"The State of Us": Wars of Partition in Beckett's Endgame

by Ashley Taggart*

This essay focuses on the perceived "incomprehensibility" of Beckett's *Endgame* as it relates to lateralised faculties within the human brain, inner "borders," taking into consideration the playwright's experience of violent partition in Ireland and his own clandestine border-crossing to "Free France" in the Second World War. Beckett's fascination with neuroscience, the theme of ageing, and his use of "pseudo-couples" is traced back to Bergson's distinction between between the incompatible operations of "instinct" and "intelligence" in human apprehension and understanding. The paper argues that *Endgame* heightens this disjunction in a number of ways, deploying the sorites paradox to underscore the limitations of quantification (dominated by the left-hemisphere) to relate to phenomena. As the play reveals, a rival faculty is needed to perceive when a 'heap' of grains has amassed, or indeed, to grasp the passing of time. The inevitable and necessary codependence of Hamm and Clov is seen as part of an aesthetic which embraces "the whole mind" even as it leaves unitary meaning or resolution endlessly deferred.

Keywords: *Endgame*, borders, brain-lateralisation, ageing, incomprehensibility.

Perhaps even more than Beckett's other major dramatic work, *Endgame* resists conceptual assimilation. In this spirit, he describes the situation depicted in the play as a "local phenomenon." If others insist on having "headaches among the overtones, they must provide their own aspirin," his friend, Alan Schneider is advised. (Beckett 1983, 109). Yet it is not only the mise en scène which resists reductive interpretation, a "local phenomenon" stripped of a locale. As the play proceeds, the dialogue proves by turns violent, ribald, abusive, and

* University College Dublin, ashley.taggart@ucd.ie.

*In*Verbis, n. 2, 2021, pp. 107-121

ISSN 2279-8978

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then, just as suddenly, anecdotal, reflexive: "No one that ever lived ever thought so crooked as we" (Beckett 1979: 16) the audience kept constantly unsettled by glaring non-sequiturs, vertiginous leaps of logic and incongruities of register. Indeed, throughout, both main characters seem to exhibit the symptoms of 'knight's-move thinking" typical of schizophrenia, what later psychologists like Kurt Schneider came to call "Entgleisen" (derailment) symptomatic of the same "crookedness" acknowledged by Clov. Yet this psychological malady is at least part-consequence of another fundamental imbalance, that of power between the two protagonists, and Clov's subject status, especially bearing in mind Beckett's own colonial and postcolonial experiences in Ireland, where, as a boy, "... his father took him and his brother to the top of a hill where the fires [of the Easter 1916 Rising] could be seen clearly" (Bair 14) something he was still speaking of with sadness and horror nearly sixty years later. As a boarding schoolboy in a school just across the line of what was to become Northern Ireland, he regularly travelled south across what was to become a "hard border," during the worst of the Irish war of independence. But there were other, more personal borders, and identity conflicts he had to wrestle with. As the scion of a Protestant family inside what had become a Catholic, revivalist state, his early novels display an estrangement from, and a disparagement of, the more nationalistic excesses of his "homeland." Despite his reverence for Joyce, he found it difficult to accept the older writer's advice, as expressed in a letter to Arthur Power, "You are an Irishman, and you must write in your own tradition. Borrowed styles are no good. You must write what is in your blood and not what is in your brain..." (18) Facing the increasing militancy of the Catholic church, as seen, for example, in the Censorship Act of 1929, of which Beckett was a victim, the boundaries of "Irishness" appear for him, deeply problematic. His repeated derision, in *Murphy* and elsewhere, of antiquarian exclusionists who invoked Celtic icons like Maeve and Cuchulainn, indicates someone deeply distrustful of nationalistic impulses in literature at the very least, and whose infrequent return visits show all the signs of profound alienation, even a sense of internal exile. Paradoxically, on the issue of borders, perhaps more than any other, the personal and the political bleed into one another.

Certainly in the dialogue of the play, there is scant respect shown for stylistic boundaries, however "hard" the border between the outer world, the "other hell," and that of the protagonists may appear. The language veers between savage humor on the one hand and lofty speculation and allusion on the other, set against a backdrop

of incursive unknowns. The effect in performance remains one of disorientation. To some, indeed,

"Understanding it can mean nothing other than understanding its incomprehensibility"[1] (Adorno: 120).

In many ways such opacity is to be expected since, "...art has nothing to do with clarity, does not dabble in the clear and does not make clear... Art is the sun, moon and stars of the mind, the whole mind." (Beckett 1983: 64) Beckett, at least at this stage in his career, endorsing a radically inclusive aesthetic, paradoxically one of occlusion, whereby the work (since it is both the dark *and* the light, 'sun, moon and stars') *cannot* offer up conceptual elucidation, clarification.

As early as *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, he reflects on the kind of fiction he is incapable of writing, "a little book that would be purely melodic; think how nice that would be, linear, a lovely Pythagorean chain-chant solo of cause and effect..." Instead, "The music comes to pieces. The notes fly about all over the place, a cyclone of electrons..." (Beckett, 2011: 43) What is intriguing here is that such a credo is tied to a particular understanding of the physical world, indeed, the world of sub-atomic physics.

Yet the occlusion in the play is not total. It has long been noted that the setting in *Endgame* resembles a hermetically-sealed skull, with two windows acting as "eyes," just as our brains gather dispatches through small portals in the cranium, the foramina. A few years later, the narrator of *Texts For Nothing* is more forthcoming, "We are needless to say in a skull." (Beckett 1967: 38) and, "inside an imaginary head." (82)

The play begins with a mime. Clov with his ladder, seeking to look out the two high windows which dominate the stage. The first time he marches to the window and forgets his ladder he takes six steps before realization kicks in, the second time, three. Finally, he will take only one. Mindlessness, inattention, habit and accommodation are to the fore.

The sense of elapsing time is as acute as it is tantalizing. Hence, one of the great refrains of the piece.

Hamm: (Anguished.) What's happening? What's happening?

Clov: Something is taking its course. (17)

[1] As Beckett puts it, in a letter of 23rd January 1952, "As for wanting to find in all this a wider and loftier meaning to take away after the show, along with the programme and the choc-ice, I am unable to see the point of it." *The Letters of Samuel Beckett 1941-1956 Vol. 2*. (316).

The "something" that is time passing, dismays Hamm because, even though he is subject to it – later amending his refrain to "I'm taking my course" – he cannot grasp it. Indeed, the words he seeks to nail it down with, words which allow the comforting illusion of repetition, sameness and measure, ultimately fail to afford the semantic succour famously sought by Watt. As the downtrodden Clov waspishly comments, "I use the words you taught me. If they don't mean anything anymore, teach me others. Or let me be silent." (32) Many have heard here echoes of one of the unresolved paradoxes of decolonization, "most notably language dispossession and the co-dependency of identity between long-standing coloniser and colonised." (Pearson: 216) a situation which leaves Clov a "victim of the language of the oppressor...in which he must think as well as speak." (Lyons: 193)

Much has been written on Beckett's early exposure to the ideas of Henri Bergson, beginning, "in or around 1930." (Maude: 193) Bergson's *Creative Evolution* offers insights into one source of Beckett's preoccupation with dyskinesia and the ossifications of habit, setting out a sharp distinction between the faculties of "intelligence" and "instinct." For Bergson, intelligence, meaning intellectual understanding, is a function of the need to manipulate objects in the world. Essentially outward-looking, the faculty of intelligence thrives on distinctness and clarity, on hard conceptual borders, applying these primarily to the *things* around it. (Bergson: 161) "Intelligence," and its ultimate manifestation, science, seeks to engage with phenomena by fragmenting them into discrete (mensurable and manipulable) units.

As attested to by Michael Haerdter's *Rehearsal Diary*, Beckett's direction of *Endspiel* in 1967 was highly attuned to such arithmetic aspects of performance, an aspect of the work highlighted by a late encounter between Beckett and Kishin Mooranji, a theoretical physicist, who expressed his surprise at discovering a shared fascination with mathematics, solid-state physics, and the problem of 'interobjectivity'. Pressed by Beckett, Mooranji explained that his research was on "excitons," electrons hit by a particle of light, which then enters a higher energy state. When this occurs, it creates a positively-charged "hole," with which the electron then binds to create an "exciton."

"In a transfer of 'interobjectivity' to 'intersubjectivity', I added that the exciton is perhaps akin to his interacting with what he has left behind in Ireland." To which Beckett "nodded in recognition." (Mooranji: 47)

An underlying focus on permutation and a Euclidean awareness of space later reaches its most extreme expression in *Quad*, which

is pared-down to the ritualistic, "computational" (Brits: 122) and allegorical aspects of drama. Anyone who has seen Beckett's hand-written notes for *Quad* can testify to their exhaustive precision and obsessive detail. Stevens (164) goes so far as to describe the play as a "cross-fertilization between mathematics and literature." Haerdter himself notes the care Beckett took to explain the sorites paradox to the Berlin cast.

For Bergson, the faculty of intelligence is comfortable with the language of seconds, minutes, days and weeks, terms which denote fixed, calculable discontinuities. "Intellect... selects in a given situation whatever is like something already known; it seeks this out, in order that it may apply its principle of "like produces like." (29) Or, in the words of Hamm's plaintive cry, "It's the end of the day like any other day, isn't it, Clov?" (17)

The trouble with the faculty of intelligence, says Bergson, is that its ideal focus – inert matter *out there*, in the world – is a poor model for universals which pervade not only the external world, but the inner workings of mind. We do not look out at time, but are insidiously and continuously altered by it. "Our personality, which is being built up each instant with its accumulated experience, changes without ceasing. By changing, it prevents any state, although superficially identical with another, from ever repeating it in its very depth. That is why our duration is irreversible." (17) We are in the position of cartographers adrift on a floating island, attempting to secure the position and topography of an archipelago of other floating islands. According to Bergson, the attempt to engage with life using the faculty of intelligence is doomed to fail, because the necessary stability of terms is sadly lacking.

Duration as it is lived, is the experience of the ever-new, the "unprevisible," something our intelligence simply cannot process. "Against the idea of the absolute originality and unforeseeability of forms, our whole intellect rises in revolt." (29) The construct of abstract time is, suggests Bergson, a strategy intended to artificially segment indivisible duration and so quell fears of disintegration, the collapse of the self. It does this by allowing a means to measure and so control the temporal terrain of past/future. The former has a practical motivation, the latter, psychological.

Beckett, with a nod to Bergson, portrays one of the key human perceptions as being that of bodily decay, the affective inner core of self "winding down." (which, for Clov and his beloved clock, is perversely a "winding up") Alongside this, and outside of it, is the time

expressed in hours, minutes and seconds, impervious to the vagaries of self, reliably linear and perfectly, diurnally repetitive. The two co-exist as a dual perception within Hamm. It is from such schismatic apprehension that the torments of hope, expectation and memory arise. Both Hamm and Clov are creatures of the half-light; Hamm can never quite relapse into blithe animality, nor Clov attain his contrasting dream of geometry, order. The hell of *Endgame* is a hell of vying inner states struggling to attain cross-border accord. "There's something dripping in my head. A heart, a heart in my head." (19)

"Instinct is sympathy. If this sympathy could extend its object and also reflect upon itself, it would give us the key to vital operations." But instinct can no more step out of its sphere than intelligence can. Janus-like, the faculties are "...turned in opposite directions." (176) The capacity of intelligence is ultimately based on an aversion to the unprevisible, the new. This means it can never fundamentally comprehend life, which is manifestly the "ever-new." Instinct by itself however, can never fully engage with the materiality of the world.

In Bergson's striking aperçu, "There are things that intelligence alone is able to seek, but which, by itself, it will never find. These things instinct alone could find; but it will never seek them." (151) The two capacities resemble two individuals bonded to one another in a situation of anguished co-dependence, exhibiting conflicting, but complementary abilities and perceptions. Like a couple where one can't walk and the other can't sit. Like Hamm and Clov.

Beckett's preference for "double-acts" in his work (Hamm and Clov, Estragon and Vladimir, Mercier and Camier) has long been noted. In *The Unnamable*, Beckett explicitly plays with this notion when the narrator sees two men appearing and then disappearing in the distance, remarking, 'I naturally thought of the pseudo-couple Mercier-Camier.' (Beckett 1958: 6). Some critics (Fifield) are now beginning to extend the idea of the "pseudo-couple" to the brain itself.

At this point, recalling the author's stated goal of conveying "the whole mind" through his work, it might be helpful to look at more recent developments which might help us to approach *Endgame's "*incomprehensibility" from another angle.

A good starting point is an article by Lawrence Shainberg, in *Paris Review*, which recounts a meeting with Beckett in 1981. "Whenever I saw him he questioned me about neurosurgery." (2) Those critics, amongst them Matthew Feldman and Steven Matthews, who have studied Beckett's notebooks have confirmed his interest, from the 1930's onward, with psychology, brain science and even behaviorism.

This is clearly not a writer divorced from empirical research. "I doubt that he ever lost his interest in certain kinds of information, especially those which concerned the human brain." (Shainberg: 2) Most telling of all is the comment Beckett inscribes in the flyleaf of Shainberg's study of neurosurgery, "I have long believed, that here, in the end, is the writer's best chance, gazing into the synaptic chasm." That Beckett is not only prepared to make such a statement, but to admit that he has "long believed" the same, should make us sit up and take notice, as commentators like Dirk van Hulle and Rina Kim are now doing.

As is generally acknowledged, whether in his own brushes with mental illness or indeed his treatment of the process of ageing, Beckett fearlessly confronted the changes that were occurring in his own synaptic chasm. From the same article, "It's a paradox, but with old age, the more the possibilities diminish, the better chance you have. With diminished concentration, loss of memory, obscured intelligence – what you, for example, might call 'brain damage' – the more chance there is for saying something closest to what one really is." (3) The poignancy of his last published piece, the poem *What is the Word,* stands testimony here, representing a kind of elegy for the loss of his own linguistic brilliance, and a haunting testimony to nominal aphasia, where "words are scattered like glacial moraine...formed into heaps that never quite form a sum." (Salisbury: 198)

Beckett introduces the sorites paradox early in the play, because it exposes a fundamental contradiction in our everyday understanding. In Bergsonian terms, it exposes the limit-point, the borders, of "intellect," or at the least, the essential incompatibility of intellect (which informs us there is no heap, only individual, constitutive grains) and instinct (which, at a certain point, tells us there is).

In the years since, the basic terms of this Bergsonian disjunction have been redefined by modern science "peering into the synaptic chasm" in a way which may help us to reframe the central character pairing. This is due to recent discoveries about brain lateralization, an inbuilt physiological "border" we all live with, and are barely cognizant of, until the sorites paradox and others, expose the contrasting *modus operandi* of the brain hemispheres themselves.

In *The Master and His Emissary*, Iain McGilchrist lays out what is currently known about the specialized and often contradictory workings of the two halves of the brain. What he describes about the way each hemisphere operates has much bearing upon our understanding of Beckett's work, and in particular his pseudo-couples.

Take the sorites paradox. It turns out to be the perfect illustration

of how the two sides of the brain display irreconcilable ways of categorizing and engaging with objects. It tries to relate two things: a grain of sand and a heap, as though their relationship was transparent. It also presupposes that there must either be a heap or not be a heap at any one time: either/or are your only alternatives. That is the left hemisphere view, and sure enough it leads to paradox. According to the right-hemisphere view, it is a matter of a shift in context, and the coming into being of a *Gestalt*, an entity which has imprecisely defined bounds, and is recognised whole… (139)

As McGilchrist puts it, "our ordinary ways of thinking, those of the left hemisphere, are not adequate to the nature of reality. But, such is the overweening nature of the left hemisphere, it refuses to admit defeat, and reverses the equation... the left hemisphere, with its reliance on the application of logic, [states] the opposite: that it is reality which is inadequate to our ordinary ways of thinking... it asserts... there can never be a heap of sand." (140) As with Zeno's paradox, the sorites conundrum, "results from believing that the whole is the sum of the parts, and can be reached by a sequential process of incrementation…it also presupposes that there must either be a heap or not be a heap at any one time: either/or are your only alternatives. That is the left-hemisphere view…" (138) It is just such reliance on fragmentation, conceptual borders and the "law of the excluded middle" which is interrogated in *Endgame.* The imbalance between left and right – the struggle to establish who is "master" and who the "emissary," and the consequences of that power-struggle are sharply exposed in the play.

Beckett's use of the sorites paradox points to other lateralised capacities. It turns out that the two hemispheres perceive time (and relate to it) in opposing ways, "virtually all aspects of the appreciation of time, in the sense of something lived through, with a past, present, and future, are dependent on the right hemisphere..." (76)

However, the left hemisphere perceives time as a series of discontinuous instants. Yet, "Time is essentially an undivided flow: the left-hemisphere's tendency to break it up into units and make machines to measure it may succeed in deceiving us that it is a sequence of static points, but such a sequence never approaches the nature of time, however close it gets." (76) The left-hemisphere world, "is explicit, abstracted, compartmentalized, fragmented, static... essentially lifeless." (39) Yet, even though one side may, at any one time, dominate the other, they are, of course, bonded within one skull and, ultimately, one behavioral strategy.

To take a fundamental example, studies have shown that there are many kind of attention. Among those are *vigilance*, *sustained attention*, *alertness*, *focused attention* and *divided attention.* It turns out the two halves of the brain process different aspects. Yet they must also cooperate. A process of cross-referral is at work, or what McGilchrist calls *reverberation*, "in almost every case, what is new must first be present in the right hemisphere, before it can come into focus on the left." (40)

It transpires the right hemisphere is responsible for every type of attention listed above, with the exception of focused attention, with, "...whatever the left hemisphere does at the detailed level, needing to be founded on, and then returned to the right... an instance of the right→left→right progression which... lies at the very foundation of experience: attention, where the world comes into being." (40) Although the hemispheres may be specialized, their closely-monitored border-crossing, the corpus callosum, is ceaselessly active.

In *Endgame*, Beckett accords Hamm and Clov characteristics which uncannily reflect the polarities raised by lateralization studies. Indeed, it might be said that their interminable squabbling and essential incompatibility exteriorizes in extreme form an inner border-dispute we all embody, something that became shockingly evident in early split-brain studies. Clov's wry observation on their condition, "No one that ever lived ever thought so crooked as we" (16) paradoxically serves only to point up the universality of their predicament. And if,

Clov: I can't sit.

Hamm: True. And I can't stand.

Clov: So it is.

Hamm: Every man his speciality. (16)

It is worth investigating what those "specialities" might be.

Consistently, Clov exhibits an obsession with order, uniformity, symmetry, measure. This too, is clear from his very first speech, "I'll go now to my kitchen, ten feet by ten feet by ten feet, and wait for him to whistle me. (*Pause.*) Nice dimensions. Nice proportions..." (12)

Later he acknowledges this tendency explicitly, "I love order. It's my dream." (39) Where Hamm dreams of making love, of running into the woods, Clov's dream is of an altogether different, more structured (albeit moribund) kind.

As befits someone who relishes the attractions of mathematical exactitude, Clov is addicted to tools, instruments of measure; his clock, microscopes, and telescope. The episode where Hamm asks to be taken "for a little turn" in his wheelchair, reveals much about the gulf

between Clov's outlook and that of his master/"father." Afterwards, Hamm asks to be put back where he was, in the centre.

Hamm: ...Put me right in the centre!

Clov: I'll go and get the tape.

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

Clov: There! *Pause.*

Hamm: I feel a little too far to the left. (*Clov moves chair slightly*) Now I feel a little too far to the right. (24)

Where Clov yearns for precision, measure – "I'll go and get the tape," Hamm is dominated by the subjective *impression* of being "bang in the centre." He feels too far to the left, he feels too far to the right.

Hamm's language is grandiose, rhetorically stylized, "We lose our hair, our teeth! Our bloom! Our ideals!," where Clov's tends to be emotionally "flatter," more logical, reflecting his love of precision, measure, the incontrovertible solidity of fact. In a teasing allusion, Hamm even goads him about this.

Clov: I look at the wall.

Hamm: The wall! And what do you see on your wall? Mene, mene? Naked bodies? (17)

The biblical reference is to the writing on the wall at Balshazzar's feast, "You have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. God has numbered the days of your kingdom. Your kingdom is divided.": weighing, numbering, dividing, being exactly the kind of bloodless, cerebral activities most precious to Clov, something which Hamm's sarcastic coda, "Naked bodies?" merely derides.

Clov's repeated "observations" from the window only serve to reveal further incongruities.

Clov ... (*He gets up the ladder, turns the telescope on the without.)* Let's see. (*He looks, moving the telescope.)* Zero... (*he looks*) ... zero... (*he looks*)... and zero.

Hamm: Nothing stirs. All is –

Clov: Zer –

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

Clov: What all is? In a word? Is that what you want to know? (25)

What Clov reports seeing through his telescope is not living beings or the lack of them, but rather a numeral – Zero. Hamm is violently upset by this reflex reductionism. Instead, he wants the general impression, the *Gestalt*, and he wants it delivered in words. This is emphasized the next time Clov is ordered to look out the window, towards the end.

"Any particular sector you fancy? Or merely the whole thing? "(47) the oxymoron betraying his underlying values. This too is consistent with the segregated roles described by McGilchrist, "In generalized terms, the left hemisphere yields narrow, focused attention. The right hemisphere yields a broad, vigilant attention..." (27)

In these respects, Clov might be said to embody an extreme version of left hemisphere tendencies. It would, however be an oversimplification to suggest that Beckett is using the pairing of Hamm and Clov to represent the left and right hemispheres in any literal and consistent way. There is an inescapable, begrudging symbiosis. Yet, to draw an analogy with the current Brexit situation in Northern Ireland, there are also hotly-contested border-controls.

What seems to be taking place is that Beckett focuses on particular human universals (such as the need to measure, fragment) and pushes those tendencies to an extreme in one half of his pseudo-couples, whilst developing the opposite in his "partner," pulling the audience this way and that across no-man's land.

What is intriguing, though, is how often the particular antitheses chosen reflect *lateralized* traits. There are extended periods in *Endgame* where Hamm or Clov exhibits exaggeratedly left or right-dominant behavior. Thus, when Hamm, after a long build-up finally gives us his grand narrative about a supplicant, it occasionally seems as if he has appropriated some of Clov's obsessions.

"The man came crawling towards me, on his belly... (*Pause.*) It was an extraordinarily bitter day, I remember, zero by the thermometer. But considering it was Christmas Eve, there was nothing... extraordinary about that. (35)

But the beggar refuses to talk,

Come on now, what is the object of this invasion? *(Pause.)* It was a glorious bright day, I remember, fifty by the heliometer, but already the sun was sinking down into the... down among the dead. (*Normal tone.)* Nicely put, that.

Finally, the beggar tells him about his son, back in the village, who is desperate for food.

And you expect me to believe you have left your little one back there, all alone, and alive into the bargain? Come now! (*Pause.*) It was a howling wild day, I remember, a hundred by the anemometer. The wind was tearing up the dead pines and sweeping them... away. (*Pause. Normal Tone.*) A bit feeble, that".

Besides being an exercise in self-aggrandizement, Hamm's story is periodically caught between this impulse and the need to objectivize,

quantify. His cherished anecdote is sporadically infiltrated by the incongruous urge for detail, verifiable fact. Hamm finds himself appealing to quantitative (left-hemispherical) measurement on temperature, sunlight, wind-speed, only to throw up internal anomalies. Hence, "It was an extraordinarily bitter day, I remember, zero by the thermometer." Yet evoking the figure for temperature forces from him an immediate retraction. Thus, the deployment of measure, intended to bolster his version of events, has precisely the opposite effect – "... considering it was Christmas eve, there was nothing... extraordinary about that."

And so the monologue continues, swinging wildly between a subjective, impressionistic account of events, and the bald statement of scientific measure. Beckett forces the two incompatible elements together, like repelling magnets, mimicking the "right→left→right movement described by McGilchrist. Take the following sentence, "It was a glorious bright day I remember, fifty by the heliometer, but already the sun was sinking down into the... down among the dead."

Yet, "Only the right hemisphere has the capacity to understand metaphor..." (115) So, the movement from the metaphoric, "It was a glorious bright day, I remember," to the quantifiable, "fifty by the heliometer," returning once more to the, "sun sinking down into the...down among the dead," can be seen as a case of hemispheric "reverberation," cross-border collaboration, in action, "right and left hemispheres process[ing] semantic information in different but complementary ways." (Schmit 139)

But this conflict across internal borders should not be surprising. From early in the play, Hamm intimates that he is suffering a deep internal schism, "Something dripping in my head, ever since the fontanelles." (35)

To step back for a moment from contested states, internal and exteriorised, within *Endgame*, and look at the play as cultural artefact, it might be possible to see a reason why it has proved itself so resistant to interpretation, clarification. Beckett's play is not open to elucidation, partly because it is *about* the fundamental, and endlessly deferred, quest for elucidation itself. Bergson's haunting observation seems particularly apt here, "There are things that intelligence alone is able to seek, but which, by itself, it will never find. These things instinct alone could find; but it will never seek them." (151) Or, in McGilchrist's words, "The left hemisphere knows things the right hemisphere does not know, just as the right knows things of which the left hemisphere is ignorant." (199) Sovereignty is unattainable by

either of the rival "states." Both hemispheres, whether they realise it or not, are reliant on one another, "The world of the left hemisphere, dependent on denotative language and abstraction, yields clarity and power to manipulate things that are known, fixed, static, isolated...but ultimately lifeless. The right hemisphere, by contrast, yields a world of individual, changing...living beings within the context of the lived world, but... never fully graspable, always imperfectly known." (174)

Neither has sufficient means to make sense of the world, since, "blind" to the workings of the other, both are confined in irreconcilable complementarity. Trapped in the island of the self, with limited consciousness, "statelessness" is not an option. Neither is it wholly possible to exist entirely in one "state" or the other, since both are incomplete. There is a parallel to be drawn here with those who grew up in Northern Ireland, post-partition, who regularly poll as either Irish or British (and often both) with many plumping for "Northern Irish" in an uneasy compromise. By extension. Beckett's own self-imposed exile, from a country beset by bitter rivalries, political repression and partition ("there are no compensations for me in this country, on the contrary... I hope never to have to return") (Keatinge 16) necessarily failed to achieve an absolute and enduring dislocation. It may well be too, that, as Anna McMullan puts it, "Beckett's experience of the newly-instituted Irish Free State," formed the basis for his "rejection of unitary and exclusive structures of identity (McMullan 92). For this most heterodox of writers, the very notion of a "free state" for the individual, caught between competing inner drives, between dependence and renunciation, was elusive, if not illusory. There is a good reason why, when, talking to Mooranji, he found his own words quoted back at him (from the Addenda to *Watt)* "For all the good that frequent departures out of Ireland had done him, he might as well just have stayed there," Beckett "smiled…and fell silent for a while." (Mooranji 47)

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