am not I’. I am He and He is me because He is in everything, everywhere, yet beyond them. That is the beauty of God’s being. F Schoun reveals the divine nature of man in the following quote:

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Deification; God becomes man in order that man might be able to become God. ‘Man pre-exists in God – this is the ‘Son’ – and ‘God’ pre-exists in man – this is the intellect. The point of contact between God and man is, objectively, Christ and, subjectively, it is the purified heart, ‘intelligence – love’

‘Unification’ (tawhid): The One (Ilâ – Llâh) has become ‘nought’ (lâ ilâha), in order that ‘nought’ might be able to become the One; the One has become separate and multiple (The Quran) in order that the separate and multiple (the soul) might be able to become the One. The ‘multiple’ pre-exists in the One – this is the uncreated Quran, the eternal Word – and the ‘One’ pre-exists in the multiple: this is the heart – intellect, and in the macrocosm it is the universal Spirit.81

In other words, a mystic contains all contradictions. He is reasonable or natural, not a rational being. The rational man tries to deny all that is irrational. But life consists of both the rational and the irrational. The reasonable man accepts the both. He enjoys paradoxes and does not make life a problem. He looks at life as a mystery. He is not interested in solving it but in living and experiencing it. He lives the duality of existence. The seasons come and go, the grass grows and flowers bloom, the leaves fall and the night dawns effortlessly. In the same way he lives life effortlessly, feeling light without any

burden or existential angst. Osho comments on the essence of living effortlessly in the following words:

Nothing is missing when you reach the ultimate state of awakening; all is fulfilled, you are utterly contented...Life is known for the first time as a great significance, as a great dance, a celebration. There is no complaint, no desire, no hankering for things to be other than they are...

So don't be worried. All things are impermanent: pleasure and pain, friendship and enmity, poverty and richness, success and failure, birth and death. All is in a flux, all is impermanent, so why be worried? Everything goes on changing...The moment you cling to something you are with the idea that it can be permanent. Nothing can be permanent, and nothing can be done about it. It is just the nature of things to be impermanent.\(^2\)

Beckett's people are never born properly, like Jung's 'unborn girl', that is to say that they "can not ascent to this incidence of form from the formless, especially when it takes the form of new human life"\(^3\). To be fully born is to be "embedded deep in life, hoping for nothing more, for themselves or for others ... but most of Becket's characters who have 'never been properly born' as Watt's Addenda say of Watt ... cannot properly forget: whence their agony and fear in relation to growth, sex, generation and their arrogant attempts to rule

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themselves out as independent of the shit". But the question is that how to ‘rule out’ immaterial self-consciousness that makes our self conscious of being, of time and change. It is this self-consciousness that mystics transcend existentially by the aid of various techniques such as ‘breathing’, ‘contemplation’ and ‘meditation’. They connect and relate self-consciousness with ‘cosmic breath’ that underlies our physical breath. After due discipline and faithful practice the cosmic breath connects the seeker’s self-consciousness with ‘cosmic-consciousness’ in which all dualities and conflicts are dissolved: “...consciousness is the God-part in us. And it is through consciousness that we become small or great...we either rise or fall, and through consciousness we become narrow or we expand” 85. But to attain it is more a matter of practice and devotion and less a matter of mental juggling or ‘splitting consciousness’ by Beckett and his characters. Martin Esslin seconds our view:

In Beckett’s work this tension between the transient, unyielding decaying nature of the material universe and the immaterial aspect of consciousness which incessantly renews itself in ever-recurring self-perception plays an important part. Consciousness can’t conceive of itself as non-existing and is therefore only conceivable as unlimited, without end. The more in Beckett’s works the

84Davies, 1994, p. 229.
85Inayat Khan, 2003, p.229.
material envelope decays and is stripped away, the more painful becomes the tension between the temporal and the infinite. Beckett’s characters may lose the capacity for locomotion; their senses may decay; yet their awareness of their own self continues relentlessly; and time can never have a stop: the final situation in Waiting for Godot, in Endgame, or in How it is imply eternal recurrence...eternally suspended in limbo and can be conceived as recurring through all eternity.86

Man is by nature a pleasure loving animal but he is frustrated when he sees the only side of the coin. So long as man breathes on this planet, there are two sides (duality) in the apparent world that man has to confront and experience. The prophets and the saints of the whole human tradition lived in this perplexing duality and yet they experienced and then reported the realm of timelessness and eternal joy through various possible means. What mars then Beckett’s sincere search is that he sees only one side of reality and absolutizes his self-consciousness in all possible ways yet he remains discontent because it is through the contact with cosmic consciousness that one can escape from the prison of self-consciousness. The Hindu mystics call this contact Samadhi and the Sufis, fana. Man is free to make of himself whatever he likes. Even suicide is a momentary escape from the hell of self-consciousness man is in because in suicide man dies as an ignorant. He loses the chance that existence had given to him. Who

knows what next. One who commits suicide was born in ignorance and dies in it. The positive side of suicide is that the very act of committing it is an act of man's freedom. Man is not born at his will, at least he can die at will. But the negative side of suicide is that it is an act in illusion, ignorance and in confusion. When the existence becomes confusion or a burden and living itself becomes a futile exercise – the same morning, the same evening, same words, same friends, same hunger and the same sex – or when the suffering crosses the threshold of bearing potential. There are as many reasons of committing suicide as many individuals, as Camus expounds in *The Myth of Sisyphus*. However, the common point in all suicides is to liberate one's self. Everybody wants liberation – temporary or eternal from the burning world flux: the thought of total extinction, of not being (why am I?), of disappearing into nothingness.

A mystic also commits suicide but not in confusion rather at will. His suicide is gradual, moment to moment. He dies to all systems and ideologies including his own personal individualistic whims and subjectivities. He 'sees', without any identification, his relations with his physical, mental, and psychological processes. He comes to awareness that he is not body, mind nor even soul. He remains a witness to anger, greed and all the 'Others' that surround him. He too
sees the helpless cries of children on their innocent faces and the silence of heaven. Rationally speaking he sees the muddy and absurd waters of existence everywhere in our finite world. He seems a silent introvert without any rebelling attitude on his face towards heaven. To the rational mind a mystic is the most ignorant person because he does not argue, or mentally unfit because he does not preach solutions. Instead of wasting his energy in suicide or in argumentation he uses it to attain self-knowledge and thereby a ‘way’ (not a system) to attain deliverance. That is why mystic’s say that body is only a medium to be used to transcend it to realize beyond body. Clinging to any system or discourse or even to body and its desires can not liberate one ultimately. An individual may attach himself with optimism, pessimism, stoicism, meliorism, Christian providence or Islamic Unitarianism to defeat the pangs of suffering, yet the fact remains that one has to fight the battle alone. If one accepts suffering helplessly because one can do nothing about it, one inwardly wants to reject it because the human mind does not like it. If one rejects suffering, the mind accepts it unconsciously because polarity is the very nature of mind. Human mind can not exist with one charge alone. It needs two to work: to have pleasure is to have pain; to be good is to have evil and so on. The concept of good and evil and pleasure and pain is born in mind. It is not given in existence. Suffering is evil and pleasure is
good according to the need of the mind (Ego). Feelings and emotions in themselves, without mind's interpretation, are natural – neither good nor evil. They are a sort of energy that flows. How can death in itself know that it is evil. It is mind that labels natural processes this or that. And it is human mind, in one way, that interprets the presence of suffering as the proof of God’s existence, non-existence, omnipotence, impotence, benevolence and malevolence. That is how systems come into being.

It is again human mind that has created the idea of a personal God who is responsible directly for all the evils that man has been going through. Even if Godot’s identity is a mystery but his idea does exist in the minds of Vladimir and Estragon. The whole play wavers around Godot’s idea. He may be Christian theology’s personal God or a figment of Beckett imagination that cannot say who and what Godot actually is. But the fact remains that if there is no idea of Godot that arrests the religious man of Beckett, then there may be no sense of suffering of waiting, fear of damnation or indulging in the parody of the parable of the ‘two thieves’ and other caricatured activities that the two tramps are involved in. It is such ‘ideas’ that empower humanistic mind of absurdists to dwell in despair and blame true Godhead for evil and suffering without understanding man’s actual and total position in
relation to his Creator. F Schoun exposes meticulously the insufficiency of such absurd humanistic mind in the following words:

...God can be called ‘good’ because all possible goodness derives from Him and every quality expresses – in an ‘indirectly direct’ manner – His Essence, and not only such and such function; and man is bad because his will no longer conforms to the profound nature of things, hence to the divine ‘Being’, and his false ‘instinct of self-preservation’ makes itself the advocate of every passion and every terrestrial illusion. Many men are good only ‘by accident’, that is to say in the absence of circumstances which might actualize in them all the baseness, ferocity and perfidy of which human nature is capable; it is true that there exists in every man a deeper layer, a ‘pre-satanic’ layer one might say, and this latter is good, but it finds itself buried, precisely, under the ‘icy’ crust produced by the ‘fall’ and now become second nature. Only the love of God – or Gnosis – can break or melt this ice; as for a deliberately ‘human’ virtue, a virtue attributable solely to the resources of our corrupted nature, this is merely a defiance hurled at God; basically it tries to show that man is better than God, or that man alone is good – man ‘despiritualised’ and thereby ‘dehumanized’...man can neither create good nor destroy evil; in the long run he can but change a little the pattern of evil or good; and when he does so in the name of an atheistic and demagogic prometheanism, he ends only in destroying values higher than those that he set out to overcome...It would certainly be absurd to assert that human beings are fundamentally bad; but with the best in the world one cannot find in man the innocence of virgin nature...If man is good, why seek to protect him against himself – for what enemy has he outside his own species...And if human evil has a source outside man, whence does it come? Not from animality, for the animal, however savage, is incapable of human perversion. The fact of
which antitraditional humanitarianism has completely lost sight is that evils on earth are inevitable because the world is not God, or because the effect is not the Cause; the discrepancy between the two terms must be manifested in the term which is relative, and that is precisely the meaning of suffering and death. Man escapes his fatality only in the Absolute. We do not say that he cannot avoid certain evils on a limited plane, but we do say that he cannot avoid evil as such, which is quite a different thing. The attitude of convinced optimists is, in practice, to choose the world whilst wishing that it were not the world. ‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you’, says the Gospel.\(^{87}\)

If there is any God, as there must be One only One, He must be creating himself in creation and yet beyond it. He must be a pantheist’s God, of a theist as well as of a monotheist. He must not exist for an atheist. He is Becket’s ‘darkness’ and Osho’s ‘empty fullness’ or Buddha’s \textit{Nirvana}. So there are as many Gods as there are minds. Our God is the projection of our mind, of our socio-religious ideology. The crux of the problem of the suffering is not whether there is a God or not, whether He is benevolent or malevolent; omnipotent or impotent rather it is that man is born free and alone and he dies more alone, as R Frost said. So, man has to justify himself his own ways by understanding his limits and by knowing himself. The title of Philip Yancey’s book is \textit{Where is God when it hurts}? The realistic

\(^{87}\) Schoun, 1959, pp.55-56.
answer is that God is there where it hurts. The pain reminds everybody
that everyone is in trouble in this world. It speaks aloud that this world
can not be an end in itself. It forces one to transcend one’s painful
state. The prince Buddha was set on the search for truth when he
encountered an old diseased suffering man. Suffering shatters the
‘facile optimism’ of complacent theological and scientific mind. It
uproots our sense of being and cultivates in us the desire to seek truth
as it is. Humanly speaking, it is the cruelest creation but without it
man remains forgetful of his original abode, if any. Beckett does not
approach this problem realistically rather he tries to interpret it in a
sentimentally irrational perspective. He does not want to see beyond
pain and pleasure. F Schoun appropriates the premises of Beckett’s
eyocentric tragic vision about man but differs in his conclusion in the
following words:

Our form is the ego: it is the mysterious incapacity to be other than
oneself, and at the same time the incapacity to be entirely oneself
and not ‘other-than-Self’. But our Reality does not leave us the
choice and obliges us to ‘become what we are’, or to remain what
we are not. The ego is, empirically, a dream in which we ourselves
dream ourselves; the contents of this dream, drawn from our
surroundings, are at bottom only pretexts, for the ego desires only
its own life: whatever we may dream, our dream is only a symbol
for the ego which wishes to affirm itself, a mirror that we hold
before the ‘I’ and which reverberates its life in multiple fashions.
This dream has become our second nature; it is woven of images and tendencies, static and dynamic elements in innumerable combinations; the images come from outside and are integrated into our substance; the tendencies are our responses to the world around us; as we exteriorize ourselves, we create a world in the image of our dream, and the dream thus objectivised flows back upon us, and so on and so on, until we are enclosed in a tissue, something inextricable, of dreams exteriorized or materialized and of materializations interiorized. The ego is like a watermill whose wheel, under the drive of a current – the world and life – turns and repeats itself unceasingly, in a series of images always different and always similar.  

Becket’s mind could see only suffering; the more his mind tries to escape from suffering the more he found it in his mind. In psychology it is called ‘the law of reverse effect’. Becket’s characters ‘search’ their true self to escape suffering but they fail because the very search becomes the obstacle. To desire (search) the true self implies to have that according to your desire or to desire timeless self by time (desire) is to desire more time. This explains that Becket’s characters have multiple selves (desires). They are multiple desires projected by the mind of the author in search of timeless and spaceless self. Vladmir and Estragon wait for an unknown and unseen Godot. The very act of waiting implies either hope (active desire) or hopelessness (passive desire). One hopes (waiting) when one is

88 Schoun, 1959, p. 120.
hopeless and one can be hopeless when one hopes. The third possible impossibility may be that these two characters ‘hope – yet do not hope’. In all the three above cases the desire remains. In the first the desire is active, in the second it is hidden, disguised in hopelessness and in the third the desire is undecided wavering and procrastinating, like Hamlet, between ‘to be or not to be’. They thus pass time (suffering of being) between hope and hopelessness. They now identify themselves with hope and the next moment with hopelessness. One can clearly see the fluctuating moods of these two characters and the other characters of Becket in general. O’Hara rightly analyses:

His [Beckett’s] characters pass time, kill time, distract themselves from time with theological and mathematical speculations...but at their back they always hear time’s wingless chariot on it treadmill, getting them nowhere towards death. A lifetime becomes a perpetually incomplete process, diversified at first by learning, travel, sex, and the desire for love, but dwindling at length into the mere existence of a mind sick with thought and fastened to a dying animal.89

They now long for death and then for life. That is why time (world or desire) becomes ‘tormenting’ to them. Pozzo reflections on ‘time’ are worth quoting: “…one day we were born, one day we shall

die, the same day, the same second... They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it is night once more."^90 Is not that enough for man, asks Pozzo. No, because the flow of time is against man's wish of immortality in this world. And every man of mind, like Pozzo, becomes angry against this time and calls it 'accursed time'. On the human sentimental plane Pozzo echoes every man on this earth. Time is accursed because it has no goal or meaning for man who is recycled aimlessly by it. A mystic sees this aimlessness of existence (time) as the fist blessing that goads him towards timeless heaven. The accursed time, logically speaking, becomes a blessed moment in the timeless sea because time, according to mystics like Rumi, is "a cutting sword, as it cuts the roots of the past and the future, making the Sufi oblivious of both. He [Mystic] is kept absorbed in contemplation of God with whom 'is neither morn nor even', neither past nor future, neither time without beginning nor time without end... no divisibility of any kind. In the spiritual world, it is 'indivisible continuity; an eternal Now in which all things co-exist"^91.


^91 Ctd. in Khosla, 1987, p. 130.
Time is God for the prophet of Islam as it is the moving image of eternity. Also it is one day when one gets enlightened, delivered from the wheel of death and life (time), from the Buddhist perspective. Alternatively, it is here now that one could be reborn in the kingdom of God, in heaven. However that moment or that day never comes to Beckett. So a mystic has nothing to wait for. He lives the moment spontaneously with no nostalgia for past or future. Whom for to wait and why to wait. One can wait for some special day, the day one will be awarded heaven or hell or one's true self; else one can wait for the extinction of world and time or for some savior who comes to save one eternally. The saver is the special ambassador of God, who carries with him the keys to ultimate success. However a true mystic can not read his own self under the light of others because he is not a machine that can be driven by others. He burns his own blood to study his own heart, as Osho explains further:

Man is not born fully developed (as Becket's characters too are not) just as other animals are born ... A lion is born as a lion, will live as a lion, and will die as a lion.

Only man is born as a possibility. He can be many things, all his doors are open; He is not a finished being ... [Man] the highest animal in the world is born unfinished.92

So, man in mystic's vision is not in exile. The whole world is man in mysticism. Man encompasses even God (but not the Promethean man, but the pontifical man, who renounces his ego and passes away in *fana*, only to be reborn in the kingdom of God, as *Jeevan Muktha*, as perfect man). He is microcosmos. He is the pole of existence. He sees reflection and manifestation of Self or God everywhere and there is nothing beside him. He is one with the cosmos as he has realized unity of God or *Tawheed* and that makes whole nature a theophany, a manifestation of God. The unity of God is the unity of Reality. The whole realm of manifestation is thus enchanted. It speaks so loudly of God, of Beloved. As there is no observer (the observing subject) but only the observed, mystic can have no sense of exile. He sees paradise in this earth because he is transported out of time through gnosis or intellectual intuition. Exile and alienation is only for little puny creature who thinks the universe as the other, as mute and brute fact, as gratuitous and feels himself thrown or hurled in the world. Mystic can't be exiled. He is not a stranger to the world and life is not a plague. He has regained the paradise, so he is not haunted by the sense of sin and guilt. He is in heaven. As it is absurd to speak that God could feel exiled or alienated and encounter 'other' as hell or universe as other, so it is absurd to speak of mystic's exile or alienation. He does not encounter universe
as the other, so there is no hell for him. Hell is constituted by ignorance and fall but he knows and knows absolutely as he has seen both the worlds as one. Absurdist philosophy arose only in the west and not in the east because eastern Unitarian world view can’t allow it. All the gods and angels are within man, they are names of his different faculties, according to Ibn Arabi, a muslim Sufi. There are no gods who could condemn man to roll a rock like Sisyphus. The Buddha said that he is above all the gods and devas (gods) lie prostrate before him. So it is absurd to kill God so that man may live as Nietzsche did. Man’s freedom is not curtailed in presence of God, as Sartre thought. It is only expanded infinitely. God is not a super person out there but the deepest self of man. So God can neither be on leave nor absent. This could be only if man is forgetful of his own self, or else if he chooses to remain blind. What ails Beckett is ‘athambia’, and ‘divine aphasia’, a God who mysteriously punishes and loves in incomprehensible ways. But this is really an expression of man’s – western dualist fragmented absurdist man’s–own impotence, his own distorted receptacle that cannot receive ‘grace’. Man must accept total responsibility, the fact that he has to journey alone. He must be a light unto himself to cure his own pain and end his sorrow by his own efforts (although that is actually the work of spirit indwelling in him); then he must make his way to heaven and see the face of God. And
then he will come to see that God speaks to him, loves him and cares for him. He will have no complaint against heavens as he has crossed the dark night of soul. Heavenly God is within him and as long as he has not realized his own divinity he is condemned, rather self condemned and self excluded from the vision of God. And who can cure the blind.

Osho is right when he says in *Zarathustra: a god that dances* that it was Buddha who relieved man of god without saying, like Nietzsche, that God is dead and man is now free to live. For Osho Nietzsche’s statement is just a reaction created by Christianity with its personal God who threatened man’s freedom and man had only choice to murder Him. Buddhism does not give one such ugly alternative. It simply says that God is not the problem. The problem is man. God is an escape from the problem to be solved. Man himself is God because existence is divine. Theology becomes anthropology with Buddha, according to Osho. There is no self, there is no you, you are not separate from existence. God is the totality and existence is included. Man finds Him always in his heart and east has already known that personal God is not absolute or *Brahman* and that one has to go into oneself and win salvation by one’s own effort.
The silence of Buddha on fourteen metaphysical questions is the religious answer to all absurdists and Osho refers again and again to this silence. Buddha insisted on this silence again and again that dissolves all questions and questions the very questioning endeavor. Buddha avoids all speaking by denying speaking at all and this in enlightenment. Derrida’s famous essay ‘How to avoid speaking: Denials’ tries to grapple with this issue. He curiously does not refer to Buddhist way of avoiding speaking, who represents the supreme flowering of mystical consciousness. Buddha rejects negative theology (as Derrida does). He is not an atheist and he is not a theist – he does not negatively assert about God and he does not positively deny God. He is trans-theistic. Buddha avoids deconstructionist aphasia, nihilism and relativism and this is the religious genius of east. The Buddha does not say that there is no truth (as Nietzsche and many other deconstructionists and absurdists would say and thus end in disastrous relativism and epistemological chaos) but there is no seeker. He cuts at the root of desire for truth and thus by eliminating the desire he lives truth. He becomes truth. Buddha becomes God. This is the esoteric meaning of the Muslim Shahadah that there is no god but God. To Sufi Faridudin Attar the path to the beloved is a flight from ‘unknown
to unknown' and Rumi says that "I will pass away from word, utterance and act, so without these three, I can be with You".

'Before' doesn't outstrip Him, 'after' doesn't interrupt Him, 'of' doesn't vie with Him for precedence, 'from' doesn't accord with Him, 'to' doesn't join with Him, 'in' doesn't inhabit Him, 'when' doesn't stop Him, 'if' doesn't consult with Him, 'over' doesn't overshadow Him, 'under' doesn't support Him, 'opposite' doesn't face Him, 'with' doesn't press Him, 'behind' doesn't take hold of Him, 'before' doesn't limit Him, 'previous' doesn't display Him, 'after' doesn't cause Him to pass away, 'all' doesn't unite Him, 'is' doesn't bring Him to being, 'is not' doesn't deprive Him of being.
