

UNIVERZITA KONŠTANTÍNA FILOZOFA V NITRE
FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA

Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

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Zúfalstvo a identita v Beckettovej trilógii

Despair and Identity in Beckett's Trilogy

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Declaration of Originality

I, the undersigned, solemnly declare that this diploma work is the result of my own independent research and was written solely by me using the literature and resources listed in the Bibliography.

Lednické Rovne, 9. augusta 2001

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I would like to express deep gratitude to my consultant Mgr. Daniela Petříková, CSc, for all her help and leadership, without which my diploma work would not look as it does.

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Introduction

Samuel Beckett (1906 - 1989) belongs to the most unique writers of the 20th century. His work is immortal as the theme he had been writing about. Born in Ireland his mother language became English, however, the trilogy **Molloy**, **Malone Dies** and **The Unnamable** was written firstly in French, as the most of his later texts. Lest it was him who had translated all his novels and plays from French into English and vice versa, Beckett is being considered to be the representative of both literatures. The perfect knowledge of several languages (English, French, German, Italian, Latin) reflects also in his texts, which are full of allusions to other texts of the authors from around the world. Reading Beckett we can come upon a quantum of links to various writers, philosophers, scientists, historians, politicians, etc. Since the field is very broad, it spreads from the ancient philosophies and reaches up to the latest theories, I have in concern only the main and the most evident link, that is to say, the philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard.

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard (1813 - 1855), Danish philosopher, is considered to be the father of existentialism. His philosophy of existence is based upon Christian religion, especially on the philosophy of the first Christians. Like Beckett's, also Kierkegaard's work touches various areas of human culture – philosophy, theology, psychology, literary criticism, devotional literature and fiction. He had tried to turn the orientation of the Christian church from the masses onto an individual. He had stressed the importance and the only relevance of the individual in h/is relation towards God.

The maximal focus on the individual is what solders the texts of these two authors together. In my work I am dealing with the problems connected with the individuality and self-awareness, which I am specifying in the theoretical background in the first chapter. The second chapter has in concern mainly despair as such, and its representations (representatives) in the trilogy. The problems of the identity I am clarifying in the third chapter. While dealing with the

existence and the individual, the theme of the communication cannot be omitted. It is the fourth chapter which is dedicated to this phenomenon. Very specific is also the form of each novel of the trilogy, and therefore the fifth chapter deals with the structure, the plot and the story, and the relation of these means of story-building towards the existentialist discourse.

1. Feeling at very first!

Reading Beckett could be a question of one sitting, for someone it could be a question of one reading, if any, but definitely it is not a question of one simple understanding. Beckett's work is as complex as life, I daresay, and to analyse it means to study all possible and accessible literature related to it. Another question is, what can be considered as referring to it. For me the leading will be the vocal of S. Kierkegaard's reflections and notions. Browsing through the Internet I will wade in existentialist discourse in Encyclopaedia Britannica, Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy and others. Among a number of adjectives which label Beckett's books since the day of publishing I pick the term literature of existence. Literature evokes feelings and it is through feelings one realises h/is own existence. Nice said, but to prove this I need to face a philosophical point of view.

The existence, the being of a human and its meaning, was always the object of any philosophical research. Since its dawn, mankind tries to fathom its inevitable dusk. Life and death, these are the terms which concern every philosophy, every reflecting mind, terms which we can place on the left side of some universal equation and to which the right side, the side of answers, either philosophy or religion is to compute. The result of this is a structured system providing in its specific way answers to more or less all the basic questions of existence, though the systems vary from one to another according to differences between particular philosophical schools or individual philosophers. In most cases 'being' was considered to be an object of research and a kind of system was a satisfactory solution to this problem. Object and system are the words, which will be crucial in the definition of the philosophy of existentialism.

The first difference between classic philosophies and the existentialist philosophy is that of the point of view on human being. As an existentialist, I can study only my own existence, because it is the only one I *can* study. In other words, since the human is no longer divided into soul and flesh, and is viewed as a complex of

physical and psychical abilities, the only such complex I am in contact with, is my own body with its consciousness, and this am I and stay whole my being, so I can never view my existence as an object of study. I am constantly a subject to my existence and subjectivity is the only way of perception for me. It is obvious that after such exclamation I am sure that none of the systems ever raised can be of any importance, as for the suitability, for me. There you have an explanation of why Søren Kierkegaard, Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, Friedrich Nietzsche and other existentialist writers *have been deliberately unsystematic in the exposition of their philosophies, preferring to express themselves in aphorisms, dialogues, parables, and other literary forms.*¹ What can be more subjective than art? Once there is no system which can be delivered to and understood by everyone, only art can hold the function of media for the thoughts and feelings of an existentialist. One of the aims of this essay will also be to show that Samuel Beckett's trilogy is one of such works. Thus, the need is now to introduce some more existentialist terms of which subjectivity is one of the main ones.

As the title suggests, it will be feelings I am going to deal with, not only in this chapter. Borrowing here the formulation of French philosopher **Jean-Paul Sartre**, *existence precedes essence*, which means that being is not determined by any metaphysical substance whatsoever, that it is upon an individual whether s/he ever raises any meaning to h/is life, understanding this I can now take a deeper look upon the feelings which arise from the statement of such seriousness.

Existentialist knows that it is impossible to fathom everything, that it is beyond human intellect to grasp the meaning of existence, and that human life is just a spark in an endless and timeless, dark eternity. This finding gives birth to anxiety, feeling of general apprehension, which cannot be confounded with the fear of some specific object, feeling to which we are used to. In a nutshell, by anxiety is meant a fear when one doesn't know what s/he is afraid of, there is simply a feeling. It was Danish philosopher **Søren**

Kierkegaard who, being one of the first to be called existentialist, introduced this term into philosophy (in Danish – angst, in German(Heidegger) – Angst, in French(Sartre) – nausea).According to him, *anxiety is the underlying, all-pervasive, universal condition of human existence*².

Lest there is a tradition in differentiating between theistic and atheistic existentialism, it must be said that Kierkegaard is considered to be a representative of the former. He viewed himself as a religious poet and whole his life he was dealing merely with one question basically: how to be a real Christian with true faith. From this perspective, anxiety is a way how God communicates with a human, the voice of God, and so it is an intersection of time and eternity, a moment when the “I” is being born. Despair, a feeling which Kierkegaard described completely in his **Sickness Unto Death**, is a next step, after anxiety, on the way of self-approaching. I am mentioning this for a simple reason, despair is closely connected with the self, and it will be the “I” which will concern me at most. I will try to detect all three types of despair in the trilogy.

This *sense of anguish*³, once realised, can never be overcome, however, not everyone does realise it. It cannot be overcome, for there is no object of anxiety which could be destroyed. This dread springs from the feelings of nothingness and absurdity of human existence, and the only way how to defeat it is to put an end to this existence. My life has no reason, it is not define by any essences, it is empty and it is absurd from my birth till my death, where both events are equally absurd. Thrown in, torn out, negligible moment of existence in between, and immense darkness of eternity all around. My life is nothing, and having repulsed all the systems and structures which could bind me I stand alone naked on a hill, gazing down to the abyss of unfathomable depth. **Albert Camus**, French existentialist, in his **Myth of Sisyphos**, claims that the suicide is the only real problem of any philosophy, and means exactly the theme which is brought into the mind of a human simultaneously with h/his feelings of anxiety, with the discovery that the difference between being alive and being

dead, or, better said, being and not-being, is totally absurd. Is there any reason why to continue in this, how do you call it?, existence? Why not to end it right here, right now? Why not? Why yes? Being there any meaning, any essence behind existence, being there something rather than nothing behind it, would these questions be of any point then? Maybe not, but there would be answers to them at least, while in my, existentialist, case, there is no one and nothing to answer them. Taking this result now into a context of the trilogy, the existentialist is no longer looking for answers, he is looking for a way, and probably a bit of courage, to end his pitiful(?) lasting. Whether he did succeed, whether it is even possible to succeed, will also be the conundrum of my work.

Hand in hand with this theme goes the question of choice. Kierkegaard in his **Either-Or** states that there are specific *stages* in one's life and each individual is to choose which one to accept. Man, a being without essence, modifies himself according to what kind of stage he enters, and in this way he makes his nature. Kierkegaard speaks about an *aesthetic* stage, an *ethic* one, and points to a *religious* stage. From this perspective he defines three types of a man, which will come in use further in my work.

For Sartre making choices is a lifelong process, we make choices in every moment and there is no way of being without them. Even following any system of rules, given by a religion or philosophy or anything, is a choice to follow them. Even the decision not to choose is a choice.

Although the existentialists have never raised a set of rules according to which one can subordinate own behaviour, they have defined some principles under which a man can act and take responsibility for own deeds and commitments. For Kierkegaard such principle is honesty towards own self and accepting the burden of responsibility for choices made and deeds done.

An anxious man, which rejects all the institutions, theories, philosophies, sciences, religions because of their inability to interpret h/his world is resigned to refuse also knowledge, for being one of such,

morality which individual understanding could never fit with that one of society which s/he must decline as well. Solitary as a lost and forsaken planet in a pitch-black universe s/he experiences the feeling of alienation, even in a crowd of people. For nobody can ever penetrate into my consciousness, nobody can ever understand my life, my being. I am, we all are, alienated in time, for *we are shut out of history. We no longer have a sense of having roots in a meaningful past nor do we see ourselves as moving toward a meaningful future. As a result, we do not belong to the past, to the present, or to the future*⁴. But hostility in human relationships is based not only upon this philosophical background, it has its roots in the structure of developing society, where, thanks to, e.g. a vast omnipresent bureaucracy of omnipotent corporations, people feel that they are bordered from each other even by a simple sheet of paper, and the communication is somehow depersonalised. This is further mirrored also in the family which peculiar members are hostile to each other, even when they do realise it. The needs of an individual can never go in accordance with those ones of society, that is the “alienated” problem of an existentialist.

It remains to illuminate this obscure word society. People, others, they, these will be the synonyms which will represent the common, the usual. In Kierkegaard’s point of view society will be those who are neither on an aesthetic, not ethic, nor religious platform of life. Society are people which live in crowd, which try not to protrude from it. To make this statement is of great importance while talking about the “I”. It is a question of fundament not to make balls of it, of society which is nothing, and of the “I” which is everything. However, it mustn’t be understood this “I” has taken any of those Kierkegaardian platforms. To choose a stage one must at first settle h/is relation to God. God is eternal, that’s the biblical axiom which accepts also Kierkegaard, it is then upon each individual to arrange one’s own distance from God. (The distance between human and divine “I”.) Everybody can guess how far from God each stage can be found. Protagonists of Beckett’s trilogy are all

so remote that they can afford themselves doubts about God's existence, although they could be in such god-forsaken place, that in this absurd circle of life they wouldn't be surprised to find themselves one day sitting and chatting behind God's back. What a huge uncertainty!

Uncertainty or anguish is a malignant tumour of despair. This sickness spreads with the speed of a thought and once there is a bacteria of it the whole body is destroyed. Whole world is destroyed, and there is no vaccine against it. God, or someone, must have provided us with some, surely, but what if nobody does remember what was it what to do?

After the introduction of the main terms of existentialist philosophy, it is now apparent that there was (and still is) a feeling at the beginning. At first it is astonishment. What am I?, Who am I?, Where am I?, What to do with it? and With what? are the basic questions to which each "desperate exister" seeks answers. Exister of **Molloy**, **Malone Dies** and **The Unnamable**, either sentenced to or blessed by such discourse, attacks the relevance of knowledge, intelligibility of language, mysticism of love, satisfaction of truth and uniqueness and unity of human being. This is what the trilogy is all about and this is what my work will be trying to focus on.

Now few things the reader should have in mind while reading my text:

- 1) After what has been said about the existentialism above, it is obvious that I am not going to systemise or to make up a kind of system from Beckett's trilogy. However it might look, thanks to my pictures and schemes, I will try only to illuminate, to enlighten this Beckett's really philosophical text by the help of Kierkegaard's philosophy and Bible.
- 2) There appear many protagonists in the trilogy, and those, which any of the stories is about – Molloy, Moran, Mahood, Sapo, Macmann, Mahood and Worm, I will consider being the one and the same man in the different stages of his despair.

- 3) I will use the term the exister, taken from **The Unnamable**, whenever I will have in mind all and any of the speakers – Molloy, Moran, Malone, Mahood, etc. In a similar way I will use the terms “the narrator”, “the speaker”.
- 4) Since the existentialist philosophy is as complex as a human being, not talking about Beckett’s text, it may happen that I will repeat my statements and explanations on several places in my work. The themes I have specified overlap each other and are closely connected.

¹Eiermann, K. *Existentialism Defined*. Quoted on 4.12.2000. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://members.aol.com/CazadoraKE/Private/Philo/Existentialism/zKdaextheme23.html>>

²Eiermann, K. *Existentialism Defined*. Quoted on 4.12.2000. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://members.aol.com/CazadoraKE/Private/Philo/Existentialism/zKdaexthemetwo.html>>

³Eiermann, K. *Existentialism Defined*. Quoted on 4.12.2000. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://members.aol.com/CazadoraKE/Private/Philo/Existentialism/zKdaexthemetwo.html>>

⁴Eiermann, K. *Existentialism Defined*. Quoted on 4.12.2000. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://members.aol.com/CazadoraKE/Private/Philo/Existentialism/zKdaexthemesix.html>>

2. The Waking

Sama smrt je v křesťanské terminologii výrazem největší duchovní bídy, ale uzdravení zase spočívá v umírání, odumírání.¹

2.1. Forms of despair

Placing such a motto at the beginning of a work dealing with “the exister” of Samuel Beckett’s trilogy, for whom death is the goal and dying is whole life, could look rather sarcastic. Beckett is sarcastic, that can only be expected, but the funny thing about this Kierkegaard’s sentence is its discourse in terms of the trilogy. One by one almost every word is being attacked, discussed from various angles, then, from hunter into hunted and vice versa, previous statements assaulted with doubts and negations. I do not mean to declare these or other Kierkegaard’s words, which will be mentioned further below, being a kind of pretext, in any sense, for Beckett’s trilogy, my intention is rather to draw, to explain a (con)junction of these two writers and their work. On the other hand, reading **Sickness Unto Death** excludes the possibility one could not be overcome by the feeling that Beckett had only redone and retold Kierkegaard’s thoughts. Finally, both works have in concern one subject – despair and its embodiment in a human form.

Now I have opened the theme, despair, which is omnipresent probably in every Beckett’s text, what changes are its variants only. The trilogy deals with all three of them. These are defined in **Sickness Unto Death**, and their presence and modification I will trace throughout the novels. Kierkegaard speaks of despair:

- 1) when one does not realise h/is own I - unrealised despair
- 2) when one does not want to be one self
- 3) when one desperately does want to be one self

The first reading can give us an impression, that each part of the trilogy deals with one of the variants, but this may be judged only

from a quick glance at the surface of the text. As I will point out further on, in terms of Kierkegaardian existentialism Beckett goes beyond it somehow, or does not sink into such depths, it depends upon a point of perspective; there you have Kierkegaardian dialectics. If Kierkegaard represents existentialism of Christian nature and his despair is thus “softened”, Beckett’s despair surely lacks such or similar “softener”. For Kierkegaard despair is the voice of God, who in this way speaks to the man, despair in Beckett’s text is nothing but a prattle, random turmoil which never ceases, it is short of such certainty God grants Kierkegaard. If there ever was a distinction between an atheistic and a religious existentialism, Beckett *crosses the border, closes the gap* and his despair is greater, more pathologic, for the exister cannot be sure whom that flow of words (despair) belongs to, whether it is God or devil, or someone (something) completely different, even own self. However, there are matters which remain unchanged in the light of this contrast. The feeling of despair is still here, and so are its three modifications which, different in whatever way, stand for one and the same. One sole despair stands behind every human deed, and this despair is everlasting.

Jakmile však něco zoufalost vyvolá, ukáže se, že už
vlastně byl zoufalý po celý předcházející život.²

It means, that a human could have led a life full of joy and happiness, s/he might have never felt any lack of anything, and yet, in a moment, s/he can find out that s/he has been desperate all h/is life. And even though h/is “waking” happens at the death’s door, and s/he would argue by h/is deeds and successes, however great, s/he would never succeed in persuading h/himself that h/is existence was not/is not/will not be drowning in despair. Anyhow, it is not the case of persuasion. Despair has nothing to do with intellect and reasoning. Firstly, it is a feeling, the worst of all, and secondly, the only medicine against this sickness is to believe in God. Neither feeling, nor belief is based upon a rational reflection, despair therefore cannot be cheated, however, one can try at least.

Beckett does not heal the wounds. The exister of his novels suffers eternally. He tries to deceive his despair by telling himself stories, by inventing, but that almighty feeling finds him (his mind) everywhere. Yes, in Beckett's texts it is despair WHO is omnipresent and omnipotent, unlike Kierkegaard's, where it is Christian God, obviously.

2.2. How it works

Molloy is the first novel of the trilogy, which deals with the first form of despair. Divided into two parts shows the eternity of despair. That is to say, Molloy, the narrative voice from the first part, is the unrealised despair of Moran, the narrator of the second part. One can even say that the pages Molloy writes and each Sunday are taken away by a man, are those we can read as a second part of the novel. The man who every Sunday comes for the pages is always the same one, as is Gaber the agent from the second part, who also comes only on Sundays. And definitely the first part is a voice; where are then pages Molloy is writing all the time? At first we are listening to Molloy's voice (1. part), then we are reading his text (2. part). This text is Moran's seeking for Molloy or, in other words, Molloy's seeking for the origin of his despair, tracing his process of growing identity. Molloy is paid for his work, *so many pages, so much money*³, Moran is also, he is paid to seek for Molloy. They both seek, the attitudes differ. While Molloy's state of mind is of the quality as described in his encounter with a social worker, which can be applied to his thinking towards life – *to him who has nothing it is forbidden not to relish filth*⁴– Moran is relishing his *last moments of peace and happiness*⁵. These moments are smashed by the intrusion of Gaber into Moran's peaceful garden. Gaber, whose name evokes many connotations, as all the names in trilogy do, is here to be taken for an index of Moran's process of changing. He appears only twice in the story, at the beginning of Moran's journey, and at the end of the un/successful quest to announce him to set out for a way home.

Gaber is God's agent in a sense, what more he is one of the crowd of His agents as we definitely find out in the beginning of the third novel⁶. Gaber, as Biblical archangel Gabriel announcing the birth of Christ to Mary, by laying the task to seek out Molloy on Moran's shoulders, announces to Moran the birth of identity, the advent of his "I". Besides, Gaber on the one hand gives (gaben, in German) Moran the opportunity to get closer to his (Moran's) own self, and thus realise despair seated in his life, Moran's search is in this sense successful, on the other hand, Gaber grabs and buries into grave (Grabe, in German) Moran's previous life. Ironically, Moran's new way of existence, at the end, is not too distant from grave-like feelings. That's the double-bladed knife of realising own self – the closer one gets, the more desperate one becomes – *čím více vědomí, tím intenzivnější zoufalství*⁷. This mood is supported also by the form of this second part. As Moran approaches Molloy, either geographically or mentally, firstly paragraphed and organised text gradually turns into a free flow of speech, reminding Molloy's part.

2.3. The myth

The second coming of Gaber is the most genuine climax of the story, of the searching, of the narrating. There is being unleashed an insane pandemonium of Moran's and Gaber's replicas in this paragraph, which culminates almost into a brawl between these two. Moran desires to know what has Youdi told to Gaber, he hopes he will figure out from it something about Youdi and thus anything about Moran. But then, when finally he hears it from Gaber:

He said to me, said Gaber, Gaber, he said--. Louder! I cried. He said to me, said Gaber, Gaber, he said, life is a thing of beauty, Gaber, and a joy for ever. He brought his face nearer mine. A joy for ever, he said, a thing of beauty, Moran, and a joy for ever.⁸

he is disappointed and does not seem to understand. *A thing of beauty is a joy for ever*⁹ – is the first line of John Keats's poem

Endymion and its appearance in the novel and placement in Moran's part is not accidental. From many and various links between these two texts the one is most obvious and probably the most important, again it is the process of searching. Endymion, shepherd, prince and poet, is in his dream visited by moon goddess Cynthia and fascinated by her beauty. He wakes up alone decided to seek her out, so he sets out for a long journey through forests and under sea, and so on as the myth follows. The point is that this verse shifts the novel further into the layer of myth. The parallel is supported right in the end of the paragraph I am dealing with, where Moran (like waking from a sleep) opens his eyes and finds himself alone in the grass. And if Endymion is spellbound by the beauty of Cynthia, Moran is spellbound by the identity of Youdi, it means totally destroyed by the discovery that for someone could life be such an adorable thing, because only for those realising own identity can life be a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. From this place on really starts Moran's quest for own identity, here is the beginning of the exister's myth.

2.4. The names

Moran is changed, but not enough to become Molloy, there is more running before him. Another name-play, and there will be more of them as I will advance, for there is a kind of importance in names. However, "running" in Moran's case is to be understood only ironically. Not only he is living in Turdy which, considering its inhabitants – Moran jr., Martha, Father Ambrose, etc., is rather to be called "Tardy", but it is surely very difficult to run with the lame legs. The name Turdy also "smells" of turd, and terms like shit, filth and alike are often used in the novel to express exister's disgust from life or any life providing movements.

Most of the names of the characters which appear in the speech of the exister are changed once, twice during the narration and this phenomenon is always closely linked with the change in their behavior, nature, or speaker's way of perception, so is the frail

conception of identity displayed. Finally, identity is the focus of the trilogy – unrealised, unwanted, desired.

The modifications of the names I am clarifying on one example in the subchapter **3.2. ABC**, nevertheless, few examples can only serve. The change of the woman, whose dog is accidentally killed by Molloy, from Sophie to Lousse, for instance. It happens when Molloy decides, or is persuaded, to join and visit her in her house. They have met and now they both are change. Molloy can still address himself Molloy, so far (until he becomes Malone), but the woman (Sophie) is completely different person (Lousse) for him. Sophie is a woman, whose dog he has killed, Lousse is a woman, in whose house he spent some days (weeks? months?). Similar transformation happens in **Malone Dies** when Sapo changes into Macmann; this episode is further explained in the subchapter **5.2. The scheme**.

More obscure is the alternation of the names of the woman in the third part of the trilogy. In one of the stories the exister tells himself in **The Unnamable**, he finds himself (his trunk is all what is left of him) being *stuck like a sheaf of flowers in a deep jar*¹⁰, and this woman comes when it snows to cover him with a kind of tarpaulin. He names her Marguerite at first, after while her name changes into Madeleine, and finally, it is the last time he is mentioning her, she is again Marguerite. Only three times he recalls her name, in the second case the name is changed. Again the circumstances of this metamorphosis are of the great importance. Let us now look at the sentence where it happens:

I seem to exist for none but Madeleine.¹¹

He distorts her name in the very crucial moment, when he doubts his existence, and the existence of the only human who could prove the one of his, is after that incident with her name disputable.

Since the names in the trilogy are the carriers of identity, one cannot be surprised that in still changing point of view upon the identity (now unrealised, then unwanted, and finally wanted after all), the names are being modified.

2.5. The knowledge

The problem of despair is the pensum, the lesson, the labour, the demand, using the words from the text, the problem is in the inability to fathom what to do with life, what to do while living. Best it will be explained by one of the last Moran's sentences:

If there is one question I dread, to which I have never been able to invent a satisfactory reply, it is the question what am I doing.¹²

What am I doing? Question which varies, but stays the same, through all the trilogy. For Moran it is one of the questions which in the end arise in his head, Molloy is already used to it, Malone even makes up an answer to it for himself, and the last, the one without name, is for this self-makeup cursed for eternity. Life in this sense turns to a desperate search for a "job", even such as that one of Sisyphus. As an example of this, Molloy's affair with sucking-stones can serve, sorting of lentils in Malone's part, or the reflections from the third novel about pouring water from one vessel to another all life long. This is but a desperate desire to grasp at least *the remnants of a pensum one day got by heart and long forgotten*¹³, the pain comes when one gets to know that s/he is not capable of it. Where is the redemption then?

For to know nothing is nothing, not to want to know anything likewise, but to be beyond knowing anything, to know you are beyond knowing anything, that is when peace enters in, to the soul of the incurious seeker.¹⁴

These Molloy's words clearly show the relation of the exister towards knowledge, towards understanding, intelligence, towards brain as such. For if brain has failed in its basic function – which from human point of view is to elucidate, to illuminate darkness of human existence – and if one knows, what irony here!, that h/is brain will never succeed in fulfilling these expectations, why then to further widen this martyrdom of learning? Even Bible is full of examples of the uselessness of any lore; hadn't all the problems of humankind

started under the branches of the tree of knowledge? Wasn't it Jesus himself who said that *blahoslavení chudobní v duchu, lebo ich je kráľovstvo nebeské*¹⁵? Obviously the main alazon of Beckett's novels is human brain. What an irony the reader can feel from Moran's pride that his son won the first prize for history and geography¹⁶. These subjects deal with time and space, phenomena in which the exister tries to find his place, phenomena which together with the meaning of existence are somehow beyond his intellect. Molloy consciously mocks his own education:

Yes, I once took an interest in astronomy, I don't deny it. Then it was geology that killed a few years for me. The next pain in the balls was anthropology and the other disciplines, such as psychiatry, that are connected with it, disconnected, then connected again, according to the latest discoveries.¹⁷

And brain will suffer more, for it is brain which is responsible for all this trouble.

2.6. The body

Returning now back to the motto, let me consider its second part where it says that the recovering is to be found in dying, in passing away. Moran stiffens as he advances in his way towards realising own existence. It all begins, shortly after the first arrival of Gaber, in the bathroom with a knee injury and this spreads further into the whole body. Thus various disfigurements, malfunctions and diseases escort Moran into completely different human being. This process runs behind the scene of the trilogy so to say, and as such it creates a strong link connecting the single novels of the trilogy. And nothing can stop this paralysis, not even death. Yes, Malone even dies and though the process runs on.

There is also the inner transformation, of course, the question is which one, the inner or the outer one, is the leading and which is merely the victim of the major one. Here it is obvious that the process

of recovering runs within, Moran awakes from his previous unrealised subsistence, diving still deeper into eternal despair he loses connection with the temporal being, and so he slowly passes away. And so does Molloy. His mayhem is a symbol of a life which whole is nothing but a permanent dying. On the contrary, this rupture of mind and body is only apparent, for one's own shell is still the only channel, however unreliable, for a mind to experience the world. And a subject for conversation.

2.7. The conversation

Conversation. However ill it might seem, the only conversation in Beckett's trilogy is that one of the exister with the reader, or, better said, between the writing narrator and the reading listener. The problem might appear when it comes to the question who is this narrator. The reader is obvious, let me say so, on the other hand what does the narrator know about h/im to whom he speaks? Here it looks to be fifty-fifty as for the information about the other side. And yet the narrator knows one thing about the reader – the narrator knows, at least guesses, what he has already told, what has the reader already caught from his flow of speech. Such strange discussion penetrates all the trilogy, however, we can feel its lack in Moran's part – another evidence, that this part is written by Molloy – by-the-by, it changes nothing in this narrator's awareness of the reader. The exister steps even further when introducing protagonists from previous Beckett's texts, which makes from Beckett's work one huge complex, a chain of vice-existers. From a number of examples I can choose one to illustrate this; it is one of the questions from the ending of Moran's part:

10. Would we all meet again in heaven one day, I, my mother, my son, his mother, Youdi, Gaber, Molloy, his mother, Yerk, Murphy, Watt, Camier and the rest?¹⁸

Murphy, Watt, Mercier and Camier are Beckett's stories written before and characters from them, Murphy, Watt and the *pseudocouple Mercier-Camier*¹⁹, appear in the trilogy in various contexts. They also show the metafictional layer of the text. Could there be more clear demonstration of everlasting and all-pervasive despair, then such a confession of an author, that all his work is marked by this emotion?

From another point of view in the desperate loneliness of a man the word conversation sounds rather rude, like an abuse. Kierkegaard's proportion between consciousness and despair can be expanded for solitude. The more conscious one is, the more alienated one feels, and solitude in the estranged world becomes a kingdom of terra firma for h/im. And the intruders are punished, even killed.

¹ Kierkegaard, S. 1993. *Bázeň a chvění. Nemoc k smrti*. Praha. Svoboda – Libertas. page 120

² Ibid. page 133

³ Beckett, S. *Three novels – Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. New York. Grove Press. page 7

⁴ Ibid. page 7

⁵ Ibid. page 93

⁶ Ibid. page 298.

⁷ Kierkegaard, S. 1993. *Bázeň a chvění. Nemoc k smrti*. Praha. Svoboda – Libertas. page 148

⁸ Beckett, S. *Three novels – Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. New York. Grove Press. page 164

⁹ Keats, J. *Selected letter and poems*. 1971. London. Chatto & Windus Ltd. page 50

¹⁰ Beckett, S. *Three novels – Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. New York. Grove Press. p. 327

¹¹ Ibid. page 341

¹² Ibid. page 173

¹³ Ibid. page 32

¹⁴ Ibid. page 64

¹⁵ Mt 5, 3

¹⁶ Beckett, S. *Three novels – Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. New York. Grove Press. p. 130

¹⁷ Ibid. page 39

¹⁸ Ibid. page 167

¹⁹ Ibid. page 297

3. Consciousness and Identity

3.1. Touch of the infinity

The identity, or the soul, here it is one and the same, is like a huge swarm of bees. This parallel is based upon fantastic complexity of these two phenomena, which both consist of infinite number of components. The “swarm of identity” is omnipresent in all three novels, the image of a hive haunts the reader as s/he advances, but from one novel to another the perspective is slowly being changed. One can say “the camera” is going deeper into details approaching the hive, penetrating the swarm. Molloy already dwells in a kind of a honeycomb, where he is nourished by anonymous worker bees, but really the first contact with this allegory is evident from Moran’s reflections about bee-keeping and his studying of bees’ dances and behaviour. For Moran the bees are an object to his study as it is likewise with his unrealised identity. The paragraph, dealing with Moran’s observations of bees’ dance, at the end of the first novel can be understood as a kind of pretext to Molloy’s beholding of two men, A and C, at the beginning, movements behind the window which Malone observes, or to the description of the cyclic movements in the third novel. How horrific then sounds this Moran’s naive and innocent sentence about his relationship to the bees:

And I said, with rapture, Here is something I can study all
my life, and never understand.¹

A prophecy worth a line in Bible! The exister is sentenced, infected by the sickness, and having no chance to recover, he is infected unto death.

Each protagonist, every “M”, is a part of the soul, of the identity which is in the centre of the trilogy, but never presented as a complex at once. The identity cannot be presented in whole for it cannot be understood at all, and if it cannot be understood at all, then it cannot exist in fact. Moran is not aware of his own identity – therefore, in essence, it is not existing; Malone is searching for some identity, he

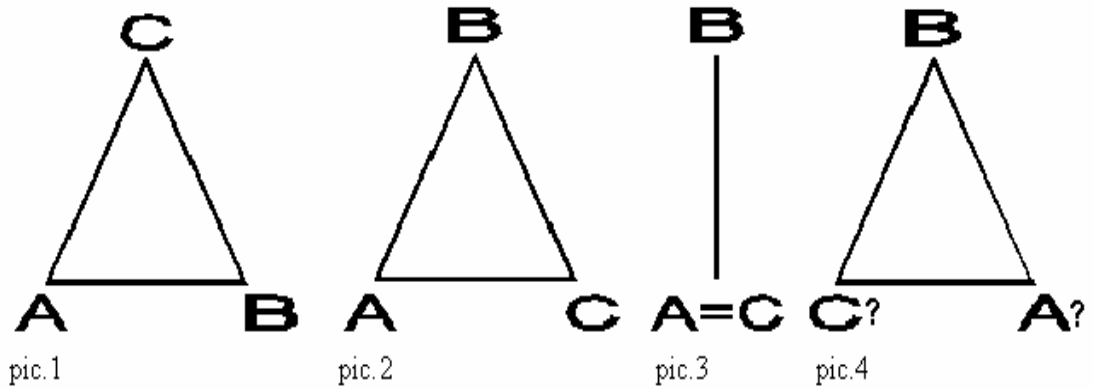
knows that he should have one - it is undiscovered, it is not existing; the unnamable capitulates in this quest for the/any identity, he is lost among billion parts of “something” which as an entire phenomenon has vanished – it is not existing. On the mythical layer in the trilogy, this incident is represented by that allegory about the swarm of bees. Moran is only a bee-keeper – he does not realise that his soul is like a swarm of bees; Malone is convinced that he is only one of the bees in the swarm, but he behaves like a queen bee flying from swarm to swarm, looking for a free one; and the last one does not know anymore which one of the bees in that swarm he either is or used to be. He tries to be himself alone, he wants to be the whole swarm, not just one of its drones. As an expression of this desire, one episode from **The Unnamable** can be understood. It is the narration about his dwelling on an island. Limbless he is stuck in *a jar, its neck flush with his mouth*². With his mouth he catches flies. This strange spectacle can bring to us the image of a hive with an opening as an entrance for the bees. The bee-hives used to be, and I am sure they still are, made in the shape of a head, human mostly, but other beasts were included also. And that he catches flies? Why not? It is a symbol. He would catch any insects just to have something inside, such is the desperate gluttony of his desire to have AN identity.

3.2. A B C

A and C in Molloy’s case are two men going towards each other on a forlorn road, C on his way out of the town, A returning. The land undulates, and therefore the men alternately ascend and descend the waves of the road. From Molloy’s point of view it might look like two bees, A flying from a meadow and C leaving the hive, dancing and humming on various levels in order to exchange some information. Because that is exactly what fascinates Moran in bees’ behaviour – the way they communicate, their air-dance accompanied by the hum of their wings, the fact that there is a kind of communication among bees. From “a reader’s observation point” this situation can look like

a triangle. We have two vertices, A and C, and we also have the third one, the Molloy's, B. Besides the fact that Molloy is still a kind of *Beekeeper*, a kind of *Beholder*, the main point is that he is in the middle, between A and C. Because when naming any triangle we usually, if not always, employ the letters A, B, C, in that order, when naming any line we use the letters A, B. Therefore if Molloy draws a line between A and C, it is apparent that there must be the third vertex somewhere. It is Molloy who considers himself to be that missing point. Its name is not mentioned in that passage, it is not visible, for *it was perched higher than the road's highest point and flattened what is more against a rock*³, this B is being intentionally neglected, the paralipsis gives clue to the exister's life standpoint – always “somewhere beside”, getting more and more distant from life itself. The scene performs on the level of A and C, but the real representation, or re-representation, or even pre-representation of it takes place on the higher level. In the head of the beholder.

Such three-constellation, though modified, can be read in next two novels, too. In order to explain its seriousness in terms of the conscience and the identity, the help of visualisation can come into use. There is shown a typical triangle ABC, as we are used to it, in the first picture of my chart. Leaving the mathematics and geometry behind, the visual observation gives us the impression that the main vertex in this configuration is C, and we can also consider the vertex B to be somehow secondary (tertiary?) important. On the other hand, without B there would be no relation between A and C, because there would be no “point” in it, there would be no one to observe it, neither A nor C would exist. This “B” is maybe the crucial point of the trilogy, the main vertex of the exister's life. For if he finds himself to be always B in relation to other A's and C's, being one of the same A's and C's he lacks any relation to any B. You do not exist unless someone beholds you.



It is evident, that for those who believe in God, right He is the very Beholder. The life in the belief under the Watcher's eye has the meaning. As I will point out further on (see the subchapter **3.5. Unleashing despair**), the exister cannot feel the presence of God, because everything around him drowns in despair. On the one hand, he even does not want to feel God, on the other, he desperately desires to know whether he either exists or not. The desperate need to be observed, to be heard and listened to and to be read penetrates whole the trilogy in the form of perennial addressing the reader. With the rising tension within the exister, it also rises the vociferous explicitness of his utterance, though the number of voices speaking increases, too. Still more and more "readable" is his urgent need.

Equate me, without pity or scruple, with him who exists, somehow, no matter how, no finicking, with him whose story this story had the brief ambition to be. Better, ascribe to me a body. Better still, arrogate to me a mind. Speak of a world of my own, sometimes referred to as the inner, without choking. Doubt no more. Seek no more.⁴

The quotation is from the ending of the trilogy, of course, not from the ending of the exister's suffering. His doubts do not end on the last page of the novel, for he cannot find an answer to the basic question of his existence. Finally, he would agree to be just an invention, a phantasmagoria, of someone else, for that is a kind of existence also. Because who cares if there are two men on a road in reality

somewhere. The reality is only one – that one of “mine” – and the fancy and the invention are its inseparable complements.

Let me now return to the triangles. Pictures 2, 3 and 4 portray the Molloy’s observations of the two men. At first he sees them approaching each other (pic.2) and there is almost no description of their appearance (*one small and one tall*⁵). Greater attention is paid by Molloy to the cows grazing in the fields around. The situation changes as the two men meet (pic.3), because such an encounter automatically means a collision, a confrontation of two completely different worlds. That is the fact which still surprises Molloy – how two (and more) distinct beings, bodies, minds can communicate with each other, how they can understand each other, how they are able to express themselves. The problem with the identities appears in the moment they part and go on each his way. Molloy now vehemently describes them, he guesses the courses of their steps, guesses their feelings, and suddenly he does not know exactly which one is A and which one is B. The identities blur as they will do yet many times in the trilogy. They have been changed by their mutual communication, and for Molloy they are now totally different. Anyway, they three form a triangle again (pic.4), the vertices has lost their signs. The designation has lost its sense, never mind which vertex is A and which is C.

A similar situation is described in the beginning of the third novel. The confrontation of the two minds is here taken into the extreme, when the two men meet, they disappear.

Two shapes then, oblong like man, entered into collision
before me. They fell and I saw them no more.⁶

The language is less expressive, or better said more mystical, but we can see the parallel with the situation from the first book. It is probably the same situation, now viewed from a position of a man in the later, or even the latest, state of despair. For him who is in a permanent struggle within, and everything around him is grey and meaningless, only the discovery of other conflicts out there can be of any interest, and maybe of some help.

3.3. It's the fault of the pronouns

The whole problem of the identity is the identity. It is the problem of the eternal and infinite phenomenon being caught in a mortal and finite matter. The greatest manifestation of such paradox is Christ's embodiment in a man. This "divine" in the exister's personality is his soul, his identity in a fact, and as such, the identity is too monstrously complex to be understood by a mortal. A man changes, or is changed, s/he discovers new and forgets the old dimensions of h/is soul, s/he modifies h/is character, re-styles behaviour, never is the same in h/is 80's as forty years ago. Wasn't the past just a dream? Who will I be in the future? Who I am now? To whom belong these voices in my head? Whose are the thoughts running through my brain? These are the questions which worry the exister, I can say, eternally, and which drive him to the edge of the sanity by their inexorability. *I. Who might that be?*²⁷ is the very question which in the shadows of Molloy, Moran, Malone, Macmann, Mahood, Worm, etc. remains unanswered. What was, what shall be divine, has suddenly turned into a diabolic uncertainty. His anxiety is only stressed by the poignant inability to express himself, because the facilities of language, however flexible, cannot satisfy the needs of the desperate speaker. Where there is no identity, could there be a grammatical person?

...someone says you, it's the fault of the pronouns, there is no name for me, no pronoun for me, all the trouble comes from that, that, it's a kind of pronoun too, it isn't that either, I'm not that either...⁸

Among a thousand of voices the exister cannot identify that one of his own. Now is Malone speaking, then it is Mahood, suddenly Worm, and somewhere in between "I" for a while. Doubtless they all are some parts of one identity, shreds of the exister's soul, but lest the exister cannot differentiate between these voices, and they are of no credibility for him, such torn identity reflects no past, experiences no

present, and offers no future. Such torn identity has become infinite. According to Kierkegaard, *já je syntéza, v níž konečno omezuje a nekonečno rozšiřuje*⁹. The sentiment, the knowledge and the will can become unlimited, or fantastic, if the infinity in the “I” is loose untied. Probably the most fantastic is the exister’s sentiment.

Tak jako revmatik neovládá tělesnou citlivost, které se zmocnil vítr a počasí, takže na sobě zaznamenává změny povětrnosti atd., Tak je tomu i s člověkem, jehož cit se stal fantastickým; stává se jaksí nekonečným, ale ne že by se stále více stával sám sebou, naopak sám sebe stále více ztrácí.¹⁰

To be or not to be here’s the demand! The exister realises this growing distance from his “I”, but he is not able to stop this lunatic process. Finally the distance is so great that he no longer knows whether he is, was or will be. He somehow feels that he neither is, nor is not, and this uncertainty feeds his despair. As the remoteness grows, the reader can observe a slight shift in a nature of the questions the exister asks. From primal Moran’s interrogations of a kind like - Who am I ? - to the definite problem of the unnamable - Am I ? - and its variations in tenses - Was I ? - and - Will I be? Without having an answer to this basic question the exister cannot solve any other problem concerning his (non)existence. Even “NO” would serve, maybe more than “YES”, for there would be no bothering about other questions. Despair feeds also upon his scepticism about finding a satisfactory reply, anyhow, he tries. Molloy, to begin with, endeavours after answers into the unknown land of his soul to find himself in the middle of nowhere, when succeeds in pulling down the dogmas and the principles on his quest. The need to solve the problem of own persisting slowly emerges in Malone’s thoughts:

But what matter whether I was born or not, have lived or not, am dead or merely dying, I shall go on doing as I have always done, not knowing what it is I do, nor who I am, nor where I am, nor if I am.¹¹

From a number of replies to that basic question which the exister either utters or thinks I have chosen one which probably best explains the relation of the exister's soul to the outer world:

...perhaps that's what I am, the thing that divides the world in two, on the one side the outside, on the other side the inside, that can be as thin as foil, I'm neither one side nor the other, I'm in the middle, I'm the partition...¹²

Perhaps that's what I *is*, the unmaterial border between two worlds, two dimensions, *on the one hand the mind, on the other the world*¹³. The exister has the feeling that his identity is ungraspable, that his desperate wish to be his own will never be fulfilled.

3.4. God, Kierkegaard and Beckett

According to Kierkegaard, consciousness is something on the edge between the temporal and the eternal, it emerges where the final touches the infinity, when the individuality melts into divinity. At such moment, the mortal becomes aware of h/is own identity, at the same moment s/he is astonished by its vast multifarious complexity, and like a bottle falling from the hands of an old drunkard, this identity suddenly smashes into uncountable pieces. To form the "I" again, these fragments must be glued together somehow, otherwise the human persists in despair. H/is despair is now realised, however, s/he apprehends that s/he was desperate all h/is previous life. The one and the only way how to escape from the claws of despair is to believe, to believe in God. Christian belief is that cement which is able to fix the ego and to arm it against the feelings of anxiety and despair. But to set one's life such an azimuth is almost impossible task.

The whole trilogy can be described by the previous paragraph, the text can be understood as a delineation of just that instant in the life of a man. But, lest despair is eternal, it does not matter whether we talk about a second or an epoch, still the crucial point is the touch of the infinity. This juncture is in the first novel represented by

the second coming of Gaber, especially in the end of that paragraph when Gaber has already left:

I was alone. My hands were full of grass and earth I had torn up unwittingly, was still tearing up. I was literally uprooting. I desisted, yes the second I realized what I had done, what I was doing, such a nasty thing, I desisted from it, I opened my hands, they were soon empty.¹⁴

Definitely, it is Moran who is uprooted. Torn out from his garden of perfect lawn where nevermore shall he return. He sees that everything he had done before was meaningless, everything he will do in future will be meaningless, his hands are empty.

3.5. Unleashing despair

While watching a film in a TV or a cinema, it is only obvious that, when camera takes a character into detail the watcher's view of the character's surroundings is being narrowed, everything besides the focus disappears beyond the frame of the screen. Such details are mostly taken to underline the importance of that person (or an animal, a building, whatever), when the rest is for that moment of no point. Similar process takes place while reading Beckett's trilogy. As despair in the exister advances, he loses his contact with the outer world, which for him becomes irrelevant. However, the narrator all the time dwells in one place, yet he moves. He sinks deeper into his bottomless despair, into the inferno of everlasting doubts and never answered questions about his own (non)existence. With growing depth the meanings blur and everything blackens. In the first novel a reader can admire almost a vista of the town, the forests, the shores. Malone has in concern mostly one building – House of Saint John of God – and his room especially, which is in that asylum house, according to all signs and indications. In one of the kind at least, but I daresay, and methinks it is obvious, that the teller of the whole trilogy is bound to one and the same bed by his immobility, in one and the same room with one window and the door, which leads into

the hall of the same building into which Macmann was *being plunged*¹⁵. Molloy, Malone, Macmann, and the one speaking in the state of mind where there is no importance in names any longer, they all, being one man in different phases of his “sickness”, speak and write in the same tenement. *I am in my mother’s room*¹⁶, is the first thing Molloy tells the reader, and it seems he dwells there eternally. By-the-by, we can still find him there in the end of the trilogy, however, it no longer matters where he is. He is completely lost in a hell where there is nothing left for him only *nameless images* and *imageless names*¹⁷, hell where there is only “I”, unfathomable, unrecognisable “I”. A maximised shot of a camera, the eternal close-up.

...wherever I go I find me, leave me, go towards me, come
from me, nothing ever but me, a particle of me, retrieved,
lost, gone astray,...¹⁸

Still more explanatory is his sentence from which the morbidity of despair is evident:

Where I am there is no one but me, who am not.¹⁹

Emptiness, greyness, flatness. These words denote the world of the unnamable. These words express the feelings of the one who is being asphyxiated by his diabolic despair. The man suffocates but it is the world that dies. And this progressive paralysis goes further, spreads faster, it kills everything even the body because of its irrelevance, because everything that matters is in the head, and *all the things that stick out have fallen*²⁰. However, the brain here is only a gateway to one’s inner self, to the inmost “I”, and once the man had passed through it, the abilities of his brain are for him negligible, and the hemispheres begin “to protrude”. What remains is just *a big talking ball, talking about things that do not exist*²¹ with one hole for the eye, and another one for the mouth.

Ale každý vnějšek je tu úplně lhostejný, zde se podtrhuje uzavřenost, či jak bychom ji také mohli nazvat – uvězněná niternost.²²

Empty, flat and grey is the brain and such are the qualities of the dimension where the desperate “I” is hidden, with such descriptions the third novel begins. And despair deepens. In the end of the novel the exister’s soul can be found in an obscure dungeon full of caves and holes, in one of the holes of some strange honeycomb. The darkness thickens, the opening above diminishes, the frequency of the word “I” towards the end rises. But the end never comes, it is an unending spiral winding into nowhere. The more desperate the exister is, the more conscious he becomes, and the more he realises his own identity, broken, fragmented, shattered, the more desperate he becomes. The exit from this vicious circle is only through the belief. Kierkegaard speaks about a movement towards belief, final movement towards God, but to do this, one must have a bit of courage and a will. That is what the exister lacks, but the deficit in his case is not a simple cowardice. He stands on *the very brink of the precipice*²³ and is to make the final step. But there is no motive, there is no reason, he has not grasped the explanation of such a deed. He cannot comprehend how a man can live for God. He has lost everything but despair, which he has grown attached to, and he does not want to change it anymore.

A kdyby mu nyní Bůh na nebesích a všichni andělé nabízeli, že ho z toho dostanou, nedá si říci – teď už je příliš pozdě. Kdysi by byl dal nevímco za to, aby se té trýzně zbavil, ale tenkrát ho nechali čekat!²⁴

The offered hope opens before him like an abyss into which he has to jump. His resistance is an expression of his despair. He neither wants, nor he knows how to make that last step:

The last step! I who could never manage the first.²⁵

When making a step we usually must have an aim, a destination of our voyage, even if it is a senseless walk after dinner, or jogging before breakfast. But the exister has lost the reason for doing it, he has lost the ground beneath his feet. There is nowhere to go, there is no path to walk. A strange complex has risen out of his despair and now he feels that it is even impossible to progress, to make any

movement, except for that one in a circle. It is a kind of earth complex, because while on a planet wherever you go you walk in a circle, unless you are drilling yourself down into the planet. As I have already pointed out, the sinking is the only movement the exister 'exercises', and thus he loosely descends into mental and physical dungeon. His feet are what he finds useless at first on his fall, therefore, after his brain, his feet are next to get lame. He still finds his hands useful, he writes, must write, but the reader is offered a rich menu of numerous malfunctions in the functions of his external and internal organs. Of them the most afflicted are the sense organs – eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. These, being the mediators between the inner and the outer world, have now in the dark catacombs of mind lost their credibility and are of no use. They slowly rot, because the exister's relation with his surroundings is still less and less based on whatever sensual perception. The brain no longer rules, and it has become just a stage for undirected diabolic performances.

¹ Beckett, S. *Three novels – Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. New York. Grove Press. page 169

² Ibid. page 327

³ Ibid. page 10

⁴ Ibid. page 390

⁵ Ibid. page 9

⁶ Ibid. page 296

⁷ Ibid. page 336

⁸ Ibid. page 404

⁹ Kierkegaard, S. 1993. *Bázeň a chvění. Nemoc k smrti*. Praha. Svoboda – Libertas. page 137

¹⁰ Ibid. page 138

¹¹ Beckett, S. *Three novels – Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. New York. Grove Press. p. 226

¹² Ibid. page 383

¹³ Ibid. page 383

¹⁴ Ibid. page 165

¹⁵ Ibid. page 255

¹⁶ Ibid. page 7

¹⁷ Ibid. page 407

¹⁸ Ibid. page 386

¹⁹ Ibid. page 355

²⁰ Ibid. page 305

²¹ Ibid. page 305

²² Kierkegaard, S. 1993. *Bázeň a chvění. Nemoc k smrti*. Praha. Svoboda – Libertas. page 175

²³ Beckett, S. *Three novels – Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. New York. Grove Press. p. 333

²⁴ Kierkegaard, S. 1993. *Bázeň a chvění. Nemoc k smrti*. Praha. Svoboda – Libertas. page 175

²⁵ Beckett, S. *Three novels – Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. New York. Grove Press. p. 333

4. Of Clubs, Sticks and Crutches

4.1. The old man and the sea of despair

The communication is a phenomenon itself. It forms the basis almost for every human deed, even not to want to express oneself is a kind of communication, too. There are many ways of communication between people, many ways between a man and, let say, animal, or God, and it would be unavailing to make a list of them here, because the exister uses only few. I will deal with the reasons of his inability to express himself in this chapter, and I will also try to explain the background of his striving for a bit of understanding.

The very basic line of the trilogy is that one of an old man which 'lasts' on a bed in a room of some asylum house. He is paralytic and slowly dying, writing his memoirs and reflections with a pencil in an exercise-book. He is being given food by a social worker and the same or other social worker takes away the excrements. The uncertainty about the identity of the social worker is based upon the fact that everything the exister sees of her, or him, *is the gaunt hand and part of the sleeve, not even that, not even that*¹. The transfer of pots is made via the stick, Molloy's and Malone's extension of hands. His sense organs either do not operate as they should, or he cannot trust them, and the stick is therefore his only way of perception and communication. On the other hand, he experiences only the things within the reach of his strange tentacle, and thus he also can keep a certain distance and aloofness from the outer world. Let now Malone himself describe his stick, because it is thanks to him mainly, that the stick gains and loses its importance:

It has a hook at one end. Thanks to it I can control the furthest recesses of my abode. How great is my debt to sticks! So great that I almost forget the blows they had transferred to me.²

And the blows he had dispensed to others with his stick for that is a kind of communication also. There are other synonyms to the stick

used in the novels, such as club, crutches, hatchet, hammer, umbrella, provided they hold the function of communication. I will use the word club, for as Malone says, *it is stained with blood*³ and obviously, it is merely with the club the blows are being dispensed. But why the blows, and whence the blood? I am dealing with the answers in the next subchapters, however, one example cannot spoil anything. It is from the ending of *Malone Dies*, where Lemuel (he will be mentioned further below) deals himself a violent blow. Malone expresses a kind of understanding for such an act.

But the part he struck most readily, with his hammer, was the head, and that is understandable, for it too is a bony part, and sensitive, and difficult to miss, and the seat of all the shit and misery, so you rain blows upon it, with more pleasure than on the leg for example, which never did you any harm, it's only human.⁴

It is only human! As human as despair in a man. The club then, in the context of the whole trilogy, happens to be a symbol of a desperate man, or rather a symbol of despair in man. To underline such an assertion I will take a closer look on several events or situations in the following subchapter.

4.2. Only encounters count

Right in the beginning of the first book we can find the first crucial situation – the encounter on the road – which is being discussed in the subchapter **3.2**. The *stout stick*⁵ is here carried by the man, which is leaving the town. His uncertain walk is akin to that one of Molloy, he is old and seems to be anxious without reason, all the signs of his appearance give us the impression that it is Molloy himself. Thus Molloy observes Molloy, going towards the other man. The other man, the opposite one, walks loosely like Moran in the beginning of his quest, smokes a cigar like Moran does, is followed by a dog as Moran is by his son. The resemblance is obvious. Moran

walks without a stick, he must have set on the journey only a moment before.

In **2.2.** I have claimed that Moran and Molloy are one and the same man in different stages of his despair. The distance between these two stages is metaphorically equal to the length of the stick. Molloy has a stick; it is an expression of a need to be supported, for that is exactly what a desperate man really feels – everything what has kept him living before, he finds lying derelict in one simple moment of epiphany and now all the weight of the heavens rests on his shoulders. No wonder he needs a stick. Moran, on the other hand, walks loosely and takes his *life, universe and everything*, easy so far. Therefore Moran does not need a stick. Located in two different dimensions they do not know each other as they meet. It is an encounter of the past and the future of a man, whose present is enshrouded in the shade of a rock above. Of course, there is still one more dimension, and that is the one of him who confabulates all these encounters and stories. The dimensions and their mutual relationship and influence will be the subject of the next subchapters, but in order to conclude this section I must return to the subchapter **3.2.**

After the decrypting of the identities, we can now apply these to the triangle (pic.2) from the subchapter **3.2.** It brings out a strange result – Molloy observes Molloy meeting Molloy! As I have indicated, the difference between them is made by time. The time shifts are also supported by the code used here – A, being the first in the alphabet, represents Moran, and thus the past of the exister; C as the last of these three letters represents Molloy, the one on the road, and thus the future; and the B in the middle, Molloy the beholder, has to be taken for the present state of the exister.

Another event which could throw more light on this obscure topic of clubs and communication is the encounter in the forest. The same situation appears in both parts of the first book, it performs on the same place in the same forest and in the same time. What changes is the point of view. While in the first part we read the

depiction of the encounter from Molloy's perspective – Molloy meets a charcoal-burner - in the second part it is Moran who describes what has happened – Moran is in his shelter visited by a man wearing a coat and *a stick so massive, and so much thicker at the bottom than at the top, that it seemed more like a club*⁶. And to make things more clear I can add the identifications of the protagonists according to my understanding – in Molloy's part it is Molloy who meets Moran, in Moran's part it is Moran who is visited by Molloy.

The scene performs in the forest at the hut, at the shelter Moran has built for him and his son. It is dark. They do not understand each other. Each considers the other one to be more miserable than himself. These are the common features of both stories. But the narrative parallax has in the focus the stick especially, and it is most evident in the climax of the encounter, which, as I have explained in the subchapter **3.2.**, is the parting. Molloy is on his departure held by the sleeve, and this gesture, however peaceful, he understands as an attack against him, so he...

So I smartly freed a crutch and dealt him a good dint on the skull. That calmed him. The dirty old brute. I got up and went on.⁷

For a man in Molloy's state of despair the ways of communication have been restricted to the one and the last channel, to the basic function of communication, where there are only two poles available – the agreement or/and the disagreement. The communicative channel, not only that one of Molloy, is bi-directional – the perception and the transmission – thus, in order to communicate you must both understand the message received, and also be able to formulate and express your message. Molloy can only agree or disagree, but since his receptors' failures limit him in understanding of the incoming messages his answer is mostly the disagreement. And the simplest way to show, again in the limits of his abilities, his dissatisfaction is to manifest it violently.

Let us now turn the attention on Moran, how he perceives the situation, how he becomes familiar with the stick. The setting is the

same. Moran has just given a piece of bread to the strange wayfarer which is about to leave.

Do you mind if I look at your stick, I said. I stretched out my hand. He did not move. I put my hand on the stick, just under his. I could feel his fingers gradually letting go. Now it was I who held the stick. Its lightness astounded me. I put it back in his hand. He threw me a last look and went.⁸

There is no violence here, however, it is the same situation, the parallax is evident. Let me now remind my assertion that Molloy and Moran is one and the same person. The stick now becomes an index of the exister's state of mind. For if Molloy kills Moran in order to bid farewell to his previous "moranistic" existence, Moran examines the stick in hand and for him the stick becomes an omen of his ensuing inevitable existence. As a confirmation of this can be taken a sentence from the beginning of *Malone Dies*, when Malone investigates his past:

But perhaps I was stunned with a blow, on the head, in a forest perhaps, yes now that I speak of a forest I vaguely remember a forest. All that belongs to the past.⁹

From Moran, through Molloy, into Malone. As long as there is a club, and blows on the head, both dealt and felt, there is a kind of a progress, too. In terms of Kierkegaardian definition of despair and Beckett's 'practical application' of this feeling into the life of a man, the word 'progress' sounds rather strange. Kierkegaard speaks about the perseverance in despair and the movement towards belief, and it is the most valuable progress for him. However, he also defines certain levels of despair, which vary according to the level of self-awareness of each particular man. From one to another there is a progress, one way only, for once you have reached a certain level of self-awareness it is impossible to descend on a lower one. Thus a man can ascend up to the highest level.

Pasák dobytka, který by byl já před kravami (kdyby to bylo možné), má velmi malé já: zrovna tak vladař, jenž je já před otroky, vlastně ani žádným já není, neboť v obou

případech chybí měřítko. Dítě, jež dosud uznávalo pouze měřítko rodičů, se stane já tím, že se mu jakožto muži stane měřítkem stát. Jaký však nekonečný význam dostane já, jemuž bude měřítkem Bůh!¹⁰

Now all that remains is to endeavour the last progress – the movement towards believe. And that is the moment in which Kierkegaard and Beckett separate. The exister of the trilogy cannot execute the final movement, for he cannot move. Neither physically, nor mentally. In such state of mind the exister can be found in the third novel. His body is dead, but his mind is still alive, I am explaining it further below (see the subchapter **4.3. Malone's club**). The mind lives on in a total isolation from the outer world. In his unending quarantine the exister cannot communicate, cannot perceive, cannot express himself.

What doesn't come to me from me has come to the wrong address. Similarly my understanding is not yet sufficiently well-oiled to function without the pressure of some critical circumstance, such as a violent pain felt for the first time.¹¹

The mental progress under such conditions is only hardly imaginable. We are again at the stick, for the pain, he is talking about, is of a physical nature (mental sufferings are his everyday reality). The old good blow on the head he will not relish anymore. With the death of his body the stimuli have pass away. The dramatic catastrophe happens when Malone loses his stick.

4.3. Malone's club

As I have already stated, the stick is most important in *Malone Dies*. It is the only and the last contact of his still more stiffening body with the world which surrounds him. Great part of the novel *Malone* only peacefully vegetates on his bed, waiting for his end to come. His only activities are mental inventing and manual writing. There can be drawn a parallel between the stick and the pencil, for if

the stick is an extension of Malone's arms, the pencil is a tool of his mind. Writing for him is a way of seeking his own identity, the pencil therefore, is a kind of a stick, thanks to which he at least tries "to control the furthest recesses of his mind". Shortly, his body uses the stick to experience the outer world, via the pencil his mind communicates with his body. The loss of the stick is therefore an index of carnal death – the paralysis. Without his wooden tentacle Malone is completely severed from the world. The paralysis advances faster, functions of his body fail more often. But still he writes, nevertheless how clumsy, he writes until he is able to operate his hand.

It cannot be surprising, that such fatal accident, as the loss of the stick, is accompanied by other changes. Malone, aware of the nearing end, begins to make an inventory of his possessions, the pencil is shortening. And he even has a visit, of which he is acknowledged by *a violent blow on the head*¹². A man dressed in black, a priest maybe, or a mortician, symbolically makes Malone know that it is about time to depart. He should be the black dot after the exister's life sentence, however, time will tell it was just a comma separating two synonyms. But the main breakpoint can be observed in the story of Macmann Malone narrates himself. That is to say, Macmann after the eons of his endless loitering, anchors in the House of Saint John of God. He does not want to stay there, he needn't to be cared after. Nevertheless, he is not able to escape from it, he is kept in that asylum house like a convict in a prison. The important thing is that Malone himself feels something similar – his soul is in his body captured as in a jail of bones.

Malone escapes, in the end he dies. The climax of his lifelong toil has come, and when he thinks he is finally over, it is only his body that really dies. What an irony peculiar to Beckett! The body is paralysed, dead in fact, but still there is a life within – the heart beats, the brain operates - rigor mortis has not come. A coma of flesh. Dead limbs and sense organs, dead skin-bag with a restless soul inside. The consciousness has escaped from the world, and it is also

devoid of the body, in a sense, for it cannot feel the pain which is the best moderator of the communication between the mind and the body. Thus the consciousness has entered a new dimension, a dominion of thoughts and reflections, where there is no perception and no expression, where silence speaks and voice is silent. How cruel must be this discovery for Malone! All his hopes are smashed. In a compliance with Kierkegaard, this is probably the highest state of despair, its deepest morass.

Hrozí-li jako největší nebezpečí smrt, doufáme v život;
když ale poznáme horší nebezpečí, doufáme ve smrt. Když
však je nebezpečí tak veliké, že se i smrt stane nadějí, pak
je zoufalství beznadějí, že se ani umřít nemůže.¹³

This is the state whence Kierkegaard make his movement towards belief. The exister does not execute such movement; would he be able to move, one could say he even makes a step astray. The problem is that the exister is aware of God, however, he does not believe in Him. Yes, such construction is none the best, I see, but in its strangeness the exister's state of the mind can be explained. For to believe does not mean simply to enter the next level, it is to set out on a journey, to walk a certain path. And it is also a question of will, one must have a will to endeavour this task. Finally, one must have the opportunity to dart this way, but whence the opportunity where there is no certainty about one's existence?

4.4. The struggle within

The way a man communicates with other people is just a reflection of how it works inside the man. If we forget about despair for a while (its eternal existence in every man), with a bit of imagination we can draw a proportion between inner mental equilibrium of a man and h/his behaviour towards the people s/he meets. The more simple a man is the less problems in expressing h/himself s/he finds. The simpletons can talk to anyone, they are not afraid to address you anytime and anywhere, they utter whatever

comes to their minds. Someone can call it honesty, but it is a poor simple-mindedness, because honesty is closely connected with consciousness, and their notion of self-awareness is on the lowest level. As the level of self-awareness rises, despair, sleeping somewhere underneath the brain so far, awakens. The problems in communication arise, there is still greater and greater need to express oneself, however, still there is less and less possible ways in succeeding in it. The man realises that the number of people he is able to address dangerously decreases. Not everyone can understand you and also you are not able to understand everybody. Despair feeds upon this knowledge, and again we have here Kierkegaardian axiom – the more self-aware a human is, the more desperate s/he becomes.

And now the exister, with his ocean of despair! He has *taken a reef in his sails*¹⁴ and the ship of his life went down. He has rescued himself on a small solitary rock elevating from the sea surface, and as far as his sight can reach only immense grey of the ocean spreads. All alone and naked, on a reef too small for sitting on it. Shall he swim, to find a help, a ground somewhere, anywhere? Shouldn't he rather sit where he is and wait for a help to find him?... I have used this parallel to show how distant from other people the exister feels. The more desperate one is, the more alienated one becomes. It goes the other way round, too, because also people alienate themselves from him. As Kierkegaard points out, the world is ignorant to the individual "I", because the expression of individuality is not wanted, it is not interesting for the world, it could be even dangerous.

Největší nebezpečí – ztratit sama sebe – se může ve světě přejít tiše a jakoby nic. Není ztráty, jež by se oplakávala méně, ale každé jiné ztráty, jako například ruky, nohy, pěti tolarů, ztráty ženy, atd. si svět všímá.¹⁵

Is there any communication possible then? With whom? It is an ocean of the otherness, the strangeness, which surrounds him, its waters are unknown to him, its depth unfathomable. In such state of mind any dialogue is unthinkable. In this allegory, to communicate means to throw oneself to the water and swim till reaching the

ground of another isle at least. It could be done only in totally haphazard manner, for there are no hints for swimming in this or that direction, nor the stars on the night sky shine. On the other hand, the exister has got already used to his loneliness, and the rock is surely the safest place around. Such polarity (multiplicity) of ideas exists in his mind and he is not able to decide, he is not able to make any decision any longer, for the pros and the cons have merged. The inner equilibrium has been absolutely annihilated. The communication of two completely different "I's" is unimaginable, because how can they understand each other, if there is no understanding within a simple mind.

4.5. Multiphrenia

The modern science has already the evidence that self-awareness is a complex of mutually operating components, such as memory, perception, feelings, experience, way of thinking, conscience. This was proofed in medical experiments with people suffering from epilepsy. The surgeons separated the hemispheres of the afflicted by cutting the bridge between them, in good belief that it will restrict the epileptic fits to one half of the brain only. They succeeded in this, however, an unpredictable thing happened. That brutal operation caused a split in the patients' personalities and they became schizophrenic. The two personalities differed according to what centre of which functions dwelled in the particular hemisphere.

The exister's identity is smashed into shreds, he has been under the knife several times and now he appears to be not schizo but multiphrenic. Each shrapnel is represented by a pseudo-identity of Molloy, Malone, Mahood, Moran, Macmann, Worm, and of course Murphy and Watt, etc, and in the multiphonic pandemonium of voices, a reader can only be guessing who of the representatives is speaking in the moment. Each of them is a single bee, one drone, of a huge swarm of identity. They form the exister's identity together, but single they are like flowers torn out of the garden. Without having

their roots in the ground they are slowly fading, they must inevitably die. Therefore his memory is weak and unreliable, perception fails, experience is either invented or wrongly remembered, conscience echoes no more, and things are getting worse. The worst thought for the exister is that he would not mind to be just one of his vice-existers, but it is not possible. Your identity cannot be determined by your memory only, for example. However, still he tries. It is obvious that after the burial of the identity in **Malone Dies**, this quest really starts in **The Unnamable**. He has a feeling that his demons only abuse his mind and body. They enter, shout and leave. We can find him almost in an apologising mood when declaring that *those voices are not his nor those thoughts, but the voices and thoughts of the devils who beset him*¹⁶. He already knows that it is impossible to exorcise them out of his body, or mind better said, and it is the only thing he knows. Now he plays, because the existence has lost its seriousness (it also does not entertain him), and the life has become a game as Malone says¹⁷. Lest the exister feels his ego lacking, it does not matter now whether he wants to be someone else (**Malone Dies**) or just himself alone (**The Unnamable**), the essence of the game consists in pretending, or trying, or not longing to be somebody, anybody.

Perhaps it's by trying to be Worm that I'll finally succeed
in being Mahood, I hadn't thought of that. Then all I'll
have to do is be Worm. Which no doubt I shall achieve by
trying to be Jones. Then all I'll have to do is be Jones.¹⁸

The masques he puts on, or are put on him, in an insane rhythm one over another, mesmerise him somehow, and he no longer knows which one of the masques was put as the first, which as the last, and if there is a masque on his face at all. The masquerade is no longer under his control and he suddenly realises that it neither was ever before. He finds himself lost in a carnival procession, he finds himself being that procession. And the game is no longer the game; the crowd, not knowing what to do, nor where to go, runs down the town, ransacking the streets for the leader. All that remains are again the

voices and the thoughts of the devils. The game goes on as described and with each loop of this lunatic spiral the noise of the voices and the pain of the thoughts is being multiplied.

Samuel Beckett has taken to the extreme the distinction between the soul and the body. The solipsistic idea, everything is in the individual mind, applies in **The Unnamable** literally. As I have stated, the exister is locked in his head, in his dead body, where only the brain operates, however chaotically. The whole novel could be a delirium of the last moments before the total brain-death, but without the possibility to perceive and express there is no notion of time any longer. The few seconds can turn into aeons and vice versa. There is neither any notion of space, and the exister can dwell in the grave as well as in the womb. The infinite uncertainty in the eternal lasting. All that remains is anxiety and despair.

¹ Beckett, S. *Three novels – Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. New York. Grove Press. p. 185

² Ibid. page 185

³ Ibid. page 249

⁴ Ibid. page 267

⁵ Ibid. page 10

⁶ Ibid. page 146

⁷ Ibid. page 84

⁸ Ibid. page 146

⁹ Ibid. page 183

¹⁰ Kierkegaard, S. 1993. *Bázeň a chvění. Nemoc k smrti*. Praha. Svoboda – Libertas. page 179

¹¹ Beckett, S. *Three novels – Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. New York. Grove Press. p. 350

¹² Ibid. page 269

¹³ Kierkegaard, S. 1993. *Bázeň a chvění. Nemoc k smrti*. Praha. Svoboda – Libertas. page 127

¹⁴ Beckett, S. *Three novels – Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. New York. Grove Press. p. 198

¹⁵ Kierkegaard, S. 1993. *Bázeň a chvění. Nemoc k smrti*. Praha. Svoboda – Libertas. page 139

¹⁶ Beckett, S. *Three novels – Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. New York. Grove Press. p. 347

¹⁷ Ibid. page 180

¹⁸ Ibid. page 339

5. The Story and the Line

5.1. Omens and visions

Yet once more I must return to the ABC triangle, for the importance of the scene rests in its uniqueness. The exister never again regurgitates similar event in such a way and we can only hardly dissect any other encounter from the trilogy into the details. The problem is that the details and the events merge, appear suddenly as totally new, and disappear as the reader advances. I am not saying that it is all clear at the beginning, not a thought, but it is expressed in the clearest possible way, possible in the limits of the exister's (Molloy's) abilities.

The encounter of A and C, which is clandestinely being observed by B, foreshadows the breakpoints, and thus the winding of the trilogy. However rude it might sound, it really foreshadows the scheme (the scheme!) of every of the three novels.

The pictures (2, 3, 4) visualise the course of the encounter from the beginning of **Molloy**, however, they can be applied to the form of the whole trilogy as well. It is evident from the pictures, that the vertex B does not change, it remains on the same place. It is because this B is the *Basic line* of the trilogy, it is the voice of the old man, which slowly passes away on a bed. His vocal resonates throughout the whole trilogy. Silently at first, produced as if by a ventriloquist, but gradually the volume increases, it echoes still more often, up to the only one, coherently dissonant, vitriolic shriek in the end. Thus the picture 1 can be ascribed to the first book, where B is Molloy on the bed in his dead mother's room – that is the “present” state of the exister as I was explaining it in the subchapter **4.2**. Then there are these two other stories, the one (part 1) of Molloy and the second one (part 2) of Moran, which are in the picture represented by the letters A and C, according to my explanations above. The B-voice is very silent and it is overcast by the sketches from Molloy's previous existence. It is hidden, the reader almost forgets about it. With the

exception of the first page, there are only few remarks about his present existing further in the first part. And if I say 'few', I mean two, three at most. **Molloy** deals with the first type of Kierkegaard's definition of despair, namely it is despair, when a man is not aware of h/is eternal "I", and thus not realising himself being desperate. Thence the silent B-vocal, therefore the division of the book into two parts.

Malone Dies is represented by the picture 3. The number of episodic lines is reduced from previous three to two. The B-vocal here is Malone's I-narration, obviously, now loud and clear, and this alternates with the third-person narration of Malone about Sapo and/or Macmann. I can name this second line of narration A-voice, or C-voice (see pic.3), it does not matter for now. It also cannot be understood that, let say, Sapo is A and Macmann is C, or vice versa. This triangular pattern is now being applied to the form of the book, of the whole trilogy, not to a single event as I am doing it in the subchapter **3.2**.

The relation which exists between these two levels of narration is more balanced than the relations between A, B and C voices in the first book. While in **Molloy** the proportion of the main B-voice to the rest would be 1:2 and even less, in **Malone Dies** this proportion will be 1:1. Malone often recalls his present state (the bed, the room, the stick, etc) and he narrates the story of Sapo/Macmann when he desires to escape from his present state. Malone does not want to be himself, his despair is of the second type of Kierkegaard's definition. It is impossible task, for human "I" is eternal, and thus indestructible, one cannot throw it away like a hat. I think that Malone somehow comprehends this fact, nevertheless he tries. It is the only thing he is able to do, despite the fact he is not able to do it.

What tedium. And I call that playing. I wonder if I am not talking yet again about myself. Shall I be incapable, to the end, of lying on any other subject?¹

Macmann is still more akin to the exister, for whom it is still more difficult to change his mind (to escape) into Macmann's. The two

narrative lines, that one of Malone, and the one into which he tries to escape are slowly approaching each other. This phenomenon penetrates the whole trilogy and I am going to explain it in the next subchapter.

There is only one episodic line in **The Unnamable**, the B-voice evidently. Here the proportion of the B-voice to the rest would be 1:0. It is everything. Or nothing, if we take it strictly mathematically, where the division (what the proportion is, in fact), the division by zero is a non-sense. After that it would be reasonable to put a question mark also behind the vertex B in the fourth picture of my chart. Then which of the vertices (voices, stories, lines) is the main one? The B-vocal? Is there any voice to be considered being the B-vocal, at all? Now we are again and finally at the main question of the trilogy – Am I? – and the B-vocal or B-voice has become the identity which the unnamable exister desperately seeks. The exister has fallen into the third type of Kierkegaard's despairs, into despair when one desperately does want to be one self.

5.2. The desperate geometry

I will try to visualise the relations between the episodic lines of the trilogy in the following scheme. Some things have been already indicated in the paragraphs above, still there are some which remain to explain.

There are several stories narrated by the exister in the trilogy. They are narrated by the one who lies in bed. In accordance with my statements from the previous subchapters, the B-vocal is the voice of the “bedtime” speaker when recalling his present state. More or less intensive the B-vocal penetrates the whole trilogy. The other lines, A- and C-vocal, can be heard in **Molloy** (I. and II. part). In **Malone Dies** these vocals merge into one, let say AC-vocal (AC as alternating current), and Malone really alternatively changes the flow of his speech from his B-vocal to his bedtime story. All these voices melt in one murmur in the last novel, in **The Unnamable**. The purpose of the

scheme is to trace the moments in which the stories (the narrative lines) approaches, and to find out the qualitatively (viewed from the point of the story development) equivalent events in different lines. This will be important while explaining the exister's progress through Kierkegaard's typology of despair, for if the exister advances, it must be, in some way, mirrored in the stories he tells himself. Since the whole process takes place in the exister's mind, which is also the spring of the stories, the vocals must be yoked together, as the two oxen pulling the same burden of despair.

The scheme is divided into three rectangles, each representing one novel of the trilogy. The B-vocal is the thick line at the bottom of the triangles; the A-, C-, and AC-vocal are marked. The points (1, 2,..a, b,..) represent elements of the particular story, the events after which the protagonist sinks deeper into despair, and thus enters the next level of his existence. The symmetry of the graph is here to simplify though already complex scheme, however, always the two point-events, one above another on two different lines, share the same axis – that is the mirror-effect of the exister's storytelling.

1. rectangle – Molloy

The importance of Gaber's arrivals (points A1 and A3 in the scheme) has been already discussed in the previous subchapters (**2.2.**, **2.3.**), and so has been (**4.2.**) also the encounter in the forest (points A2 and C2 in the scheme). Moran, in these points in the story, approaches Molloy, mentally mainly, that is to say, these are the moments in which Moran realises his still growing despair. It is not so easy to show the declared parallel between, let say, A1 and C1 in the first rectangle, because despair is here only awaking and the B-voice is very silent, light grey in the scheme. Nevertheless, the intensifying breakpoints have something in common.

A1 – the beginning of Moran's searching for Molloy, for his "I".

C1 – besides everything what has been said above, here the idea of visiting his mother arises in Molloy's head, it is the beginning of the quest which, in the future, ends in his mother's room.

A2–C2 – the parallax relation between these points institutes the ethereal connection of both the protagonists and their lines.

A3 – is the climax of the Moran's story (the A-line) as explained in **2.3.**; Moran, desperate as never before, sets on his way home where he shall never return. He is different, and everything around him is changing.

C3 – it is the ending of the first part (the C-line) where we can find Molloy wallowing in a ditch, remembering the encounter of A and C from the beginning. *Molloy could stay, where he happened to be*², waiting for a help to come, and we can find him in a similar position (both mental and physical) in **Malone Dies** as Macmann who lies in rain just before he is helped into a kind of asylum house. From this point of view, the points A3 and C3 are echoes of the 'happened future', the future which will come true in the second part of the trilogy.

2. rectangle – **Malone Dies**

The coincidence of events from two different story lines is most evident here, and it is this coincidence what forms the basic message of the novel, that it is impossible to escape from one's "I" and to become someone else. Malone tries to depart from himself each time he begins to narrate the story of Sapo/Macmann, but he, as he himself claims, *does not depart from himself now with the same avidity as a week ago*³, or not *with quite the same alacrity*⁴, it is still more difficult to elude the bindings of his own identity. Malone, aware of the lunacy he is undertaking, becomes more desperate, in a perfect compliance with Kierkegaard's proportion - *čím více vědomí, tím intenzivnější zoufalství*⁵ - and the right time to realise his growing despair comes in the moments when the AC-line approaches the B-vocal.

AC4 – is the point where Sapo changes into Macmann. Here it is obvious that the protagonist of the AC-line enters a new level. What more, this modification happens at the first mention of Sapo after the incident with the pencil, when it had slipped from Malone's fingers. I have already explained the importance of the pencil in terms of the

communication, no wonder this momentary 'fall-out' in the B-line does reflect in the AC-line.

B4 – the pencil is here in a function of a rivet joining two narrative lines together. Paradoxically, the junction emerges when the rivet drops out. It could be a symbol of the advancing paralysis (stiff fingers cannot hold the pencil enough strongly), however, it is an event in the exister's lasting, a sudden change. He spends *two unforgettable days of which nothing will ever be known*⁶, in seeking the pencil, and he even likes it. It is inevitably lost what has not been written. Malone, after regaining his pencil, first time mentions his name, as if, afraid of shortening time, he wanted to sign his testament. By writing he tries to find, or gain, his (an) identity, and the story of Sapo/Macmann is not being written as a marginal note.

AC5-B5 – Malone loses his stick and he loses it for good. Macmann is helped into the asylum house, and it is the last but one stage on his desperate fall. He is finally in the house where Malone the exister dwells, all that remains now is to get into the same head. Malone without his stick is, so to say, washed up and left for dead practically. His hour is at hand, and it is only a question of days when it will come. The death comes ripping from within Malone's head. I am dealing with this process in **4.3**. It is obvious, that we can expect changes of similar seriousness also in the AC-line, in the story of Macmann. He experiences a love affair with Moll, one of the women in that geriatric ward of the House of Saint John of God. The descriptions of their relationship (their dialogues, love-letters, sexual intercourse, etc) launch the most dynamic part of the novel, and remind (they are in fact) the last efforts of the one who is dying.

AC-6 – the horror sail. The embarked ones are: Lemuel the keeper (social worker in whose charge Macmann is), Macmann and four other inmates, Ernest and Maurice, also keepers, and Lady Pedal who has *organized, for the benefit of Lemuel's group, this outing to the islands which was going to cost her dear*⁷. The dynamics of the speech graduates, the sentences are getting shorter. Ernest, Maurice and Lady Pedal are killed by Lemuel on the shore of the islet they has

reached. The ending of this thriller fades away, as the boat with Lemuel and five Goddam Johnnies⁸, in the fall of the night and the vast silence of the sea.

B6 – The horror sail is the true symbol of Malone’s death. The two episodes overlap and in the end they merge in one. The body of Malone dies, it is stiff and motionless as the waveless sea. The only moving/movable/moved “part of his body” is the mind. Like the Flying Dutchman it floats across the paralytic ocean, and the crew of the boat are the devils which now have obsessed him.

In the island, there are killed those, who, from Macmann’s/Malone’s point of view, had something to do with the outer world. Farewell to arms, farewell to legs – Malone’s body dies. The vocals unite.

3. rectangle – **The Unnamable**

*Where now? Who now? When now?*⁹ According to my scheme, I can modify the first words of the third novel, and thus keep the line from the previous book, into similar questions – Where in this ocean? Who in this boat? When in this darkness? The NOW is the only reality, there is no *before*, there is no *after*, there is no *here*, nor *there*, there is only EVERYWHERE and NOWHERE. And there is also no *I*, no *you*, nor *he*, *she*, *it*. All there is – A VOICE.

Since the vocals have in B6 jumbled together we can neither distinguish the main line, nor the other voices, despite the fact there is nothing but voices. The thick line in the last rectangle can be named ABC-vocal, provided none of the letters is the main one. What a wonderful example of the third type of despair – the desperate longing to be one self. In the pandemonium of voices within his head the exister cannot grasp that one of his own. Thoughts boil in the cauldron of his skull, and nevertheless he can taste it, he cannot say what the goulash lacks. Vomiting, he eats on.

¹ Beckett, S. *Three novels – Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. New York. Grove Press. p. 189

² Ibid. page 91

³ Ibid. page 208

⁴ Ibid. page 210

⁵ Kierkegaard, S. 1993. *Bázeň a chvění. Nemoc k smrti*. Praha. Svoboda – Libertas. page 148

⁶ Beckett, S. *Three novels – Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. New York. Grove Press. p. 222

⁷ Ibid. page 280

⁸ Ibid. page 281

⁹ Ibid. page 291

5.3. The story scheme

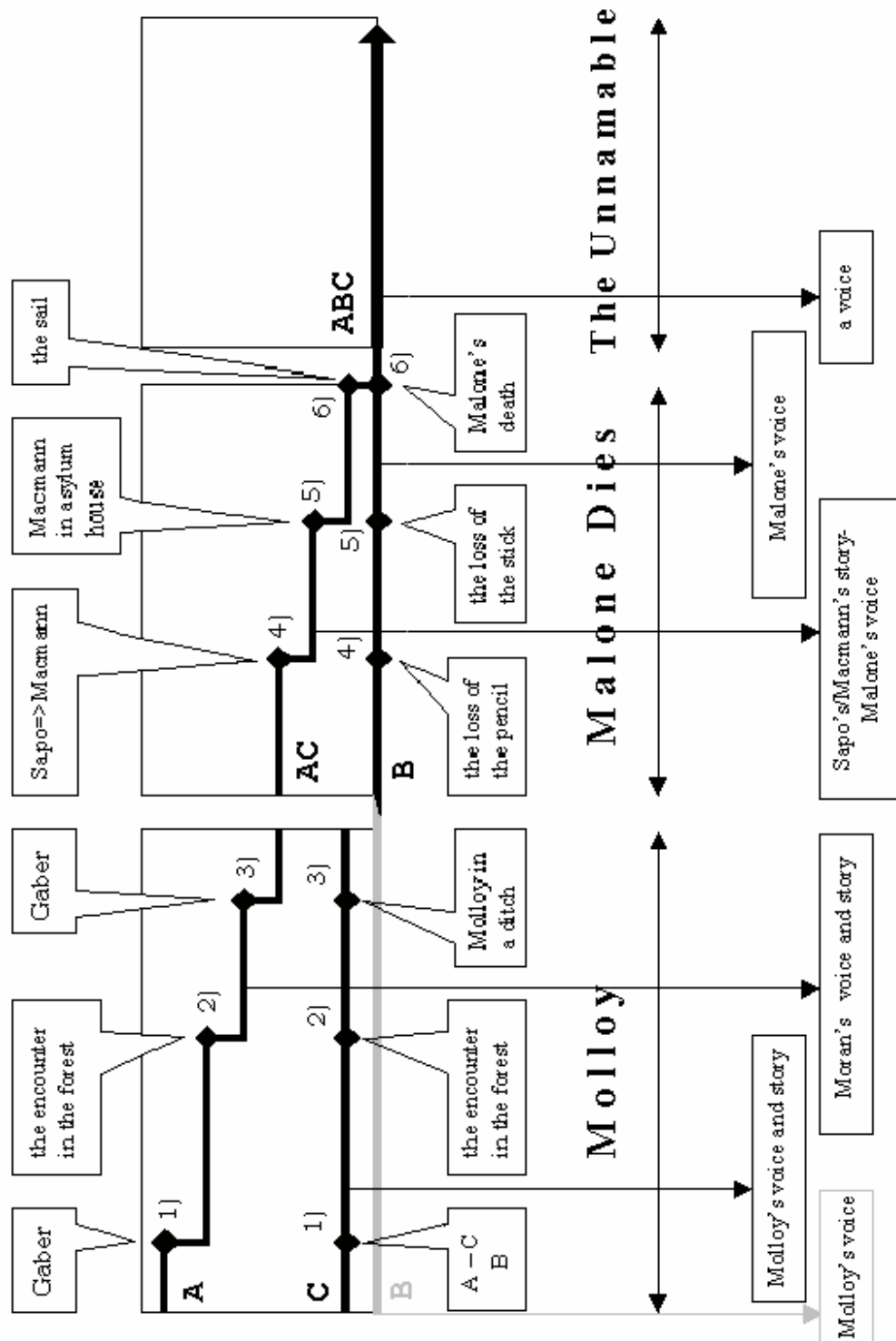
A – line of Moran

C – line of Molloy

B – line of the speaker on the bed

AC – line of Sapo and Macmann

ABC – line of the “dead” exister



Conclusion

The aim of my diploma work was to trace the signs of despair, and its particular types, in the Samuel Beckett's trilogy – **Molloy**, **Malone Dies** and **The Unnamable**. By succeeding in this, I tried to draw the philosophical background of the novels, and thus explain the psychological motives of the exister's (non)acting. While studying the texts I was led by Soren Kierkegaard's work, especially his **Sickness Unto Death** and **Fear and Trembling**. Beckett's texts are marked also by other philosophies, however, Kierkegaard's influence is most evident and it is the main one. I was dealing only with the main terms of Kierkegaard's/Beckett's/existentialist discourse, such as individuality, identity, consciousness, alienation, anxiety, despair and communication and still there are things which remain unspoken. I tried to keep a cohesive and coherent line and to introduce another problems would mean a number of extra pages. The reader could notice that the themes I had chosen to work upon overlapped in my text, and crossed the boundaries of the chapters. It is because one cannot strictly say that this is about despair only, this about identity and this is the unique problem of communication. It is also one of the results I have come upon, that these feelings and problems are closely connected and there is a kind of proportion between them. This crossover of themes has also proofed what I have claimed at the beginning, that it cannot be said, that each novel deals with one particular type of despair. They do, in the surface structure, but deeper down in the text it has been discovered that the types of despair penetrate and protrude from one novel to another, and the connecting (and dividing also) element has become the old man – the exister – on the bed in his mother's room.

In my opinion, my work brings a new point of view on several problems and throws few rays of light on some enigmas of Beckett's writing. Firstly, I could not avoid the influence of my second subject, the computer science, and a kind of systematic thinking has marked my schematic perception of the novels. Such perspective is rather

rare to be seen in the works analysing the texts of Samuel Beckett. On the other hand, the scheme I have developed forms only the framework of my other hypotheses. Thus my theories are propped in this way, and are no longer *hypostheses*, what cannot be said about some exclamations of some of Beckett's critics.

It is the very first event in the Molloy's story – the encounter of two men, A and C – which formed the basis for my scheme. The important thing is that I have succeeded in defying all three types of despair upon the form of the trilogy as well as upon the particular stories and narrative lines. It has shown the all-pervasive substance of despair and its omnipresent threat and thrill.

Since despair was the very theme of my work, I have tried to analyse its influence on various phenomena, such as communication, so called name-plays, the mythical layer of the trilogy, the knowledge, mind and the inner world of the exister, the identity and the soul, the body and the outer world. In the last chapter I have tried to visualise the effect of eternal despair on the form of the trilogy.

As a devotee of Samuel Beckett's work I tried to do my best while studying and analysing his trilogy and writing my research and commentary. All that remains to say is that I liked the working on my theme, despite the fact I am not a student of philosophy, and I am proud of my results and satisfied with my conclusions.

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Slovenské resumé

Zmysel ľudskej existencie je rozhodne tým najobskúrnejším mystériom, s akým sa človek za svojho života stretne. Niekomu sa na otázku zmyslu svojho života podarí nájsť odpoveď, inému nie, a niekoho ani len nenapadne, aby ju hľadal. Problém totiž nie je v tom, že by odpovedí nebolo, práve naopak. Každý filozofický smer a každé jedno náboženstvo ponúka odpoveď, a spolu s ňou celý systém hodnôt, zásady morálky, definície a dogmy. Spomedzi všetkých ideológií, ktoré kedy človek vymyslel (alebo mu boli vnuknuté), vyníma sa jedna špecificky. Je to existencializmus, ktorého ideové chápanie sa pohybuje niekde na pomedzí filozofie, umenia a náboženstva. Filozofiou je existencializmu najbližší nihilizmus, umením si existencialista definuje pocit úzkosti a náboženstvo ho môže vyliečiť zo zúfalstva. Nihilistické odcudzenie jednotlivca, úzkosť z predstavy svojej ničomnej existencie v nekonečnom vesmíre a z toho prameniace zúfalstvo sú základnými pojmami existencializmu. Týmito problémami, a ich zrkadlení sa v rôznych rovinách textu, sa zaoberám v mojej diplomovej práci.

Existencializmus vychádza z individuálneho, osobného pocitu človeka, nemôže teda vytvárať systém ako iné svetonázorové prúdy. Laicky povedané, texty existencialistov vždy iba ponúkali, a ponúkajú, určitý návod na vytvorenie si vlastného pohľadu na svet. Existencializmus je o osobnej zodpovednosti nad vlastným životom a o vnútornom uvedomení si tejto zodpovednosti človekom. Uvedomenie spočíva v zistení, že život človeka nie je vopred definovaný, že človeku chýba podstata a je týmto spôsobom neopodstatnený, že je sám v nepredstaviteľnej nekonečnosti vesmíru. Prvé kroky na tejto ceste za krutou pravdou o absurdnosti ľudskeho bytia, vedú po schodoch k vlastnému „ja“. Sebapoznávanie je základným princípom filozofie existencializmu.

Existencialista je závislý sám na sebe, stále viac si uvedomuje, že len on sám môže prostredníctvom vlastných skúseností poznávať svet, a tak aj sám seba. Z tohto, dá sa povedať logického

individualizmu, rastie odcudzenie jednotlivca ostatným ľuďom, čo však nemôže byť považované za akúsi chorobnú mizantropiu. S rastúcim vedomím o sebe, rastie aj vedomie o rozdieloch medzi jednotlivými ľuďmi, vzniká predstava o jedinečnosti a neopakovateľnosti každého jedného človeka. Človek si teda aj uvedomuje, že je čím ďalej zložitejšie dohovoriť sa s inými ľuďmi, a komunikácia tak zlyháva. Je preto len pochopiteľné, že existencialistickí filozofi, ako Søren Kierkegaard, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Friedrich Nietzsche a ďalší, sa prezentovali skôr umeleckými dielami ako filozofickými spismi. Pretože čo môže byť subjektívnejšie ako umenie?! Umenie je predsa komunikácia, a v tomto prípade to platí aj naopak.

Moja práca sa zaoberá trilógiou Samuela Becketta (1906 - 1989) – **Molloy**, **Malone Dies** (Malone zomiera), **The Unnamable** (Nepomenovateľný). Pri definovaní filozofických koreňov tohto diela, by len ich prostý výpis zabral množstvo listov papiera. Skutočne, v Beckettových textoch možno nájsť odkazy, linky a narážky na rôzne filozofie staroveku, rovnako tak aj na najnovšie filozofické názory. Najvýraznejší a najsilnejší vplyv na jeho tvorbu však mal existencializmus, a zvlášť dielo dánskeho filozofa Sørena Kierkegarda (1813 - 1855).

Spoločné sečnice diel týchto dvoch filozofov a spisovateľov prechádzajú človekom, a to hlavne jeho osobnosťou, jeho vedomím o sebe a jeho zúfalstvom. Kierkegaard vo svojom diele **Sickness unto Death** (Nemoc k smrti), o ktoré sa pri analýze Beckettovej trilógie v mojej práci opieram, určuje pomer vedomia k zúfalstvu, ktoré sa stupňuje z rastúcou predstavou o vlastnom „ja“. Táto úmera tvorí gro mojej práce.

Na základe vlastného uvedomenia Kierkegaard vo svojom diele definuje tri základné typy zúfalstva:

- 1) neuvedomé zúfalstvo – človek nemá predstavu o svojom „ja“ a to, že je zúfalý, akože je, nevníma, alebo za zúfalstvo pokladá úplne iný pocit.

- 2) zúfalstvo nechcieť byť sám sebou – človek už má predstavu o svojom „ja“, toto ja však odmieta, prípadne chce byť niekým iným.
- 3) zúfalstvo chcieť byť sám sebou – človek má vysokú predstavu o svojom „ja“, paradoxne však toto vedomie o sebe jeho „ja“ rozbíja.

V trilógií sa toto členenie premieta do viacerých vrstiev textu. V tej najvrchnejšej rovine každá kniha reprezentuje jeden typ zúfalstva, hlbšie sa však jednotlivé formy zúfalstva rozkonárujú a prerastajú z jednej novely do druhej.

Podľa Kierkegaarda je zúfalstvo večné, a je večné aj v človeku, ktorý si ho neuvedomuje. Je hlasom Božím, ktorý takto prehovára k človeku, a je len na ňom, či tento hlas počuje/počúvne alebo nie. Tým sa však nemyslí, že človek musí veriť v Boha aby ho počul. Viera je liekom na túto nemoc, a to jediným. Len cez vieru v kresťanského Boha môže sa človek stať úplne sám sebou.

Prvá kniha trilógie, **Molloy**, je rozdelená na dve časti, jednu rozpráva Molloy, druhú Moran. V mojej práci vychádzam z predpokladu, že Molloy, Moran a všetci ďalší hlavní protagonisti dejových línií trilógie, ako Malone, Sapo, Macmann, Mahood a Worm sú jedným a tým istým mužom v rozdielnych štádiách zúfalstva. Tento muž nemá identitu, lebo najprv si ju neuvedomuje, potom, keď si ju uvedomí, ju odmieta, a keď ju nakoniec stratí, zúfalo si ju žiada. Nazval som ho existerom, podľa výrazu z tretej novely, kde *nepomenovateľný* hovorí o všetkých tých Molloyoch, Moranoch a Maloneoch ako o svojich vice-existeroch. Tento exister je všadeprítomný ako jeho zúfalstvo. V trilógií je to hlavný rozprávač, ten, ktorý leží na posteli v izbe svojej matky. Takto sa Molloy stáva neuvedomelou identitou Morana, ktorý sa ho, svoju identitu, vydáva v úvode druhej časti hľadať. Dostáva túto úlohu prostredníctvom agenta Gabera, ktorý tu vystupuje ako posol Boží, ako archanjel Gabriel oznamujúci Márii počatie Krista. Ku koncu tejto časti Moran

začína počuť hlas. Nie je si istý komu patrí, ani či mu správne rozumie, ale je to znak toho, že si začína uvedomovať svoje „ja“.

Ak v prvej novele bol hlas existera z postele takmer nečujný, v **Malone Dies** sa exister už zreteľne ozýva. Je si vedomý svojho nesmrteľného „ja“, ktoré v svojom zúfalstve zo slabosti odmieta. Rozpráva si príbehy o Saposcatovi, neskôr o Macmannovi, do ktorých pred svojím „ja“ uniká. Malone zomiera a rozprávanie príbehov si stanovil ako náplň svojho čakania na smrť. Ako postupne odumiera Macmann sa naňho stále viac začína podobať, až sa v momente Maloneovej smrti tieto dve dejové línie zlúčia. Zdá sa, že sa konečne splnil Maloneov sen, že zomrel. V skutočnosti však odumrie len jeho telo, všetky zmysly, nastane niečo ako kompletná paralýza, telesná kóma kedy zostane fungovať len mozog a snáď srdce.

The Unnamable, ako čisté vedomie, sa teda ocitá uväznený v lebke mŕtveho tela. Nemôže vnímať, nemôže sa vyjadrovať, de facto tak stráca pojem o čase a priestore. Tu nachádzame ten najväčší paradox, keď nezostáva vlastne nič len vedomie, ktoré stratilo pojem o vlastnom „ja“. Zlúčili sa aj dejové línie z predchádzajúcich častí, a už nie je zrejmé čo je skutočnosť, čo sa odohralo v minulosti a čo je kompletne vymyslené. Tretia forma zúfalstva sa tu prejavila v plnej sile. Všetko, čo je počuť, je len hlas. Nejaký hlas. Komu však patrí, to sa nedozvie ani čitateľ, ani exister.

Z predchádzajúceho vyplýva pevná spätosť vedomia a zúfalstva, preto nemôže prekvapiť, ak sa takáto spojitosť ukáže aj s komunikáciou, respektíve v spôsobe komunikácie človeka. Pokiaľ je schopný, exister komunikuje vlastne len jediným spôsobom – palicou. Palicou, ktorou rozdáva rany, a palicou, ktorou rany dostáva. Tá sa tak stáva jediným spojivom jeho tela s okolitým svetom, keďže zmysly mu službu vypovedajú, a taktiež sa stáva symbolom zúfalstva človeka, alebo skôr jeho telesnej schránky. Keď ju Malone stratí, jeho telo stratí kontakt so svetom a začína proces smrti.

Tak ako palica znamená pre existera jediné spojenie jeho tela so svetom, ceruzka, ktorou píše, spája s jeho telom jeho myseľ. Pokiaľ je schopný písať, ešte vie že žije. Akonáhle jeho telo ochrne, ceruzka

mu vypadne, a v temnote uzavretej mysle rozmýšľa, či zomiera alebo má pred pôrodom.

Celá Beckettova trilógia je poznačená hľadaním identity. Najprv Moran hľadá tú svoju, Malone sa neskôr snaží nájsť nejakú inú, no a *nepomenovateľný* sa snaží nájsť aspoň nejakú. Kierkegaard ponúka ako jediné východisko z tejto zúfalej situácie vieru v kresťanského Boha, čo znamená počúvnuť hlas, ktorý prehovára ku každému človeku. Exister z Beckettovej trilógie si však nie je istý, či hlas, ktorý počuje patrí skutočne Bohu. V tej svojej mŕtvej hlave počuje tisíce hlasov, ktoré môžu patriť hocikomu, diablom i jemu samému. V tejto nekonečnej neistote mu neostáva nič iné, len rozprávať a dúfať, že raz skutočne začuje hlas alebo svoj, alebo Boží.