



„NOTING IS FUNNIER THAN DISASTER” (The feminine character in the couple’s relationship, in Samuel Becket’s theatre)

„NIMIC NU E MAI CARAGHIOS DECÎT NENOROCIREA”
(PERSONAJUL FEMININ ÎN RELAȚIA DE CUPLU,
ÎN TEATRUL LUI SAMUEL BECKETT)

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Între partenerii cuplului din piesele lui Samuel Beckett nu se stabilesc numai relații de apropiere, de afecțiune. Cuplurile din piesele lui Beckett se caracterizează prin comportamente care denotă permanent dragostea și ura, partenerii fiind legați de aceeași suferință sau chinându-se neconținut unul pe altul, în funcție de situațiile prin care trec. Cuplul beckettian reprezintă pentru parteneri întreg universal. În piesa „O, ce zile frumoase!”, cuplul pare să nu observe situația lui de exilat în existență sau, chiar dacă o face, nu-i acordă acestui fapt prea multă importanță, încercând parcă să-și uite destinul din această lume apocaliptică. Autorul aduce în scenă imaginea unei femei aparent vesele, care se scufundă încet într-o movilă de pământ. Într-un imens pustiu și o căldură toridă, Winnie, amenințată de orbire, îngropată în pământ, alunecă lent spre moarte, „spulberând” golul din spațiu și timp, prin cuvinte. În „Sfârșit de partidă”, personajele își trăiesc ultimele clipe în lumea în care au fost aruncate. Nu dau importanță dreptului la libertate pentru că sunt neputincioși, și-au irosit șansele pe care le-au avut. Hamm și Clov sau cuplul de bătrâni - Nagg și Nell - prin comportamentul lor pun în evidență grotescul, tragi-comedia situației în care se află. Familia mai mică a celor doi bătrâni este, la rândul ei, claustrată, aruncată la gunoi în spațiul familial, de către Hamm, fiul lor, paralytic și orb. În piesa „Comedie”, personajelor li se vede doar capul, gâtul și trupul fiecăruia fiind închise în vase identice. Este adusă în scenă, într-o manieră originală, tema „evadărilor” din cuplu, a trădărilor conjugale, a iubirilor permise sau nu, într-o „comedie” a vieții și a morții, a vieții în trei, amestec de minciună și adevăr, despărțiri și împăcări, suferințe și extaz.

Couple partners in Samuel Beckett’s theatre don’t only establish close, affectionate relationships. The form “we”, equivalent to the equality between partners, or even with the association that it entails, is replaced, most often with a relationship based on inequality, desire to dominate one of them. One can speak of loneliness in two, the anti-heroine often seized with the sense of pathological loneliness. Being oneself along death, with its anxieties and nightmares, alone in the family, in the host, she appears as

a grotesque caricature, put in non-sense situations, wearing an incoherent dialogue as an expression of her inner emptiness. Couple partners in Samuel Beckett’s plays have behaviours that are permanently intertwined with love and hatred, the partners being bound by the same suffering or continually struggling one another, depending on the situations passing through. Characters do not metamorphose themselves; they remain what they are, even if they do not really know sometimes what they represent.

Love or fulfilled erotic experiences are missing, appearing only pale memories of excitement moments.

The Beckett couple represents for partners the entire universe in which their Ego identifies oneself with an entity mostly *viva voce*. Anti-heroines, by their condition of being solitary, maintain only the illusion of communication. They speak for themselves and hear themselves. It exists a solitude filled with words. We do not know where the characters live, where they move, where they die, there is no possible identification of space or time. There is an abstract world, populated by beings already dying, expelled of city, literally or figuratively, of their house or their environment, ranging or buried in a sarcophagus / amphora, a mound of sand or in a housing space surrounded by water. Sometimes it is brought on stage only a world made of voices, from sonorousness of words, which are recognized limits, weaknesses, betrayal. In Beckett's plays is created, using language, a reality out of nothing, from the inner emptiness of the characters. On the edge between life and death, in an undefined space and time, couples spinning their memories, they become nostalgic, showing as visionary appearances in a sterile universe. They talk incessantly, whatsoever, only to forget; they exist actually in and through language. Beckett creates an agony of speech to mark the stillness, the silence before the End. Words can lose touch with reality, being suspended somewhere between being and nothingness, between speech and silence. The anti-heroines still soliloquize, maybe from the desire to prove they are still alive. Life can continue as long as there are words. Last reality remains the word, one

that says nothing, but by his vanity, succeeds in laughter, located on the border between comic and tragic.

While in *Happy Days*, the couple seems not to notice the exiled into existence, even if it does, does not give much importance. Trying to forget her fate of this apocalyptic world, Winnie speaks, but only to waste words. The author, captivated by the dramatic possibilities of this character restrained and forced to channel his expressiveness only in words spoken tirelessly, brings into scene the image of a woman seemingly happy, sinking slowly into a mound of soil. In Act I, Winnie has free hands being buried to the waist, in the Second is buried up to her neck, without possibilities of motion; she can only communicate with her voice, her eye blinking or facial mimicry, through facial expressiveness. Her husband, Willie, sitting behind the mound, can make gestures, can move, but is so concerned about his newspaper, that almost ignores his partner. The fact that Winnie looks so cheerful being in this hopeless situation is tragic, but in the same time bitter-humorous. The tragicomedies sources are just joy and optimism of this character. Up to a point it seems a foolish joy, the author creating a pessimistic comment upon life, but in another sense, her joy in front of death and nothingness of life expresses courage and human nobility. "If for unknown reasons no effort is no longer possible, then all you have to do is close your eyes – and expect to arrive the day – the beautiful day when your flesh will fuse because of scorching heat too strong, and the moon night will take hundreds and hundreds of hours." („Și dacă din motive necunoscute niciun efort nu mai e cu putință, atunci nu-ți mai rămâne

decât să închizi ochii – și să aștepti să sosească ziua – ziua frumoasă când carnea ți se va topi din pricina arșiței prea puternice, iar noaptea lunii va dura sute și sute de ceasuri.”¹

Winnie's life is full of beautiful days, because she refuses to fall into depression. Her first words – “Another divine day” – are a further attempt of escape from the final decline through word illusion – “Go on Winnie. Begin your day, Winnie” („Dă-i drumul Winnie. Începe-ți ziua, Winnie”)². In a vast desert and a scorching heat, Winnie, threatened by blindness, buried in the ground, is sliding slowly to death, “dispelling” the void of space and time, through words. Word plays its part of „brightening” a particular tragic reality. Paradoxically, the character aspires to nihilism, for its own truth, but at the same time is possessed by a fear of nothingness, emptiness, total silence, death. Having an illusory existence, Winnie shelters oneself in memories and sentences with no deep meaning. Words alternate with pauses, as if aspiring to the easiness of nothingness, this seemingly empty talk, besprent with stillness, burdening the discovery of character. Geneviève Serreau, in *Histoire du nouveau théâtre*, notes that Winnie's monologue turns on stage in a dialogue with silence. Winnie's stillness seems moments of amnesia, before starting a new search of herself. Word alternates with a gesture, a game of physiognomy, with a break, the character's thought changes direction depending on surrounding objects.

¹ Samuel Beckett, *O, ce zile frumoase!* în *Teatru*, traducere de Anca Măniuțiu, Fundația Culturală „Camil Petrescu” & Revista „Teatrul azi” (supliment), București 2006, p.12.

² Idem, p. 8.

Trying to remember the beautiful days of erstwhile, Winnie fails to put together only fragments of phrases: “Words leave you; there are moments when even words leave you? (Pause) What shall you do until words are coming back?” („Cuvintele te părăsesc; sunt momente în care până și cuvintele te părăsesc? (Pauză) Ce poți face oare până ce cuvintele se reîntorc?”)³. She seeks to survive in this hostile world, waiting for a rebound. And till that moment, she speaks to fill the void of a meaningless life, giving voice in fact to the nostalgia of closeness. Beckett uses a fragmented language to demonstrate her deadlock condition. Words are a chaotic noise protecting her from nothingness, without passing into thinking, as a result of reflection. “At the beginning was the word”, says the biblical text, but it seems that for the Beckett's heroes, the word “was” even at the end. At the end, the being remains only the head, as the most important “organic” component, and speech, the language. Apart from the eternal soul, the body breaks down slowly in a continuous decline. While buried, Winnie is seized from time to time by the desire of rebirth in another dimension, feeling that she will escape from the mound of soil that an anti-gravity force will tear her out and she will float “in the heavenly vault”.

Although suffering, she does not know despair, continuing to live as if everything is as before. She is extremely attached to a lot of objects carrying in an old bag, “hidden treasure bag” of her intimate ego. It seems like a constant source of entertainment, both in moments of boredom and sadness. Winnie “cohabits” with objects, cannot do without the bag or its content, as

³ Idem, p. 18.

her body is swallowed by the ground, and words are leaving her “Toothbrush, glasses, lipstick, mirror, nail file, piece of biscuit, bottle of medicine, music box with her emotional significance are part of a veritable ritual often grotesque, an attempt to challenge isolation. Dissimilar objects that the heroine takes out every morning to arrange them carefully in the bag at nightfall are ridiculous and unrelated as her memories are swallowed by the black bag of time. And the umbrella on fire, but reappearing intact the next day, bears the sign of the days consumed but who come back, the sign of an anonymous life, which will be replaced by other anonymous lives.”⁴

When the ground covers her up to the neck in second Act and she cannot handle objects, or umbrella, Winnie is having fun only looking to the bag or remembering stories, songs or lyrics. “How is that admirable verse? Oh, ephemeral joys - O-tra-ra-la... endless despairs” („Cum e versul acela admirabil? O, trecătoare bucurii – O, ta-ra-la.....nesfârșite deznădejdi.....”)⁵ Her fun is now to see herself living, searching, without finding comforting senses for existence. Death can be a solution, only flirting with. Death equivalent represents for Winnie and Willie only latency, living dead, unable to live, but also to die. They are Adam and Eve of an end of world, where striving for the affection of the other or at least understanding are an illusion. “Poor Willie – running short – finally – this is it – a small tragedy – another one – without remedy”, Winnie exclaims while examining her toothpaste tube,

⁴ Anca-Maria Rusu, *Cercurile centrice ale absurdului*, Editura Artes, Iași, 2009, p. 128.

⁵ Samuel Beckett, op. cit., p. 10.

giving a dual meaning of her sentence. “Poor Willie – has no desire – of anything – any purpose – in life – poor, dear Willie – good only to sleep” („Bietul Willie – n-are poftă – de nimic – niciun scop – în viață – bietul, dragul de Willie – bun numai să doarmă”)⁶. The heart of anti-heroines is a huge desert, a machine functioning strictly biologically. “Oh, I know it too well, when two people are together – as we are – when one sees the other, does not mean that the other sees it, life has taught me also that. Yes, life, I suppose, there is no other word.” („O, știu prea bine, când doi oameni sunt împreună – așa cum suntem noi – când unul îl vede pe celălalt, nu înseamnă neapărat că și celălalt îl vede pe el, viața m-a învățat....și asta. Da, viața, presupun, nu există alt cuvânt.”)⁷

Winnie feels human in inhuman conditions, she continues to call, to tempt Willie, does not want to give up to anything, even after everything was taken. Escaping the couple is not possible. The two are sentenced to live, to survive together. In our opinion, the Winnie’s burial up to waist, from the first Act, can also mean the “burial” of erotic act in the couple relationship. The womb of the anti-heroine in a biological age of procreation is now deprived of erotic startled. This could explain the separation of the two partners, as in Nell and Negg couple of *End game*: they do not form a perfect androgynous being, no touch, no erotic communication. It seems that the lack of this type of communication affects even the commune dialogue between the two.

Actress Madeleine Renaud, in the setting made by Roger Blin in 1963

⁶ Idem, p. 8.

⁷ Idem, p. 16.

at Odeon Theatre in Paris, puzzled out Winnie as a woman reached at a turning point in her life, a woman, looking back, who is feeling fear for the future, but also the couple tenderness: "For me it stands as a brilliant love poem, a poem about the couple, and when, at the very end of the play, Willie crawling with so much effort towards Winnie who is silt up to the neck, and when he lies his trembling hand, Jean-Louis and I, we are both, and each time, shaken to tears."⁸

In Beckett's theatre, human existence disintegrates and anti-heroines, even if they "live" halfway into the ground or in garbage bins, don't have sometimes the strength to give up and cling to life, they hope, have reserves of tenderness or affection. Partners of couples share the same fate, they are small people, without any important social status, uncertain, suffering from frustration and alienation, examining their fate, putting questions about past or future. In Beckett's plays, it appears a gap between the characters behaviour and the reality that dominates. In *End game*, the characters live their last moments in the world that were thrown. The relationship between closed and open space is equivalent to the relation between existence and nothingness. Beckett suggests the agony into existence. Anti-heroes are condemned to live together, to endure, to struggle, to exploit one another. "Action" takes place in a room, through whose windows one can see only sea and desert. A room of a home placed at the end of the world. In this enclosed space, nobody can

choose anything, nobody can escape. Beyond the walls of the house is desert, nothingness. Relationships between characters are strained, individuals tolerate each other out of favour, because of strict social rules, in a co-existence imposed by external unspecified factors, unknown. Beyond family, there is nothing.

Anti-heroes are solely responsible for the existing situation, or they are slaves of destiny, of law that they cannot change. They do not consider important the right to freedom because they are powerless, they wasted their chances. Hamm and Clove or the elderly couple – Nagg and Nell – their behaviour emphasizes grotesque, tragicomedy of the situation. The smaller family of the two elders is itself thrown away, to garbage in the family space, by Hamm, their son, paralyzed and blind. Hamm seems to be the master, or maybe the father of Clov, who at his turn wants the release from this closed world, and perhaps under the tutelage of the "father", that cannot leave him. Nagg and Nell, also paralytics, live in garbage bins in this tight space of the room, suggesting a closed universe, secluded without escape. A microcosm closed in a macrocosm, the inner world of the two parents, with all emotional experiences, all physical sufferings, is trapped in the narrow world of son Hamm, as old and suffering.

If family represents the "basic cell" of society, according to Beckett, family relations parents-children are in a state of putrefaction. Disposal of Hamm's parents represents a metaphor with a double meaning, which was associated by some critics to be revenge of the very cruel son or, by others, with the near death of two elders, transformed in a caricature of

⁸ Madeleine Renaud, *El se vrea un martor*, în „Secolul XX”, nr. 298-299-300/1985.

human existence, while the others in the fullness of life are trying to escape. Other critics consider them on the border between being and nothingness, an image of old age, as a stop station between life and death. Nagg and Nell consider themselves as pets: “Nagg: Have you changed the sawdust? / Nell: There’s no sawdust. (Pause. On a tired note) Can you be more specific, Nagg? / Nagg: Sand, please.... What does it matter? / Nell: It has big importance.” („Nagg: Ți-au schimbat rume-gușul? / Nell: Nu-i rume-guș. (Pauză. Pe un ton obosit) Nu poți fi ceva mai precis, Nagg? / Nagg: Nisipul, poftim.... Ce importantă are? / Nell : Are mare importantă.”)⁹ In their relationship exists an infinite tenderness and mutual care showing an old couple, an old connection in which they completed each other: “Nagg: Want a piece? Biscuit. I’ve kept half of it. (He looks at the biscuit. Proud:) Three quarters. Take it.” („Nagg: Vrei o bucată? De biscuit. Ți-am păstrat jumătate din el. (Se uită la biscuit. Mândru: Trei sferturi. Ia-l.”)¹⁰

Reached at the end of life, the two elders are some poor infantile beings, almost like living corpses, slowly decaying, losing the acuity of hearing and vision, losing teeth that “yesterday” were still there <“Nell: (with an elegiac tone): Ho, yesterday!”>, that yesterday from another time, as suggested by Nell’s wistful shout. Although still together, they are still separated, as in the future coffins. In fact, each dies alone. They cannot touch, cuddle, nor even scratch anymore. Their unhappiness seems co-

⁹ Samuel Beckett, *Așteptându-l pe Godot. Eleutheria. Sfârșitul jocului*, traducere din limba franceză de Gellu Naum și Irina Mavrodin, Editura Curtea veche, București 2007, p. 227.

¹⁰ Ibidem.

mical, somewhat like a self-irony in the state of decrepitude they inhabit. As a human comedy that does not dare laughter and, at the same time, as a humorous tragedy with herabsurdity. Their faces are so white, as specified by the author, but not purity white, but a white of spectral beings that will turn soon in. White appears here as a sign that announces the surrender of characters. It’s the white of surrendering the “arms” of life.

Although the two old people are trying to communicate with the others by erecting the edges of dustbins, the communication is not possible. They are clenching to the edges of trash bins, as life, to come to light, but the trash bin collects all their bodily wastes, rests that will return shortly in the dust which they were made. Hamm’s parents are sitting in trash bins, like some helpless dolls. They “crippled their legs” in a bicycle accident in Ardennes. They remember their love of youth, boating on Lake Como, the day after the engagement, but then they wonder whether all this really happened. Time affected their memory, feelings, and love becomes evanescent. The couple recalls their love spring. But the love story of the two elders, now in the dustbin, shades into grotesque. This sequence appears as another episode of a consumed love story happened also in a boat, as in *Krapp’s last Tape*, or an echo of the stories told by the elders in the play of Ionesco *The Seats*. Hamm hates his parents which are sent to the dustbin, but it seems that they hate their son. Nagg, recalling the childhood reactions of Hamm, seems as selfish as his son: Hamm left alone crying, while his parents were going to sleep peacefully.

Nell, a little dreamy, remembers past times, while her husband wants

to tell (for how much time) “the tailor story”, a small story that has amused his bride a long time ago. As his son Hamm, Nagg likes to tell stories, showing the same desire to be always heard. However in the middle of story, he stops to apologize: “A bad story. I tell it more badly each time”. („O povestesc prost. Spun din ce în ce mai prost povestea asta”).¹¹ A joke told too many times is not funny anymore for Nell, as in the past. In the empty space that is told, Nagg's joke seems similar with the tailor's from the story, which shows the errors made by the Creator, the creator of a meaningless world. Nell tells at one time the most important rejoinder of the play, as the author notes in his Berliner diary of rehearsals: “Nothing is funnier than disaster”. These few words contain a whole philosophy of Beckett about human, giving the viewer the freedom to laugh, although laughter is not anymore liberating. Nothing is more comical than misery, in Beckett's work. Calmly, without pathos or solemnity, Nell is essentially releasing the whole wisdom gained by humanity along time. “Yes, yes it's the funniest thing that exists. And we laugh wholeheartedly at first. But it's always the same. Yes, it's like that funny story that we are told too often: we find it all funny, but not laugh at it anymore.” („Da, da este lucrul cel mai comic din câte există. Și noi râdem de el, din toată inima, la început. Dar e mereu același lucru. Da, e ca povestea aceea nostimă care ni se spune prea des: o găsim tot nostimă, dar nu mai râdem de ea.”)¹²

Irina Petrescu, from Metropolis Theatre in Bucharest, in the staging from 2010 of late Alexander Toci-

lescu, „she plays a Nell almost radiant. Although senile, dirty, dying, Nell interpreted by Irina Petrescu has a playful, mischievous voice, in a perfect agreement with mentioned speech: “Nothing is funnier than disaster”. It is obvious from her game that not only she looks with a clear amusement at others misfortune, but also hers. Ion Besoiu builds his character completely different, swinging between self-irony, indifference (toward his condition, Nell, the humiliations constrained by Hamm), seasoned with vague rests from the erst macho behaviour, and the whimpering voice of an stultified old man who asks his biscuit at fixed hours. Irina Petrescu and Ion Besoiu manage to put together in brief appearances, almost exclusively with voice and eyes, a complex relationship, where tenderness, humor and senility live normally”.¹³ Nagg and Nell couple look like two characters as mirrors, dusty and old, reflecting the image of decay, represented by their son Hamm and his servant Clov. Nell “disappears” first, she doesn't want to struggle anymore with life, to get the head out of the trash bin to see the same nonsensical view: “Why this comedy every day?” The song theme is death or only death of hope, or maybe depression, in a mood as dead of the outside world, but in the inmost depth of the human being is given a continuous fight between pulses – sometimes opposite – of ego.

As noted by Nicolae Balota in his work *Literature of absurd*, in *End game*, there are four characters which seem interfaces of the same human being – Hamm could embody the

¹¹ Idem, p. 229.

¹² Idem, p p. 227-228.

¹³ Liviu Ornea, *Nefericirea de a exista - Sfârșit de partidă*, în „Observator Cultural”, februarie 2010.

strength of emotions, Clov the intelligence, the sense coordinating emotions, and Nagg and Nell couple represent the unconscious, as a repository of memory. Displaying the image of a giant skull¹⁴, the two elders are only the memory remains of a tired consciousness, always oriented towards past, with dismantled memories, without efficiency of moment refusing any hope. Throughout the dialogue, Hamm, the son, do not address a word to his mother, nor Nell, even when Clov tells her that she died. It seems as a possible note of the oedipal complex between the relationship of two, and considering that Nagg and Nell could represent the memory of consciousness, and Hamm and Clov the reason, the oedipal complex can signify a metaphor of the strained relationship between reason and emotional memory. The picture “with the face towards the wall”, as stated by the playwright in his scenic indications, can mean, as Martin Esslin stated in *Theatre of the Absurd*, a memory, a lucidity moment of consciousness, which now nobody wants to remember, a vain remnant of memory, a refusal, a denial.

Nell or Winnie are accomplice to their destiny, not fighting against it, just trying to accommodate, to obey and hence their tragic existence. They indulge in the prison built by themselves, a trash bin, a mound of soil, accomplices of the end. According to critics' statements, Winnie's optimism

¹⁴ The scene described with great accuracy by Beckett, looks like the image of a giant skull – „two small windows placed above, with the curtains drawn A door to the right of proscenium. [...] In the center Haam, sitted in a bath chair, covered with an old bed sheet” – the characters becoming thus fantasies of an inner consciousness.

is not a result of the courage of a warrior. She is "blind" regarding her condition, but occasionally she has moments of lucidity acknowledging the drama, but soon returns to good mood and optimism. Immobility of the two female characters can result from the impossibility of going somewhere, because that "somewhere" does not exist, nowhere to go and no any inner or outer motivation for doing it. They do not talk about their poor condition, not complain about family or personal problems, but they bring into discussion major human themes, as philosophy, ethics, religion. They are touched by the need for “signs” that would clarify the meaning of existence. The idea of happiness is caricaturized, once possible, or the care for trifles, before the imminent death.

The vessel in which some of Beckett's characters are closed is in an embryonic stage, the man being trapped in the vessel as in a matrix. Birth is expulsion, alienation, the ultimate life sentence. It is the mythical trauma of expulsion from paradise, as psychoanalysts say. Thus, Beckett's anti-heroines are just physical similarities with human beings, uttering just few words, essences of dialogue, or phrases with pure voiceful, musical value. Silence is inseparable from their immobility, their immobilization through burying in ground or in a coffin. The characters want a rebirth into death. They lose gradually their limbs, putrefy, lose control by successive mutilations of their body-disappearance of sexual potency, teeth, eyesight and hearing, returning to the newborn stage. In Beckett's plays, the body is reduced to a head, the head to a mouth uttering words, aspiring to non-existence, but also with its fear. The characters remain human only by

their ability to spell words that shatters the silence of nothingness.

In the play *Comedy*, the characters are shown only the head, the neck and the body of each being closed in identical vessels. In our opinion, the author is staging in an original manner, the theme “escapes” from the couple, of marital betrayals, permitted loves or not, in a “comedy” of life and death, a life in three, a mixture of lie and truth, separations and reconciliations, suffering and ecstasy. Three characters without a certain identity, generically called F1, F2 and B, two women and a man, are planted in three coffins/funerary amphorae, seeing only the heads, with “effaced” faces, without age or particular features. The man, seated between the two women, is the connecting element, and in the same time, the separation one, of discord. The atonal voices quickly utter words, evidences of earthly mistakes. Along with Dante or the imagined Inferno of Jean-Paul Sartre in *Closed doors*, Beckett recreates the image of “Doomsday”. The sarcophagus, as a refuge in the afterlife, and corollary also, with the role of protecting the anti-heroes of other temptations, other “evil spirits” that could wander around them, it provides them access in the dock. Being present in front of a court-light, represented by a reflector, the Judgment takes place in a Pre-Purgatory, where spectrums – anti-heroes speaks like from beyond the grave.

The cycles of total darkness and accurate focused light outline the image of an “after world” land, where the three were designed by death. Every feeling has gone, only the memory of guilty passionate feelings remained: death is the one that dominates now. “Everything will be black, silent, fulfilled, deleted ... [...] Yes, the peace,

everything faded, all the pain, all as if it never has been, something will come”. („Totul va fi negru, tăcut, revolut, șters... [...] Da, pacea, totul stins, toată durerea, totul de parcă nici n-ar fi fost vreodată, ceva va veni.”)¹⁵ The author does not specify how the passing away happened, beyond the sense of speech, a suicide or maybe a murder can be inferred. In agony, animated by the violence of light, the characters try to express their thoughts, fragments from an existence already faded, by monologue. Separated, each in his vessel, they are not aware of others presence, they cannot see each other, cannot touch, nor hear. Alone in life, alone in death, facing the “infernal glitter”, begging mercy, trying to find a meaning where there is none – “F1 – Is it because I do not tell the truth, is this, maybe one day, good or bad, I finally shall tell the truth and then it will be over with the light, instead of truth?”. („Totul va fi negru, tăcut, revolut, șters... [...] Da, pacea, totul stins, toată durerea, totul de parcă nici n-ar fi fost vreodată, ceva va veni.”)¹⁶

Paradoxically, the only thing that still works “on the other side” is the sense revealing them, later, the fact that “we don’t know to live”. Darkness evoked by the three characters is perhaps according to Beckett's vision, the supreme unconscious, and the spotlights would only have to compel characters to play again the role of human existences, guilty of living in misery and impotency. “F1-Silence and darkness, do not ask for more. [...] It would

¹⁵ Samuel Beckett, *Comedie*, în *Teatru*, traducere de Anca Măniuțiu, Fundația Culturală „Camil Petrescu” & Revista „Teatrul azi” (supliment), București, 2006, p p. 35-36.

¹⁶ Idem, p. 41.

undoubtedly be a bigger sin if I crave for more than that [...] Thirst that kills darkness. And the darker it is, even worse. Bizarre.” („Fl – Tăcere și întuneric, nu cerem mai mult. [...] Ar însemna fără îndoială să păcătuiesc și mai tare dacă aş implora mai mult de atât [...] Sete ucigătoare de întuneric. Și cu cât e mai întuneric cu atât e mai rău. Bizar.”)¹⁷

In our opinion, Beckett is fundamentally tragically. We meet here with Eugene Ionesco, who notes in *Notes and Contranotes*: “It’s tragically just because he totally involves the human condition and not the man belonging to a certain society, nor the man saw through and alienated to a specific ideology and, at the same time, simplifies and cuts the historical and metaphysical reality, true reality in which man is integrated. What is important, the truth is that man should appear in its

dimensions, in its multiple depths. In Beckett plays, the concerned issue is that of last goals of man; the image that the author offers to history, about human condition, is more complex, more grounded.” („Tragic tocmai pentru că la el intră în joc totalitatea condiției umane și nu omul cutărei sau cutărei societăți, nici omul văzut prin și alienat de o anumită ideologie care, în același timp, simplifică și amputează realitatea istorică și metafizică, realitatea autentică în care omul e integrat. Ceea ce e important, adevărul, este ca omul să apară în dimensiunile sale, în profunzimile sale multiple. La Beckett, problema care se pune e cea a țelurilor ultime ale omului; imaginea pe care acest autor o oferă despre istorie, despre condiția umană, este mai complexă, mai întemeiată.”)¹⁸

¹⁷ Idem, p. 44.

¹⁸ Eugène Ionesco, *Note și contranote*, traducere și cuvânt introductiv de Ion Pop, Editura Humanitas, București, 1992, p. 150.

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