

The Blanchot/Beckett Correspondence: Situating the Writer/Writing at the Limen of Naught

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In 1943, in *Faux pas*, six years prior to Samuel Beckett's famous aesthetic pronouncement in "Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit" ("The expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express"),¹ Maurice Blanchot wrote in his essay "From Dread to Language": "The writer finds himself in this more and more comical position – of having nothing to write, of having no means of writing it, and of being forced by an extreme necessity to keep writing it" (GO 5). The similarity between the two positions is intriguing, and perhaps no mere coincidence. Indeed, reading Blanchot's theoretical pieces, we discover the plane of the unfeasible that inhabits, as well, the Beckettian universe.²

Blanchot writes in "From Dread to Language":

The world, things, knowledge, are for [the writer] only reference points across the void. And he himself is already reduced to nothing. Nothing is his material. ... What is more ... it stands apart from all investigation; it cannot be taken as an end; one cannot propose to the will that it adopt as its end something that takes possession of the will by annihilating it ... [and therefore] the writer's "I have nothing to say," like that of the accused, contains the whole secret of his

solitary condition (GO 5).

This passage announces a literature of exile. Blanchot summons the writer to the limit-experience of the eternal return of naught, an experience that transforms the writer into a witless insomniac, eyes wide but seeing nothing at all, almost, who ushers the night into day: an experience of non-identity and difference-in-itself – of “*my consciousness without me*” (“Literature and the Right to Death” [1948] GO 47).

Similarly, Beckett’s project to write a “literature of the unword”³ corresponds to Blanchot’s situating the writer/writing at the threshold of the *il y a*, a term tropologically designating (after Levinas) the passive, indifferent, irreducible naught of Being. The Levinasian/Blanchovian “there is” is to be thought, following Nietzsche’s thinking the eternal recurrence of the same, as Being without beings – eclipsed from the world of event, causality, and representation. For Nietzsche, this is the thinking of nihilism, what Blanchot calls “a movement of infinite negation” (“Reflections on Nihilism” IC 145). Blanchot however points to the utter impotence and powerlessness, the “logical vertigo,” that accompanies this movement of thought (or willing):

It is nihilistic thought par excellence: it is how Nihilism surpasses itself absolutely by making itself definitively insurpassable. ... Eternal Return is not on the order of ... power. The experience of the Eternal Return involves a reversal of all ... perspectives. The will that wills nothingness ... [is] without either will or end. (IC 148-9)

This liminal experience of naught drives Beckett’s “literature of the unword,” his “aesthetics of failure.” Indeed both Blanchot’s and Beckett’s poetics welcome the unaccountable, a silence paradoxically *uttered* by no one. To be sure, it is emphatically silence not associated with Heidegger’s silent voice of conscience that calls for an individual to shape authentically his or her destiny in relation to death’s certainty (in *Being and Time*). It is silence that cannot be aligned, indeed, to either human interiority or exteriority. It is, rather, silence without possibility. Always forgotten and powerless, it is already always outside, other than, itself.

But how must, as artists, Blanchot and Beckett proceed? In the 1948 essay “Peintres de l’Empêchement,” Beckett asks: “Car que reste-t-il de représentable si l’essence de l’objet est de se dérober à la représentation?” (“For what is it that remains representable if the essence of the object is to hide from representation?”) And he replies: “Il reste à représenter les conditions de cette dérobade.” (“It remains to represent the conditions of this hiddenness.”)⁴ The following year, 1949, Beckett articulates these “conditions,” after Blanchot, in his seminal aesthetic dictum (quoted above in our essay’s opening paragraph), not in terms of an objective analysis of the

“hiddenness,” but in terms of the ontological situation of the writer – i.e., in terms of the writer’s bewildering obligation to write unknowingly, impotently, impossibly, nothing.

In the conclusion to his study of Derrida’s *Speech and Phenomena*, Thomas Trezise writes:

Subjectivity expresses itself to the extent, and only to the extent, that it has always already been forced outside of itself, that it is always already intersubjective. Expression is therefore to be understood as both a compulsion, a necessity or an obligation and, paradoxically ... the involvement of subjectivity in a universe without power. ... [Thus] preced[ing] subjectivity itself in its traditional understanding, intersubjectivity designates what Blanchot calls “Quelqu’un” [“someone”], an Other that is not another subject.⁵

Heidegger shows the way for Blanchot’s irreducible Other. In speaking about the purely other-ness or “distantiality” of this primordial “outside,” Heidegger writes: “The ‘who’ [of Dasein in its *everydayness*] is not this one, not that one, not oneself ... not some people ... and not the sum of them all. The ‘who’ is the neuter, *the ‘they’* [*das Man*]. ... Everyone is the other, and no one is himself⁶ – that is, everyone is always already a divisive non-event.

However, whereas Heidegger opposes Dasein’s inauthentic *everydayness* of the subject-less *they* (that acts as the ontological ground for definitive, “in-the-world,” manipulative others) to Dasein’s projection of possibilities toward authentic, meaningful selfhood “toward-death,” Blanchot valorises the meaningless *everydayness* of the anonymous “quelqu’un.” And it is this “Other” endlessly other, this “outside” that is neither outside nor inside, to which the writer must relinquish him or herself.

Beckett’s *The Unnamable* (1949) – the last novel in the trilogy: *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *The Unnamable* – suggests such an “outside” as a paradoxical and ultimately meaningless verbal event. As an unending, linguistic metaphor for an imageless image, *The Unnamable* gives voice to that which Blanchot calls “the narrative voice,” that of the voiceless, irreducible, ghostly “quelqu’un”:

This tone, these words, to make me think they come from me ... a voice that never stops, you don’t know where it’s coming from ... They say they, speaking of them, to make me think it is I who am speaking. Or I say they, speaking of God knows what, to make me think it is not I who am speaking ... Ah if only this voice could stop, this meaningless voice which prevents you from being nothing, just barely prevents you from being nothing and nowhere.⁷

As if describing the situation of the itinerant voices of *The Unnamable*, Gerald L. Bruns characterizes Blanchot's burdensome "space of literature" as "the invasion of the writer" by "an impossible task":

The event resembles the prophetic invasion of an alien divinity that breaks one off from the world. No one asks to be a prophet, words stuffed in one's mouth, raving in the desert. Responsibility takes the form of exposure, being exposed ... to something like an empty, abandoned space. In this space one is no longer a cognitive subject that can take the measure of its surroundings. Rather the subject has been turned out of its house, deprived of any refuge; it is now a restless, itinerant ego, if "ego" is still the word.⁸

Such ontological exile, opening upon an oppressive, schizoid wandering – as Beckett depicts in *neither*, "from impenetrable self to impenetrable unself by way of neither"⁹ – forces the writer to submit to the neutral worklessness of language, to a silence that speaks. In *Malone Dies* (the novel preceding *The Unnamable*), Malone does "die" – but only as the "author" *must* who has fallen into such a pitiless, unconscionable solitude as the extreme limit of dying *alone* requires, an "essential solitude" (see Blanchot's "The Essential Solitude" *SL* 19-34) that is outside of and "outlives" subjectivity. *The Unnamable* is what, subsequently, remains of writing when it is bereaved of its "author," its intending overseer – the writer reduced to merely a defective transmitter or impaired conduit. *The Unnamable* exists, therefore, as a writing of Blanchovian import, a writing filtered through a demented, nonintending consciousness *writing itself*, as nothing at all. As an unintentional, fortuitous recording of the tumultuous passivity within the boundless interstice of intersubjectivity, such writing exists as a verbal daguerreotype of literary "space" where "everything has disappeared," however dissimulated.

In his essay "Where Now? Who Now?" Blanchot indicates that Samuel Beckett's

The Unnamable is precisely experience lived under threat of the impersonal, the approach of a neutral speech that speaks itself alone, that goes through the one who hears it, that is without intimacy, excludes any intimacy, one that cannot be silenced, for it is the incessant, the interminable. ... the one writing is already no longer Beckett but the demand that led him outside of himself, dispossessed him and let go of him, gave him over to the outside, making him a nameless being, the Unnamable, a being without being who can neither live nor die, cannot cease or begin, the empty place in which the listlessness of an empty speech speaks, one that with great difficulty regains a porous and agonizing I. (*BC* 213)

For *The Unnamable's* narrative voice(s), there can be no comforting (human) illusion of a unified subjectivity. Indeed, any notion of a transcendental ego is already always a movement in futility, dispatched by the interminable violation of the "they":

How many of us all together, finally? And who is holding forth at the moment? And to whom? And about what? These are futile teasers. ... I expiate vilely, like a pig, dumb, uncomprehending, possessed of no utterance but theirs.¹⁰

The Unnamable lays conspicuously bare the (non)event of the narrative voice, the site of the writer/writing at the threshold of the *il y a*. Blanchot describes this "space of literature" as

the indeterminate milieu of fascination. ... Distance here is the limitless depth behind the image, a lifeless profundity ... where objects sink away when they depart from their sense, when they collapse into their image. Fascination is fundamentally linked to [the] neutral ... indeterminate They, the immense, faceless Someone. ... To write is to enter the affirmation of the solitude in which fascination threatens. It is to surrender to the risk of time's absence, where eternal starting over reigns [and] what happens to me happens to no one ... repeat[ing] itself in an infinite dispersal. ... Where [language] becomes ... the opaque, empty opening onto that which is when there is no more world, when there is no world yet. (SL 32-3)

From the very beginning of *The Unnamable* – "Where now? Who now? When now? Unquestioning. I, say I. Unbelieving"¹¹ – the plane of composition, the universe in which the impossibility of the ephectic narrative revolves, addresses the limit-experience of the *il y a*. Indeed, what at first appears to be the inception of a Neo-Heideggerian, hermeneutical enquiry into the question of Being – of the thrownness ("Where now?"), the fallenness ("Who now?"), and the within-time-ness ("When now?") of Dasein, anticipating perhaps a new perspective on Dasein's disclosedness – becomes instead a narrative that derails any possibility of a phenomenological enquiry. The narrative's abrupt "Unquestioning" of the "where," "who," and "when" not only swiftly disposes of the Heideggerian circular, questioning "as-structure" (of Dasein's fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception) of understanding/interpretation, but also forecloses any notion that Dasein could even possibly exist in the "Unbelieving" of the "I, say I."¹² All that remains of the "I" in *The Unnamable* is a nondeictic echoing – for *The Unnamable* is, rather, *écriture* at and as its own never-ending end: characterized by an unrelenting assault on words, on signification, in a meticulously

wrought movement of desultory purposelessness, characterized by the paradoxical play of signifiers voiding themselves of meaning, already always on the way to nothing, but always by way of something, forever condemned to step back inside the circle of logocentrism in stepping outside it.

In “Where Now,” Blanchot recognizes Beckett’s aesthetic obligation:

The work ... demands that the man who writes it sacrifice himself for the work, become other – not other than the living man he was, the writer with his duties, his satisfactions, and his interests, but he must become no one, the empty and animated space where the call of the work resounds. (*BC* 215-6)

The writer’s self-annihilation effected by the work, by the work’s “test of impossibility” (*BC* 216), the *work’s worklessness* (see “The Gaze of Orpheus” *GO* 102-4), is what Blanchot recognizes in the trilogy as Beckett’s “experiment,”¹³ fully realized in *The Unnamable*. Interestingly, at one point in *The Unnamable*, the narrative voice comically alludes to the actual *in situ* of the Blanchovian (and now, we may say, Beckettian) writer, the writer as “a deaf half-wit, hearing nothing of what he says and understanding even less”.¹⁴ “Set aside once and for all ... all idea of beginning and end. Overcome, that goes without saying, the fatal leaning towards expressiveness. Equate me, without pity or scruple, with him who exists, somehow ... with him whose story this story had the brief ambition to be.”¹⁵ This passage suggests from Beckett’s *Watt* Sam’s ill heard and ill recorded narrative of Watt’s cryptic, fragmented, and perversely inverted utterance of Watt’s threshold experience with Knott, an event resonant with Blanchot’s statement from “From Dread to Language” (published, as previously stated, in 1943 when Beckett was still at work on *Watt*): i.e., “the existence of the writer is proof that within one individual there exists *side by side* a mute who has lost all words [which crudely Watt has become] firmly wedded to an orator, master of discourse [which somewhat Sam is, in his demented way]” (*GO* 6). Similarly, in so many words, negating Sam’s point of view in favour of the liminal Watt/Knott’s, *The Unnamable*’s first-person narrative constructs a fictive body and mind for the novel’s “deaf half-wit” writer:

When I think, that is to say, no, let it stand, when I think of the time I’ve wasted with these bran-dips, beginning with Murphy, who wasn’t even the first, when I had me, on the premises, within easy reach, tottering under my own skin and bones, real ones, rotting with solitude and neglect, till I doubted my own existence, and even still, today, I have no faith in it, none, so that I have to say, when I speak, Who speaks, and seek, and so on.¹⁶

We must be careful: an autobiographical aside from Beckett is not what is at work in *The Unnamable*; for this seeming turn toward interiority, suggesting a conscious human perspective – engaged in mulling over the topical orientation of the limit-experience – is purely dissimulation, a play of surface upon and masking of the narrative voice. Leading us back into the interiority of consciousness is not, to be sure, Beckett's or Blanchot's aim.

Michel Foucault highlights the problem: "Thought about thought [which Foucault calls the 'I think'], an entire tradition, wider than philosophy, has taught us that thought leads us to the deepest interiority."¹⁷ In contrast, for Foucault, the "I speak," language's utterly dumbed-down physicality, is already always present in any speaking, but it is veiled in the noetically imbued (traditionally understood) sign. The dissimulation of the "I speak" by the meaning-giving sign apothosizes the interiorized certitude of the "I think" and the signifying utility of language in general. Writing's task, therefore, is to deconstruct the "I think," nullifying interiority (and therefore any sense of an exteriority as well) by prioritizing the erasure of signification while privileging the no-thing that marks, under such perverse linguistic conditions, the "I speak." Paradox looms, however, in the movement of language to elude meaning. As Foucault indicates: "To negate one's own discourse, as Blanchot does, is to cast it ceaselessly outside of itself, to deprive it at every moment not only of what it has just said, but of the very ability to speak."¹⁸

Blanchot comments:

The narrative voice that is inside only insofar as it is outside, at a distance without any distance, cannot be embodied: even though it can borrow the voice of a judiciously chosen character or even create the hybrid position of mediator (this voice which destroys all mediation), it is always different from what utters it, it is the indifferent-difference that alters the personal voice." (GO 142)

As indicated above, at one particular point *The Unnamable*'s narrative teasingly suggests that one Samuel Beckett speaks. The narrative, drawing upon a pseudo-autobiographical sketch of Beckett, suggests that Beckett (who seemingly speaks via the "I"), now through with creating characters, avows that his material from here on shall concern the impersonal neutrality of language (narration) itself, aligned ontologically to the writer's liminal experience of naught, to the situation of the writer at the borders of an infinite time of dying.

Blanchot admits that *The Unnamable* temptingly evokes something of this "malaise of a man fallen outside of the world and ... floating eternally between being and nothingness, incapable henceforth of dying and inca-

pable of being born, shot through with ghosts, his creatures, in which he does not believe and which tell him nothing" (BC 216). We are in fact encouraged seemingly by Beckett's script to adopt such an anthropomorphic interpretation when reading "the time I've wasted with these bran-dips, beginning with Murphy ... when I had me, on the premises"¹⁹ – that is, until we realize that the manifestation of a creature we too easily associate with Beckett's name is not just another imaginary whim devised by a demented human subject (i.e., the writer), but is rather merely the construction of a desultory string of useless signifiers (that we have isolated and hypostatized from the text's ongoing ebb and flow of useless signifiers) issued from an inhuman, unimaginable nonordinary site, the site of the Blanchovian "quelqu'un," merely "borrow[ing] the voice of a judiciously chosen character," wherewith speech speaks not.

We must keep in mind that, as the vagrant mouthpiece of the narrative voice, the writer is irreducibly without prospects or hope of recuperating phenomenologically a subject-object or interior-exterior bearing. It is not therefore Beckett or anyone else who speaks in *The Unnamable*. Rather, as Blanchot unequivocally states: as the writer is plunged into and seized by an inescapable dread toward writing at the limit, s/he is "trapped and turning in circles in a space that one can't leave, even by death, since to be in this space in the first place, one had precisely to have fallen outside of life" (BC 213). We would indeed be grossly misrepresenting the text to suggest that *The Unnamable* is merely the rantings from the interior extremities of a romantic, "self-annihilated" author, or merely the protracted complaint of a demented writer, liminally bereft of consciousness, whose script is but a description of a indeterminate journeying localized at the borders of the surd space of the imagination. As *The Unnamable's* narrative voice confesses: "The poor bastards. They could clap an artificial anus in the hollow of my hand and still I wouldn't be there, alive with their life, not far short of a man, just barely a man, sufficiently a man to have hopes one day of being one."²⁰ Indeed, what we want to believe is meaningful in *The Unnamable* never, ultimately, is.

Similarly, *The Unnamable's* "trouble with the pronouns" is indeed problematic if the novel's pronouns are read from a nondeconstructed, logocentric bias. Traditionally, of course, pronouns designate someone's or something's presence. However, *The Unnamable's* pronouns should be read as nondeictic, emptied of being, pointing neither here nor there, to no-thing and to no one. "I, say I. Unbelieving."²¹ Blanchot tells us that the demand of the neuter upon the narrative voice "tends to suspend the attributive structure of the language, [suspends] that relationship to being, implicit or explicit, that is immediately posed in our languages as soon as something is

said" ("The Narrative Voice" GO 143). For Blanchot, the "exaction" of the neuter's demand is illustrated by *The Unnamable*'s

impulse that, as the work strives to be accomplished, leads it toward that point where it is put to the test of impossibility. There, language does not speak, it is; in it, nothing begins, nothing is said, but it is always new and always begins again. (BC 216)

Possessed by the inhuman treadmill of the "outside," the writer becomes the neutered voice-box through which the voiceless voice speaks: "with closed eyes I see the same as with them open ... nothing, I see nothing, well that is a disappointment, I was hoping for something better than that, is that what it is to be unable to lose yourself."²² "Self" used here – or any self-referential pronoun in *The Unnamable* – is not to be confused with a substantial self of Cartesian certainty or with an unsubstantial self of romantic uncertainty. Rather the confusion lies with our inability to conceive of "the one outside of life we always were in the end, all our long vain life long,"²³ the unnameable *outside* "who" speaks, yet does not speak (through the vanquished author, now *no one*), *who* paradoxically says, "I'll speak of me when I speak no more."²⁴ The "I" and the "me" and the "he" are always, throughout the text, no thing at all, are always, that is, inconsequential signifiers of the Other "who" is always outside any concept of otherness. As Blanchot tells us, the narrative voice

is not heard, first of all, and everything that gives it a distinct reality begins to betray it. Then again, being without its own existence, speaking from nowhere, suspended in the tale as a whole, it is not dissipated there either, as light is, which, though invisible itself, makes things visible: it is radically exterior, it comes from exteriority itself, the outside that is the special enigma of language in writing. ("The Narrative Voice" GO 142)

The failed movement of Beckett's novel toward a totalized realization of unnameability, of attaining *in the end* a "literature of the unword," bespeaks the utter(ed) worthlessness of this irremissible vagabondage of words. Words build upon one another, and then elide themselves, constructing futile image after futile image toward the ever evasive imageless image. What remains is an inexhaustive, ever mounting and collapsing, accumulation of failing possibilities to inscribe the ineffable, inevitably posited and inevitably rejected. Always there are more words, rendering/exposing yet another hoax, another lie in an infinite series of lies, another impossible attempt to recover nothing at all. And this round of error is exigent for all words/images brought into play. (We are reminded of Foucault's lauding

above of Blanchot's persistently deconstructed discourse, "to cast it ceaselessly outside itself, to deprive ... not only of what has just been said, but of the very ability to speak.") Hence, after conjuring various pictures of light and shadow, people and things, sights and sounds, vice-existers and surrogates, *The Unnamable's* narrative voice invalidates them by simply saying such (but only to begin again its hopeless circuit of "meaning"-laden but ultimately empty words):

And the sounds? No, all is silent. And the lights, on which I had set such store, must they too go out? Yes, out with them, there is no light here ... Nothing then but me, of which I know nothing, except that I have never uttered. ... And Basil and his gang? Inexistent, invented to explain I forget what. Ah yes, all lies, God and man, nature and the light of day, the heart's outpourings and the means of understanding, all invented, basely, by me alone, with the help of no one, since there is no one, to put off the hour when I must speak of me.²⁵

Once we understand that there is no "me" to speak of, except as "no one" – two words that still imply a presence, a new conceptualization of the "me" that can never be "me" – we can understand why the unnameable voice can also say, "I alone am man and all the rest divine";²⁶ for "man" is nothing, in truth a de-centred, empty intersubjectivity, already always outside himself, always compromised by the neuter that he essentially is. However, utterance – constituted by our inability to elide the involuntary exigency of language/thought – populates and thus covers over the neuter with "things," "beings" (marking the fateful "fall" of "man" from the *everydayness* of the *il y a* into the realm of words and concepts):

Having nothing to say, no words but the words of others, I have to speak. No one compels me to, there is no one, it's an accident, a fact. Nothing can ever exempt me from it, there is nothing, nothing to discover, nothing to recover, nothing that can lessen what remains to say.²⁷

One may reservedly conjecture that through Blanchot's theoretical essays in the 1940s, Beckett found two literary figures – the subject-less writer and the voiceless voice – that would continue to inform such novels, after *The Unnamable*, as *Texts Without Words* and *How It Is*. Indeed, the burlesquing of an eternally silent voice and a "deaf, dumb, and blind" writer appear to function as Beckett's lynchpin to prick open the equivocating speech of Blanchot's narrative (voiceless) voice and to allegorize in (sham)efully "meaningful" shaggy-dog stories the tragi-comic conditions of the Blanchotian writer, inscribed as a vain and idle, yet unrelinquishing, exigent fancy.

Besides Blanchot's essays on Beckett's post-World War II trilogy and the novel *How It Is*, and his tribute to Beckett after Beckett's death, no other criticisms apparently exist by either man that refer to the other's work; nor did the two writers communicate through letters. Nonetheless, a writerly correspondence does surely exist between the two artists. Blanchot's advocacy of the writer's hemiplegic self-forgetting, -exile, -dispossession which drives a vagrant, aporetic writing conspires with Beckett's: a writing poised in stark contrast to the dialectical hypostasis of logocentrism, a writing of nonrelational passivity, without aim or result, a writing of bad conscience at the threshold of the *il y a*, akin to the condemned prisoner's "I have *nothing* to say."

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NOTES

- ¹ Samuel Beckett, "Three Dialogues", in *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*, ed. Ruby Cohn (London: John Calder, 1983), p. 139.
- ² Although it may loosely suggest as much, the intention of this study is not to claim that Beckett was influenced by Blanchot's critical theory. However, since both were working, by the time of their mature works, in the same general aesthetic direction – i.e., to write nothing – a case of influence could possibly be made for either writer.
- ³ Beckett, "German Letter of 1937", in *Disjecta*, p. 173.
- ⁴ Beckett, "Peintres de l'Empêchement", in *Disjecta*, p. 136.
- ⁵ Thomas Trezise, *Into the Breach: Samuel Beckett and the Ends of Literature* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990), p. 27.
- ⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 164-5.
- ⁷ Samuel Beckett, *The Unnamable*, in *Three Novels by Samuel Beckett: Molly, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*, trans. Patrick Bowles and Samuel Beckett (New York: Grove P, 1958), pp. 368-70.
- ⁸ Gerald L. Bruns, *Maurice Blanchot: The Refusal of Philosophy* (Baltimore: John Hopkins U P, 1997), pp. 62-63.
- ⁹ Samuel Beckett, *neither*, in *The Complete Short Prose, 1929-1989*, ed. S. E. Gontarski (New York: Grove, 1995), p. 129.
- ¹⁰ Beckett, *Unnamable*, pp. 368-9.
- ¹¹ Beckett, *Unnamable*, p. 291.
- ¹² The "I" of Dasein is not an "I" of thing-grounded designation, but is the "I" of what

the word Dasein explicitly means. For clarity's sake I quote from *Being and Time*: "Even when Dasein explicitly addresses itself as 'I here', this locative personal designation must be understood in terms of Dasein's existential spatiality. In interpreting this we have already intimated that this "I-here" does not mean a certain privileged point – that of an I-Thing – but is to be understood as Being-in in terms of the 'yonder' of the world that is ready-to-hand – the 'yonder' which is the dwelling-place of Dasein as *concern*" (155). The "I" in Beckett's *The Unnamable*, however, displays neither a deictic sensibility nor a "locative personal ... existential spatiality" as "concern."

¹³ In the essay "Where Now? Who Now?" Blanchot emphasizes the problems the characters in *Molloy* and *Malone Dies* pose in contrast to the success of the absence of character in *The Unnamable*. About *Molloy*, Blanchot says, "But, as irregular as the view we are given of him is, Molloy remains an identifiable character, a definite name who protects us from a yet more troubling menace." Molloy transforms into Moran, Blanchot believes. But Blanchot is not impressed, arguing that the "metamorphosis" introduces "an allegorical, perhaps deceptive, meaning, for we do not feel the scope of the profundity hidden there." About *Malone Dies*, Blanchot writes that "Malone, like Molloy, is a name and a figure," and complains that Malone's obsessive story-telling overshadows and therefore detracts from what is more intriguing, "from Malone, the one who is dying" and, more importantly, from the "infinite time of his death," "in order not to let this empty time speak." But upon reaching *The Unnamable*, Blanchot boldly announces: "We may be in the presence not of a book but rather something much more than a book: the pure approach of the impulse from which all books come, of that original point where the work is lost, which always ruins the work, which restores the endless pointlessness in it, but with which it must also maintain a relationship that is always beginning again, under the risk of being nothing. The Unnamable is condemned to exhaust infinity" (*BC*, 210-7).

¹⁴ Beckett, *Unnamable*, p. 390.

¹⁵ Beckett, *Unnamable*, p. 390.

¹⁶ Beckett, *Unnamable*, pp. 390-1.

¹⁷ Michel Foucault, "Maurice Blanchot: The Thought from Outside", trans. Brian Masumi, in *Foucault/Blanchot* (New York: Zone Books, 1987), p. 13.

¹⁸ Foucault, "Maurice Blanchot", p.22.

¹⁹ Beckett, *Unnamable*, p. 390.

²⁰ Beckett, *Unnamable*, p. 315.

²¹ Beckett, *Unnamable*, p. 291.

²² Beckett, *Unnamable*, pp. 391-2.

²³ Beckett, *Unnamable*, p. 346.

²⁴ Beckett, *Unnamable*, p. 392.

²⁵ Beckett, *Unnamable*, p.304.

²⁶ Beckett, *Unnamable*, p. 300.

²⁷ Beckett, *Unnamable*, p. 314.